

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2015/5847/P	Emma Casdagli	1 Framfield Road London N5 1UU	28/01/2016 14:36:40	OBJ	

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Planning Application # 2015/5847/P
Address: 66 Fitzjohns Avenue, London NW3 5LT (the "Site")

Please note that I am the owner of 64B Fitzjohns Ave ("64B") and I wish to lodge an objection to the proposed application.

I purchased 64B in 2001 intending to live there. Before completion I was unexpectedly transferred to Hong Kong by my employers where I lived for the next 13 years. I returned to London in the summer of 2014, but to accommodate my son, as well as other family members who frequently visit, I needed a larger property than 64B. As a result, I have rented out 64B since I bought it, but it has always been my intention, and remains my intention, to live in the property myself in the foreseeable future. As a result I am looking at this planning application both as a landlord, but also as a potential resident.

I have looked at the Fitzjohns and Netherhall Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy Document on your website which you note is used for the assessment of planning applications for proposed developments in this area. I note as follows:

1. 64 Fitzjohns Ave is mentioned as an unlisted building which makes a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area
2. 66 Fitzjohns is already mentioned as a negative feature even without further extension.
3. On page 36, it states that, in an area with large plots with open green land, there is pressure for backland development, but that this can reduce the quality of the visual as well as the ecological environment.
4. In the guidelines section (F/N 1) it states that all development should respect existing features such as building lines, roof lines etc
5. In the guidelines section (F/N 25) it states that extending into basement areas will only be acceptable where it would not involve harm to the character of the building or its setting
6. In the guidelines section (F/N 32) it states that rear gardens contribute to the townscape of the Conservation Area and provide a significant amenity to residents and a habitat for wildlife. It goes on to state that development within gardens is likely to be unacceptable

I note that the Site is a back land site having been originally part of the garden belonging to 64 Fitzjohns Avenue. The original out houses were redeveloped and converted to residential use some years ago when planning policy may have been more relaxed. It is apparent from guideline F/N 32 (referred to above) that development of back land is now discouraged (for good reason) and "likely to be unacceptable". In my view, an extension of the type proposed should be similarly discouraged and unacceptable. The proposal would result in a significant overdevelopment of the land and would have a detrimental effect on the surroundings and feel of the Conservation Area (not only is the Site visible from the back of 64 Fitzjohns Ave, but also from the road).

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Having a development of this size so close behind 64 Fitzjohns Ave would not only impair the look of no 64 (currently noted as making a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area), but it would also worsen the look of no 66 (already noted as a negative feature).

I also think it would set a dangerous precedent for others who might be seeking to develop, or expand development in, back land areas within the Conservation Area.

In addition to the general “in principle” objection I set out above, I would also object for the following reasons:

1. There is no reason to demolish the current houses – they are relatively recent structures and in a reasonable state of repair. The redevelopment is simply to try and squeeze extra living space out of an already tight area.
2. The construction of a basement under, effectively, the whole of the Site would bring building work dangerously close to 64 Fitzjohns Ave. This could cause irreversible damage to one of the fine buildings that make the Conservation Area what it is. The risk is increased by the fact that 64 Fitzjohns is constructed on a “raft” of clays which makes it particularly susceptible to large excavation work nearby.
3. The basement development is very close to underground water courses and it is impossible to know the effect the Proposal would have on these water courses and how that would impact the neighbouring properties, including 64 Fitzjohns Ave (again, particularly in light of how no 64 was constructed). The Civil Engineers report states that ground movements as a result of the basement work are difficult to predict accurately, but that some damage may occur. Even though he states that this should be expected to be minimal, that is just his opinion and it is unreasonable to expect neighbours to accept such a risk just for the sake of overdevelopment of a site.
4. It is difficult to work out the exact height of the new building being proposed, but it is certainly higher than the current building. It would not only make it an eyesore from the road, but result in a considerable loss of light, and privacy, to no 64, especially 64B which is the flat on the raised ground level. The Site is very close to the rear of no 64 with just a small cobbled area separating the two buildings. Privacy is currently managed by the use of some low level bamboo and other short plants. However, if the buildings on the Site are allowed to go higher than the existing buildings (not just the roof going higher than the current roof, but also the top floor windows in the Site going higher than the existing top floor windows), these low level plants will be wholly inadequate. It will mean that a number of the flats in no 64 (including my own) will be overlooked and suffer a loss of privacy, a loss of natural light and light pollution from the large windows/glazing being proposed.
5. Access to the site is a narrow lane running next to no 64. This narrow lane would be unsuitable for construction equipment/lorries and there is significant risk that the wall to no 64 could be damaged.
6. The proposal to remove the lovely Silver Birch would significantly alter the outlook from no 64

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and the general feel of the Conservation Area. I feel that there is also a real risk of harm to the Plane tree which has a TPO as well as the greenery at the front of no 64 close to the access lane.

I hope that the above explains why I feel that the proposal would be detrimental to the Conservation Area generally and to the owners/occupiers of no 64 in particular. I also feel that it is not in keeping with your own guidelines as set out in the Fitzjohns and Netherhall Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy Document.

Please ensure that I am copied on any notices/further information in relation to this Planning Application and this Site generally.
