

5th April 2016

Dear Mr Clark

**PLANNING APPLICATION: 2015/6231/P
PROPOSAL: DEMOLISH TWO GARAGES AND ERECT A 3-BEDROOM HOUSE
SITE ADDRESS: GARAGES ADJ 25B AND 25E FROGNAL AND REAR OF
MERIDIAN HOUSE, FINCHLEY ROAD NW3**

OBJECTION

We are writing again to object to the above proposal.

In relation to this development proposal, no documents have been added to the Council's website for over one month (the last entry to be seen up till today, 28 March 2016, appears to have been added on 12 February 2016), and this is making it hard for the community to find out whether there has been any progress. This is not satisfactory because it leaves people unclear about what exactly is being proposed, and whether there has been any more consultation. In particular, we have had no assurance that our concerns are being addressed, and this is one main reason why we continue to have many objections to the proposal.

- New building up to 3 storeys high

There is very little information about the proposals, but from the developer's assortment of drawings, photos, existing and proposed elevations, posted on the Council's website on 20 January 2016 (all dated September 2015), it appears that the building could either be 3 storeys (looking at page 12) or 2 storeys (looking at pages 13 and 14).

The drawing on Page 14 shows that the new building will be extremely close to 25B Frognal, and presumably positioned at 90 degrees. It will dominate 25B, and be very overbearing at this close distance. This will compromise: a) the provision of a secure and private entrance to both the new build and the existing buildings; b) external amenity space for the new and existing buildings, and c) the ability to control noise or other possible disturbance between new and existing buildings.

- Privacy issues

Given the very close proximity of the proposed house, privacy is an extremely sensitive matter both for existing and for new inhabitants. There is no reason why windows in a stairwell, which are not essential as a light source, cannot be removed. It is clearly a priority to preserve the privacy of occupiers of habitable rooms, such as the bedrooms in 25B. Also, the north facing window on top of the garage overlooks the lounge at 25B Frognal. This should not be permitted. This negative impact on neighbours caused by the overdevelopment of the small plot is in contravention of policy DP26, and permission should not be granted.

For these reasons, we must strongly object to the proposals, as currently depicted. Moreover, as highlighted in previous correspondence, the Council stated explicitly in 2012 that it would not permit any buildings which are taller than the garages currently on site.

- A precedent for further development

The proposal envisages the replacement of two of the existing rental garages with one house. Page 14 of the documents, with the title “Proposed East Elevation” shows the house, and some of the remaining garages, described as “existing storage.” However, once a precedent has been set, there would appear that the remaining garages could be developed, increasing the problem of overdevelopment and overcrowding in this very small space.

It seems to be a strategy employed by this developer to negotiate on small plots in piecemeal fashion to get the maximum profit for the site, regardless of suitability. In terms of master planning for the borough, this is bad practice and should be resisted.

Specifically in relation to this site, access by road is strained already, gardens are getting smaller and all open space, particularly green space is at a premium. For all these reasons, too, the Council should not run the risk of creating a precedent which would tie its hands if and when applications relating to the remaining garages are submitted.

- No evidence of planning merit

The planning merits of building a family house to replace these garages (or distinct lack of merits) do not appear to have been considered in their own right. Instead, it seems as if this application is being treated as a “consolation prize” for the developer, who has recently withdrawn an application for a site just a few meters away, which envisaged backland development at the rear of 29 and 33 Arkwright Road. Even the documents submitted by the applicant to the Council are labelled “Garages rear 29/33 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6BJ.” There is no attempt to explain the merits of this site as a discrete development. This leads to confusion.

This site is in an area with a history of flooding, and there is some evidence that construction could have effect on ground moisture. As very near neighbours of any new development, we have a strong interest in asking for reassurance about this matter. We believe the Council should require that the developer provides a ground investigation.

Finally, it is not clear that RedFrog, who monitor conservation area proposals, or the highways department, or the tree officer or the environmental health officers have been consulted. It is imperative that the community has an opportunity to consider the views of conservation experts and officers, and to engage with them.

For all of these reasons, we are very concerned about the development proposals, as currently available to view on the Council’s website, which are too big and are too vaguely defined. Without further precise information and assurances that the existing properties nearby will not be compromised, these proposals appear to be in contravention of Camden’s policies,

specifically CS5 and DP24 an DP26, and it is not apparent they conserve or enhance the conservation area.

For all of these reasons, they should be refused. Please treat the objection as both joint and individual by the under-signed.

Thank you for your attention.

Siobhan Baillie, Councillor, NW3

Silvia Bueno, Flat 6, 27 Arkwright Rd, NW3

Lesley David, 29 Frogna1, NW3

Barbara Dohmann QC, 42 Frogna1, NW3

Bill Frankel, 25A Frogna1, NW3

Carol Frankel, 25A Frogna1, NW3

Ken Howard, 27 Arkwright Road, NW3

Chip Martin, 42 Frogna1, NW3

Philip Mercer, 25E Frogna1, NW3

Tania Varsanyi, 27A Frogna1, NW3

Sebastian Wocker, 107 Heath Street, NW3

Yiyong Yang, 25B Frogna1, NW3

Cherie Yeo, on behalf of Mr & Mrs Yeo, 25C Frogna1, NW3