

Having lived at no. 32 Princess Road for 30 years we have grown accustomed to its good and less good characteristics. One good characteristic has been the pleasing views to the rear, with a long gap between houses, from our terrace to the other side of the canal, and a pleasant aspect provided closer by the plants and trees in the basement. In recent years the (previous) owner removed both an attractive tree and a splendid vine which in the autumn provided a spectacularly vivid red backdrop. So naturally we are concerned about how the effects of an extension in the basement might further detract from our pleasant view.

We have looked at the application (2016/4684/P) and would like to make the following comments, with some suggestions, which we ask you to take into consideration in the planning process:

- We do appreciate the concept of covering the roof with green sedum to soften the effect of replacing a good view with a large unattractive roof. However, we are naturally concerned how well this may be maintained, (as left to rot it can become highly unattractive). While the current occupants may be committed to maintaining it well, there may be no such commitment by future residents of the flat. These new owners may be less willing or capable of maintaining the sedum. In either case the result would be an unattractive brown eyesore. Our experience has been that residents of the basement move every 5 or so years as they seek more space to accommodate their growing families.
- Across much of the new roof there appears to be a raised section, with an upstand to the glass lantern (creating the roof light to the dining area). We are unsure what this upstand would look like or the material being used, but it seems to be about 18 inches high and is certainly higher than the existing kitchen roof. This wall facing us is unlikely to be attractive and is likely to mean that the more distant section of the sedum is not visible, or at least not from our kitchen on the ground floor. So the raised lantern section reduces the visual softening gained by the use of sedum.

We ask you to take into consideration our suggestions below (paragraph starting 'would it not be possible...'), as to how the visual impairments caused by both the new roof and by the erection of the raised lantern can be reduced. This suggestion proposes a different layout, which restores some of our current pleasant view yet still gains all the extra space wanted.

- There will be interconnecting doors between the old and new bedrooms, connecting through a small central courtyard. An architect has advised us that this will result in significant light pollution particularly into our two rear bedrooms at the back of our property, where previously this was minimal or non-existent.

It is interesting to look at and compare this application with other basement extensions (and submitted plans) on Princess Road. No. 34 some years ago extended beyond their kitchen to the back garden wall, thus creating an extra room. No. 26 has also applied to extend to the back garden wall, creating the extra space desired.

The extensions of both nos. 34 and 26 take into consideration the impacts of their extensions on their neighbours above. In both cases this has been achieved by building their extensions on the north side of these buildings, behind the kitchens. This area is overlooked by stairwells and utility rooms, rather than bedrooms and kitchens. Hence this causes significantly less intrusion on neighbours on higher floors – in terms of both light pollution and loss of pleasant views, as the extension is behind less used rooms.

Would it not be possible for the extension at no. 32c to be configured more along the lines of no. 26, which achieves a similar amount of extra space but with less intrusion on upstairs neighbours? No.26 seems to gain both the extra bedroom and dining space sought by no. 32c in their plans. A similar plan for 32c would be our preference.

If Camden planning feels this does not provide sufficient extra space to achieve their aims, perhaps no. 32c could build the extra bedroom to the side of the kitchen (south side) as shown in their application. Although this would still detract from our view, it would do so less than if the dining room were also built on this side of the building (as in the application). This bedroom could then have doors or windows to the back of the building, providing the necessary light and air required by 32c but not creating the light pollution of the current plan.

We have tried to see how all parties can find a compromise, and hope these suggestions are helpful and constructive.

Last, and a slightly separate matter, we understand that Camden wishes to help increase the amount of accommodation in the Borough. Most basement extensions (and indeed sub basements) are routinely approved. Roof extensions are also approved in every terrace in Primrose Hill - *apart* from the small part of Princess Road in which we live. I believe the reason for this is that the roofscape for part of our terrace (but by no means all) follows a butterfly pattern, and to remove this would in some way harm the charm of the area. Yet this roofscape is barely visible, and only from a small area on the two bridges (near the ends of Princess Road) over the canal.

We understand that there are benefits from protecting unsightly developments in a preservation area such as Primrose Hill, but the impact of roof extensions can be minimal, and indeed can be made to look very attractive, as can be seen on nearly all other terraces in Primrose Hill. Is it not time to review this discrimination against the residents of our terrace? As we are all aware, costs of moving are high (particularly stamp duty) and not allowing roof extensions seems to discriminate against families by not being able to create more space and indeed greater value to their properties.

Thank you.

Mr & Mrs J Simpson, 32 Princess Road