

Mr & Mrs Thompson

49 Albert Street
London
NW1 7LX

6th October 2016

Application Reference: **2016/4688/P**

Address: 47 Albert Street, London, NW1 7LX

Re: Objection to planning application

Dear Anna Roe,

Thank you for your visit to our property on Monday, accompanied by Alfie your conservation officer, to assess the impact of the proposed application for 47 Albert Street, not only on our own home at 49 Albert Street, but also on its impact to the other surrounding listed buildings and the conservation area as a whole.

We have welcomed into our home and enjoyed the company of Mr and Mrs Morgan, and we hope that they make a fantastic home for themselves and enjoy living there, however we feel that certain aspects of the architects proposal greatly impact upon us and we believe that if the roles were reversed between ourselves and our neighbours they would be raising the same objections.

Whilst we understand that you are holding further discussions with the applicants architects, and that a revised or new application may be submitted in due course, we nevertheless feel obliged to lodge our objection to the current application on the following grounds.

One of our major concerns is to do with the 'handing' of the listed property by the relocation of the rear courtyard/ light-well of the basement. The proposed back extensions will have a negative impact on the listed building and fail to produce any significant enhancement in plan form to the existing rooms at ground and basement level. It will have a detrimental effect on the conservation area, as the overall bulk, massing, scale and materials of the proposal would create an unwelcome and inappropriate intrusion within the conservation area.

Our concerns were also commented on no less than four times in the councils pre application advice.

- "Given the expected arrangement for the closet wing, it might be better for the integrity of the building's historic plan-form were the two masses proposed for addition to the rear of the building reversed in position."
- "The proposal is likely to be acceptable if a design can be found which makes the historic arrangement appreciable alongside recent extensions, all with minimal loss of historic fabric and dilution of historic form."
- "The height of any new extension and the increased overall footprint risk overwhelming the host building and obscuring the special interest of its plan-form and rear elevation."
- "The council has doubts about the quality of accommodation proposed at lower-ground floor, and concerns about the total impact of the extension and rearrangements at lower ground floor on the special interest of the listed building, by substantial alteration of the historic footprint and dilution of the basic plan-form. Revisions to size and layout to address these concerns would be welcome."

We fundamentally disagree with the proposition in the design and access statement suggesting that the design of the back extension has architectural merit and in some way can be seen as a complimentary addition to the listed building that it would be attached to. There is an oversized and unnecessary expanse of brickwork above the patio doors, which does nothing to enhance the internal quality of the upper ground floor.

Our concerns with the proposal are also based on the impact that it will have directly to our property. In the second pre planning advice you commented that "Overall the proposed design is considered to be of a high quality and has been sympathetically organised so as to not impact upon the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers." We strongly contest this statement as the proposal will do just that.

The overbearing height of the brickwork parapet for the counter intuitive design to create a pitched roof internally, will reduce daylight and sunlight penetration into the upper ground floor of our property. Imposing this very tall parapet to accommodate a small area of inaccessible 'deep structured' green roof, will result in the proposed extension rising higher than the extension at 49 Albert Street, cutting out our views, daylight and sunlight into our pitched glass conservatory.

We find it perverse to 'hand' the original layout of the back extension and lower ground floor courtyard. The bulkier elements of back extensions to buildings of this period whether originally built or added later, have usually been accessed from the staircase of the main building, and are of reduced floor to ceiling height to emphasise their secondary nature, maintaining the prominence of the main living rooms and their elegantly proportioned windows.

In 'handing' the footprint, our patios will be only separated by a section of trellis compromising our privacy and security. When you exit our properties to the rear you enter the garden on a raised terrace generally above the basement structure, with the neighbours basement courtyard a storey down below to the left, and your own building's basement courtyard to the right. This sequence to the terrace maintains the privacy of all the properties and allows the occupants to be able to enjoy the use of their terrace without being back to back with their neighbours.

The architects reasoning for 'handing' the original layout, switching the lower ground floor light-well area, and changing the historic footprint of a listed building in a conservation area, is because they believe that in doing so it will bring more light into the new basement courtyard of 47. We believe this to be a flawed concept. Every house in Albert street was not designed incorrectly.

The neighbouring property at number 45 (please note that all rear elevation illustrations are numbered incorrectly - 49 is numbered as 45, and vice versa) has a double back extension with a well established almost 7 ft vegetative divide along the party garden wall, this in itself renders the concept of increased light saturation defunct.

To willingly create all of these problems in pursuit of a purely contentious theoretical design concept, seems more than a little perverse.

Some of these negative impacts can be easily avoided without affecting any of the internal planning, by replacing the unwelcome and overbearing bulk of unnecessary construction to the main extension with a glazed or solid pitched roof mirroring the proposed pitched ceiling, and following the line of 49 Albert Street.

None of our issues are personal, they are purely concerns about the design proposal.

To summarise, we wish to object to the application for the following reasons

- negative impact on a conservation area

- negative impact on a listed building
- negative impact on the historic character and fabric of 47 Albert Street with respect to the design of the brick extension
- negative impact due to the 'handing' of the traditional plan
- negative impact on adjoining neighbour and in particular loss of lateral views, daylight and sunlight to 49 Albert Street.
- Rejection of the proposition that the design of the back extension responds to and enhances its relationship with the historic fabric of 47, which in fact results in unnecessary additional bulk, mass and volume that makes no material improvement to the quality of the spacial planning of 47, yet has a significant and detrimental effect on 49
- Rejection of the proposal of the choice of inappropriate materials, i.e the proposed bricks which are completely out of context with the surrounding listed buildings.

We request that the applicants be invited to submit revised proposals addressing the issues we've raised, in particular the design of the roof to the dominant section of the rear extension.

In the event of any permission being granted, the conditions that we would please ask to be applied to safeguard from further loss of light and privacy, and marginally reduce the impact on mass would be.

- The reduction in height by 100mm for the dominant rear extension which the neighbours and their architect felt possible and illustrated to us.
- restrictions of height of vegetation on green roof
- no access except for maintenance to the first floor flat roof
- all brickwork to be in London stock brick to match adjacent properties/similar brick colour if different brick type approved.

We believe that the majority of the reason for our objection reflects the views raised by LBC in your pre application comments, and that it would be a dereliction of your duty of care to all parties to ignore your own comments and give way to the highly questionable aesthetic argument presented in the design and access statement.

Yours Sincerely

Wally and Laura