

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2016/5504/P	Ray and Joanne Villis	27a Ainger Road NW3 3AS	11/11/2016 10:38:31	OBJ	<p>OBJECTION – Planning Application Number 2016/5504/P</p> <p>My family lives in the ground and basement maisonette at 27/a Ainger Road, next to GAMA’S development at No 28. Whilst we had no objection to the original plans, we do have very strong objections to the change of use from a small rear bathroom extension to a decked roof terrace. Previously, (and for the last 26 years), this roof area was intended solely as a tenants’ fire escape access to the steel escape staircase into the garden and in all that time it was NEVER used for leisure or recreation.</p> <p>GAMA’s original plans for this development presented no threat to our privacy when there was just a solid side wall to a small shower room projecting from the rear elevation, with no window facing our property and no direct access to the roof. When they decided to delete the shower extension, we were told by the builders, that there would be no roof terrace, just a roof with a skylight. GAMA may have thought it would help their sales pitch and asking price if they went for change of use and installed decking to the roof to create a leisure/recreation area. However, it’s obvious they gave no thought to what the consequences of that change would be for us in terms of the massive invasion and loss of privacy in three of the five rooms in our flat, produced by being so totally overlooked from such an unacceptable proximity. This late change of use was clearly never an essential ingredient of the financial viability of the project, since it only appeared as an afterthought. GAMA’s maisonette already has a garden many times larger than this newly added roof terrace.</p> <p>This planned roof terrace is a mere arm’s length (1.2 metres) from our large kitchen sash window, giving anyone anywhere on the terrace clear, close and uninterrupted downward line of sight into our whole kitchen from below waist level upwards. This unacceptably bad situation is made even worse by GAMA’s decision to raise the terrace decking two feet higher than the original roof. In the case of the sash window to my daughter’s bedroom/study (at garden level, directly below our Kitchen window) the GAMA terrace gives anyone on it a clear unrestricted sightline into most of her room from the carpet upwards. My daughter is very disturbed about this invasion of her privacy and since the builders have been on the roof (a total of seven months now) her only protection from prying eyes has been to keep her blind permanently down and window shut the whole time, even in the heat of summer.</p> <p>Our Bathroom, at garden level, is directly opposite GAMA’s terrace and just three metres away horizontally, which means that with the frosted glass sash window partially down to allow steam to escape from a bath or shower, the angled sightline is once again directly into the bathroom. We now also hang a shawl over the window when the light is turned on.</p> <p>All of the above visual intrusions into our private personal spaces inside our home are made worse when a light is on in any of the rooms, putting the room’s occupants into a ‘light box’ for anyone on the terrace.</p> <p>If any one of us should get up in the night and go to the kitchen for perhaps a glass of water, when they put the light on they can’t be sure that no one is on the unlit proposed terrace, for whatever reason, looking in. They might be there simply because they can be. However, being constantly aware of that possibility is very disturbing and providing access for the possibility of such scrutiny from close proximity is a gross invasion of our privacy. This loss of our right to privacy in our own home is clearly evident in three of the five rooms in our home and the small private patio where we sometimes eat.</p>

**Application No:**    **Consultees Name:**    **Consultees Addr:**    **Received:**

**Comment:**    **Response:**

The effect of our total loss of privacy has already been extremely disturbing and upsetting, emotions that did not come from prediction, conjecture or supposition but from experiencing the negatives of close proximity overlooking on a daily basis over a seven month period. The thought of the effects of future social gatherings held at will on this terrace day or night is quite simply dreadful.

#### NOISE/SOUND

Uninterrupted sightlines provide equivalent soundlines and, as we discovered from hearing builders talk (not shout) on the terrace, every word can be clearly heard even when the windows to all rooms at the rear of our maisonette are shut. We have been keeping all the windows shut as the only, if ineffective, way of reducing their invasive conversation and providing minimal protection from our private conversations being overheard. The Builders' conversations, although less clear, can still be heard all the way into our Living Room at the front of the house. GAMA also chose and installed suspended wooden decking for their proposed roof terrace, which produces the highest level of sound when walked on in shoes.

Overall, the mental assault from the visual and aural invasion that comes from being overlooked by people in unacceptably close proximity has already been sorely felt for months by my family and the approval of this change of use to a roof terrace would make the destruction of our right to privacy in our own home permanent, with unimaginable long term detrimental effects.

#### NO ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE

Should GAMA, the developer, try to suggest an alternative such as a timber partition, the negative effects on our home will still be unacceptable in that it would achieve only a partial suppression of the sound problem but produce a severe deprivation of light problem. The partition would have to be without perforations and at least 1.8 metres high. This would mean that the reduction of light in the kitchen would be severe and the light to my daughter's bedroom, the bathroom and our small patio reduced to extremely gloomy.

Built over 150 years ago, these local terraced houses were clearly designed to protect personal privacy for all residents, not destroy it.

The decision to abuse or dictate the extent of our rights to privacy in our own home should never sold on in perpetuity to the daily whims of an unknown third party owner or tenant in an adjacent property. This would obviously create a likely source of conflict with whoever moves into GAMA's development.

#### FINALLY

If this objection to the proposed leisure/entertainment roof terrace is upheld by yourselves and a return to the original roof as planned ordered, I would respectfully suggest that the timber grooved decking be replaced with a more usual roof finishing and the door provided for easy access from the upper level of the maisonette onto the roof be permanently blocked off to remove the temptation of any subtle hint or inference from the vendor or his agents that the future use as a leisure terrace would be available subsequent to purchase.