

96 College Place
Camden Town
LONDON
NW1 0DJ

Obote Hope
Planning Solutions Team
Development Management
Camden Town Hall Extension
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8EQ

04 November, 2016

Dear Obote Hope,

RE: Planning Application. Variation of Condition 3. Reference Number: 2016/5873/P (As Built revision application for 2014/1387/P).

I am writing to object to the recently submitted planning Application, for the Loft Extension at 94C College Place. Why they have not built what they had permission for is quite beyond comprehension.

What the owners (Mr & Mrs Salinsky), and the Contractors (Absolute Lofts SW London Ltd), have now built, now almost completed, (although scaffolding is still in-situ), and now seek to gain permission for, is not to the plans consented to by Camden Planning. The build in its current form is totally unacceptable.

INTRODUCTION

By way of history, previous plans' iterations/Revisions such as that superseded in the history of the initial application (B) and (D), were scaled back by the Planning Officer as being wholly unsuitable. I believe this was rejected because it was not in compliance with Camden's policy on 'Dormer Windows'. Permission had previously been sought, for the mansard to the rear main roof to bridge the full width of the property, albeit that this iteration included the dormer as being set back from the rear façade by at least 1000mm (1.0m). Permission was not granted for this scale of mansard to the main roof.

A subsequent plans' document to Revision F was approved, and concluded the planning process; consent being granted. This scaled the rear main roof dormer back to be inset into the rear slope, offset from the Party Wall, and again set back 1000mm from the rear façade. This then maintained the pitch/aspect of the rear slope, particularly to the party wall line with 96 College Place.

CURRENT SITUATION

On 17 September, 2016, the builders peeled back the opaque scaffolding sheet coverings, to commence building up the wall, which revealed the full extent of the duplicity by which the owners are seeking to push through this amendment. I immediately notified the owners and Party Wall Surveyors of the Planning and Party Wall infringements. Indeed, if seen earlier this would have afforded me the opportunity of notifying planning enforcement at an earlier date. Since that date, they have continued to build despite this notification and also, more importantly, since the Enforcement Officer's notification – at their own risk.

It is now obvious, that what has been built is the original (refused) design, and that they are flouting the Planning process, trying to subvert the authority of Planners, and basically ridiculing Camden Council's Planning Process.

They should not be allowed to get away with this, and build what they feel they would like to have built, as opposed to what they have been allowed to build.

Currently they are in breach of Planning, and the Party Wall (Etc.) Act, and are thus now trying to obtain retrospective consent, which I would hope you will strongly resist, and reject.

As a Conservation Building Surveyor, Construction Project Manager, University Lecturer on Building Control, and an 'Ask an Expert' for the Grand Designs London and Birmingham shows, I fully support the maintenance of Built Environment standards, to ensure that the fabric of the community at large, is maintained to an aesthetic standard. The Victorian Society would also maintain that this is an important aspect of on-going, re-development of buildings of this character. This is supported by Dormer Planning Policy reference. Indeed, I have always strongly supported Camden's policy in this regard - that dormer windows to the rear main slope, are to be viewed as 'subordinate' and respectful to the 'host building'.

Planning officers, in as many as half a dozen loft conversions in the street, have sought to maintain the slope of the main rear roof adjacent to the open party wall, maintaining its scale and slope delineation. This includes myself, in the development I carried out over a decade ago, and others since. Indeed, despite the fact that an increased floor space and height adjacent to the sloping party wall would have been useful, I and others have respected and complied fully with the Planning Department policy and considerations, whilst also maintaining the aspect of the principal rear roof line.

Without exception, (up until now), each, and every one of those seeking to carry out Loft Conversions, have adhered to the Planning Consent granted by Planners.

If this retrospective Planning Application and revision is granted consent, the flood gates will open to everyone carrying out the same process, to build whatever they so fancy.

By way of London's media at large, this will also be of interest as a topic of consideration, how the Planning Authority deals with such a case, how effectual the system is, and how other developers can potentially play the system. It would prove to be an interesting storyline or vignette to both the print media or broadcast programming, of a General Interest nature.

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT FINDINGS

The Principal Planning Enforcement Officer for Camden, John Nicholls, has noted as follows:

“They have effectively built an L-shaped mansard rather than a roof extension and separate dormer. As I have explained to them, the roof extensions, as explained in the officer’s report, comprise:

- *Removal of the pitched roof of existing third floor projecting wing and installation of a hipped roof extension with a roof terrace;*
- *Installation of a single dormer window to rear roof slope; and*
- *Installation of two front rooflights (to the front roof slope)*

*Under **Revisions** on the report it states:*

The roof extension has been revised so that it has a separate dormer window on the rear roofslope (rather than forming part of the roof extension).

In addition, they have also built the top of the roof extension too high. Although Camden Design guidance states that these should be 500mm below the ridge, we allowed them 300mm in this instance. It looks as if they have completely ignored this as well and built right up to the ridge. Therefore, I have asked them to lower the whole thing as well.”....

“.... I have also advised them that in my opinion, this is not something we are likely to approve because we had negotiated them away from this position to get to what was approved.”....

“....In my opinion, there isn’t much wiggle room because they had been given some compromises with the original application at the case officer’s discretion. Therefore, if they aren’t going to undertake the works to implement the approved plans themselves, then I may need to take more formal action.”

PHTOGRAPHS

Below, can be seen a selection of photographs, depicting the scale an impact of the build to date.



PHOTOGRAPH 1

Taken 17/09/16. Depicts mansard to full width and depth to rear façade; whereas, it should be inset of the Party Wall line and set back 1000mm from the rear façade (where the gentleman is standing).



PHOTOGRAPH 2

Photograph later the same day 17/09/16.



PHOTOGRAPH 3

View from rear roof-light of 96c College Place.



PHOTOGRAPH 4

Current aspect from rear roof-light of 96c College Place.



PHOTOGRAPH 5

Shows open lead soakers to the roof slates allowing water ingress behind.



PHOTOGRAPH 6

Shows how the Parapet to the Party Wall was previously constructed, prior to the illegal injuring of the wall (This image is of the mirrored, front slope). Construction detail shows lead flashing, render bead and render up to corbel providing adequate water proofing detail.

BUILD QUALITY OF PARTY WALL BUILD-UP

The current build-up of the Party Wall is not to current Building Regulation Standards.

No stepped Damp Proof Course (DPC), at the appropriate level, has been included in the skin to the flank of 96 College Place. Neither has the flashing to the side of 96 College place been inserted to link with this missing detail. This now allows for moisture to permeate behind any future flashing applied. (see Photographs Nos. 5 and 6).

Previously installed render bead and render, covering the lead soakers up to the original creasing course (corbelled coursing, below the sailor/cadet brick capping course), offered proper weathering detail to the original 9" wall. Quite apart from the fact that the roof to the side of 96 College Place, has been open to rainwater ingress behind the lead soakers for 2 months already, any retention of the wall in this form will not negate further water ingress over the long term.

Any inclusion of a flashing detail, with no DPC, will allow moisture to travel through the bricks behind and down to the walls of the room below. Without knowing the construction detail to the neighbouring property's side, this may also impact, long term, on their construction also.

I have asked the Party Wall Surveyors and Building Control to look at this and will continue to pursue this aspect to seek removal of the illegal wall. There is no permission to have built this at all, nor climb onto the roof of 96 College Place (the adjoining property), breaking slates in the process. (see Photograph 2).

CONCLUSION

I fully support the Principal Planning Enforcement Officers, John Nicholl's, findings that this is an illegally built structure, and that its impact is not in accordance with Planning Policy. Also, and most importantly, that it should be adjusted back to the scale to which proper process deemed acceptable in the first instance. This would stop the flagrant abuse and ridiculing of the whole Planning Process, and Camden Council Planning Solutions Team in particular.

I therefore urge that you support John Nicholls and that this 'As Built', retrospective, Planning Application submission be rejected.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Stewart