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Ms. Kristina Smith
Regeneration and Planning
London Borough of Camden
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

2nd December 2016

NT+A Ref: 649
Camden Ref: 2016/5613/P

RE: HILLVIEW, VALE OF HEALTH PLANNING APPLICATION

Dear Ms. Smith,

As you are aware, NT+A submitted a planning application for the development of Hillview, Vale of Health in early October following receipt of formal pre-application advice in August 2016. We note that this planning application has received letters of objection from some neighbours and their representatives.

This letter provides a response to the various comments made by these few local residents. Instead of going through each of the objections line by line, we have grouped each of the topics raised (with planning merit) and provide the following response:

Issue: Overlooking into properties and gardens

Response: This was discussed at length during the pre-application stage. Many objections discuss views into the adjacent house's windows and gardens. As highlighted by officers at pre-application stage, it must be acknowledged that there is already degree of existing mutual overlooking between the properties along this terrace. One can already see into neighbouring rear gardens from windows of Hillview. By this rationale, the rear gardens of adjacent properties will have aspects into the windows of Hillview. This is commonplace in any terrace of properties anywhere.

Despite this, the applicant has increased the overall setback with the roof terrace after pre-application feedback was received to alleviate any concerns. It is now set back 2m from the edge of the extension.

This proposal would cause no change in the status quo from the existing arrangement, with views into various back gardens already occurring, a result of being a terrace of houses.

There are also various nearby properties (within this terrace) which already have the benefit of roof terraces above flat roof extensions. These can be seen in the images below and do not prevent any of the neighbouring properties from enjoying their own homes. Roof terraces are an established part of the site context.

Hillview and Faircroft do not have any boundary wall or fence between the properties, so it cannot be suggested that a harmful impact of privacy will occur as a result of this proposal.



EXISTING TERRACES AND EXISTING VIEWS INTO REAR GARDENS

Issue: *Visibility from across Heath Pond*

Response: It was suggested that the rear extension will harm the view of the properties when viewed from the other side of Heath Pond on winter days when the trees are sparse. Having travelled to this location on 14th November, the entire building is barely visible from most views. The lower ground floor rear extension will not be visible from **any** public views. Please see the various images attached in Appendix 1 of this letter. As the application property is not readily visible in all images, a dotted red line outline has been provided for each photo for ease of reference.

The existing glass 1980's conservatory contributes little to the Conservation Area's essential character, with an improvement occurring as a result of this rear extension when compared to the existing situation.

As advised by officers, the upper levels will use materials and proportionality of a traditional style which complement its neighbours. The design of the rear elevation is of the highest quality and will be an improvement of overall appearance of the rear terrace. We consider that an attractive facade would be presented, complementary to its context. Leaving the existing rear elevation in place will result in further structural inadequacies and put the entire terrace at risk of structural damage.

Issue: *The dormers would be clearly visible from the path across the road looking east*

Response: Some objection has been raised regarding the view of the proposed development from the pedestrian lane opposite. A drawing has already been provided to demonstrate that the low level side dormers would not be visible from the street.

Additionally, as can be seen from the photos in Appendix 2, neither low level dormer would be visible as one travels down the pedestrian lane opposite. The side dormers are kept to a very low height so as to remain completely screened from public vantage points. In any case, side dormers are a feature of this terrace, and are contained in other roofs along this terrace.

Issue: *There was a lack of public consultation prior to submitting the application.*

Response: The applicant called in person to each of the adjacent properties prior to submission of the application. In addition, letters were dropped into other properties to let them know of the impending application and that further information/discussion was available on request.

At the time of writing the report, the feedback was mixed. Messages were received by the applicant indicating no objection to the proposed works. The applicant either spoke to, or dropped cards into the residents of Hollycot, Faircroft, Silverdale, Lakeview, Beechey Cottage and Garden House.

The applicant is also not bound to undertake any public consultation with the local residents and it was done so as a matter of courtesy rather than obligation, and in effort to amend any matters which could be resolved prior to the formal submission. It is unfair that the residents are objecting to the applicant's efforts to consult, when there is no obligation on them to do so.

The applicants and their team would continue to liaise with residents should this application be granted, for matters such as construction logistics and agreeing upon an acceptable construction programme.

Issue: Resistance to a roof terrace in principle

Response: It appears that there is significant objection to the rear roof terrace in principle. This is surprising given the various flat roof extensions with terraces at nearby neighbouring buildings. A larger roof terrace was proposed at pre-application stage but this has been reduced in line with officer's guidance to specifically address previous concerns.

Issue: The style of architecture is disliked

Response: The single storey of the lower ground floor rear extension is of the highest architectural quality, designed by award winning architects, HEAT Architecture. The extension comprises 1.5sqm of additional floorspace, so it cannot be argued that this extension is excessive. Externally, it is formed of red brick to match the material palette of the floors above.

This single storey rear extension will not be visible from public vantage points so the impact it will have on the conservation area will be minimal.

A more contemporary approach was originally suggested for the upper levels to the rear at pre-application stage, although in light of pre-application advice received, this was revised to a more traditional style of architecture. This was met with support from Camden Council after supplying revisions.

A red brick is proposed for all levels, with the only departure from the traditional style of design coming at lower ground floor level, with larger openings proposed and a flat roof extension. Given that this will not be seen from any public vantage points and its lower ground floor/garden location, this was seen as an acceptable approach by officers at pre-application stage.

The rear elevation requires replacement as it is in a very poor structural condition. This was witnessed by all parties when visiting the site. While the property has been soft stripped in order to assess the structural problems, no major structural works have been completed and the existing building has not been let open to the elements at any time. Please see the Structural Report prepared by Consbee for more detail in this regard.

Issue: There would be daylight/sunlight

Response: It has been suggested that the extension would have an unacceptable impact in terms of daylight/sunlight for the resident living in Faircroft. The extension constitutes a nominal increase in floorspace, and the neighbouring room in Faircroft is a largely glass room with glazed roof. Any impact on daylight/sunlight will be negligible.

Issue: Objections to the loss of housing

Response: A letter of objection prepared by Rps Cgms states that the loss of a single housing unit conflicts with Paragraph 47 the NPPF. As has been established at pre-application stage, the loss of a single housing unit complies with Local Plan policies, which has also been supported in the 2016 updated CPG relating to Housing (See Chapter 6).

The application is seeking to return Hillview back to a single family sized dwelling for the benefit of a family. With so many applications in the Borough seeking to add value to properties by subdividing properties into several flats, this application should be seen as a welcome departure from this trend.

It should also be added that this property is not serving as two units right now, so any objection based on the above grounds in an attempt to prevent a return to regular use can only be seen as misplaced.

Issue: Impact of the development on the neighbour at Faircroft

Response: The resident at Faircroft has provided sketches of how the scheme would appear in relation to their house. These are unverified views and should not be considered when making a determination.

The length of wall along the boundary is less than 2m long and single storey with the room at Faircroft at a significantly elevated level, higher than both the existing and proposed lower ground floor level at Hillview, circled below for clarity. It will not impact upon outlook or any other aspect of residential amenity.

The description of this elevation as 'too large' is inaccurate. It is single storey, low scale and will finish at a height which is below the head of the door of its neighbour at Faircroft and is considerably lower than the flat roof extension of Beechey Cottage further south.



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION IN RELATION TO ITS VARIOUS NEIGHBOURS

Issue: Structural Works/Construction Process

Response: As can be seen from the existing survey drawings, our time on site and the submitted structural report, the existing building is structurally unsound. The works proposed are absolutely necessary for the long-term structural soundness of the existing property and wider terrace.

The front elevation is still in reasonable condition and contributes positively to the Vale of Health streetscene. This elevation would be retained and made good as part of the works. While structural works are necessary, the project engineers will be able to devise a construction management plan which will minimise any construction impact on local residents or the surrounding road network.

We are aware that the site is constrained, but this does not mean that development is impossible. If the objections relating to construction were sustained this would render any development in the Vale of Health impossible due to speculative construction harm. An acceptable Construction Management Plan could be prepared as part of the development at The Garden House with recent approved planning applications, demonstrating that construction works could occur here safely and appropriately (App ref: 2016/2600/P)

Conditions regarding decibel levels, working hours, and providing a Construction Management Plan would all be welcomed by the applicant, as the intention is to implement this development in a manner which minimises any impact on neighbours and the highway network.

Issue: Flooding and Ground Conditions

Response: We note that an objection from the Vale of Health Society highlights concerns relating to geology of the site and correspondence between our engineers and a neighbour during the course of the application period.

The water levels generally varied between 2m and 4m below LGF level. One trial pit, 7, had some water inflow. Any water ingress, if encountered, can be dealt with by shoring and pumping out locally to allow for casting of the footings and underpinning.

This will be well within the capability of any competent contractor.


CONCLUSION

The applicants are seeking to live in this house, if granted planning permission. They are not a developer seeking to maximise profit. This is a sensible and appropriate extension which optimises the site, returning the property to a family home, together with quality architecture.

We are fully aware of the context and location and have appointed a high quality design team to ensure that a structurally sound and well designed proposal was created, all the while being considerate to the neighbours and conservation area.

We hope that the objections submitted have all been addressed via the above letter. If you wish for any further clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact me and we will be happy to assist.

Kind regards,



BRIAN KAVANAGH B.Sc MPLAN

PLANNER

NICHOLAS TAYLOR + ASSOCIATES

APPENDIX 1

VIEWS OF HILLVIEW FROM ACROSS HEATH POND | 14.11.16 | IMAGE 1



VIEWS OF HILLVIEW FROM ACROSS HEATH POND | 14.11.16 | IMAGE 2



VIEWS OF HILLVIEW FROM ACROSS HEATH POND | 14.11.16 | IMAGE 3



VIEWS OF HILLVIEW FROM ACROSS HEATH POND | 14.11.16 | IMAGE 4



VIEWS OF HILLVIEW FROM ACROSS HEATH POND | 14.11.16 | IMAGE 5



APPENDIX 2

**VIEWS OF HILLVIEW FROM PATH TO THE WEST | 1.12.16 |
IMAGE 2**



**VIEWS OF HILLVIEW FROM PATH TO THE WEST | 1.12.16 |
IMAGE 1**



**VIEWS OF HILLVIEW FROM PATH TO THE WEST | 1.12.16 |
IMAGE 3**

