

TJ Evans RIBA and EM Lane RIBA
77 Agar Grove
London
NW1 9UE

FAO Charlotte Meynell
Junior Planning Officer
Planning Solutions Team
Planning and Regeneration
Culture & Environment Directorate
London Borough of Camden
2nd Floor
5 Pancras Square
London
N1C 4AG

25th March 2017

By email (Charlotte.meynell@camden.gov.uk) and Letter

Dear Ms Meynell

Re: 2017/0987/P - 75a Agar Grove London NW1 9 UE – Proposed Ground Floor Extension and alterations to Lower Ground Floor Flat. OBJECTION.

We are writing to object to the above proposals. We are immediate neighbors and long term residents at 77 Agar Grove and set out below the basis of our objections:

1.0 Policy DP24 - Securing high quality design

The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

- a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;*
- b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;*
- c) the quality of materials to be used;*
- d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;*
- e) the appropriate location for building services equipment;*
- f) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;*
- g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;*
- h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and*
- i) accessibility.*

1.1 Failure to consider the character and proportions of the existing building.

This row of terrace houses all have similar if not identical rear elevations with projecting bays to the left hand side of the rear elevation (i.e. the terraces are not "handed" from one to the next). Neighbouring extensions (at numbers 77 and 73) have been located against the "main wall" of the house, leaving the bay window undisturbed.

With this proposal, the existing bay will sit on the flat roof of the extension. There will obviously need to be a mid-way structural steel to support the bay. And this in turn will rest over the side elevation window. All structurally possible, but not the most thoughtful or elegant approach. We believe this will create a very uncomfortable relationship between new and old and is not sympathetic to the character and proportions of the existing building. This issue is also covered in

more detail below.

2.0 Policy DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage

Conservation areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:

- a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;*
- b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;*
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;*
- d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and*
- e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.*

2.1 Failure to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

We are both architects and have a combined experience of over 40 years, working on a wide variety of projects in Camden and elsewhere. With a professional interest in local conservation Liz is a member of the Camden Square Conservation Area Advisory Committee and as an advocate of good contemporary design we are pleased to say that the building on the front cover of the Camden Planning Guidance Design CPG1 is one that was designed by Tim.

It is our shared view that the current proposals do not preserve the character of the building and therefore do not enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As highlighted above the proposed extension sits awkwardly beneath the four-storey high bay resulting in an uncomfortable elevational resolution that detracts from the form of the original building creating an unorthodox relationship with it.

The neighboring extension at 77 and that at 73 Agar Grove both maintain the clarity of the bay form in its entirety resulting in a clear legibility of the inherent structural logic. This is simply achieved by locating the extensions to the recessive portion of the elevation, in both these cases the extension is subservient to the whole and sympathetic to the original houses, maintaining the continuity and rhythm of the terraced rear elevations. The extended width of the proposed extension at 75a and the large opening exacerbate the disjunction between new and old creating an unsettling and distractingly dysfunctional composition. It is our view that the design is not of adequate quality and insufficient thought has been given to the character and proportions of the existing building and therefore causes harm to the conservation area context.

3.0 Camden Design Guide CPG1

Specifically states that rear extensions should be designed to:

- *be secondary to the building being extended, in terms of location, form, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing;*
- *respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the*

building, including its architectural period and style;

- respect and preserve existing architectural features, such as projecting bays, decorative balconies or chimney stacks;
- respect and preserve the historic pattern and established townscape of the surrounding area, including the ratio of built to unbuilt space;

3.1 Failure to respect and preserve existing architectural features such as projecting bays

In this case the projecting bay has been completely disregarded in the proposal.

4.0 Camden Design Guide CPG1

Further states at 4.14 *The width of rear extensions should be designed so that they are not visible from the street and should respect the rhythm of existing rear extensions.*

4.1 Failure to respect the rhythm of existing rear extensions

The neighboring rear extensions are all located against the recessive portion of the elevation, adjacent to the bay and any proposed extension should perpetuate this rhythm.

5.0 Policy DP26

Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

The Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity. The factors we will consider include:

- visual privacy and overlooking;*
- overshadowing and outlook;*
- sunlight, daylight and artificial light levels;*
- noise and vibration levels;*
- odour, fumes and dust;*
- microclimate;*
- the inclusion of appropriate attenuation measures.*

We will also require developments to provide:

- an acceptable standard of accommodation in terms of internal arrangements, dwelling and room sizes and amenity space;*
- facilities for the storage, recycling and disposal of waste;*
- facilities for bicycle storage; and*
- outdoor space for private or communal amenity space, wherever practical.*

5.1 Failure to provide adequate standards of accommodation and insufficient consideration of light pollution.

London Design Guide space standards require minimum of 50 sq m for 1 bed / 2 person dwelling and 61 sq m for 2 bed / 3 person.

In addition the minimum space standards for individual rooms are:

Combined living / dining / kitchen space - 25 sq m

Single bedroom 8 sq m & double bedroom - 12 sq m

The Design Access Statement describes an open plan living space, however what is shown is a cramped and awkward space, which falls short of minimum acceptable standards. The introduction of the study appears to be an attempt to introduce a second bedroom at the expense of providing a compliant Living space and as a two bedroom flat, it would be below the minimum acceptable standard of 61sqm.

In the proposed plan there is also a roof light indicated, directly in front of the raised ground floor

bedroom window, which could result in light spillage up into this room and beyond. We note that the recommended 1.0m distance in plan suggested in pre-application advice has been adopted, however it should also be noted that in the section, the height of the roof light aligns almost directly with the raised ground floor window sill so will appear directly in front of this window and not below it as one would expect.

Finally we would also note that in your letter to the applicant's representatives dated 31.01.17 at point 8.2 you strongly encourage the applicant to share and discuss the proposals with neighbours and I am disappointed to report that we have not been consulted or engaged in any way. Had we been given such an opportunity we would have made our views known.

In summary, we are not opposed to extensions and development, however in this instance it is evident that the proposal has not considered the design principles set out in the planning guidance and the context of the existing host building and therefore should, in our view, be re-considered.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Timothy Evans RIBA and Elizabeth Lane RIBA.

Timothy Evans RIBA and Elizabeth Lane RIBA