

Your ref: 2019/4092/P

45 Highgate West Hill London, N6 6DB

Listed Building Consent for The erection of two storey brick side extension with basement and lightwells, part brick part glazed link to main house, creation of doors from windows and associated alterations, part demolition of existing extension.

Dear Sanchita,

Thank you for notifying the Society of this application for listed building consent. We request that the current application is WITHDRAWN or REFUSED for the following reasons:

The impact on the conservation area and the setting of the heritage assets

The mass and siting of the new two storey plus basement extension obscures important views of no. 45 and its Listed neighbour at no. 46 from the public realm where this small group of differently scaled buildings can be appreciated in their wider verdant setting. We note that views across the grassed-over reservoir, which acts visually as a village green in this location, are key within this part of Conservation Area in aiding appreciation of the historic character of Highgate Village and of the form of this high status pair of houses in that setting.

The form of the proposed side extension, with its long parapet, introduces a jarring horizontal note into what is a predominantly vertical composition of built forms, articulated by repeating vertical sash windows. In longer views from The Grove the negative impact of a building whose length is aligned and close to the edge of the reservoir is particularly apparent. Whilst the current 1970s extension in this location is also visible, it is a storey lower and is not as long. It therefore does not impact on the pair of Listed houses to the same degree.

The Society believes that it is imperative that the openness and semi-rural character of this part of the Conservation Area is not compromised, and that there remain visible green gaps between the built forms around the reservoir (which the proposed extension would obscure).

Inappropriate scale and massing of the proposed extension

Whilst the existing 1970s extension is not a building of importance in its own right, it is of a much more appropriate scale, referencing the smaller houses on the East side of Highgate West Hill around Pond Square and South Grove. It is this contrast of scales which sets the higher status houses into context. A pleasing mixture of the 'vernacular cottage' alongside the 'polite' Georgian architecture characterises this part of the village, on both sides of Highgate West Hill. The proposed new extension, because of its excessive scale, would fundamentally alter this relationship, causing harm to both the listed buildings and their setting. . Any new extension should be of a similar scale to the existing.

We note that the drawing titled "proposed side elevation" does not include outlines of the II* house and the 1930's building behind the proposed extension. The full impact of the length and height of the proposed extension is therefore not able to be assessed in elevation and in context. The winter perspectival views provided in DOC 005 do, however, make it clear that the new extension will substantially obscure the first floor windows of the main house from views along The Grove, thus significantly harming the reading of nos. 45 and 46 as a pair of detached high status houses.

Inappropriate design detailing

An additional concern is the proposed addition between the flank of the closet wing and the new two storey extension. If a two storey link is required it should be provided via an opening in the end wall of the 1930s building, which is deeply set back from the front façade, so that the original house is well separated from any additional side extension of greater height than a single storey.

Finally we have some reservations about the proposed removal of the external plumbing on the flank wall of the main house, which will inevitably result in further fabric loss to the interior as these services are brought within the plan form. There are currently no wet services or redundant chimney flues on this side of the house in which to hide pipes, and the details of this need careful consideration to ensure that a positive resolution can be found.

We hope these comments are useful to you in determining the application. We would be happy to carry out a site visit in order to further inform discussion of the proposals.

With best wishes

Christina Emerson

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The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

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