

Your ref: 2019/4092/P

Our ref: 153842

**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,

You will be aware that the Society had previously raised substantive concerns in relation to this application (our correspondence of 8 October 2019) and requested that it be withdrawn or refused.

We were subsequently able to make a site visit and I am now writing with our further comments. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the applicant and his agents for their time and the detailed explanation of the proposals provided on the day.

Considering the proposals as they stand, our concerns were not alleviated by the site visit. However, we think that a relatively modest reworking could significantly reduce the harmful impact on the building and its setting that is the basis of our objection. Specifically;

-while we are pleased that the front elevation (i.e. that facing the drive) of the new extension has been pulled back to the line of the existing, and therefore no longer obscures the front of the house in long views across the reservoir, this repositioning has created an awkward acute angle which gives far more emphasis to the new front elevation at the expense of the historic building. In order to resolve this the extension should either be moved back further or the depth of the acute angle reduced.

-extending the link building upwards has had the unfortunate effect of obscuring both the C19 closet wing and the 1930s extension in cottage form. We do not think this is acceptable as neither would remain readable. However this could be entirely avoided by repositioning the first floor link to run through the rear section of the new link building instead. This would effectively extend the new corridor proposed for the 1930s building and if a brick, rather than glazed, back were to be incorporated at first floor level the pragmatic result would be to increase the usability of the link space. It could, for example, be employed as a dressing room or storage space.

-we regret that, rather than simply pulling the front line of the extension back, the original length has been retained so that the new building now extends further towards the Grove. As stated in our original objection '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.'

In order to address these issues, at least in part, the Society would wish to see a reduction in the length of the new building which returns it to the back line position adopted at pre-app stage. This would make it less visible from the Grove and would retain more of the green gap between the buildings around the reservoir. Given the overall size of the new extension, this would have a minimal impact on the floorspace provided. To put this into context, the volume of the original house is 146 sq. m while that of all extensions including the new extension constitutes an additional 191 sq. m.

A reconsideration of some of the design detailing would give further scope for a reduction in harm. More could be done to ensure the new extension takes its cues from the historic building so that it is less intrusive in appearance and does not compete with what is already there. We would suggest that thought is given to eliminating both the brick panels and the rather mundane Juliet balconies. The latter necessitate openings that are too wide in the context of those in the historic house. A string course might be employed by way of restrained detailing and consideration could be given to placing a 'proper' balcony on the curve of the building instead. While we understand that the applicant had been asked to reduce the size of the chimney, we feel that this has been taken too far and that what remains appears uncomfortably and inexplicably as three long pipes. We suggest a partial reinstatement of this feature with a brick chimney breast that just breaks the parapet line used in combination with real pots that are shorter in length. This will help to add movement to the parapet line and to add verticality to the horizontal mass of the extension.

We would urge you to ask the applicant to submit a revised proposal which takes into account the comments above. We would be pleased to provide further advice at that point.

With best wishes

Christina Emerson

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