

I would like to object to planning application 2019/4710/P. I feel it is already overdeveloped due to the 3 existing/partially built extensions, each individually granted under permitted development, but with the scale of the proposed additions it would be far beyond overdevelopment; it would be massively overbearing and oppressive, with a great loss of amenity to neighbouring properties and their gardens. The impact would be especially large at 5 Hillfield Road due to loss of the harmonious way these properties join together and bring light in. I feel there has been no consideration whatsoever to preserve amenity or respect the character of the surrounding area.

Most of these comments are similar to those raised in objections to 2019/4621/P, but there are some important differences especially with the measurements.

The proposed extension will create the feeling of a claustrophobic tunnel at 5 Hillfield Road in the area that is currently an open, well used courtyard (the side return and lower patio) - this amenity will be lost and the green and bright views from our windows facing it will be replaced with unnecessary high walls right in front, with nothing green or blue to see, along with a big reduction in ambient light - this includes our only 2 bedrooms and bathroom. This new wall will be 10.5 metres long, which to give perspective, is over twice as long as the existing property depth up to the infill (9.6 metres long including the bay, even shorter without). The effect is turning it from an open courtyard to a dark corridor. This is actually made worse by the fact the property later slopes upwards, rather than downwards as light is already reduced, rather than opening up away from the properties.

This new wall would have a peak height of 4 metres at the boundary, sloping down after the first 3 metres to approximately 3.3m which would be the same for the remaining 8.5 metres - this would be so overbearing and be such an unnecessary change, giving a poor outlook from our daughters bedroom and the courtyard where she is able to play. It will also impact the green outlook enjoyed by other neighbours due to the full width and so high profile all the way across.

Before raising the rest of my objections, I would like to bring up a number of issues with the application. I believe it makes a number of serious errors, including incorrect and misleading statements both in the design & access statement and also in the drawings, which I feel should thus be entirely disregarded and encourage extra care when scrutinizing. It is also misrepresentative of the existing site because the mostly built loft extension is much larger than the plans granted under permitted development. This is all detailed below.

#### **Incorrect garden height levels**

The diagrams claim that [REDACTED] is quite high compared to his proposed extension and that an already in place 1.8m fence would mean we cannot see the extension. This is simply not true. Most of the extension, in fact the first 9 metres is at the same level and is around a very much used part of the garden (save for the 5cm elevation number 3 has vs number 5). So above a 1.8m fence would be a further 1.5 metres wall which is quite a contradiction to those claims. The last few metres of the proposed development, the garden does start to step up, however a 3.3m high wall will certainly more than just visible. I estimate that at the rear most part of the extension, the ground level will have just reached

1.05m. So before that point, it will be lower. As explained later, the 'already in place' fence is not 1.8metres; an additional temporary fence has been put up which has been arranged so it's up to 2.7 metres high.

#### **Angle of light**

The claim an angle of 45 degrees from our windows would simply hit the fence is not true. The existing 1.8m fence in the courtyard area does not obstruct at this angle however a 3.3 metre wall certainly would. Even if a 1.8m fence did obstruct, it would just point out that building further up so high would remove a very significant amount of crucial ambient light during the day.

#### **'Already in place fence'**

The existing fence in the courtyard/side return is 1.8 metres high and the raised garden area fence is just 1.4 metres - the gardens are very narrow and relatively long so most of the fences in the street are low. The applicant has erected a temporary fence for the building works which in the courtyard at its lowest is 2.15m high and at its highest 2.7 metres (you can remove 5cm to account for the slightly lower level of 5 hillfield and building level of the infill in progress). This fence is set slightly back from the boundary, raised higher than the ground level of the partially built extension on raised posts on an area higher than at the boundary, and when the garden does begin to slope up to the rear, it doesn't follow the gradient the long-existing fence owned by the applicant follows; it steps up before the slope and much higher, with some parts 0.75 metres higher than their existing fence to a height of 2.7m (most of it is 40cm higher than the 1.8m one). This fence is temporary and serves a useful purpose for shielding the current building works, but if it is being referenced in the application as the 1.8metre fence it is very misleading - perhaps it wasn't intended as the 'already in place fence' referred to and instead the existing one was - however this would invalidate the claims of what is visible and the impact on light levels.

#### **Incorrect projection of fence**

Further to this, the diagrams on 0119/PP show an impression of a 6ft fence, and how it would compare to the proposed extension - for this to be true the fence would be at a height of up to 4 metres from the courtyard at 5 hillfield before the garden steps up, this is simply an inaccurate and misleading projection.

#### **Incorrect diagrams of loft conversion / additional floor over rear addition - and impact of this**

It is important to understand the mostly complete roof extension declared in the application is substantially larger than the permitted development plans it was granted under, and so it would be misleading to view those plans in respect of this application, especially when considering the overall bulk and cumulative impact of the various recent additions and new proposal. I feel that in order to accurately assess the proposal in respect of existing developments, it would be necessary to visit the property and/or for the applicant to re-submit fully accurate diagrams representing factual state along with realistic projections, and also potentially submit a retrospective application for the loft.

The key parts of the roof that make it much larger than the permission granted and diagrams show:

- a) extended approximately 110cm further back along the rear addition than the permission granted. This is the additional story created for a bathroom that was added above the 2nd floor, built above the rear addition's roof. The plans show it coming out 1.3m but it is in fact 2.4m.
- b) is not built 20cm from the previous outer eaves at the main rear elevation (where numbers 3 & 5's rear elevation join). In fact a new, additional steeper outer eaves was added to create a 20cm tangent, but it is not inline with 'detail A' in the specification and is really a synthetic addition. This additional outer eaves was not present beforehand or on any neighbouring properties. The proposed diagrams show the wall is set back from the previous eaves (forgetting any outer ones), this is clearly not the case.
- c) the part of the rear elevation/rear addition that faces the infill (and towards [REDACTED]) on the additional floor is not set back at all from the outer eaves, it is on the same vertical plane as the rear addition's wall and there are no outer eaves. 'Detail A' in these diagrams has been completely ignored.
- d) the ridge of the roof was raised approx 15-30cm; the front slope is longer and runs further back than previously, or than any neighbouring properties, and goes to virtually the same height as the parapet. To further illustrate this, the roof slope at number 1 is actually higher than number 3, except the roof at number 3 then runs further back to a higher point.
- e) rather than the flat roof running from slightly below the previous ridge as before, it comes out just under the peak of the new, raised ridge, so the new roof is higher than the previous ridge. It is also sloped up to the rear right where the additional story was created.
- f) potentially larger than 45 cubic metres it was declared as due to points a to e, perhaps 10-15 cubic metres more than the plans approved due to the increase in height, width and two depths that are set further back. I have not properly measured this increase.

I will describe the relevance to all this shortly, but to point out, I believe the additional story that was created above the 2nd floor rear addition was only made possible by combining all of these amendments.

The proposed diagrams for this new application do show the additional story going further back than the plans it was granted under and referenced in the application, however these plans still show the roof to be much lower than the ridge and shows the rear walls (described in b and c) being set back from the (outer) eaves. This is very misleading and hide the net bulk of all the partially built and proposed extensions, which could be misleading for anyone viewing the diagrams in good faith.

To clarify, bringing this up is not a request for enforcement; I am aware of those channels and this is not intended for that. I would like the existing and bulky extensions to be completed but not added to, the aim is to avoid any further loss of amenity. What is being requested is for the diagrams for this application to be regarded with question and scrutiny, because they do not accurately represent the true bulk of the property, nor do the approved plans that are referenced.

To summarize my opinion on this, the cumulative effect of all these undocumented amendments is a much larger roof extension in virtually all dimensions where the rear most parts are much higher and further back. That in itself is overbearing to neighbouring properties, reduces natural light levels and the amenity of the garden spaces.

I feel that when this is compounded with the other part built rear extensions and now the proposed plans, it creates an unacceptably overbearing and bulky appearance that is far from subservient in appearance, not at all in keeping with the neighbouring properties and green gardens. It is over-developed and becoming far too dense in my opinion.

**Mis-labelling of existing extension - it is being enlarged but not declared as such**

The proposed diagrams in 219/PP also label the existing extension incorrectly. The permission granted for that extension preserves the stepped nature of the kitchen, whereas this diagram labels it as existing extension but in fact is squaring it off in addition to the side/rear extension. When combining this extra depth & width with the 3.3m height it has, there is a large impact to ambient light and visual amenity to number 5 - it is also not in keeping with the original design.

I believe that covers all the errors in the application that could mislead any assessment without close knowledge of the property and its neighbouring ones.

**Loss of amenity**

The proposed developments will have a significant impact on the amenity enjoyed in our garden and the views and openness enjoyed by other residences above and around it. We use the [REDACTED] quite a lot; our 2 year old daughter is able to play outside safely with the doors to the property and her bedroom open, and we usually keep a small table and chairs in this area. That understandably hasn't been possible for part of this summer due to the development for the wall that has been built in the infill so far, but we would hope for this amenity to return. With such a high wall, running from 4m down to a height of 3.3metres along the boundary for nearly 10.5 metres, it will create a feeling of a long, enclosed corridor or tunnel and would turn it into a dead space. We would have to walk through this to get to the remaining usable parts of the garden.

I would also like to say that when suffering from stress, the garden area provides a place to escape, away from buildings next to the trees and bushes with the sounds of birds and other wildlife. This is becoming a rarity in London and these gardens collectively provide a special area to rest and relax. With a building protruding so far, being so high and wide along these narrow gardens I don't think this will be possible anymore.

A kitchen area set so far back will also bring about a lot of noise, further impacting this. The size of the kitchen would also suggest catering for a large number of people, again this will inevitably create a noisy environment in what is currently a peaceful and beautiful surrounding.

Also, should the [REDACTED] lose its useful purposes due to this development, and given the garden does step up past the end of the rear addition, we won't be able to let our young child play in the garden with minimal supervision. She will need to

go up the steps to the raised part of the garden, or she/they may be more inclined to take a risk and go up there against instructions. I say this to reiterate the safe and useful area this open courtyard currently provides.

It is also worth stating that whilst the front rooms of these properties have high ceilings of approx 3.15m, the ceilings are reduced in the middle and rear and are 2.3-2.4m. Having a roof at 3 metres high in the infill and further back would be unnecessary and create a disjoint to the neighbouring area in the rear addition, it certainly wouldn't 'flow' or be in keeping. It was obviously not possible to scrutinize this in the PD applications. These lower ceiling heights in the rear also highlight the need to encourage natural light into both numbers 3 and 5 Hillfield Road.

#### **Side return and courtyard 'useful purpose'**

The applicant's claim this area does not serve useful purpose is also incorrect and misleading, at best it's subjective. He may not appreciate or care for Victorian design which was done with such care and appreciation for aspect, the lay of the land - both to create openness and light into properties. For example, the infills on the south side of hillfield road are smaller with the main part of the properties longer/deeper, and don't need to have the further stepped rear kitchens with lower ceilings; they have much more light facing south combined with a downward slope so don't need to open up the light into the properties the same way. The application is for the other side of Hillfield Road which is north facing going into a slight slope after the lower patios/courtyards; the infill is deeper and the kitchen from the rear addition is also stepped, and has a lower ceiling and eaves, which helps keep the main internal parts brighter and feeling open in the area exposed by the infill.

With the proposed development, the applicant would eventually become accurate in saying this area 'does not provide useful purpose' because its amenity value would be all but lost by compromising its design.

#### **Impact on gardens**

The applicant states the gardens are long as a reason for approving. The gardens are full of nature with many different birds inhabiting and frequenting, with many trees and shrubs. The more development comes out the more this is lost. If the applicant is suggesting we should relocate to the rear of the gardens I find this unacceptable. Firstly, we shouldn't have to, and it's quite a walk. The rear of the gardens are also overlooked by flats. The best parts of the gardens are near the property where they are accessible, quiet, bright and not so overlooked and also allow you to blend from inside to outside, in fact this was stated as a benefit to these designs!

Even the existing approved designs provide an outdoor area to the side of the rear most extension and out from the side return, which will be of great use to the applicant when they move in, particularly with children as they won't be needed to go up steep steps to play outside - they would be steep because with a 10.5 metre extension it will cut much more into the slope than at present, and wouldn't need to excavate so much past the rear of the extension before stepping up. This may have been overlooked by the applicant when considering creating a safe and amenable family space with close access to the kitchen and

other sociable spaces, especially considering the applicants aims of making the gardens inviting and blending in. The garden at number 3 will become more detached than at present due to this steep rise being introduced.

**Poor design of extension and loss of its internal and external amenity**

The amenity value of the proposed development is poor. The property will be nearly double the footprint of the original, becoming a long, narrow corridor internally with poor light levels, especially the most internal parts which will be far from any natural light. It will be approximately 23 metres long and just 6.3 wide for virtually the entire length, and with a very high roof extension, north facing into this slope, a token lightwell that will attract close to zero light, the insides of the existing ground floor will become very dark.

There will be a large reduction of windows to the property, even though it will be much larger - unnecessarily substituting existing windows with roof lights is not quality design and I'd hope would not be the future for residential dwellings. Also, by the property going into the slope, when the small number of windows are finally reached, they will attract very little light or external visual amenity because they will be facing a much steeper slope to the main garden level with very little space at ground level.

The lightwell is also very small and can barely be described as one. It has a 4 metre high wall and steep slope, with just a small opening akin to a small roof light just without the glass. Again because of the aspect and enclosed nature of this proposal and high walls, this light-well should be designed to actually bring in natural light. The existing plans actually have a flat roof approved here despite a parapet of up to 1m higher.

In effect, the ground floor will become comparable with a basement level, which is completely unnecessary given it is the main sociable floor of the property and has windows at the rear to provide such needed ambient light and visual amenity.

This extension is not providing anything that is missing from an already large ground floor to a good sized family home, especially given the already large extensions that have been granted. With this poor or even negative amenity value to the host property, and such negative impact and amenity loss [REDACTED] I cannot see how this can be approved. If it was bringing great benefit then possible compromises could be weighed up then perhaps it could be argued for, but I just cannot see anything positive to it.

**Parallels or precedent from the appeal for the 6m extension.**

I don't feel the appeal for the 6m metre permitted development should be considered relevant because that extension is much more narrow and is virtually entirely where the garden slopes up, and not along a boundary at ground level before the sloping. I was also disappointed because at the time, Tendai Mutasa, the case officer, advised me not to object

because the application was being rejected. This prevented my inputs being available to the appeals process.

### **Alternatives**

Whilst I would hope this extension would be rejected outright and no further plans would be approved given the already overbearing size and bulk of the 3 part built extensions, if plans were even to be considered, it may make much more sense to:

- build the extensions with a sloped roof that tapers down at the boundary to a height of 2 or 2.3 metres - the property's eaves at the rear kitchen are approximately 2.05m so this would be much more in keeping, and given it's future use is as a kitchen where cupboards would typically be, it would not have a negative effect on standing space. [REDACTED] where the wall including parapet at the boundary is 2.3 metres, going to a maximum of 2.9 metres but not near the boundary. That is a 1 metre difference at the boundary and nearly half a metre where it meets the existing property - although that extension is still much, much smaller in overall bulk. Regardless of these differences, I am just highlighting that basic efforts could be made to at least attempt to make the design subservient and blend in with neighbouring properties, and to avoid such loss of amenity.
- For any enlargement of the infill, the 4m high wall of the part built side extension should be vastly reduced, again none of the wall needs to be above 2.3 or even 2 metres high. And if a lightwell was desired, it would provide much more light if this was so not so enclosed with high walls and effectively a roof covering so much of it.

Regardless of the above, I would still object to the overall bulk; it certainly wouldn't be modest, it is just too big and overdeveloped, and would not be in keeping with the neighbourhood or fantastic gardens either, but at least it would be showing at least a minimal consideration for neighbouring amenity along with the properties' cultural value.

### **Parallels from the approved permitted development plans**

I don't think the plans permitted under PD should be relevant in terms of suggesting minimal impact and loss of amenity. Camden had no choice but to approve these, and I understand it was the intention of permitted development to prevent 4 metre high walls at boundaries and to prevent building across a wide area when properties are stepped. The infill was approved with a 4 metre high wall due to the ridge being located at the boundary. The rear 6m extension did not consider the building was going over the 50% of the width when it is indeed stepped.

Whether these were workarounds for flaws in permitted development can only be an opinion, but I don't believe Camden would have approved such large works had they been given the power to make a decision. To then join these extensions together on top of an overly large (and questionably compliant) roof extension is not really a parallel, and to follow that there would be no limit to the size of the extension.

Apologies for the length of these comments. I am happy to clarify any wording if not clear.