

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2020/3553/P	A J Kelly	19/11/2020 17:19:08	OBJNOT	COMMENTS ON APPLICATION 2020/3553/P

Before commenting on the revised plans, I would like to complain about the lack of meaningful consultation by both the applicant and the planning authority.

I own a neighbouring property which will be particularly adversely affected by this development yet I was not formally consulted by the planning authority the first time round. Nor was I notified of the revised plans despite having commented on the first plans. I found out about them by accident and this is unacceptable.

In addition, although some other residents were contacted by Mr Dimoldenburg on behalf of the applicant, I was never contacted to discuss the proposed development and, it appears from comments on the first set of drawings, other residents facing the site were also not contacted. Basically there has been no meaningful community involvement.

While the revised plans are an improvement on the first set, they do not deal with the objections that I and others submitted before. Many are still relevant and I have therefore included them below.

I would therefore like to object to this application for the following reasons:

Unacceptably high density

Adverse impact of the residential amenity of neighbours

Visual impact / Design

Effect on the character of the neighbourhood - out of character with existing properties

Subsidence and flooding

Density

Although the new plans reduce the height of the building, which is welcome, the reduction is not sufficient to deal with the comments on overdevelopment of the site which I made before. There will still be six flats and this should be seen in the context of the recent grant of planning permission in respect of 1 Hillfield Road. If a version of this application is approved this site will be grossly overdeveloped.

In addition, the "garden grabbing" issue is not addressed by the reduction in height. There will be little green space left, which is a concern, and the building still goes far too close to the property boundaries with 3 Hillfield Road, South Mansions and Gondar House.

Loss of Amenity

The points I made previously - see below - are still highly relevant. The reduction in size does not substantially deal with the issues of loss of light, overlooking, overshadowing and loss of privacy. This proposal would have a seriously adverse effect on neighbouring properties.

Visual Impact / Design

This is still an unattractive building. It is just a smaller unattractive building than the one in the first set of proposals. A more modest construction would be more in keeping with the space and have less impact on neighbouring properties.

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Effect on the character of the neighbourhood

My previous comment is still relevant here. This rather ugly modern building is not in keeping with the character of the area. The surrounding buildings are in the main Victorian houses and mansion blocks. There are newer houses on the west side of the road but these are much smaller in scale and therefore blend in.

Subsidence and flooding

See previous comments.

Additional comments

The additional comments below still stand.

Previous comments - included for ease of reference.

I would like to object to the grant of this application on the following grounds:

Unacceptably high density

Adverse impact of the residential amenity of neighbours

Visual impact

Effect on the character of the neighbourhood - out of character with existing properties

Design

Subsidence and flooding

It is likely that some or all of these factors played a role in the decision to refuse development in 1988 and they are still material considerations.

Density

This is really a five storey building which is intended to be built over two gardens. The title to no 1 includes land which must at some point have belonged to Gondar House as it sits directly behind it.

Six flats represents over-development of the site. This application must be seen in the context of the application, which was approved in August to develop the main building on the site i.e. no. 1 Hillfield Road. There is clearly an intention to cram as much as possible in onto this site which was previously 3 flats and a large garden.

Five storeys (including etc basement is far too high

The proposed footprint of the building will run too close to the property boundaries. It will virtually abut the boundary with 3 Hillfield Road.

The development is 'garden grabbing'. The land is currently garden land with an area used for off street parking. The development allows for minimal outside space.

The size of the rooms, particularly the bedrooms, is very small and the accommodation will therefore be cramped. This is because two many units are being squeezed into the space.

Loss of amenity

The proposed overdevelopment of the site means that, if this application is approved, the amenity of neighbouring properties will be seriously affected.

The building will block light from South Mansions and Gondar House and no 1 Hillfield Road It will deprive

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residents of what is a very pleasant view of open land.

It will also take light from the gardens of number 3 - 7 Hillfield Road. These properties will be overshadowed and also overlooked by the flats at the back of the building resulting in loss of privacy.

It is likely that there will inevitably be noise disturbance from the flats because they will be sited so close to the boundary.

The only positive factor is that the owner of number 3 has apparently said that he will sell up if the development is approved which will undoubtedly result in the popping of Champagne corks throughout the Hillfield Road cul-de-sac.

Visual impact

The proposed design is unattractive and this is largely because of the size of the building. A more modest construction would be more in keeping with the space and have less impact on neighbouring properties.

Character

The character of the proposed building is not in keeping with the character of the area. The surrounding buildings are in the main Victorian houses and mansion blocks. There are newer houses on the west side of the road but these are much smaller in scale and therefore blend in. This building will stick out like a sore thumb.

Subsidence and flooding

This is an area which has suffered from some considerable movement over the years as well as water running down hill because of the topography. This development is only going to exacerbate this, particularly when taken in the context of all the other excavations nearby, especially the recently approved basement excavation at no 1 Hillfield Road.

South Mansions already suffers from cracking and subsidence. The excavation attendant upon this development, particularly the basement, will inevitably have an impact on this.

Additional comments

I would also like to make some additional comments in order to clarify misleading aspects of the paperwork attached to the application.

First I would like to comment about the way the applicant has gone about preparing this application.

There is a statement of community involvement which does not actually reflect genuine community engagement. I and many other residents of neighbouring properties were not invited to participate. The applicant seeks to imply that changes resulted from this limited exercise. This is clearly not the case. A proper community engagement exercise might well have resulted in real changes and application which was more acceptable to local residents.

Indeed, given the local context, with a purported developer carrying on stop / start works to two properties in the Hillfield Road cul-de-sac for the past 13 years seemingly only to render them increasingly more uninhabitable, this developer would have been well advised to make efforts to engage properly with local residents and work with them instead of just trying to give that impression to Camden planners.

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Secondly, there is a contradiction between this application and what was said in the application by the same applicant, inter alia, to convert the cellar of number 1 to another flat. This was approved by the Planning Committee mere days before this application was submitted - surely no coincidence. It was said that the waste from the basement excavation would be stored on the land at the back of the property. This would not be possible if this application were approved as that land would be being built on so this development will inevitably result in more waste on the public highway and greater disruption for neighbouring properties.

The application also refers to contributing to 'much needed housing'. This development is not going to provide the housing the borough really needs - social housing. It is just going to provide a fat profit for the developer as the flats will be sold at £500k+.

Much is also made of the supposed 'car free' nature of the development. This is disingenuous. The parking controls in Gondar Gardens only run from 10 - 12 weekdays and are poorly enforced. This means that there is ample scope for someone to drive his / her car to work and then park it outside in the evening, overnight and at weekends which is when there is greater competition for parking.

Finally, Mo Farah might be able to walk to the local tube stations in the times set out in the application but it would take most people much longer which is why residents are still likely to want to acquire cars.

A J Kelly

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