

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2021/2418/P	Mark Hutchinson and Lis Fields	14/07/2021 20:22:17	OBJ	<p>Planning application number: 2021/2418/P 2 54 Dobson Close London NW6 4RU Erection of a single storey ground floor rear extension</p> <p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>We strongly object to the proposed extension in the planning application above.</p> <p>We are very concerned that both the applicant and the planning department are unaware of the serious negative impact the existing extension at 55 Dobson Close has had – and continues to have – on the residential amenity of all the neighbours, not only those in the same block but in the two adjacent blocks as well. The addition of this extension has caused such significant damage to the building that Camden council, our landlord, instructed a surveyor to inspect the damage. In his report the surveyor has recommended that a further structural survey be conducted. He has also recommended that the neighbours whose properties have suffered internal damage seek compensation from the leaseholder of 55 Dobson Close. We are alarmed that permission for another extension involving another major and potentially dangerous alteration to the building will be even considered without first considering the findings of the report and the structural survey to follow.</p> <p>Furthermore, the decision to grant planning permission for 51 Dobson Close has caused the local community much consternation and suffering. The Council's disregard for the opinions and well-being of our community is, in itself, a loss of amenity for our community. We are still fighting against this extension but the sheer effort of having to defend our environment, our mental health and our property against the laissez-faire attitude of the Council is an unacceptable loss of amenity. In regard to both actual extension to 55 Dobson Close and the proposed extension to 51 Dobson Close, we have been misinformed, misled and ignored about how the Council, as landlord, grants or refuses permission for extensions. Granting of further planning permission would condemn residents to another divisive battle against the Council.</p> <p>The proposed extension will have an adverse effect on the residential amenity of all the neighbours in the three blocks which span the west side of Dobson Close, with a particularly severe effect on those properties in the same block as number 54.</p> <p>This effect on the residential amenity has several aspects:</p> <p>Noise and vibrations travel along concrete floors</p> <p>Whilst we understand that the normal noise and disturbance caused by construction work are not grounds for objection, we believe that in the case of Dobson Close things are different. The particular way these blocks were constructed causes sound and vibrations to travel a considerable distance as they are transmitted by the concrete floors, particularly the ground floor which is a concrete platform spanning the entire length of each block and which supports the entire building above it. The blocks were not designed to withstand alterations of the kind proposed in this application.</p> <p>The building of this extension, like that of the extension at 55 Dobson Close, will require extensive demolition work in order to widen the opening in the rear ground floor wall and make way for sewerage/drainage from the proposed ground floor wet room.</p>

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The noise and vibrations generated by this work will travel throughout the block – as well as the two adjacent blocks – causing extreme disturbance to local amenity and bringing distress to dozens of people. A number of neighbours are housebound due to disability, old age and/or chronic health problems and so unable to leave their homes when the noise and vibrations are unbearable.

Structural damage

The vibrations travelling throughout the block containing 54 Dobson Close risk causing structural damage, as is evident, once again, from the construction of the extension at 55 Dobson Close.

Whilst we once again understand that normal damage to neighbours' property is not a planning issue, in this case the damage is liable to be so great that it will affect local amenity. Moreover the extent and type of the damage which will be caused is unpredictable – and could prove to be irreparable.

For example, the block which houses 55 Dobson Close has shifted due to the building of the extension there. This has resulted in a change in the flow of

rainwater on the communal second storey walkway; outside 70 Dobson Close which is directly above number 55, and number 69, water no longer runs to the outside edge of the walkway, from where it can drain away, but now accumulates on the other side, creating puddles under the front doors.

Cracks have appeared in the all properties which directly surround 55 Dobson Close, on interior and exterior walls, and on at least one rear balcony. For example a serious crack has formed around the entire opening from the communal stairway onto the walkway adjacent to 69 Dobson Close. This opening had been redecorated only five years ago; now large chunks of plaster have become loose and threaten to fall at any time. Another significant horizontal crack has formed in the rear exterior wall of the property directly above number 55.

Such effects on the whole of the architecture of the estate, as opposed to individual properties, constitutes a loss of amenity.

Loss of public safety

The loss of public safety, both during and after construction, constitutes a further loss of amenity. The structural damage which is likely to be caused by building this extension will create hazards for public safety. The building is now over 60 years old and neither the roof nor some areas of mortar are as robust as they once were. We have already had numerous incidents of loose tiles and masonry falling from the roof of our block. Luckily no-one was hurt or killed.

However, the extensive, powerful vibrations generated by the building of an extension, particularly during the demolition phase, are something the building was never intended to have to withstand. These vibrations will only increase the fragility of the building and thus increase the risk to the residents as well as to the general public. The back of the block consists of private gardens used by children and adults, and the front of the building is a public walkway.

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Loss of emergency fire access

There is another safety issue, which is the loss of emergency fire access.

The kitchens were situated at the front of the block so that in the event of a kitchen fire the emergency services would have direct access from the road, i.e. Dobson Close. Moving the kitchen to the rear of the building makes it very difficult to access as there is no road at the rear of the building.

Damage to Architectural Integrity

The extension will damage the architectural integrity of the building. It is out of

keeping with the elegant, understated 1950s design by Louis de Soissons, Peacock, Hodges and Robertson. The residents of Hilgrove estate care deeply about this; it was one of the key arguments made in our successful campaign to stop the buildings being clad with unsightly, unnecessary external wall insulation in 2015.

The extension at 55 Dobson Close provides ample evidence of the detrimental visual impact of such an extension. Rather than provide a precedent, this extension should serve as a salutary warning of the harm done to the local amenity.

Affect on visual amenity of close neighbours.

The proposed extension will have an adverse effect on the visual amenity of its close neighbours. We feel that this is un-neighbourly.

Loss of Garden Space

The loss of green space is also a serious concern, as highlighted by the Camden Local Plan (see, for example, Policy A2 Open space, point e. and paragraph 6.37)

Not in Camden Local Plan

We would also like to point out that there is nothing in the Camden Local Plan to support the building of extensions such as these.

Damage to the Community

The extension of 55 Dobson Close, and granting permission for an extension to 51 Dobson Close, has left lasting feelings of anger and injustice amongst the community. It has instigated a loss of amenity in the very damage done to the spirit of the local community. Given the opposition amongst the community to this proposal, allowing this extension would compound this damage. Loss of amenity does not only include the physical environment but also mental health.

Yours Faithfully,

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