

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2021/2410/P	Alexamder Potts and Susan Siegfried (wife)	25/07/2021 19:04:30	SUPC	The proposed extension to 40 Leighton Road and redesign of the interior and of most of the exterior represent, on the whole, a very worthwhile and well thought out plan, which will improve the quality of the property, adjacent properties, and the neighborhood in general.

There is however one significant feature of the plan to which we wish to lodge an objection – the addition of a second floor mansard roof extension. This would disrupt the distinctive flat roofline of the unusually well preserved street facades of the row of three terraced houses extending from 36 to 40 Leighton Rd. It also materially affects the appearance of our property at No. 38 as seen from most vantage points, approaching either along Leighton Rd. or Lady Margaret Road. The addition would significantly increase the bulk of the house at 40 Leighton as seen from the front and from the back, making it out of character with the dwellings in its immediate vicinity, including our adjacent property. To elaborate, there are three grounds on which our objections to the mansard roof extension rest: 1) aesthetic; 2) historical; and 3) functional.

1) Aesthetic

The mansard roof extension would create a dominating effect, both as seen from the street and from the rear where it would overlook our garden. In the “Design Statement” its visual impact at the front elevation is described as “minimal” and the “degree of harm [as] negligible”. However this is not the case. It would be clearly visible from three main approaches to 40 Leighton Rd. and to our house (along the north side of Leighton Road from Kentish Town tube station and from the Torriano Avenue and also down Lady Margaret Road). Only if you were standing directly in front of or very close to the house on the south side of the street would the set back be sufficient to disguise it. The argument that the mansard roof extension would be “hidden” by the London Plane tree in front of the house (“Design Statement”, 5.2) is specious because a) the tree is not in leaf much of the year, as shown in photographs of the property in winter (5.0), and b) the London Plane trees currently in leaf in front of 50 and 52 Leighton Road do not hide the second floor dormer extensions that exist on those properties, even though one is set back. These are both eyesores, and presumably date from a period of laxer planning permissions. Even if the mansard roof extension at 40 Leighton Rd. would be somewhat less intrusive, they give one an idea of the impact this extension would have on the local architectural environment.

2) Historical

The mansard roof extension would be an anachronistic, quite visible intrusion into the historical character of the early Victorian architecture that distinguishes this section of terraced housing on Leighton Road. The strict, simple rectilinear lines of the houses are the primary source of their charm and historical interest. The trio of houses at 36, 38, and 40 Leighton Road form an architecturally cohesive ensemble, with lower parapets, ground level entrances, in contrast to the houses that rise up beginning at 42. While the former are the “narrowest and humblest” houses in the terrace (“Design Statement”, 5.2), they form the attractive endpoint of the vista from Lady Margaret Road. The proposed mansard roof extension at No. 40 would pull the facade of this house into the less cohesive architectural features of the higher terrace on its eastern side rather than maintaining the integrity of its original grouping in a trio with 36 and 38 Leighton Road. The parapet is unbroken from 36 to 50, where it is regrettably interrupted by second floor extensions at 50 and 52, before continuing on the other side. It would be an aberration, historically, to break the line of early Victorian architecture again.

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3) Functional

We are concerned that the protruding dormer will negatively effect the fall of sunlight on our flat roof and in particular on the solar panels that have been installed on it. These are consistent with “green” guidelines encouraged by Camden Council. While the Shading Analysis (“Design Statement”, 4.0) claims that the projection will have “very little” impact (while failing to mention our solar panels), that is not how we read it. The fall of sunlight would be diminished in the mornings throughout the year—and during the long winter months that is primary period of daylight—which stands to effect the amount of energy generated by our solar panels.

We also note a few minor comments concerning the front elevation of 40 Leighton, immediately adjacent to our house at 38 Leighton Road:

i) We have spoken the owners about coordinating the design of proposed additions to the street front of the properties at 40 and 38 Leighton Road, and they are amenable to this. We should like the iron railings running adjacent to the pavement to imitate closely the historical character of the railings further up the terraces on Leighton Road rather than being of the modern design shown in the “visualization” of the redevelopment of the property. We have also spoken to them about that the planned metal railing along the western boundary of 40 Leighton Rd. and should like to see this party wall modified and replaced by a brick wall, like the one demarcating the eastern boundary of the property’s front garden. This would create an appropriate separation between the waste bins they are proposing to locate along this boundary adjacent to the entrance to our property.

ii) We note that the design of the brickwork shown in the schematic diagram of the slightly modified façade proposed for 40 does not echo the existing patterning of bricks on the current and neighboring facades. It is uniform, and fails to register the vertical orientation of the bricks over the tops of the windows and the door in the latter. We hope that the assurance given in the document called “Application Form, Redacted” that this front wall will be retained is correct and that the brickwork around the new window will be consistent with the original early Victorian brickwork.

iii) We hope that the runoff from the drainpipe proposed for addition to the front elevation of 40 Leighton Road flows beneath ground rather than issuing at ground level, close to our front door. The owners of 40 Leighton Rd. assured us that this would be the case.
