

Application No: 2021/3476/P
Consultees Name: Benjamin Woolgar and Emily Chalk
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Comment: OBJ

Response:

In summary, we object to the application for three reasons.

(1) First, contrary to what the application suggests, the surrounding site does not have 'many terraces', such that no harm will be done to the character or setting of the neighbourhood (see p.7 of the Design and Access Statement). It is relevant in this regard that that Statement contains incorrect information.

(2) Second, the proposed terrace will affect the neighbouring amenity, particularly visual amenity. In this regard, the proposed terrace is materially different (in particular given the proposed use of planters), from other terraces in the area.

(3) Third, the proposed terrace will also create noise and disturbance. Again, the proposed terrace is materially different from others in the area in this regard.

We note from the Home Improvements CPG, p.54, that factors to be taken into account in granting permission for a balcony or terrace include (1) the impact on the wider area and neighbouring amenity; (2) the risk of harmful noise disturbance; and (3) the intensity of use of a balcony. We also note that it is recommended to engage with neighbours prior to submitting an application. Taking into account these considerations, we believe the application should be refused.

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Objection 1: Harm to the character and/or setting of the neighbourhood.

The Design and Access Statement asserts at p.7 that the surrounding site has "many converted terraces", such that no harm is done by the proposal to the design or setting of the neighbourhood.

That assertion is wrong. The map contained on that page is incorrect in two material respects.

First, the map shows 42 Sumatra Road as having a roof converted into a terrace. This is incorrect. There is no terrace on the roof of No.42. That is apparent from simply looking at it, and also from other photographs in the Design and Access Statement. It is unclear how this error was made.

Second, the map also appears to show a terrace at No.54 Sumatra Road. However, this terrace is in fact a half-length terrace (as is again apparent from a visual examination), which protrudes significantly less than the proposed terrace at No.44.

Thus the true position is that there are only two roof terraces which are similar to the proposed one at No.44: namely my own (at 38 Sumatra Road) and 1 Glenbrook Road. The proposed terrace is also the only roof terrace in the area which would use high planters, which causes a much greater change in visual amenity – both from street height, and from neighbouring and nearby windows. The other roof terraces shown on the same map, on the opposite side of the road, affect a different area and have different visual amenity generally (and given the inaccuracies which are visible just from our own home, it is unclear to what extent the map can be relied on).

The proposed terrace would therefore represent a considerable change to the neighbourhood's character.

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Objection 2: Visual amenity

The proposed terrace proposes to use "fixed and permanent planters", which will necessarily be high. No existing roof terrace on this side of Sumatra Road/Glenbrook Road uses such a significant number of planters, or such high planters. The existing terraces have black metal railings only, with minimal furniture and/or low-set plants.

The use of high planters will thus obscure and affect the views of many houses on both Sumatra and Glenbrook Road. It appears to be necessary, because otherwise the proposed terrace will have unacceptable privacy issues. However, it will significantly affect visual amenity.

We note that, whilst recommended in the CPG, we were not consulted about the proposed terrace (and we are not aware of any of our neighbours being consulted either). Whilst not determinative by itself, this suggests that little consideration has in fact been given to neighbours' visual amenity.

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Objection 3: Noise and disturbance

The proposed terrace will inevitably cause noise and disturbance to neighbouring houses.

In this regard, it is highly relevant that existing roof terraces in the area are attached to multi-level houses with independent gardens. The roof terraces are therefore rarely used (and even less so at night). The roof terrace at 1 Glenbrook Road is almost never used (and has not been used at all to the best of our knowledge in the last 12 months). Our own roof terrace is also only sparsely used, and principally for private use rather than social events.

By contrast, as the proposed terrace is attached to a flat with no access to a separate garden, it is to be inferred that it will be in significantly more frequent use, including for social events. The result is likely to be that the noise disturbance will be considerably greater.

It should also be borne in mind that some dogs in neighbouring houses are upset by presence on a nearby roof terrace, leading to loud barking. This problem will also be exacerbated by the proposed terrace.