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Planning application ref 2021/4368/P

Mr and Mrs Havakuk

2 Quickswood

London NW3 3SJ

I object to the proposed enlargement of 2 Quickswood on the grounds that:

1. There will be a significant detrimental impact on the amenity of the surrounding existing dwellings due to substantial reduction in light;
2. There will be a significant detrimental impact on the amenity of the surrounding existing dwellings due to substantial overlooking; and
3. The proposed extension is out of keeping with the existing low-rise architecture in the context of a modern period development that may be unique within the borough.

Light

The rear of 2 Quickswood is diagonally opposite the rear of my house, 2 Conybeare, across four small patio gardens, the others owned by 1 Conybeare and 4 Quickswood (see Q2 EX0 SITE LOCATION PLAN 20210308). The rear of 2 Conybeare is west-facing which means that the sun moves from the east-facing front of the house in the morning to the west-facing back of the house in the afternoon and evening, providing light to the living room and kitchen through glazed full-height patio doors. The increase in elevation of 2 Quickswood by 2.7/2.8 metres would substantially obstruct the light to the ground floor living room and kitchen. It would also materially reduce the level of daylight and sunlight reaching the ground and first floors as well as the rear patio garden of 2 Conybeare.

I should say that the matters I raise here are separate from any private action that I may take in respect of any proposed interference with the right to light from which my property benefits.

When the current owners of 2 Quickswood added an extension to the first floor roof terrace a few years ago, the level of daylight and sunlight reaching the living room, kitchen and garden of 2 Conybeare were reduced appreciably. In addition, in summer, the sun was prevented from reaching the rear patio garden of 2 Conybeare until early afternoon, whereas previously it had done so at mid-day. The proposed additional storey would prevent sunshine from reaching the rear patio garden of 2 Conybeare at all before the evening, even in high summer. The owners of 2 Quickswood have a south-facing front garden and use their rear north-facing garden comparatively little. 2 Conybeare has only the one west-facing rear patio garden. The rear patio garden of 2 Quickswood is filled with tall palm trees and plants to create privacy in respect of their ground floor accommodation, apparently in preference to window blinds: these already restrict the amount of daylight and sunlight reaching the ground floor and garden of 2 Conybeare. The ground floor accommodation and garden of 2 Conybeare would become darker all day permanently if the second floor additional storey were to be built.

Overlooking

The submitted planning application drawing Q2 PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION (EAST) 20210903 shows two new full-height windows, one on each side of the 2 Quickswood 'L'

shape facing east and north respectively: these windows would overlook the existing windows of the accommodation at 2 Conybeare. Please see two below two photographs taken from the ground floor and first floor of 2 Conybeare respectively.



The proposed new development would occupy the top portions of each of those pictures. Any semblance of privacy in the garden would be gone. In the house, I would face the unattractive alternatives of the invasion of my privacy if I kept the blinds up, or darkness and artificial light if I kept the blinds closed.

The surrounding neighbourhood

Quickswood and Conybeare are part of a comparatively small, low-rise development with its own unique character. The buildings have a distinctive, square or cubic style to them which is the result of having not been built appreciably higher than they are wide. The roads and walks in the neighbourhood are of a fairly standard width, but feel much wider, airier and more open because they are not crowded by buildings of an overbearing height.

The grouping of individual houses is also unusual, if not unique. Four two-storey houses are set around a quadrant of four small patio gardens. The architectural motif is repeated throughout the neighbourhood. The design only works architecturally and practically because the houses surrounding the garden courtyard are built to an appropriate height.

I believe that this is the first application for a third storey, second floor enlargement in respect of a Quickswood 'courtyard house'. That is no doubt for good reason: if one courtyard house were to be built up, fairness would demand that all the courtyard houses could be built up. The result would be to rob all the houses of the amenity of their gardens at a time when outdoor space has become all the more important.

Conclusion

The effect of the proposed second floor enlargement would be oppressive, overbearing and incongruous. The owners of 2 Quickwood can have no reasonable expectation of being permitted to diminish the amenity of their neighbours' houses or the character of the neighbourhood in general. Living in the Quickwood-Conybeare neighbourhood is a choice to live in a characterful and lightly built space. Granting this planning application would set an unfortunate precedent affecting other residents who are content with two-storey houses, which already provide generous accommodation.

Helen Janecek
2 Conybeare
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24 December 2021