

Camden Planning.

15th June 2022

Dear Sirs,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Site: 13 Kemplay Road, London, NW3 1TA

Planning application ref: 2022/1137/P

Application description: Erection of a replacement two storey dwelling with basement following demolition of existing.

I have been asked by neighbours to review the planning application. My comments are as follows.

Scale, Design and Heritage.

The applicant has submitted a scheme that is similar to one previously rejected by the council.

Planning permission was granted for a replacement dwelling in 2018 (Camden ref 2015/4373/P). However, before the scheme was accepted amendments were sought by officers, then it was amended a further 3 times following concerns from members of the planning committee. These amendments are detailed in the table overleaf.

July 2015 (Original proposal)



Aug 2016 (Revised scheme - considered by Planning Committee April & Sept 2017)



Oct 2017 (Revised scheme - withdrawn from Committee Agenda of 26th October 2017)



Nov 2017 (Revised scheme - withdrawn from Committee Agenda 28th Jan 2018)



May 2018 (Current proposal)



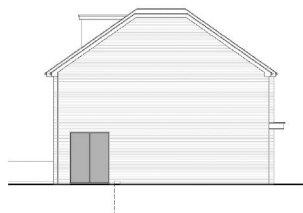
Key changes included, attaching the house to the terrace, changing the materials to brick, removing a single storey side element and introducing a 2 storey side element with a lower ridgeline.

The last change ensured the width of main part of the dwelling reflected other properties in the terrace, thereby maintaining rhythm. According to the committee report officers also sought this change so the proposed dwelling reflected the stepping down of the terrace.

Perhaps the applicant is hoping that the planners and members of the planning committee are going to have a collective bout of amnesia, because the revised scheme reintroduces the single side extension, this would also be clad in wood as an attempt to disguise it, and removes the subordinate 2 storey side element.

Something has also gone seriously wrong with the flank elevation. As approved, the flank had a small crown roof. This detracted from the full hipped roof form of the terrace, but it had a uniform and symmetrical profile and it didn't look too out of place in the context of the surrounding street scene.

Approved flank elevation (2015/4373/P)



Proposed flank elevation, current submission (2022/1137/P)



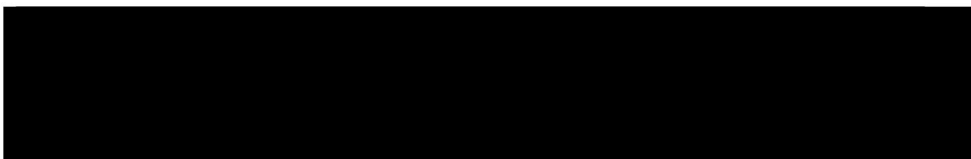
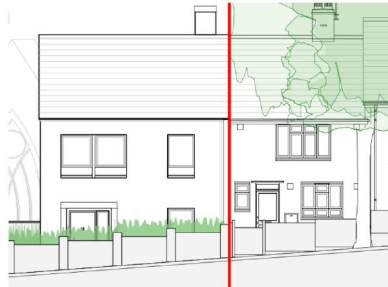
In contrast, the proposed flank elevation would have a bulky rear mansard profile. This markedly contrasts with the front hipped roof slope. It also reads as a clumsy attempt to conceal a large second floor.

Turning to the front elevation. The knock-on effect of trying to maximise the amount of second floor space is evident. As approved, the first-floor windows were sited immediately under the eaves to match the placement of windows in the terrace. As sought, the first-floor windows have been set down from the eaves to increase the amount of second-floor space. This, combined with a different style and pattern of fenestration, means the front elevation of the proposed dwelling would poorly relate to the existing terrace. The level of architectural detailing also compares poorly to the previously approved development.

Approved street scene elevation (2015/4373/P)



Proposed street scene, current submission (2022/1137/P)

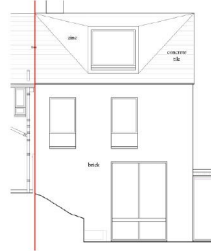


The rear roof slope would accommodate a bulky zinc clad dormer. Its angular form would be at odds with the proposed house and the terrace. Compared to the approved, the rear window hierarchy is poor and the pattern and placement of windows between floors is disjointed. The rear elevation will be visible from the grounds of the listed chapel at the rear.

Approved street scene elevation (2015/4373/P)



Proposed street scene, current submission (2022/1137/P)



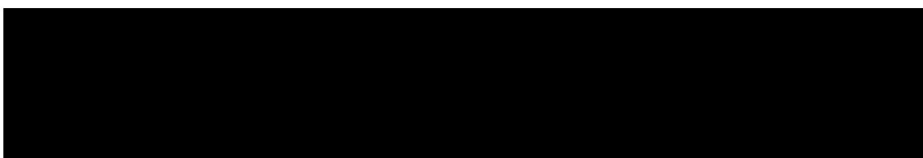
Proposed elevation: North

The applicant describes the proposed side extension as a 'kitchen box'. The name alone implies this is a small addition. However, this is not the case, it adds another 4.5m to the width of the house and would be 6.5m deep. A bin and bike store would be bolted onto the side, which means the built footprint of the ground floor would extend right up to the sensitive side boundary with the listed chapel. It is noted the drawing disingenuously shows the store in lighter shading.

The applicant has argued this is no different from the 1.8m close boarded fence that was permitted by the previous application. The street scheme drawing also masks this element with mature landscaping.

However, the reality will be different. I doubt it can be built with such a slim roof profile and there is an absence of any guttering. From the street it will be seen in 3 dimensions and will clearly appear as a solid structural addition to the house.

The use of wood cladding is an inappropriate material for a new build. The lack of any openings in the front elevation would give this element of the scheme a bunker like appearance.



Conclusion (scale, design, and heritage)

As detailed, the previous application was amended on numerous occasions before it was finally approved. The current scheme constitute a harmful step back and reintroduce elements that were previously considered to be unacceptable.

The existing house makes a neutral contribution to the character of the conservation area, so there have never been any issues associated with its demolition. However, the committee report said, *'the loss of no. 13 is not considered harmful to the character or appearance of the conservation area as long as a suitable high-quality replacement is proposed'*.

The replacement house is not high quality. Its form, bulk and overall design would create an unsympathetic form of development that would detract from the character of the terrace and the wider surroundings.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

The proposed dwelling would fail to preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area and the setting of the listed chapel at the rear of the site, and it would cause less than substantial harm to a these designated heritage assets. In accordance with Paragraph 202 of the NPPF no public benefits have been identified that would outweigh the harm. The application should be refused.

Neighbour amenity.

When officers considered the previous application, it was considered to have an acceptable impact on neighbours (privacy and daylight and sunlight). However, the case officer's assessment in the committee report did not review the impact of the development on conditions of outlook for the occupiers of No. 15 Kemplay Road.

I think this was a mistake. The first floor of the proposed house would have projected just under 2.5m beyond the existing rear building line of No. 15 Kemplay Road. This created a sheer 2-storey, 2.5m deep, projection and as No. 15 has not been extended at the rear there is no doubt that it would have an overbearing impact on the occupiers of this property.



The current submission would also project 2.5m beyond the rear of No. 15.

Perhaps officers could correct this mistake and re-appraise this aspect of the proposed development, particularly as the massing of the projecting flank has increased as a result of the mansard roof.

Basement Impact.

The Basement Impact Assessment that accompanied the previous application was detailed. It included and desktop assessment and site investigations. It was also scrutinized by third party consultants and amended on at least 2 occasions.

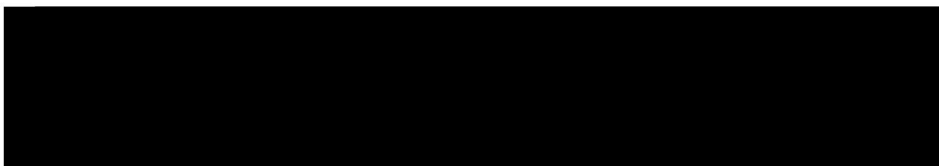
The basement impact assessment that accompanies this application should also undergo the same degree of scrutiny, particularly as it has been produced by different consultant. It is noted they are reliant on the borehole data undertaken by the initial site investigation in 2015.

Furthermore, the structural impact of the proposed basement was only considered to be acceptable because it was set 1m away from the flank boundary with No. 15 Kemplay Road. As shown on the current drawings the proposed basement would extend right up to the flank boundary.

Other matters

The applicant's Design and Access Statement refers to a pre-app undertaken in August 2020. The outcomes of the pre-app are only briefly reported, but it is clear the proposals were not supported by officers. Officers highlighted the incongruous mansard roof, the single storey side element and the poor fenestration pattern and style.

Looking at the sketch drawing that was submitted with the pre app the applicant has improved the design, but they have not heeded officer's advice who said that the proposed replacement dwelling should adopt the same approach as the previously consented scheme in terms of style and design, so it fitted the rest of the terrace.



Determination.

I would be grateful if you could take these comments into account and refuse the application.

I would also be grateful if the application is determined on the drawings that have been submitted and no attempts are made to negotiate with the applicant. This happened with the previous application, and it took 3 years to determine. Not only was this a waste of time for officers and the applicant (they ended up with a scheme they had no intention of building), but more importantly neighbours were left in limbo for an unreasonably long time.

Once a decision is made in 8 weeks, the applicant can then exercise their right to appeal should they wish to pursue this scheme further.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Hollins

Consultant Chartered Planner

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