

Dear Ms Madondo

APPLICATION REFERENCE:- HGY/2023/1644
FIRST FLOOR FLAT, 166 VICTORIA ROAD, WOOD GREEN, LONDON N22 7XQ
ERECTION OF REAR DORMER ROOF EXTENSION WITH ASSOCIATED REAR ROOF
TERRACE AND INCREASE IN RIDGE HEIGHT TO ALIGN WITH NEIGHBOURING
PROPERTY, NO 168. FIRST FLOOR INTERNAL ALTERATION AND REFURBISHMENT

We refer to the above Planning Application and are writing this joint letter to register our Objection to the proposed development. Our properties, no. 168A and 168B, are the adjacent flats to the West and so we are the most affected neighbours.

At the beginning of this letter we would like to emphasise that we don't want to raise unnecessary objections and wish to have a good neighbourly relationship with our new neighbour. However we cannot support this proposal and, in protecting our own interests, we must express our view that it would be significantly harmful.

We have genuine concerns about the scale, siting and design of the proposal. This is because of its detrimental impact on the locality and our residential amenity. We have referred to some Planning guidance alongside our comments below before highlighting the Policy conflicts. However, first we would first like to raise some queries about the Submission itself.

Queries regarding the Submission itself

The advertised description

- we would question whether the advertised description reflects the nature of the proposal - it introduces a new second floor above the existing two storey flat-roofed rear projection. This 'box' element is not on a roofslope and so, in our view, does not form part of an L-shaped dormer
- whilst an internal alteration and refurbishment is referred to, the external changes to the windows (front, side and rear) are not specifically mentioned for a flat that has no Permitted Development rights

The plans

- we have noted that the depth of the 'box' element measures 2.09m on the Proposed Site / Block Plan but the Proposed Second Floor Plan shows it to be 2.73m. Consequently, the plans which show the relationship with our flats at no. 168 is considered to be inaccurate and misleading
- also, we have measured the terrace to be over 1.3m on the Proposed Second Floor Plan but the figure quoted on it is 1.2m
- we would also question why the garden is included in the red Application Site line if the flat does not have access and ownership of the garden as confirmed in the covering letter and the Design and Access Statement

THE DESIGN APPROACH IS CONSIDERED TO BE INAPPROPRIATE

The dimensions are excessive - width, depth and GIA

The Terrace which no. 166 forms part of maintains a two-storey character with a subordinate rear projection and, with this in mind, we feel that the dimensions of this proposal are excessive. Notably:-

- the 'box' element would extend the full width of the existing rear projection
- the roof terrace would also extend the full width of the existing rear projection
- the 'box' element would be 2.73m deep (which is not far short of the 'Permitted Development' threshold for a ground floor extension to a house)
- the study would have a GIA of 8.31sqm - this is bigger than the Government's threshold for a bedroom (nationally described space standard and the London Plan)

The fenestration doesn't complement the host dwelling or the wider Terrace

- the sliding doors are extra wide and the ratio of glazing to cladding is poor
- there would be a total of eight openings (including the flat rooflight on the dormer) and six different designs / proportions giving a very cluttered appearance
- furthermore, the position of the openings result is awkward and unbalanced

The harm

Due to its external envelope, the 'box' element would be particularly harmful especially in combination with the proposed increased in the ridgeline and the large dormer on the rear roofslope.

Overall, the proposal would be an overly dominant new feature that would be at odds with the positive design characteristics of these Terraced houses. The proposal does not sympathetically reflect or respect the Terrace's architectural style and it would not be innocuously absorbed.

We acknowledge that the focus of the development is to the rear of the property (with only the increased ridge, replacement windows and the new rooflights affecting the streetscene). However, it is clear that its excessive scale and poor design would be highly visible from a number of neighbouring properties, including ours. Whilst these vantage points do not form part of the public realm, they nonetheless encompass the characteristics of the local area as it is experienced and appreciated by others. The proposal would be incongruous even among the other additions at the rear of the Terrace. Maintaining the integrity on the rear and side views of properties is important, whether or not they are available to the public gaze.

The proposal is contrary to design guidance and objectives

Paragraph 26 of the Government's National Design Guide, is considered particularly relevant to this proposal:-

"Scale is the height, width AND length of each building proposed within a development in relation to its surroundings. This relates both to the overall size and massing of individual

buildings and spaces in relation to their surroundings, and to the scale of their parts. It affects how a space can be used and how it is experienced” (emphasis added).

Section 126 of the NPPF explains that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps development acceptable to communities. **Section 134** goes on to say that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design taking into account any local design guidance and SPDs.

On a local level, the proposal is contrary to the fundamental objectives of the Development Plan. **Supporting paragraph 3.14 in the Development Management DPD** (DM DPD) makes it clear that extensions to residential buildings should be subordinate in scale to the original building, as well as respect the architectural unity of a Terrace of houses and the urban grain and character of the surrounding area. New development should not undermine existing uniformity of the building or Terrace and should not over balance or dominate existing features important to the building. The following paragraph, **3.16**, states that extensions to the roof, such as dormer windows, should be restricted to the rear and their size, location and design should be such that they appear subordinate on the roof (emphasis added).

Our comments on other extensions in the Terrace

We note that the Design and Access Statement argues that there are some precedents that support this Application at no. 166. We do not concur. We acknowledge that there have been some additions and terraces to the rear projections on this side of the road but we would like to make the following observations:-

Other additions above the flat-roofed rear projections (not dormers as described, and discussed above):-

- they were permitted using previous local and regional Planning Policies (now the DM DPD, the 2021 London Plan and the Government’s National Design Guide are relevant)
- they also pre-date the 2021 changes to the NPPF - this included a new emphasis on granting Permission for well-designed development and refusing it for poor quality schemes
- they are all more modest, including depth
- the dormers on the rear roofslope were much lower in relation to the ridge
- two of them were houses with a full garden (so the terrace would be less intensively used)

In summary, none of the additions cited are the same or very similar to the development (the proposals themselves AND their immediate context). Consequently, direct parallels cannot be drawn between these schemes. And, as a note, no. 214A is just a standard dormer.

Furthermore, we are of the view that cumulatively the number of additions constructed in this part of Victoria Road have started to change the scale and appearance of the area in a way that is detrimental to the overall character of the area. We feel that this is a valid point that should be taken into account too.

While front and side alterations are likely to have the most prominent impacts, rear extensions certainly have potential to cause adverse impacts on character, and when considered alongside other alterations, there is a risk of a cumulative deleterious effect on the wider Terrace. To allow this Application would make it more difficult to resist other similar Applications and the repetition of this type of development - in terms of its scale, siting and design - would further exacerbate the harm.

DETRIMENTAL IMPACTS ON OUR RESIDENTIAL AMENITY AT NO.S 168A AND 168B

Supporting paragraph 2.9 in the DM DPD explains that the Council recognises that amenity can be compromised in a number of ways such as detrimental loss of daylight and sunlight to adjacent occupiers and loss of privacy and outlook due to the proximity and design of developments. We are concerned about all of these and we would like to highlight a number of reasons why our flats are particularly sensitive to the proposal at no. 166.

Reasons why we are particularly sensitive to development at the upper flat of no. 166

- the rear elevation is North-facing
- a staggered dormer has been added to no. 170, with the higher part next to us
- there is a higher rear projection at no. 170

Upper flat 168B

- has a sole bedroom window next to the rear elevation of no. 166
- it also has a kitchen diner at the start of the rear projection, facing no. 166's rear projection
- it does not have the benefit of any outside space

Lower flat 168A

- also has a sole bedroom window next to the rear elevation of no. 166
- the windows next to the bathroom, opposite the proposed 'box' element and terrace, serve an open plan kitchen / diner / living room
- there is an elevated external seating area at the end of the rear projection

The adverse impacts

Loss of privacy

As the two-storey rear projection has a close relationship with our habitable room windows, dedicated seating area and garden, we have particular worries about:-

- the French door serving the new bedroom next to us (which we note has been added since pre-application advice was sought)
- the size of the study's sliding doors
- the height / profile of the proposed terrace's balustrade.

We do not agree with the statement written on the plans that the balustrade would “prevent overlooking” because there is a substantial proportion that would be under 1.7m in height, both to the side and the rear. Also, the term ‘translucent glass’ on the plans is ambiguous and no details of obscurity have been provided. Furthermore, due to the excessive depth of the ‘box’ element, its siting adds to our concerns about the unobstructed views. The level of overlooking would have an unacceptable impact on our privacy levels.

Also, loss of privacy doesn’t relate solely to direct overlooking – it also involves activity and disturbance in close proximity to private and quiet areas. Studies have shown that perceived privacy can relate to the degree to which one hears one’s neighbours. As it is difficult to screen against noise, especially at an elevated level, the relationship the terrace has with the ‘box’ room and the large sliding doors is another issue. There is no guarantee it would be used as a study in the short, medium or long term and so its potential use as a communal social space – for longer periods of time, including into the evening/night – should form part of this current assessment.

The new larger (and re-positioned) bathroom window and the enlarged kitchen – with its new juxtaposition with the worktops etc – would increase the potential for overlooking and so these changes amplify the intrusive relationship with both our properties.

Loss of light

The proposed development, being substantially taller than the original rear projection, would have a significant effect on our access to sunlight and daylight. Access to direct morning sunlight during the winter months, when the sun is lower in the sky is particularly valued because we don’t have South or West facing windows at the rear. In fact, we only have one such window each, serving the front room. The lack of any set back from the Western wall of the rear projection exacerbates these impacts.

In terms of light levels, **supporting paragraph 2.10 in the DM DPD** states that “*The design and layout of buildings must enable sufficient sunlight and daylight to penetrate into and between buildings, and ensure that adjoining land or properties are protected from unacceptable overshadowing. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) provides guidance on site layout planning to achieve good sun-lighting and day-lighting (BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: a guide to good practice)*”. No information has been submitted alongside the plans to demonstrate the level of harm. In the absence of any details, we don’t feel that a favourable conclusion on light levels can be made.

Outlook and sense of enclosure

The height and position of the ‘box’ element and its lengthy outward projection from the main part of the dwelling would cause it to dominate our outlook.

The change in land levels at the rear of the Terrace – and the consequential ‘set down’ of the two-storey rear projection compared to the floor levels in the main part of the building – reduces the overall dominance of the existing building. This benefit would be lost if the development were to go ahead. Its disproportionate scale would add undue mass and bulk and therefore have an overbearing effect. These effects would be most pronounced in views from the habitable rooms in our flats.

The extended flank wall (with no ‘set back’) would also have a negative impact on the narrow intervening space at the back of our properties. The more severe ‘tunnel effect’

would unduly heighten a sense of enclosure and compound the harm. The flat roof and the use of slate cladding would do little to diminish the scale and bulk of the addition.

Relevant points regarding amenity in the South Tottenham House Extensions SPD

Whilst we appreciate that the Application Site does not lie within the South Tottenham area in terms of the Council's Supplementary Planning Document entitled House Extensions, we feel that the fact that the document discourages second floor rear extensions because of their potential impact on neighbouring residents is relevant.

3.48 Rear Projections

The roof extensions proposed in this SPD are not meant to apply to rear projections from the original continuous Terrace, often giving the house an L-shaped plan. This applies whether they are original rear projections or later extensions. Furthermore, there is a much greater danger of loss of daylight, sunlight and privacy to neighbours, both backing onto the house concerned or either side, if rear projections were extended to 2nd and 3rd floors (emphasis added)

3.49 Extensions to Two Storey Rear Projections

Even where additional floors of Type 1, 2 and 3 are permitted on the main house, additional floors on two storey rear projections are strongly discouraged. Many houses were originally built with a two story rear projection of less than the full width of the house, leaving a lightwell with windows to the main back room and rooms in the projection facing onto it. Usually these lightwells are shared with one neighbour and the projection shared with the other, as the layout of the house is "handed". Such extensions would greatly diminish daylight and (depending on which direction they face) sunlight to both the applicant's ground and first floor windows but also those of the immediate neighbour sharing the lightwell. They will often also reduce day and sunlight to back gardens of the applicant and several neighbours. Overlooking and loss of privacy is another concern (emphasis added)

POLICY CONFLICTS

We feel that this Application conflicts with a number of Policies in the Development Plan, as well as the 2021 London Plan.

Strategic Policy SP11 in Haringey's Local Plan requires all new development to be of the highest standard of design that respects its local context and character. This is reflected in **Policy DM1 of the DM DPD** and the Council's Development Charter. With reference to **Part A**, this proposal fails to relate positively to neighbouring structures to create a harmonious whole or improve the character and quality of an area. In terms of **Part B**, insufficient regard has been given to the criteria listed. There is clear conflict with **Part D** in respect of ensuring a high standard of privacy and amenity:-

- a) Provide appropriate sunlight, daylight and open aspects to adjacent buildings and land
- b) Provide an appropriate amount of privacy to neighbouring properties to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring residents

We feel that there is additional conflict with **Policy DM12** in respect of residential extensions:-

A All residential extensions must be of a high quality, taking account of the privacy and amenity of neighbouring uses

E Extensions or alterations to residential buildings, including roof extensions will be required to be of a high, site specific, and sensitive design quality, and respect and / or complement the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics, detailing of the original buildings, including external features

G Proposals for residential extensions should have regard to the Council's relevant Supplementary Planning Documents

London Plan 2021

On a regional level, the Application is also in conflict with **Policies D3, D4 and D6** of The London Plan. **Policy D3** sets out a design-led approach which requires consideration of design options to determine the most appropriate form of development that responds to a site's context and capacity for growth. In terms of form and layout, it states that it must enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape, with due regard to building types, forms and proportions. **Criterion D of Policy D6** confirms that the design of development should provide sufficient daylight and sunlight surrounding housing that is appropriate for its context and minimise overshadowing.

NPPF

With reference to the NPPF, **paragraph 130** explains that decisions should ensure that developments:-

- (a) add to the overall quality of the area
- (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and layout
- (c) are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment
- (d) maintain a strong sense of place, in terms of streets, spaces and building types
- (f) safeguard a high standard of amenity for existing users

CONCLUSIONS

Supporting paragraph 3.13 in the DM DPD makes it clear that the Council expects that residential extensions and alterations are well designed to create a good quality living environment, whilst protecting the amenity of adjoining neighbours and the integrity of the local residential character (emphasis added).

We have various concerns about the introduction of a substantial second floor - with a terrace beyond - above the rear projection. Our key worries relate to the various impacts

on both our properties. From our point of view, the proposal is unduly intrusive and the adverse impacts are unacceptable.

The fact that Planning Permission was not sought to sub-divide the Application building into two flats is also a factor that should be taken into consideration in terms of room layouts, external space and parking pressures etc (Lawful Development Certificate **HGY/2023/0267 refers**). With reference to **Policies DM16 and DM32 in the DM DPD**, no car parking survey has been submitted to support the extra bedroom(s) in this area with a poor **PTAL of 2** (base year and forecast).

The Application would conflict with the design policies of Haringey's Development Plan, the London Plan and the NPPF (supplemented by the National Design Guide). The new owner's wish to add an extra bedroom (third) and a separate study to this two-bed flat should not outweigh the identified harm, especially as the submitted scheme is not the only option available. It is noted that the figures quoted in the Application Form indicate that the GIA would nearly increase by nearly 50% (plus external terrace).

For the reasons discussed above, we feel that the Application, in its current form, should not be supported. For clarification and in the spirit of providing positive feedback, we would like to emphasise that we would not raise an objection to a standard dormer (in isolation), plus a terrace as follows:

- i) the glass should be, as a minimum, level 4 on the standard 1-5 scale (where 5 is the highest obscurity) in perpetuity
- ii) for the avoidance of doubt, the terrace should be limited to a depth of 1.2m as quoted on the Proposed Second Floor Plan (as we have measured it to be over 1.3m on those plans)

Thank you for taking the time to consider our Objections and we trust you will be able to take all of them into account when assessing the Application.

Yours sincerely

Belinda Dowling
168B (upper flat) Victoria Road, N22 7XQ