

HGY/2023/3351: OAKLAWN, COMPTON AVENUE, HIGHGATE

Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee objects to this application for the following reasons and considers that this application must be refused because:

- the proposed replacement would not make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area,
- the proposed replacement does not meet the tests in the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan
- the proposed replacement does not follow the guidance in the Highgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- the proposed replacement does not follow Haringey's Development Management policies 2017
- Basement does not meet Highgate Neighbourhood Plan policy
- Quality of accommodation for staff. Daylight, sunlight and air quality studies for staff room and laundry required

1. The proposed replacement would not make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area

Proportion is an important aspect of the design of buildings and particularly but not exclusively regarding elevations in classical forms. These principles were set out by Vitruvius and later Palladio whose work much influenced architects working in the United Kingdom. Whilst the proposed building is not entirely Palladian being something of a combination between Arts & Crafts and Classicism but with distinctive neo-Palladian features such as the giant pilasters. We have therefore looked carefully at the history of applications for this site in terms of the changing proportions.

We attach with this objection drawings of the existing house, the consented scheme HGY/2016/1930 and the current application which we have marked up with dimensions of each scheme showing the heights:

- from ground level to ridge
- from ground level to eaves
- from eaves to ridge

We also attach a table which shows the incremental increase in the height from ground level to eaves; and the incremental loss in height of the roof.

- The percentage increase in height from ground level to eaves is 19% (71% less 52%)
- The percentage loss in height of the roof (in the worst case) is also 19% (29% - 48%).

The character of the original houses in Compton and Courtenay Avenues is Arts & Crafts and these high roofs (almost half of the height of the buildings) are very much a part of the character of this part of the Highgate Conservation Area. These prominent roofs add gravitas to the buildings, the streets and the area as a whole. The proposal as presented has reduced the height of the roof so substantially that this gravitas would be lost and the roof would barely be seen, completely alien to the local character.

The various elements, not least the giant pilasters, large glazing to the front doors, the Strawberry Gothick window above and the Arts and Crafts casement windows, seem an odd combination and we doubt there is much in the way of any precedent. However if the overall effect were pleasing and balanced in its context, then we would find such a proposal acceptable but in this case, unfortunately, the proportions seem possibly to have been dictated by other internal factors such as seeking taller floor to ceiling heights and/or the installation of services ducting. The porch seems exceptionally diminutive. Sprockets are missing on either side of the porch recess.

2. The proposed replacement does not meet the tests in the Highgate Neighbourhood Plan

The proposed replacement for the reasons set out above would not make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area as required by HNF policy:

Policy DH1: Demolition in Highgate's Conservation Areas

*Proposals to demolish buildings and structures that are non-designated heritage assets will be subject to a balance judgement with regard to the scale of the loss and the significance of the asset. Any proposed replacement should make a **positive contribution** to the conservation area.*

Supporting text:

*The Plan seeks to preserve and enhance the conservation areas. While all proposals to demolish will be considered against tests in higher level policies, **where demolition is permitted then development must positively contribute to the conservation area in which it sits.** New development should not make less of a contribution to the conservation area than that which it replaces. Non-designated heritage assets are listed in Appendices 4 and 5 on the website.*

3. The proposed replacement does not follow the guidance in the Highgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2013

Although we do not have the benefit of a revised Character Appraisal which no doubt would recognise the considerable harm to this part of Highgate Conservation Area in the intervening years, this application fails to comply with the extant document in which Chapter 10 covers the Bishops Area. It states at 10.10.1:

"10.10.1 The streets in the Bishops Sub Area are an excellent example of high quality residential development of the period. However incremental loss of features, remodelling or complete demolition of houses have a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area. Future developments should resist the loss of any buildings making a positive contribution to the area and should respect its layout and spaciousness." and:

"10.8 Positive contributions

10.8.1 Most of the existing buildings contribute to the homogenous character of the sub-area".

The principle for demolition was established only in relation to the design proposed in HGY/2016/1930 and so this application must be properly assessed against current policy and judged whether the proposed building would have a better or worse impact on the heritage asset, Highgate Conservation Area. For the reasons set out above we consider this application does not meet the policy tests.

4. Haringey's Development Management policies 2017

Haringey's Development Management policies 2017 states at DM9:

"When considering the impact of proposals on the historic environment, the Council will have regard to:

a. priority given to sustaining and enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and its setting;" The heritage asset to be considered is Highgate Conservation Area. We consider this proposal would cause harm to Highgate Conservation Area for the reasons set out above.

5. Basement

The basement appears not to comply with Highgate Neighbourhood Plan policy:

"Policy DH7: Basements

Where basement development does not fall in the scope of permitted development, and where there is evidence that there may be problems with drainage or flooding, applications for basement development will be supported only where they meet the requirements set out within this policy.

1. Impact Assessment requirements:

1. Any assessment on the impact of a basement development should demonstrate that:

iii There will be no individual or cumulative impact of development on the character and biodiversity of gardens and adjacent open spaces, particularly in designated conservation areas and those areas adjacent to Highgate's Major Open Spaces (identified in 3.4.2).

3. Limiting Environmental/Ecological Impacts:

1. Any basement development should normally be expected to allow for a minimum of one metre of permeable soil above any part of the basement beneath a garden to support biodiversity and larger trees/planting. This depth should be greater if necessary to preserve landscaping consistent with neighbouring properties."

6. Quality of accommodation for staff

The Staff room and laundry in the basement receive any daylight, sunlight or air from a light well below the driveway and close to the car lift. HCAAC suggests studies of these aspects of the design, to include details of the guarding to the lightwell should be provided.

For all of the reasons set out above Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee considers this application must be refused.