

22nd May 2024

Eunice Huang
Planning, Regeneration and Economy
Haringey Council
Level 6
River Park House
Wood Green
N22 8HQ

Dear Eunice,

Application for the erection of one additional story at roof level to existing building to provide two self-contained apartments, plant and associated works at Harcourt House, 16-17 Haringey Park, Hornsey, London, N8 9JB

I am writing in strong objection to the above application. I am the owner of flat 2 at Harcourt House and am a director of the RTM company that is responsible for the safe keeping of the building.

My objections are as follows –

1) Transparency

The freeholder sold the airspace to a subsidiary of itself for a nominal sum giving no notice to the leaseholders. They have then issued a new airspace lease to this subsidiary company and created a new address at the property, (flat 9) without informing the leaseholders. They have now submitted this planning application without consultation with the leaseholders. Their actions have been underhand and lacking in transparency, as evidenced by their attempting to disguise the application in their eventual notification to us as a 'Minor Material Amendment', when in fact the proposals amount to a complete upheaval of all aspects of the building, and compromise to the very fabric of the building itself.

2) Inaccuracy with respect to the proposed height of the development

The drawings are manifestly inaccurate, not least in that they seek to play down the eventual proposed height of the building. They are suggesting that the finished height will be 11.3m. However, 0.0m is not taken from the existing ground level, and therefore the actual proposed height will be far in excess of this.

3) Fire Regulations and Building Category

The above inaccuracy is of particular concern to me. Currently the building is under 11m and is treated as such with regards to insurance and fire regulations. This will take the building into the next category and require additional fire safety measures which will affect all flats in the building (for example requiring the necessity for a full sprinkler system) and incur ongoing costs for all leaseholders in perpetuity for the maintenance of these and increased insurance premiums. These are planning matters, as compliance with the new fire regulations will likely mean changes to the layout (existing and new) and appearance of the building.

4) Overlooking

Although my flat is on the raised ground floor, the way the building is constructed at the back with protrusions where the kitchens are on either side means that anybody accessing the newly proposed balcony above flats 5-8 will be able to easily overlook my kitchen, as well as the bedroom adjacent, currently serving as a child's bedroom for my tenants.

5) Design and Appearance

Currently the building is well proportioned and sits pleasingly in the street. It is a little tall, and according to your own Conservation Area Appraisal it has a neutral effect on this part of the conservation area. Personally I think it is a lovely building and have enjoyed living there myself as well as renting it presently to tenants.

The proposals raise the parapet by up to 1.5m and creating a single line across the top of the building. This will have a dramatic effect in making the building look tall, looming and imposing. Currently the windows sit nicely in proportion, following this upward extension the face will also then look disproportionate in the relationship between the windows and the top edge.

The chimneys will additionally need to be extended dramatically which will add to the sense of height, and look disproportionate to the neighbouring ones that will remain at their existing heights.

The proposed metal construction and cladding will look completely out of keeping and simply like a carbuncle that has been tacked onto the roof of the property. As this is clearly simply a money-making exercise for the freeholder I have no doubt that it will be executed as cheaply as possible. Despite their misleading rendering taken from a viewpoint that is at

the lowest end of the street and considerably lower than the rest of the street, from almost any other place on the road, at the opposite pavement, this extension will be visible.

6) Loss of amenity to existing residents

All current residents use the communal gardens to the rear of the property. The proposed extension will loom over and overshadow these, making them a less enjoyable space to use resulting in the loss of amenity.

The chimney from my living room is currently in use. This will be out of use while the chimneys are extended, and my tenants will not be able to use it.

The bin area already gets extremely full, no provision has been made for how additional waste will be dealt with.

7) Danger of collapse of the building

Some years ago the slab below flats 5-8 was taken up and the foundations strengthened as they were found to be inadequate. This was undertaken by the freeholder when they were still managing the block in the course of damp work. The slab / foundations of flats 1-4 have not been touched, which presumably are the same as the ones which had to be changed on the other side. If the foundations were inadequate for the existing building, I cannot see how increasing the load substantially with this proposed development can be anything other than detrimental to the safety of the structure of the building.

Excavating, underpinning and strengthening of the external walls may be required to support the new extension so the applicant must provide a structural report demonstrating this to ensure the proposal as presented is viable and will not require future planning amendments.

It seems hugely wrong that the freeholder can grant permission for extension work to be done, and that as the RTM company managing the building there is nothing we can do to stop it. Yet once it is built, responsibility for the ongoing safety and stability of the building rests with the RTM company. The freeholder will be able to sell the flats, bank the profits and walk off, leaving the residents to deal with the fall-out.

Given the inaccurate and misleading nature of the plans that have been submitted, I think it wholly likely that in their dealing with building regs the applicant will use similarly misleading and inaccurate information to get approval where it should not be granted. At

building regs stage we as leaseholders have no agency to drill down into the accuracy of the information submitted and ensure that the proposals do not compromise the structure of the building.

To conclude, I strongly object to the planning application. I think the building is aesthetically pleasing at present and feel that the new façade will look overly imposing and spoil the proportions of the frontage. I feel that a cheap metal extension on the top will have a detrimental effect on the look of the building itself, as well as the look and feel of the street and the conservation area. I am concerned about overlooking and additional pressure on existing amenities. I have deep concerns that the new fire regulations that will apply due to the increased height of the building will be unable to be accommodated within the structure of the existing building. I also believe that the existing shallow foundations of the building will be unable to support the proposals. The fact that these fire / structural matters have not been addressed in the planning application are of extreme concern to me.

For all of the reasons listed above, I object to this development in the strongest possible terms and ask that you reject it.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Parks