

Ref application number 2024/2563, 7 Blenkarne Road

Our family and live at the neighbouring property, 9 Blenkarne Road to the east of the proposed redevelopment at 7 Blenkarne Road. Ours is an owner-occupied family house where we have lived for 19 years.

We would like to register a strong objection to this application under the following headings. Individually and together these amount to an overdevelopment of the site which would result in unacceptable impacts which should not be granted planning permission.

- 1) The overbearing new east boundary wall
- 2) Loss of light to a kitchen window
- 3) Loss of light to a first-floor window
- 4) Loss of privacy to a sitting area in the garden
- 5) Heritage: Excessive development of a locally listed twinned house.
- 6) Heritage: Design out of keeping with local area
- 7) Conflict with WLP LP25 "Protecting the existing housing stock"

In addition to the above we have identified several errors and oversights across the planning application which throw into question its legitimacy.

Whilst we have tried to visualise some of the impacts of the proposals through the use of photographs and sketches, we would respectfully request that the case officer visit our home to fully appreciate the impacts of the proposals on our family.

1) Overbearing new east boundary wall

The proposal creates a solid new boundary wall on the west side of 9 Blenkarne Road that is nearly double the size of the current garage wall (on our estimates, from 40sqm to 74sqm). The replacement of this wall will involve the removal of our flat roof that is joined to the current garage wall which provides storage for bicycles and other equipment which is an inconvenience in itself.

The proposed new wall creates a tunnel-feeling in the side passage with a wall that moves from 10m x 4m to 15m x 4.9m. The new boundary wall is 50% longer and 90cm higher than the current boundary wall (of the garage). It is overbearing and visually intrusive and creates a loss of light to our property. We think this contravenes LP2 in that it has “an overbearing impact as a result of its height and scale”.

In addition to our significant concerns in respect of planning policy we understand that, by virtue of the age of our property, this would interfere with our legal right of light providing the potential to seek recourse to prevent this element of the proposed development.



2) Loss of light to a kitchen window.

There is a ground floor kitchen window on the west side of the house. It is the only window on the west-side of the ground floor which provides valuable light to this end of the kitchen (photo 1a, 1b). Crucially, it also provides light to the core living-space in the basement through a glass staircase specifically designed for this purpose (photo 1c). This would not have been apparent to the applicant's light consultant without a site visit which was never requested.

You can clearly see in the photos below that this window provides substantial light into this end of the kitchen and into the basement sitting room. This window would be entirely blocked and very substantially darker as a result of the proposed new, higher, longer boundary wall.

The applicant's light survey incorrectly calls the ground floor the lower ground floor throughout. Whilst the narrative of the report appears to acknowledge the existence of an impact to this kitchen window, it is omitted from the 'daylight distribution' assessment on page 12 of their study. This is a clear technical deficiency which the applicant must remedy prior to the officer forming a view on the acceptability of the position.

We would again request a site visit by the case officer to see both the arrangement of the kitchen and the significant impact to the rear of the space as well as the effect on the light enjoyed by the basement living space.

Photo 1a



Photo 1b

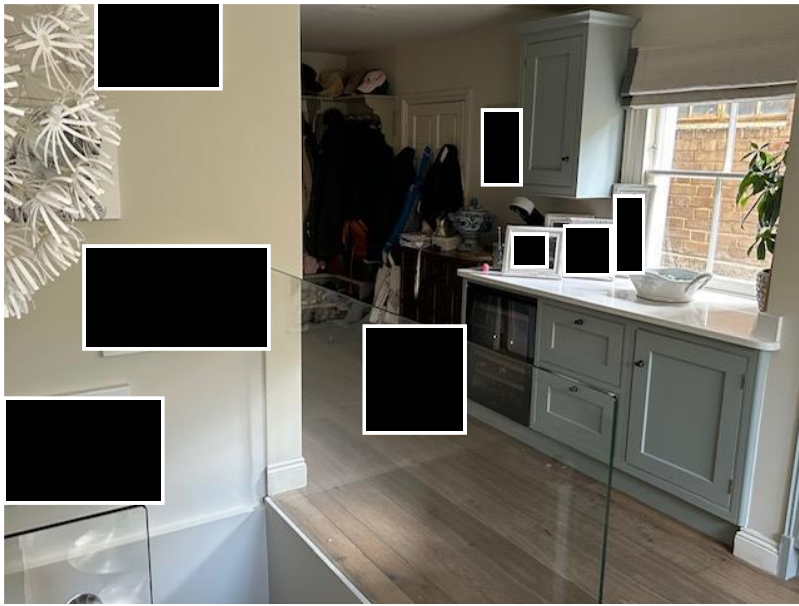
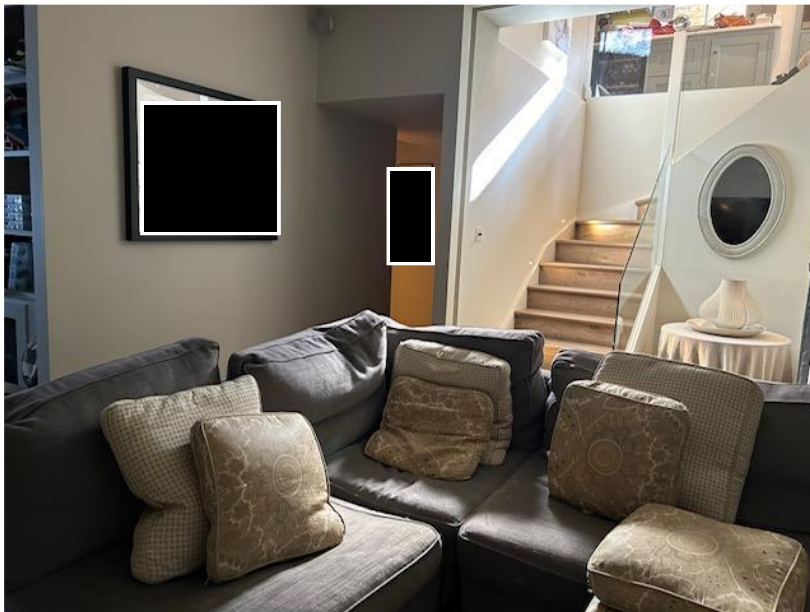


Photo 1c



3) Loss of light to a first floor window.

This first floor window would be almost completely blocked by the new boundary wall 80cms away (see photo 2a). This window leads on to 8sqm of clearly “habitable” living space (where my son and I play chess, as it happens!). Again, without a site visit the applicants’ light surveyor might not have been aware of the size or use of this space. The modelling needs to be updated to consider this window and to take account of the loss of light to core circulation space of the house which, whilst we acknowledge is more secondary, further reflects the loss of amenity given the significant obstruction to this window. We also believe this space has legal rights of light protection.

Photo 2a



Photo 2b

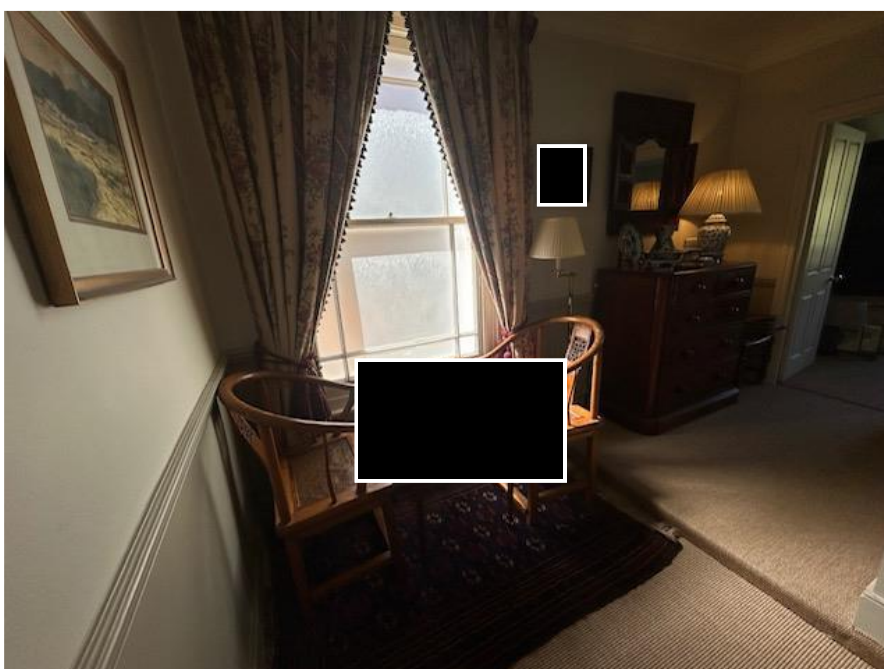


Photo 2c



4) Loss of privacy to sitting area in garden and kitchen

The plans include a substantial 3m-wide terrace along the full width of the rear of the house. None of the neighbours at no.5, 9 or 11 Blenkarne Road (nor no.7, currently) have ground floor level, garden entertaining space of this scale (described as a “snug” on previous plans) – just minimal access to stairs which then lead immediately down steps to such amenities at a lower level. Keeping ground-floor outside space at the rear of these houses to a minimum helps stop noise travelling up-and-down these gardens.

We have serious privacy concerns about this proposed terrace. The architect kindly allowed us access to the garden to see this and the photograph below was taken from the proposed location of the north-east corner of this terrace, at the border of 9 Blenkarne Road.

You can see two things:

- a) that someone standing at or near this corner (or standing along the length of the balcony, so this view would not be prevented by just a screen at the east end) looks into a seating area in our garden that was previously quite private, as well as into a kitchen bay window and the rest of the garden;
- b) you can see the photographer’s shadow on our kitchen bay window demonstrating that any kind of eye-height screening to prevent overlooking will reduce the light into both this kitchen window and the lightwell that provides much-needed light to this basement living room. We would note that any such privacy screening has not been taken into account in the submitted lighting assessment but, notwithstanding this, any such screening will have an overbearing impact on us and our home.

Photo 3a

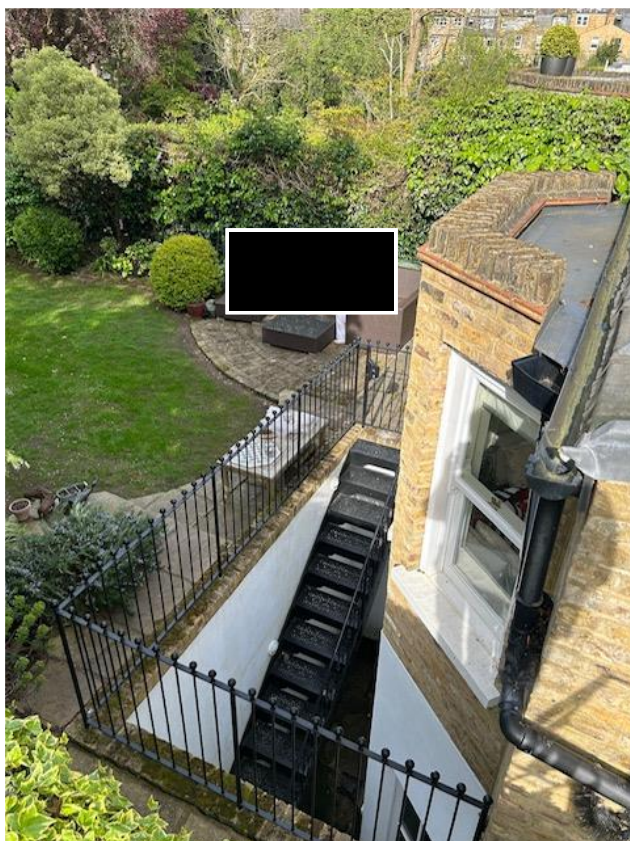


Photo 3b



5) Heritage: Excessive development of a locally listed twinned-house.

We agree with the submitted comments from the Battersea Society and the Clapham Society that the “large rear and side extensions....would detract from the original character to a marked degree”.

The aerial view in photo 4a shows that this rear extension would be out of keeping with the twinned house at no.5 which are both locally listed and should be afforded due protection.

We also note in WLP LP5 Part A points 1 & 3 that “rear extensions would be subservient to the original host dwelling and its setting, would not be overly dominant”. It strikes us that the scale of this development at the rear would not meet this requirement and is not in keeping with the local character of the area.

Our focus is on the outside of the house and how it interacts with our property but we would note the both the Battersea Society and Clapham society’s comments on some of the internal features that this development would lose.

Photo 4a



6) Heritage: Design out of keeping with local area.

We don't think the overall design, with an excess of glass to the rear and particularly the very large new boundary wall, are in keeping with the area. As noted above, the east boundary wall will almost double in size – from 10m x 4m to 15m x 4.9m and as one, huge slab of bricks is not seen elsewhere in the area. We hope the heritage officer will understand the bulk of what is being proposed and, again, we would welcome him/her for a site visit.

Figure 6a



Figure 6b

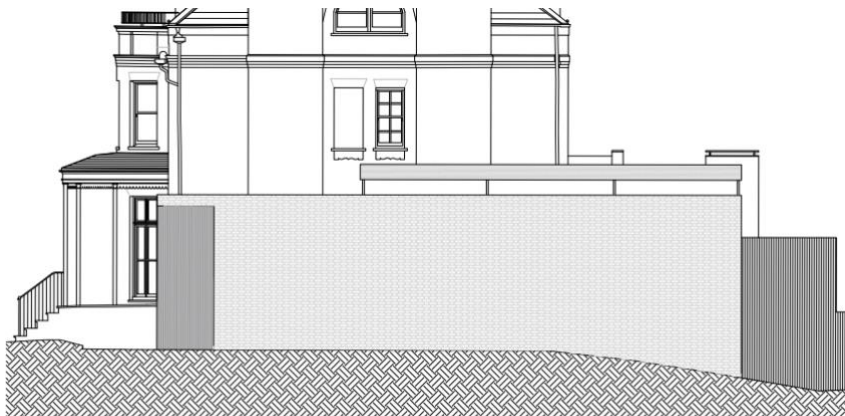
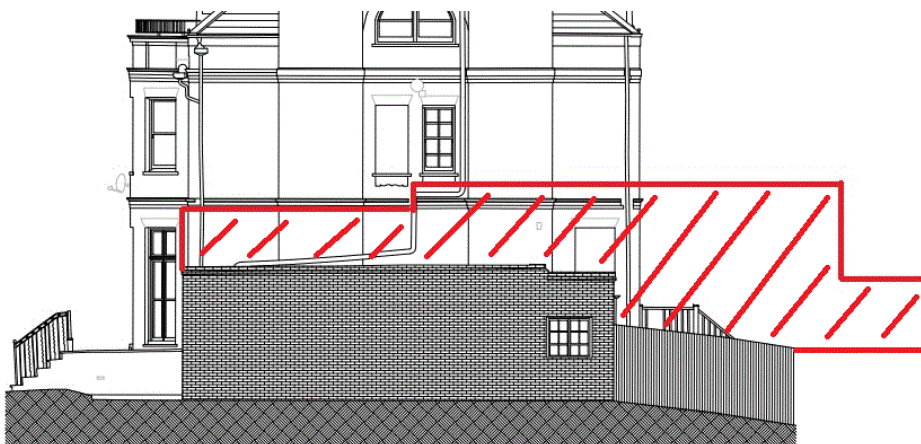


Figure 6c



7) Conflict with WLP policy LP25 “Protecting the existing housing stock”

It is not for us to judge but we don't think the developer is replacing like-with-like in conflict with LP25. The proposals convert two family-sized dwellings (a 4-bedroom and a 3-bedroom flat) into one huge family house and a small 2-bed flat.

The current top floor flat has 5 rooms and a bathroom with a pleasant aspect and windows that face north, south, east and west. It was previously used as a 3-bedroom flat and is described online (Rightmove etc, photos and floorplans 7a below) as such.

When last occupied in 2021 there were 3 occupants in this flat. It would seem that one of these bedrooms (photo 7b) has recently been converted into a substantial “dressing room”.

The top floor flat is clearly a family-sized dwelling which up until recently had 3-bedrooms, a reception room, kitchen and bathroom.. The proposed replacement is a 2-bedroom basement flat with 2 deep lightwells and no aspect. This conflicts with WLP LP25.

Photo 7a

THE MOVE MARKET Valuat

7B Blenkarne Road, London, Wandsworth, Gr SW11 6HZ

Flat 3 bed 980 sq ft

HIGHLY DESIRABLE AREA SUBSTANTIALLY SMALLER

PROPERTY VALUATION
£608,000
Last sold August 1995

INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE
★★★★★
Investment return N/A

rightmove Buy Rent House Prices Find Agent Commercial

← Back to sold prices in this area

7b, Blenkarne Road, London, Greater London SW11 6HZ
Flat 3 1

Last updated: 30/07/2024

7B Blenkarne Road, London is a **second floor 3 bedroom flat** spread over 980 square feet, making it one of the smaller properties here - it is ranked as the 18th most expensive property* in SW11 6HZ, with a valuation of £608,000.

Approximate location

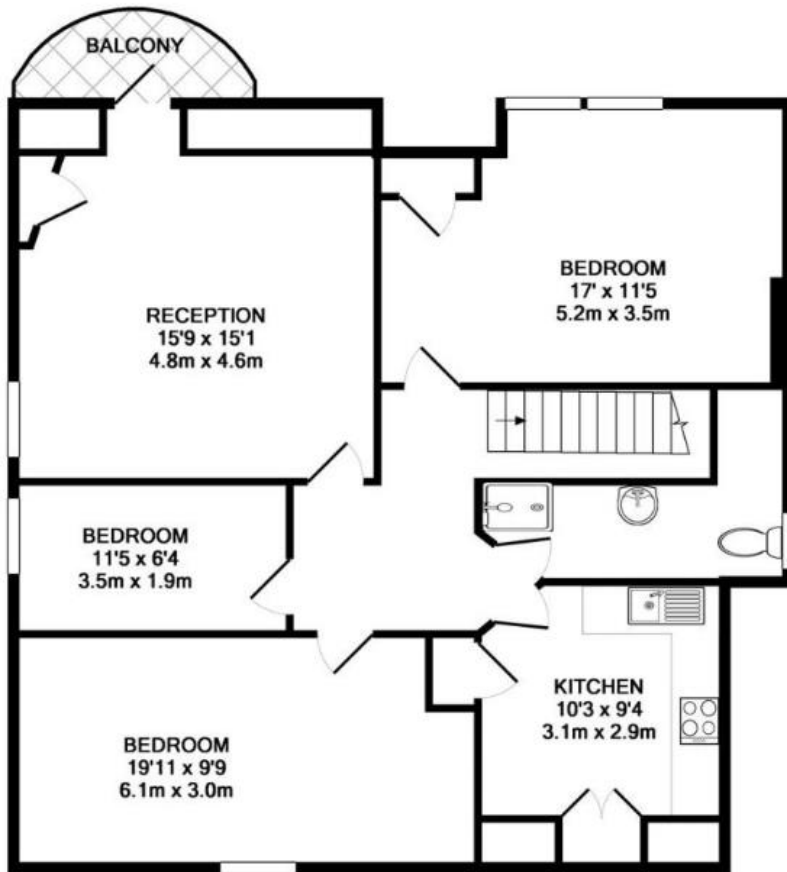


Photo 7b



Errors and oversights in the application

We would note the following inconsistencies across the application:

- i. There is an error on page 5 of the main application form where the applicant has responded “no” to the question “Does the proposal include any new building and/or an increase in height to an existing building”. At the very least, the plans show an increase in height of the garage.
- ii. The application consistently refers to the top floor flat as being a 2-bedroom flat whereas, per point 7 above, this space has been consistently used as a 3- bedroom flat for many years.
- iii. We question if the heritage plan has properly assessed the proposals in the context of para 209 of the NPPF, both in terms of identifying any harm to the non-designated heritage asset (i.e. the local listing) but also in terms of undertaking the required balancing exercise. The Heritage Statement seems only to deal with the impact on the Conservation Area, not the building itself.
- iv. There is an inconsistency between the ground floor plan, the rear elevation, and the side (east) elevation. The side (east) elevation seems to suggest the privacy screen is part of the retaining wall in this location, but the ground floor plan and the rear elevation seem to suggest that this will be a thinner separate element which sits on top of the retaining wall.
- v. It is unclear whether the light survey takes into account the shadowing from this privacy screen into both the kitchen bay window and rear lightwell (photos 3a, 3b above). We note the other errors and omissions in the light survey described in 2) and 3) above.
- vi. The landscape plan also seems to omit the privacy screen and the planting at the east end of the wrap-around terrace.
- vii. The location of the proposed screening trees by the lower, northerly garden seating area are different between the ground floor drawings and the landscape plan.

Final comments

The proposals for 7 Blenkarne Road amount to an overdevelopment of the site and will result in unacceptable impacts to our family and our home.

In terms of the planning process, this is the second application we've had to write an objection to in 18 months (the first being 2023/1300, withdrawn 21/04/23, the developer that time was Revive Renovations). 7 Blenkarne Road has a perfectly large-enough footprint already; it has important local heritage being locally-listed and architecturally twinned with a neighbour and can comfortably accommodate two families in flats of 3+ bedrooms.

Please can we stop this process of speculative reapplications every 12 months as it consumes a lot of time and causes great stress! It would also be good to allow more response time for neighbours when a developer submits a huge application with hundreds of pages of consultants' advice in the middle of August!

Finally, we would respectfully request again that the case officer to visit our home.

Thank you,

Henry and Charlotte Knapman and family