

**DAVID WOLCHOVER**  
**4 & 6 THE RIDGEWAY**  
**GOLDERS GREEN**  
**LONDON NW11 8TB**  
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Monday, 8 April, 2019

Denise Patten  
Deputy Planning Manager  
Finchley and Golders Green Area Team  
Development Management & Building Control Service  
Barnet House  
1255 High Road  
London N20 0EJ

Dear Ms Patten

**Development reference 19/1904/FUL**  
**Land to the rear of 85-87, Hodford Road, NW11 8NH**

I am the owner-occupier of 4 & 6 The Ridgeway, NW11 8TB. The rear of my property looks out towards the site in question, affording a view of it from the first floor and loft extension windows, and from the end of my garden, the level of which is somewhat higher than The Vale roadway at that point.

For the reasons set out below I object to the proposed development, certainly on its present footing.

1. The applicant's Planning Statement (PS) asserts, at para 2.3, that the surrounding area is characterised by dwellings in a variety of housing styles. This is misleading and tendentious. Save for the adjacent *White Lodge* block of flats, the styles are almost exclusively in the traditional form of two stories with a pitched tiled roof, some with pitched end, some with gable ends. The proposed development is made up of vertical sides enclosing the third story with no raking back. No doubt the developer would argue that the slight setting back of the top floors will mitigate the obtruding vertical appearance of the whole. However, the design contrasts starkly with almost every dwelling in the surrounding streets, which are all of two storeys with a pitched roof with or without habitable conversions in the loft space, or built with a third storey behind a raked back tiled frontage.
2. *White Lodge*, adjacent to the proposed development, is the obvious exception in terms of size. The recent addition of the additional, fourth floor was only permitted by the planning committee because the original application for an additional vertically sided storey was refused by an inspector on the grounds of its unacceptably disproportionate "bulk and mass". The

developer submitted an amended application enclosing the additional storey behind a raked back frontage to mitigate the added height and to render the whole more in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood. This has not been unsuccessful although the building remains, in my view, too large for the neighbourhood.

3. It may well be that the present developer has opted for the chosen design partly if not mainly on the grounds of cost. There is little doubt that the vertically sided top floor would be substantially cheaper to construct than building it into the more complex design of a pitched tiled roof in keeping with the neighbourhood style of housing.
4. The applicant submits (PS, para 3.3) that the recent addition of a fourth storey to White Lodge "demonstrates that the principle of a 4 storey modern flat development in the immediate vicinity has been established." But *White Lodge* was originally built in the 1960s, when planning considerations paid less heed to aesthetic and environmental considerations than in these perhaps more enlightened and astringent times. In fact the recent addition of the top floor was justified by the developer on the basis that it was a way of improving the appearance of what had been an ugly existing block of flats and rendering it more consonant with the appearance of surrounding villas. Even with the need for more dwellings in the capital, *White Lodge* should not therefore be used as a precedent for a creeping transformation in the character of a neighbourhood of pleasant suburban villas to one of large and obtrusive blocks of flats.
5. The developer submits (PS, para 5.15) that "[t]he proposed three storey development will act as a transition between *White Lodge* (three storeys plus roofspace [*sic*]) and Zero the Vale (two storeys plus roofspace [*sic*])." This supposed argument misses the point as to what is objectionable about the proposal. It is not its height which constitutes the basis of my objection. It is, firstly, the fact that the top floors of the proposed flats have vertical sides up to the flat roof and as such are out of keeping and character with adjoining and neighbouring structures, including, ironically, *White Lodge*. Secondly, if the site is to contribute to any "transition" between *White Lodge* and the property referred to in PS para 5.15 as Zero The Vale, it would preferably be the absence of any substantial building on it but vegetation – trees and bushes – instead. *White Lodge* looms large over its neighbours but this obtrusive effect is currently mitigated by the open space and foliage growing on the site in question. In the shadow of *White Lodge* the proposed flats would amount to a clear case of overdevelopment.
6. In PS para 3.5 it is noted that "[t]he pre-application response acknowledged that the existing outbuildings on the site are of low quality and do not enhance the appearance of the area, so the removal of these structures would be of benefit." It is hard to think of a more blatant example of sophistry here. Close examination of the two garages shows that it is the dilapidated state of the gates in front of them, covered by graffiti as they are, which mainly contributes to the impression that the garages themselves are run-down. The other outbuildings are barely visible, if at all, from the street. The description of the two garages as of low quality is a red herring. Such garages are usually very basic in design and structure. If the desire of the developer is to improve the aesthetics of the site it is difficult to see why they could not improve its general appearance by repair or refurbishment of the garages and their gates. It is an odd

supposition that the most desirable remedy would be one in which they are replaced by three flats, no doubt yielding a handsome profit for the developer.

7. In the context of the policy favouring the retention of garden space, it is sought to argue at PS para 5.7 that the site

“does not have a garden character. The land is overgrown and . . . [together with the surrounding structures they] make a negative visual impact to [sic] the streetscene [sic] and the character of the surrounding area. ”

This is quite inaccurate if not misleading and there are perhaps three points to make about the assertions. First, even a brief glance at the existing site plan shows that a substantial proportion of the proposed site not occupied by the two garages and the outbuildings is actually taken from the finely groomed part of the gardens of 85 and 87 Hodford Road and is not overgrown. Second, even if the ends of the gardens adjacent to The Vale could be described as “overgrown” the fact that the owners have chosen not to prune the trees and shrubs does not mean they do not constitute a part of the two gardens. They are not waste ground or industrial “brown field” remains. Third while the view looking down The Vale towards the site is slightly and superficially marred by the state of the gates and fencing in front of the garages, the view generally is of the very pleasing foliage of the trees growing in the rear of the gardens. It would be an utter travesty of language to say that whole “makes a negative impact” on the view from the street. The proposed landscaping of the small amount of residual garden space allowed for in the proposal would furnish little compensation for the loss of foliage consequent on execution of the scheme.

I should stress, however, that my main objection is to the incongruous appearance of the new flats. With some additional investment the design could be greatly improved to blend in with the character of the neighbouring properties and not present as the rather cheap box-like “spec-built” structures which are currently proposed.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

C David H Wolchover



David  
Bendor

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From: David Bendor  
Sent: 29 Apr 2019 21:12:37 +0100  
To: Patten, Denisse  
Cc: Planning Consultation  
Subject: 85-87 Hodford Road planning application: objections

Dear Denise,

I firmly object to this proposed development. I would like to make the following points to complement the redacted remarks I added to the planning website:

1. Like other close neighbours who have already noted the noise and nuisance these building works would cause, I would like to emphasise that there has been a huge amount of construction and renovation works in the immediate vicinity over the past 10 years or so which has added significantly to the building stock, transformed the urban landscape, and doubled the population density. We have had three very large blocks of flats built, three smaller blocks built from adjoined houses, an additional floor built on White Lodge, and numerous renovations, conversions and extensions – including Zero the Vale, 85 and 87 Hodford Road. If any neighbourhood has contributed to building targets – this area has more than fulfilled its share. At it is, local amenities, utilities and basic facilities are stretched to capacity – adding more homes would further burden these resources under pressure.
2. The architectural plan as presented is both overbearing, over-developed and out of place in its immediate surroundings. The modernist design is jarring in a built environment of houses which are overwhelmingly presented in the same style, i.e. pitched red tiled roofs, with a red brick and white brick finish.
3. The location of the proposed block of flats is at one of the highest points in the immediate vicinity – meaning that the row of houses below on Hodford Road will be dominated by a three-storey building, heavily overlooked, and my garden and my privacy and peaceful enjoyment amenity will be heavily compromised irrespective of the orientation of the units or their windows. A few years ago 85 and 87 Hodford Road were single occupancy homes. These elderly residents have passed since, and these houses are rented out to two large families. If this proposal goes ahead gardens which once had 2-3 people, will have closer to 20 people. Imagine the impact on noise and privacy this will have.

4. It can be expected that more cars, more residents, pets etc will result in more noise, pollution, traffic and general disturbance. This corner is already busy with traffic roundabout, buses, school runs, access to church and synagogue etc.

5. The proposal to turn green garden into a block of flats is something I would object in principle, wherever in the borough. The land upon which these houses were originally built belonged to the Parish of Hendon. The original leases which were then converted into freeholds were drawn up to prevent any further development or parcellation. I would request that the relevant land law requirements are carefully scrutinised to ensure such construction is legal. The short term interests of the current non-resident owner/landlord who has emigrated to the US, should not be allowed to prevail over the long term interests of the many generations of residents who will have their properties blighted by this development. I urge the planning authorities to weigh the long term interests of the neighbourhood in their considerations, and prevent the degradation of current and future properties and their visual amenity as well as access to garden space for the properties which will be forced to redraw their boundaries.

6. The proposal also requires a major change of designated use from a garage to residential units. In the past the council has rejected requests – and this principle should be respected in this case as well. I was told that a request by 81 Hodford Road for such a change of use a few years ago was refused.

7. Should the opportunity arise I would be pleased to discuss my objections at a public or private hearing.

On a more general note I feel that the current planning rules are in need of review:

- i. To allow neighbours more time to react. If the Freedom of Information Act allows the Council/Government 20 working days to reply, we should allow the same here.
- ii. To require the person requesting permission to consult with neighborhood at a much earlier stage, and demonstrate benefits more clearly.
- iii. To require the applicant to provide alternative plans, which could be considered. In this case, a garden office, gazebo or renovation to the garages.

With regards,

David Bendor  
83 Hodford Road

29 April 2019

04/07/2019 14:48:38

From: "[REDACTED]"  
Sent: 16/05/2019 15:33:54  
To: "Planning Consultation" </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=F45E85A9822547B6BF32A2523F3938D2-PLANNING CO>  
Subject: Ref : 19/1904/FUL

Dear Denisse Patten

I am reaching out today with regards to the above planning permission.

Firstly, please accept my apologies the letter was dated the 03 April but was sent to the flat next door which has only been received yesterday. I realise that comments closed on the 01 May but hoping you can consider my points below.

My property Zero the Vale, is right next door to the intended property.

As it stands, the garages and constant waste from this unused site is a very undesirable feature on a residential road especially as it borders my property. This should be remediated but not at the expense of the following points

I firmly object to this proposed development on this basis

1. The architectural plan does not blend with the surrounding residential home. Creating a 3 story block of flats is going to result in further parking issues and overcrowding on what is a busy corner.
2. The location at the highest point of The Vale will compromise my immediate garden privacy.
3. From an environmental perspective, I am deeply saddened that this little green space with so many mature flowering trees which attract bumble bees and multiple birds will be damaged.

I hope that you are able to give these points your consideration.

Best regards

Fatima Sadeck  
Top floor  
Zero the Vale  
Nw 11 8sg

1 Golden Lane (5th Floor) | London EC1Y 0RR | [REDACTED]

