

Queens Park Conservation Area

Analysis of responses to consultation about changes to planning regulations

Background

During February 2017, a leaflet was distributed by the Queens Park Community Council (QPCC) to households in the Queens Park Conservation Area asking for views about three planning proposals.

The consultation was closed on Wednesday 15th March 2017. By this date, the QPCC had received 36 responses from 34 households (around 2% of total¹).

Most people supported all three proposals. However, there were people who objected to some or all of the proposals and they tended to give a fuller explanation of their views. Some people were particularly interested in one of the proposals and did not comment on all of them.

In relation to the proposals, people expressed the following views:

Proposal	In favour	Against	Unclear
Full width doors across side infill extension	30	2	4
Full length side extensions (where pre-existing extension)	32	1	3
Dormer windows	27	9	0

From the general comments made, the following three themes emerged:

1. Many people feel strongly about preserving the “architectural integrity” and “beauty” of the Estate. Several people said that they supported all three proposals because they would not affect the “look” of the estate.
2. For different reasons, several people mentioned that neighbours had carried out development work without planning permission. Many pointed out that Westminster Council was not taking enforcement action against those who have breached planning regulations.
3. Many people pointed out that the houses on the Estate are “very small for a growing family” and that allowing these proposals would help ease the pressure on people. One person felt that the balance between “environmental/sustainability/quality of life” and “heritage/conservation” should be changed to give more weight to the former.

Proposal 1 – Full width doors across side infill extension

Most people supported this proposal with several referring to the fact that such a change would “enhance the use of space” in the cottages. One response said that they had been refused planning permission for this change, although they knew that others had this style of extension. They felt aggrieved that they had been made to install two sets of wooden doors, which was more expensive and involved higher maintenance costs.

However, two people opposed this proposal because they had both suffered noise problems when neighbours had done similar works (without planning permission). One complained that the noise

“echoes” and “becomes much louder than residents can hear themselves”. The other said that they could “hear every sound from the scraping of a fork to the details of every telephone conversation”.

Proposal 2 – Full length side extensions (where existing extensions)

Again, most people supported this proposal, although very few provided comments. A couple of people pointed out that it would help to maximise space and wouldn't be detrimental to the look of the property.

One person said that they were concerned that this change would cause noise problems, partly due to the small size of the gardens on the Estate.

Proposal 3 – Dormer windows

This proposal generated some strong views.

Those in favour argued that this development:

- Would not alter the “appearance of the facades of houses in the Streets or Avenues, which is welcome”. “The rear of our house is not visible from any roads . . . we would benefit from having dormer windows while not interfering with beauty of the houses”.
- Different people said that dormers would enable “young and expanding families to stay in the area longer”, would make the houses “more practical for family use” and would “contribute to helping people to stay on the Avenues, which must be a good thing”.

A couple of people explicitly approved of the proposal that the dormers should have a standard design and one said that they should not be allowed otherwise.

A few people said that they would want to install a dormer window, if this was allowed.

Those who objected to dormer windows tended to express strong feelings on the subject. In summary, they said:

- Dormers would “impact significantly on this visual coherence and detract from the wonderful way the original builders and planners provided different details in the roofs and frontages of the different streets”. They pointed out that many rear roofs are visible from the street and that there are “many points on the estate where [other] sight lines exist and a proliferation of dormers will severely damage the area”. Different people felt that dormers would change the “character of the houses”; would not be “in keeping with the cottage feel of the houses”; “will wreck the views of all the houses from which they are visible” and would be a “blot on an otherwise very pretty landscape”.
- Some people questioned whether Westminster Council would have the resources necessary to enforce the proposed detailed specification and “without checks the whole estate will become a complete mess”.
- Others raised concerns that dormers “will increase the issue of being overlooked on”.

Other issues raised

Some people raised other planning issues of concern to them:

- Double glazed sash windows
- There should be a minimum distance between the back wall of one house and another.
- What about allowing extensions above the single storey back extensions?
- Relaxation of white-only paint rule for front windows
- More insulation should be promoted
- QPCC should produce an updated design guide for the estate

20th March 2017

ⁱ This figure is based on the following estimate of the number of households on the Estate:

1,482 houses subject to Article 4 AND
246 flats in houses which are in the conservation area
1,728 Total

This figure does not include any flats above shops on the Harrow Road.