

Sandra Wheen, 56 Gordon Mansions, Torrington Place, London WC1E 7HG.

Dear Sam Fitzpatrick

69 Gower Street London WC1E 6HJ 2024/1264/P and 2024/1614/L

I am writing as a local resident to object to the Extension proposed in this application.

I believe that the gardens of Gower Street with their walls and trees are an essential part of the heritage and streetscape of Bloomsbury and should be conserved as well as the houses.

I am particularly concerned about the garden of 69 Gower Street because it lies within the 'Ridgmount Green Corridor', shown in the Plan below and attached to my covering e-mail. This runs all the way from 97 Gower Street (North of Torrington Place) to Store Street at its Southern end and consists of Ridgmount Gardens and the Gower Street Gardens. It provides a breathing space in this part of Bloomsbury, much-loved trees for residents and visitors, and a joined-up home for wildlife.

So, if this application is granted it will not just be about this hotel, it will be about the future survival of this green corridor. One extension will lead to another and the Gower Street gardens will gradually but inexorably be lost because of this precedent. This is what has already happened to the gardens North of 97 Gower Street. They have all been brutally obliterated by mainly single storey extensions, no trees left, see Photo below and attached to my covering e-mail.

It is chilling that one of the precedents cited in this application (see illustration on Page 18 of the Design and Access Statement) shows the garden of No.55 Gower Street, within this green corridor, largely obliterated by a similar brutal single storey extension. The other precedent, cited on Page 14, is 87 Gower Street, where a small period extension has recently been pulled down and replaced by something larger and uglier which takes up half the original garden lengthways.

If there is to be an extension, let it at least be small, hug the building and not eat up the proposed large chunk of the garden.

With regard to the design of the extension, I would like to urge for a period design rather than the modern design favoured by the applicant. This is for four reasons:

1. The modern design proposed is out of keeping with the building.
2. It is extraordinarily ugly. The period alternative suggested is much more inspiring.
3. It looks, and probably is, cheap. This means that in a few years' time it will be easier to make the decision to knock it down and build a larger extension.
4. The out-of-keeping, ugly and cheap design sets a depressing design standard which others will follow.

I am not impressed by the proposal of a green roof which will be out of character with the neighbourhood, difficult to maintain and unlikely to replicate the ecological benefits of even one small tree. I would urge the retention of all trees and shrubs which do not absolutely have to be removed. These are part of the heritage of Bloomsbury and should not be restored not discarded.

In conclusion, I hope Camden will use this moment to take a view about 'the Ridgmount Green Corridor' and decide once and for all to protect it from any further development at all. But if you don't take this view, I hope you will take a conservation approach and save: the style of the building, the garden, trees and walls of 69 Gower Street.

And please can you include, as a condition of any permission, that the roots of trees near the boundary of this property will be protected from damage due the construction of an extension.

Please can you acknowledge receipt of this letter and the two illustrations.

Many thanks

Sandra Wheen
Local Resident



