

17th January 2025 : Submission to Camden Planning Committee by S Bobasch of 12a Keats Grove.

Re: Leigh House (Lower Ground Floor Flat) , 73 South End Road NW3 2RJ

Application number: 2024/1274/P and 2024/2098/L

Summary of key points in this submission

- The scale of the Outbuilding will destroy a significant part of the lovely garden directly adjacent to the Local Plan Open Space (“LPOS”) on all sides. The harm outweighs the community benefits
- The proposed Outbuilding has very large footprint – at over 400sqf, volume of 1200 cubic ft. the size of a self-contained represents an escalation in the size of such buildings in the conservation area. This opens the doors for ever larger “outbuildings” when planning is otherwise unavailable.
- The height is excessive at 2.9m for an outbuilding. A normal ceiling height is 2.4m for habitable rooms, but less for others such as kitchens, attics and outbuildings. Roof lights may add height.
- The site borders the gardens of five properties all in the LPOS. In contradiction to the Officers report, most/ all of these neighbours would see the new building towering some 1.2m above their walls, typically 1.75m above the applicant’s level. The proposal makes an unreasonable suggestion that to hide this excessive height that existing garden walls, walls should be built up higher with a trellis to hide the Outbuilding (at 2.9m); it also contradicts the claim that the Outbuilding will not be intrusive.
- There is overlooking up to the bedrooms of 12a Keats Grove (incorrectly explored) – see 6 below
- Tree protection could be enhanced.

Recommendations:

A *Protect the green space and refuse permission for any sizeable outbuilding of this scale (footprint and height) in this “verdant¹” area.*

Alternatively, if outright refusal is rejected by you, instead please indicate that you might approve a proposal with a REDUCED size overall and REDUCED Roof height to 2.4m (point 6 below).

B *Require frosted glass to doors and the 3 skylights to reduce overlooking into 12A Keats Grove bedrooms (point 8 below)*

C *Make condition 4 explicit to include protection for the Magnolia Grandiflora of 12A Keats Grove (point 7). Refuse permission to fell the glorious healthy 30m high Bay Tree #13.*

Detailed comments

- 1 **Excessive Scale in a garden adjacent to the Local Plan Open Space on all sides.**
 - a. As the Officer concedes, the site in the Hampstead Conservation Area abuts the (LPOS) on three sides. If it was in the LPOS, planning would be likely to be refused.
 - b. **As all the adjacent gardens are in the LPOS, any planning consideration should give weight to overall location and damage should be minimised by reduction .**
 - c. **Environment: The Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum** raised objections as set out in 5.2 of the Officer’s report. The reply is only partial on material and overlooks other issues such as efficiency, heating not mentioned. The green roof does not mitigate the loss of garden.

¹ Planning Officers quote

- d. **Rainwater run-off is not covered. As shown water from the flat roof falls on all sides including onto neighbouring boundary walls**
- e. **Declaring that there is a new “wildlife corridor” is disingenuous.** Free access to wildlife is not created by this proposal and in fact would be compromised by the Outbuilding.

2 **Height above Neighbours walls:**

- a. Paragraph 9.2 states that the Outbuilding would sit below the adjacent boundary walls.
- b. Paragraph 5.5 also states that. *“Given the minor extent of the outbuilding protruding above existing boundary walls.. any reduction in light access and impacts to outlook and.. amenity would be negligible.. ”* **Both of these statements are incorrect.**
- c. Fact: The new Outbuilding is 2.9m high and therefore above the 1.75m high existing brick walls of the neighbours.
- d. The extraordinary proposal is to build up boundary walls with a trellis to hide the Outbuilding. These would have to be over 3m high² to conceal the building. This would reduce the amenity of the gardens in the area by hemming in views.
- e. **Therefore we conclude that the Outbuilding DOES protrude and we will all need to have much higher walls to avoid seeing it.**

3 **Height at 2.9m is excessive for an Outbuilding and sets a precedent.:** Paragraph 9.3 states that the height of 2.9m is “considered acceptable for a garden outbuilding”.

- a. Few people live in new rooms with ceilings that are even 2.7m high (the flat roof deducts little from 2.9m) in an ordinary residence³, let alone for an “outbuilding”. As propose, it is an amazing luxury, for its stated purpose achieved by damaging neighbours
- b. The garden shed in the garden of 12A Keats Grove has a far smaller footprint and is much lower at 2.5m high. It also has a form of green roof and the inside height is fine.
- c. **The Outbuilding height could therefore be reduced by 500cm without damaging its use. If planning is approved, PLEASE MAKE THIS A CONDITION OF APPROVAL.**

4 **Overlooking:** Paragraph 9.6 claims there will be no overlooking and there are no windows fronting onto neighbourhood properties. **This is incorrect**

- a. **From 12A Keats Grove, the sightlines from two bedroom windows look into the glass of the proposed Outbuilding.** And the reverse is true. I cannot speak to other buildings.
- b. **Frosted glass is needed to eliminate this.** Given the declared use, this should not be a problem. **If planning must be granted, please make this a condition including skylights.**

5 **Purpose of Outbuilding:** Paragraph 8.2 of the Officers Report notes the extensions as providing “additional living space” yet the stated use is for an office, gym and storage not “living space”. It does not seem to have a WC or kitchen. Does it have any water?

- a. **This undermines the principle for agreeing the building as additional living space.**
- b. **Therefore as it clearly additional secondary space to the main residence, it can be much smaller in all dimensions for a gym, office and storage.**

6 **Trees:** The glorious 20 year Magnolia Grandiflora in our garden is mentioned in Paragraph 11.3 but protection is not specific and left for the later decision on foundations.

- a. **While Condition 4 may be intended to ensure protection from any harm, can it made more specific for this tree?**
- b. **The removal of the 30m high bay tree shown as #13 will be a blow to the green views as it blocks overlooking. Can it be retained please**

² I believe planning permission for such a high fence might be normally be refused

³ *“The average ceiling height for contemporary UK homes is approximately 2.4 metres (7 feet 10 inches)”³.*