

Application ref.

2025/0431/L

Site Address

16 Provost Road London NW3 4ST

Development Description

Rear garden outbuilding

Planning officer

Blythe Smith

Advisory committee

Eton;Eton

Advisory committee

Please send your comments by:

2025-03-02T00:00:00.000

About your observations

When making your observations please consider the impact the proposals will have on the character and appearance of the conservation area. This will usually be related to physical changes but can include use of buildings. The character and appearance of the conservation area is set out in the conservation area statement it may be useful to refer to it to support your comments.

Please choose one

Objection

Do you have any comments or consider that the proposal is harmful to or does not preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area?

Eton

Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Advice from Eton Conservation Area Advisory Committee: 19.02.2025

Re: 16 Provost Road, 2025/0399/P, 2025/0431/L
Rear garden outbuilding

Since 2017 there have been at least ten successful applications for some form of garden building in the Eton Conservation Area. In nearly every case there has also been a successful application for a rear extension, usually on a previous occasion as is the case here. Our reaction is the same as before: while in terms of the loss of garden space the proposed outbuilding may in itself appear acceptable when viewed in isolation, this is not the case when combined with an extension constructed relatively recently. We are also seriously concerned about cumulative light pollution from large glass windows in otherwise dark garden areas and its impact on biodiversity.

Cumulative loss of garden space

The existing plan of the garden is included with the application but not one showing the proposed garden room. However, it would appear that if implemented almost two thirds of the garden space will have been lost to the rear extension, garden room and associated paving.

When aggregated these types of application are significantly eroding the distinctive nature of the Eton Conservation area. So far our objections on this basis have always been dismissed by officers handling the applications.

Local authorities have a duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in exercising planning functions. The significance of the Eton Conservation Area is derived from its high-quality Victorian housing, with distinctive and cohesive architectural details. It includes green spaces, mature trees, and landscaped gardens, that contribute to the verdant character of the area. The ongoing cumulative loss of garden space in the conservation area through a combination of rear extensions and garden rooms being erected arises because individual applications are being considered in isolation. When viewed across the conservation area whole garden space is being steadily and insidiously eroded and biodiversity diminished. Camden is failing in its duty of care to preserve this special characteristic of the Eton Conservation Area.

Furthermore, it is in contravention of Camden's own emerging policy on the loss of garden space. The Draft New Camden Local Plan (January 2024) Policy NE2 - Biodiversity Protecting Gardens in section 11.30 states:

"The Council recognises that gardens are a vital contributor to the biodiversity of the Borough. How private gardens are planted and managed is the responsibility of individual homeowners. Through the planning process, we will resist the excessive loss of garden space recognising its value as a biodiversity resource, including its potential to deliver greater biodiversity value in the future. We will seek to negotiate the restoration of front gardens to improve biodiversity value through the Local Plan's policy on car-free development and where this would positively contribute to the significance of heritage assets, including conservation areas."

Harmful effect of light pollution

The proposed building is trying to be low key, but will not be so. A run of floor to ceiling glass doors ensures that a gym is on display. Exercise equipment, and those using it, will be visible. And when lights are on the interior will be even more exposed. Such an illuminated space would be a most

unsympathetic presence in these garden spaces. And as we have said on many occasions before a sedum roof does not compensate for the loss of biodiversity inherent in proper open garden space.

We object to this application: to its contribution to the cumulative effect on the loss of garden space and the resulting harm to one of the distinctive characteristics of the Eton Conservation Area; to the fact that when allied to previous permitted garden room developments it contravenes Camden's own emerging policy on the loss of garden space; and to the serious and harmful effect of light pollution on hitherto dark garden space.

Yours sincerely,

Eton CAAC