**Design & Access Statement for Garden Office – an outdoor structure in the rear garden of Garden Flat, 32 North Villas London, NW1 9BL.**

**Introduction**

This design access statement has been prepared to support the planning application from the construction of a simple garden office in the rear of the garden of 32 North Villas.

The application site is located at 32 North Villas. The application site comprises a substation Victorian house built around 1860 as a single family house which has subsequently been divided in three flats. The property is not listed and is within the Camden Square Conservation Area.

The Application property is the Lower Ground and Ground floor flat, known as the Garden Flat and includes the rear garden of the building.

One property in the near vicinity 3 Camden Terrace has a similar outbuilding to the proposed garden office at 32 North Villas.

**The Site History and its Surroundings**

Description of the Camden Square Conservation Area

(taken from the Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy)

Camden Square Conservation Area is a primarily nineteenth century inner London suburb. It is a planned development, in a gridded street layout running parallel to and perpendicular from Camden Road, and the layout is focused around Camden Square.

Camden Square forms the centrepiece of the planned development; however, the special character of the area is that it is also diverse when looked at in detail. The architecture is not uniform around the Square, phased development is evident in groups of buildings, and some plots have been developed individually. This is reflected in the size of plots, layout and the elevation treatment of the houses. The building of the railway through the area, the impact of wartime damage and later infill development have all contributed to the evolution of the area. The two mews behind the Square contain inventive building developments that have also evolved over time. This has resulted in a character that is a unique mix of nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century ideas of the mews concept, from functional service areas to exemplars of urban living. The green spaces and the private gardens are important as they make this a green and leafy area - an attractive yet urban place with an underlying mature landscape. The area also contains some ‘gap sites’. The most poignant is the site of the lost St Paul’s Church, a Victorian gothic church with prominent spire that was demolished in 1956 which was located at the north end of Camden Square at the crossing with Cantelowes Road. This has been replaced with low buildings with poor landscape surrounding them, Also, the junction of Agar Grove, St Augustine’s Road and Murray Street is a vacant site that fails to define the entrance, and mars the view of the area from the south and east. This part of the Conservation Area is an area that continues to change and it needs particular care both to conserve it and to allow it to evolve.

**North and South Villas**

North and South Villas were built at high density from the mid-1860s when the new cattle market was affecting the saleability of property north east of Camden Square. The houses are of the same style as Camden Terrace which lines the north east end of the Square. The houses are in brown stock brick devoid of render, mildly Italianate with segmental arched windows heads and graded in diminishing scale away from the Square. The character is more dense and urban than the Square; front areas and plot widths are correspondingly narrower.

**Map Of Camden Square Conservation Area**



**Relevant Planning Policy Camden Planning Guidance 2021**

**5.5 Outbuildings**

A diagram of a small building

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Design Proposal**

Drawings GO01-GO11 should be considered in conjunction with this statement.

This application is to build a modest garden office in the rear of the garden at 32 North Villas.

A shady garden shaded by two tall sycamore trees in neighbouring properties the garden has an almost woodland aspect. For this reason the small outbuilding has be designed to look and feel like a building you’d expected to find in that woodland context: clad in natural wood panelling that will weather over time and with doors and windows that compliment this natural colour scheme.

It is proposed that the garden office will be sited in the back right of property which is current a bare patch of ground devoid of planting and what we believe was formerly the site of a garden shed.

The room will be a small rectangular building 7.2 sqm within a 73 sqm garden.

The simple, timber clad outbuilding will improve the current aspect of the garden sitting within the current planting and partially hidden from the house by existing shrubbery. The garden will be landscaped at a later date with grasses that will partially screen the outbuilding from upper flats and neighbouring properties. The Russian Redwood cladding has been selected as it will weather to an organic grey to compliment the current planting. The UPVC window and doorframes will be a neutral dark grey colour which will match the greyed redwood panelling and be sympathetic to the planting in the surrounding garden. The building will be used as a home office, garden room and art studio.

There are mature trees in the neighbouring properties, close to the proposed site of the garden office which will obscure the outbuilding from the neighbouring properties.

The foundation system chosen to support the office building will sit on the existing garden surface (soil) and be anchored by a series of shallow screws which are minimally invasive and won’t interfere with tree roots should there be any in the area below the surface (see ground screw system section below).

**Use / Layout / Appearance**

The garden room will be for occasional family use as an office, art room and covered garden space and will be incidental to the enjoyment of the main property. It is not proposed to have any sanitary facilities.

Rectangular in design, a thin full length window will face the main house while double glazed doors to the building will be south facing opening out in the direction of a series of gardens in the neighbouring properties. It won’t overlook any buildings. The size of the building and its use will have minimal impact on its host building, its conservational area context and neighbouring properties and is visually subordinate.

The garden office is proposed as an insulated timber structure with naturally coloured timber cladding that will compliment the trees and shrubbery in the surrounding garden and enhancing the bare and empty corner of the current garden in a way that’s in keeping with the look of the garden and surrounding area.

As demonstrated from the elevation drawings GO03 and GO04 included with the proposal very little of the garden office will be visible above the existing fence line from neighbouring properties.

**Ground Screw System**

Chosen as an efficient and non-invasive system of supporting the office structure avoids the need to lay concrete slabs reducing the environmental impact of the building and will continue to allow natural rain water drainage for the site.

A close-up of a sign

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**Sustainability**

The Camden Local Plan in section 8 of its policy document sets out policies to mitigate climate change by using less energy and promoting renewable energy and looking after water resources

This application proposes the creation of a fully-insulated garden office.

The wood materials used in construction are from FSC certified suppliers who practice responsible forest management by planting four trees for every one cut down.

No impermeable surface will be laid as a foundation for the office, instead it will sit on a raised foundation structure above the ground ensuring the ground and surrounding area remains permeable to reduce any flood risk but the site is already situated in a low flood risk area.

**Design and Access Statement in Summary:**

1. AMOUNT The proposed development has an internal floor area of 7.2 m2 within a garden area of 73.75 m2, comprising of a single storey outdoor structure located within the rear garden for ancillary residential purposes.

1. LAYOUT The proposed outdoor structure has no effect to the surrounding routes of the site as it is nestled near fence lines and positioned to the rear of the garden. No public spaces are being affected.

1. SCALE The internal dimensions of the outdoor structure are 2.93m wide x 2.33m deep with an external height of 2.35m

1. LANDSCAPE All existing planting on site will remain. We wish to clarify that the outbuilding requires no conventional foundations or base. They have been designed to be suspended above the ground on a series of foundation screws which will be driven 0.5m into the hard standing area at the rear of the site.

1. APPEARANCE The small wooden outbuilding is a modest contemporary structure using natural sustainable materials. Russian cedar will be used for the cladding and stained with a natural wooden tone to blend into its surroundings. The windows are UPVC and a subtle earthy dark grey tone to again blend in with the planting. The natural redwood tone and subtle window colouring have been chosen to minimise any visual impact to the surroundings.

1. PROPOSED USE Ancillary residential purposes

1. ACCESS The access to the site will not be altered or replaced in anyway; the studio is situated close to fence lines where it does not intrude on any existing paths or access points to the main dwelling or site.

**Conclusion**

The proposal would improve the visual aspect of the current corner of the existing garden

The garden room would improve the flexibility of the garden allowing year-long use and use in all weathers.

It is carefully designed to compliment its environment and of a scale sensitive to its context.

The scheme is compliant with the councils guides and should meet the Council’s approval.