

Delegated Report		Expiry Date:	05/09/2014	Officer:	David Peres Da Costa
Application Address		Application Number(s)	1st Signature	2nd Signature	
The Studio 126 Greencroft gardens London NW6 3PJ		2014/4610/P			
Proposal(s)					
Erection of two storey building, following demolition of existing, and a glazed single storey link to flat.					
Recommendation(s):		Refuse planning permission			
Application Type:		Full planning permission			
Consultations	Date advertised	21 days elapsed	Date posted	21 days elapsed	
Press notice	31/7/14	21/8/14	Site notice	25/7/14	15/8/14
Date sent		21 days elapsed	# Notified	# Responses	# Objections
Adjoining Occupier letters	22/7/14	12/8/14	42	4	2
Consultation responses (including CAACs):	<p>2 objections from different flats in No. 128</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial increase in floorspace and by linking the main house to the garden building. the building would extend over the majority of the garden Also seems to be higher than the existing building Loss of garden and green space would damage an important part of the character of the conservation area loss of amenity of residents and erosion of the leafy, open character of the conservation area out of character with street and wider area Glazed link will damage the architectural integrity of No. 126 and is incompatible with the design and historic character of the Conservation Area's existing buildings. Conversion of studio to two storey building will also increase the urban density leading to problems with parking and waste storage A two storey house in the garden is much more extensive than a rear extension Loss of privacy to No.128 Given the existing cottage at the rear of 130 (Westcroft Cottage), the proposal would result in the occupiers of No 128 feeling hemmed in and losing feeling of light and green space in garden <p>2 letters of support (128 / 122A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little change to the appearance, as viewed from No 128, as size, height and finish don't change much Have no objections to replacing the structure with something similar Walkway is tucked against the wall and will form a nice connection with the house The development is in proportion to the existing building and would not alter the character of our property 				

- Never really liked the studio as a building and think the proposed new building will be preferable

Site Description

The site is a 4 storey (with lower ground floor) mid-terrace property on the north side of Greencroft Gardens (close to the junction with Priory Road). The property falls within the South Hampstead Conservation Area but is not listed.

Relevant History

2013/3011/P: Use of lower ground floor and garden studio as residential flat (Class C3). Certificate of lawfulness granted 01/08/2013

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS1 (Distribution of Growth)

CS5 (Managing the Impact of Growth and Development)

CS14 (Promoting High Quality Places and Conserving Our Heritage)

DP24 (Securing High Quality Design)

DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage)

DP26 (Managing the Impact of Development on Occupiers and Neighbours)

Camden Planning Guidance CPG 1 Design Chapter 4

South Hampstead Conservation Area Statement pages 8-9, 25, 27 and 47

London Plan 2011

NPPF 2012

Assessment

Proposal: Consent is sought to demolish the existing (centrally positioned) garden studio and to rebuild it on the boundary with No.124. The studio would be enlarged: it would be 0.4m wider, 1.4m longer and 1m higher than existing. The studio would measure 9m by 5.75m and would be 6.32m high. A glazed link connecting the studio to the host property is also proposed. The glazed link would measure 7.2m by 2m and would be approximately 3.1m high. The studio would be timber frame finished in clapboard with timber framed doors and windows and a slate roof. The rear of the studio would be almost completely glazed.

Assessment:

Background:

The garden studio is historic and is shown on the 1935 ordnance survey. A lawful development certificate application for the use of lower ground floor and garden studio as a residential flat was granted in August 2013. The assessment for that application including this council tax inspector note from 2002: *he and partner were given a lease to occupy basement part of the main building and have sole use of studio at the rear of the property. They are applying to buy the freehold of the property. The basement has no kitchen or bathroom (They use kitchen and shower room within the studio).* The use of the property was confirmed to be as set out in by the Council tax inspector, when the lawful development certificate application was assessed.

Design:

The Council provides specific guidance on rear extension and development in rear gardens in Camden Planning guidance (CPG1). The construction of garden buildings, including sheds, stand-alone green houses and other structures in rear gardens and other undeveloped areas, can often have a significant impact upon the amenity, biodiversity and character of an area. They may detract from the generally soft and green nature of gardens and other open space, contributing to the loss of amenity for existing and future residents of the property.

Large garden buildings may also affect the amenity value of neighbours' gardens, and if used for purposes other than storage or gardening, may intensify the use of garden spaces.

Development in rear gardens should:

- ensure the siting, location, scale and design of the proposed development has a minimal visual impact on, and is visually subordinate to, the host garden
- not detract from the open character and garden amenity of the neighbouring gardens and the wider surrounding area
- ensure building heights will retain visibility over garden walls and fences

South Hampstead conservation area statement defines the special interest of the conservation area. *South Hampstead is a well preserved example of a leafy Victorian suburb. One of the most prominent features of the area is vegetation – both to the front and rear of properties. The open green spaces of the private rear gardens and the communal gardens between terraces of houses remain undeveloped and are a very important amenity for local residents – both for those who look onto the spaces and those who have access to them.*

The conservation area statement identifies rear extensions and loss of rear gardens to hard landscaping as one of the development pressures facing the area. Paragraph 7.13 and 7.14 provides further detail on this development pressure. *The long, undeveloped rear gardens and private open spaces are central to the character and appearance of South Hampstead Conservation Area, and their preservation is of paramount importance.*

In recent years however, largely due to the increased intensity of residential use and resulting trend for residential conversion, there have been a significant number of planning applications for large rear extensions and significant loss of rear gardens to hard landscaping. This results in a loss of amenity of residents and erosion of the leafy, open character of the conservation area. Applications are always assessed in line with Camden Planning Guidance, however particular care should be taken to ensure that the attractive garden setting of the host building, neighbouring gardens and any private open spaces is not compromised by overly

large extensions and areas of hard landscaping. Residents are encouraged to maintain as much soft landscaping as possible in rear gardens.

Any development of rear garden spaces should not detract from the general feeling of openness, and should ensure that most of the existing garden space is retained.

It is evident from the conservation area statement that garden spaces are especially important in the South Hampstead Conservation Area.

The size, location and bulk of the existing studio result in this building being an anomalous element in the conservation area. Therefore, there is no objection to the demolition of this structure. Given the existing studio's large footprint and the significant area of garden already consumed, no further increase in the studio's size would be supported. The 1m increase in the height of the studio would further undermine the garden setting of the host property increasing the prominence of this incongruous element. Whilst the existing building is 5.2m high the proposed building (6.32m) would more clearly equate to a two storey structure. No existing or proposed section has been provided. However photographs on record show the existing studio had a mezzanine sleeping platform with adequate headroom only in the centre of the building. This mezzanine cut across the existing window on the east elevation. This proposal would substantially increase the amount of habitable floorspace at 1st floor level with proposed windows on the south elevation clearly indicating the position of 1st and 2nd floor.

The existing studio is more than 7m from the host property. This distance contributes to it being viewed as separate element. Whilst the existing studio is incongruous it can be clearly read as ancillary to the main house. The glazed link would result in the studio becoming an extension to the lower ground floor.

The length of the glazed link is similar that refused planning permission at 14 Lawn Road (ref: 2012/1343/P). Although that development was in a different conservation area, the appeal decision is relevant to this application. In that case the inspector held that *'the length of the link and the manner in which it connects the main building to a formerly detached garden building are most uncharacteristic of the local area. The overall effect leads to an undesirable impression of overdevelopment. Because the garden room is no longer detached, it no longer appears as an ancillary outbuilding and the combination of structures to the rear dominates the garden and rear elevation'* (ref: APP/X5210/A/12/2185507).

Likewise, in this application, the proposed glazed link would increase the dominance of the built forms in the rear garden and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Amenity:

The enlarged studio would harm the outlook of neighbouring occupiers particularly from their gardens. The repositioning of the studio closer to the boundary with No 124 would further harm the outlook of the occupiers of this property. The proposed window in the south elevation (facing towards the terrace), because of the relatively small distance between windows, may result in harmful overlooking and loss of privacy to occupiers of neighbouring properties. If approval was recommended this issue could be dealt with by way of a condition requiring obscure glass. The increase height and length of the structure is also likely to result in increased overshadowing of neighbouring gardens.

Recommendation: Refuse planning permission