

ADVICE from Primrose Hill Conservation Area Advisory Committee
12A Manley Street, London NW1 8LT

3 December 2014

11 Princess Road London NW1 8JR, 2014/7338/P (conservatory)

Strong objection.

1. Main issue: The main issue for the Committee is whether the proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The main areas of consideration are the effect of the proposals on the surviving pub garden, in terms of its use, now formally recognized as of community value, and of the impact on the significance of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

2. Process: The two applications need to be considered together, as well as on their own merits. The conservatory proposal (2014/7338/P) is clearly made in the expectation of construction of the house. While some drawings (for example, 985.03 - P3 - 150, 151, and 182) appear to show the conservatory without the house constructed, the ground floor plans provided show no access to a surviving garden through the south wall of the proposed conservatory. Were the conservatory to be constructed as now shown, without the house, the garden to the south would not be accessible from the public areas of the pub. We address the issues arising if the house were consented without the conservatory approved in our advice on application 2014/6935/P.

3. We note that the applications have been subject to no request for pre-application consultation with the Advisory Committee.

4. We address first the impact of the proposed conservatory and house on the pub garden.

5. We note the overall guiding policy on use in the NPPF at para 70 which states 'To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: ... guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs; ...'.

6. We note that the test here is to guard against decisions which would 'reduce' the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.

7. The garden has been specifically recognized by the Council as part of the larger recognition of the Albert as an asset of community value (confirmed 17 November 2014). The local community character of the pub was recognized, as was its value as a meeting place for local clubs. The garden's function in this role was specifically acknowledged. The recognized value of the garden depends on its scale, and its location, which together have no equivalent in the conservation area. On its size, what is critical is that group users, whether sports groups or extended family parties, have the space to meet. The reduction to less than half the current space threatens this community value. It clearly fails the test of NPPF 70 by 'reducing' the community's ability to meet its recognized day-to-day needs.

8. The proposals also harm the character of the existing garden: that is, they reduce its function as an external space of community value by changing its character. The existing space is both enclosed, and so gives a sense of safety, but with views through to Kingstown Street, reinforcing the sense of community value – an open space visible

to the larger public realm. These views would be completely destroyed in the present proposals.

9. The loss of much of the current openness of the garden to Calvert Street, for which the garden provides a degree of informal supervision, would also be a further loss to the community value of the garden.

10. These aspects of integration within the community space – neither enclosed by high walls, nor abutting busy pedestrian routes – are key aspects to its community role.

11. The openness to the south has also been important in allowing the garden to enjoy direct sunlight over extensive areas. The proposals would greatly diminish this. Pressed into the northern end of the open space, the surviving garden would be shaded by the raised roof to the conservatory, while the existing configuration of Auden Place already shades this part of the garden from the western, afternoon, sun.

12. We note in support of the protection of the asset of community value the recognition of these issues by the Planning Inspector in the appeal decision in 2014 on the Chesham Arms, 15 Mehetabel Road, London, E9 6DU (APP/U5360/C/13/2209018, paras 30, 35-40), and references to Appeals Ref APP/25600/A/12/2172028 & 2175522, and APP/X5990/A/14/2215985 (inquiry document 17).

13. We note that if application 2014/6935/P were not consented, the conservatory application, as currently submitted, would still cause the harms identified, by destroying access to the southern section of the garden.

14. The design of the conservatory, with its solid brick wall to the south, would, in itself, be harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Rear additions are required to 'be in harmony with the original form and pattern of the house and the historic pattern of extensions within the terrace or group of buildings' (PH27 in the *Primrose Hill conservation area statement*, formally adopted in 2001 with strong community support). In this case the proposed conservatory extends across the garden in a form quite alien to the existing pattern: its alien quality is reinforced by its division of the garden into two, separated, parts. The proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Simpson', followed by a horizontal line.

Richard Simpson FSA
Chair