

Design and Access Statement

The dwelling at 248 Gray's Inn Road consists of the upper two floors of a four storey building, of which the lower two floors are occupied by a tailor's shop. The dwelling has the benefit of the rear yard at ground floor level, in which a shed has existed for several years. This application is for planning and listed building consent for a larger shed to reflect the storage needs of the dwelling's occupants.

The existing shed (now removed) was granted planning permission by the Council by letter dated 18th November 1998 (copy included with application). This shed was a timber structure measuring approximately 3m x 2.4m on plan (7.2m²) with a ridge height of approximately 2m. The shed now proposed is larger at 4.5m x 2.4m (10.8m²) with a ridge height of approximately 3.2m.

The larger structure is needed due to an increasing amount of domestic paraphernalia associated with the resident family. This includes buggies and bicycles that can't be left in the hallway because this is also the fire escape from the upper floors of the building, or left outside in the street for obvious reasons. In addition there is garden furniture, BBQ equipment and sporting equipment to be accommodated.

The larger shed will occupy approximately one third of the rear yard, leaving a pleasant stone paved area for use by the occupants as external amenity space. The yard is already significantly enclosed by other structures, most recently by the newly constructed rear extension to the café at 250 Gray's Inn Road, which has completely infilled the neighbouring rear yard with a 3.2m high structure.

The shed will be a temporary demountable structure, fabricated off site and delivered and erected in a day, and removable in the same manner. The materials proposed are dark stained timber for the walls and shed felt or corrugated bitumen sheeting for the roof, with a painted timber window and door. These are appropriate finishes for the building type and are 'temporary' in nature compared with the masonry of the principle building and surrounding structures, so are considered to be the appropriate architectural 'language' for this purpose.

The commercial tenant of the ground floor premises (Mr C Antoniou) has been consulted about the proposal and is supportive of the replacement structure, acknowledging that this will not have a harmful effect on his premises, where the rear window facing the yard is not the primary source of light or outlook.

The site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and No 248 is a listed building (Grade II). Given the size, position and appearance of the proposed shed the applicant would suggest that it will have a neutral impact on the heritage assets in the vicinity. It is also relatively ephemeral, being easily removed once the need has passed.

In terms of planning policy context, the relevant guidance would seem to be contained in paras 4.22 to 4.26 of the Design CPG of September 2014. Under 4.22 there will be no loss of 'green' space as none exists presently and the character of the yard is not really that of a 'garden' in the traditional sense. Under 4.23 the amenity of the neighbouring residential yard at No 246 will not be affected by the proposal as the visible sky component within this neighbouring yard will not be reduced because the replacement shed is below the horizon formed by the surrounding buildings. Due to the design of the proposed shed the applicant does not consider that the neighbouring yard will be further enclosed upon. The applicant has consulted the owner of No 246, who has also raised no objection to the scheme. Under 4.24 the height of the proposed shed is below that of the adjacent structures at No 250 Gray's Inn Road, (at the rear) No 2 Wren Street and No 5 Green Yard.

No ecology will be affected by the shed and water run-off from its roof will be taken to the existing nearby yard gully, which is connected to the combined sewer system serving the dwelling.