



Dear Tessa

Many thanks for your call this morning - much appreciated.

To summarise our comments on the retrospective planning application for the shed at 17 Downside Crescent, NW3:

The objections are:

1) There is a significant security concern. On 26 March, a few weeks after the shed was installed, we were broken into. The burglars came in - as confirmed by the police who found their footsteps - from the back part of the garden. It may well have been the case that they came in from the next door garden (whose perimeter fence is lower than ours) and got up onto the shed roof, from where they could literally jump down into our garden, as the side of the roof runs alongside our side fence (there is no distance between it and our fence). We therefore feel that this roof is an easy access point and will continue to pose a security problem for us in years to come.

2) The shed itself is extremely - and unnecessarily - large and high, bearing in mind that it belongs to 3 flats next door (though crucially not the ground floor one), as Mr Forte has apparently recently converted the loft into a studio flat, thus making him the owner of 3 out of the 4 flats. It is an eyesore, and we cannot fathom a) why it needs to be so large, nor b) why windows were required. It is the size of a bungalow and, as before, we suspect at one stage it might be used as accommodation, albeit temporary. Even if that is not the case, it nonetheless seems extraordinary why permission was granted for a shed of that square footage and with that height roof.

Speaking to the current ground-floor long-standing council tenant, Mrs Woodin, she feels that Mr Forte is making every effort to try to make her leave (against her will), thus enabling him to buy up the ground floor flat from Camden council. This means that he would own the entire building. No one would then see if there was indeed anyone living in the shed because the windows face away from our garden. He would then feel free to exploit the building for a purpose other than its intended use. I am sure he sees the existing structure in the long-term, ie he wants to leave the windows in, because in future he will be able to exploit the shed as he sees fit.

In our ideal scenario, Mr Forte would be made to rebuild a smaller shed, further away from the fence. But at the very least, we would expect that he boards up/replaces the windows, as they have no purpose there at all.

Kind regards

Debbie Beckerman and Keith Jones
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