

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

1 February 2017

44-44A Gloucester Avenue NW1 8JD 2016/7089/P

Strong objection.

1. The Advisory Committee considered the application as a whole, identifying within it three distinct elements, the proposed restoration of the front elevation; the proposed roof extension; and the proposed rear extension.
2. The Committee's advice is informed by the important historical material made available through the applicant's historical analysis dated November 2011 and included in the application as Appendix 9.0. We note that the building is variously referred to, being called, *inter alia*, the house, and Building D.
3. It is common ground that the house makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The main issue is what it is about the house which makes that positive contribution, the significance of the house in the conservation area, and what harm the present application might cause to the significance of the house and to the character and appearance of the CA.
4. The Advisory Committee is also happy to accept the applicant's own assessment that, of the original 1858 construction, buildings 'B and D survive in a plainly recognisable state, D in particular being almost unaltered externally' (Appendix 9.0 Historical analysis November 2011, para 6.1 p. 8 or 10). We also note the drawings presented as Figure 9, which supports the applicant's assessment.
5. The Advisory Committee also noted the Planning Inspector's decision in dismissing the appeal on the larger site in 1998 (refs T/APP/X5210/E/97/813649/P4 and T/APP/X5210/A/97/283079/P4), where the Inspector gave particular weight (paras 19-20) to the scale of the buildings and to avoiding changes which would give the buildings undue dominance both in the street and an overbearing effect within the courtyard.
6. In the light of these considerations, the Advisory Committee has no objection to the proposed restoration of details to the front elevation. We note that, as proposed, the main front elevation should be in brick, that is, that the present paintwork be stripped away, to restore the contrast between the main plane of the elevation and the stone or stucco details.
7. The same considerations which justify the restoration of the front – in particular the almost unaltered external appearance – demonstrate that the proposed roof extension and rear extension would be seriously harmful to the identified significance of the building.
8. The roof extension would very significantly change the scale and proportion of the surviving original house. The key issue identified in the 1998 Appeal was the relationship of the house to the industrial buildings. This is to be understood in terms of the character and scale of the whole group. The house was of a scale with the low industrial buildings (Building B, also acknowledged as surviving in a 'plainly recognizable state'): this key relationship would be seriously harmed by the proposed roof addition. The later buildings of 1871, with their larger scale, contrast with the low scale of the surviving 1858 buildings: this distinctive degree of contrast is significant, and would also be harmed by the proposed roof extension.

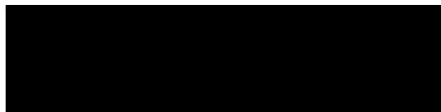
9. In broader terms within the conservation area, the importance of the roof to the house is recognized by the specific inclusion of the building in the list of properties where 'change to the shape and form of the roof are unlikely to be acceptable' in the *Primrose Hill conservation area appraisal* (current SPD) at PH19 pp. 31-32. We would also argue that the modest and simple form of the roof is part of the significance of the building, in itself and in its group, and thus of the positive contribution which it is acknowledged to make to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposed mansard form would destroy this significance, harming the character and appearance of the conservation area.

10. This harm would be visible not only from the front of the house – significant in views from both Gloucester Avenue, but also in long views along Princess Road. The mansard would require a substantial change of scale to the flank wall, visible in side views from Gloucester Avenue, again harming the historic significance of the house – in terms of scale and form – in its context.

11. Similar arguments apply to the proposed rear extension – more a rebuilding of the house to a larger scale than an extension. This would substantially harm the significance of the scale of the house in the context of the group of buildings on the site – the point specifically identified by the Inspector in 1998. This harm would be particularly visible in the views of the flank wall from Gloucester Avenue, as well as from within the courtyard.

12. The proposals for the roof and the rear extension neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, but substantially harm it in terms of recognized significance.

13. We note that there is no countervailing public benefit which might justify such harm. There is, in fact, a need for smaller houses or flats in Primrose Hill, and the house simply refurbished would contribute to the mix of housing available in the area.



Richard Simpson FSA
Chair