

Camden Square Conservation Area Advisory Committee

81 St Augustine's Road
London NW1

Date: 12 November 2018

Planning application Reference: 2018/4411/P

Proposal: Erection of infill extension at lower ground floor level, external insulation and render to existing lower ground and ground floor projecting wing; replacement of door with sash windows, additional window to side elevation and replacement of sash window with French doors at upper ground floor level including terrace and relocation of external stairs to southern boundary; replacement of conservatory with fully glazed extension with rooflight at 1st floor level; enlargement of existing dormer with hot water solar panel above and rooflight; all to rear elevation. Enlargement of dormer and relocation of rooflight to front elevation.

Summary: We **object** to the proposed development. Concerns over its bulk, technical feasibility, negative impact on privacy and light pollution and overdevelopment of garden space indicate that the proposed development will neither maintain nor enhance the Camden Square Conservation Area and in its current state should therefore be rejected.

Comments:

1. Although the drawings are generally of a reasonable standard, we have some issues with the level of detail which affect the technical adequacy of the development.
 - 1.1. Certain essential structural elements are omitted in section.
 - 1.2. The design and access statement has not been updated to reflect the changes in the revised drawings, therefore some of the arguments referring to the height and appearance of the building are invalid
 - 1.3. More information is needed on the treatment and colour of the vertical timber cladding.
 - 1.1. The structure of the building and deck is shown as sitting on timber joists raised above ground; the depth of the supporting concrete footings is inadequate.
2. The height and volume of the proposal (bulk) are inappropriate
 - 2.1. The proposed building takes up almost the entire width of the rear garden (minus 520mm on either side) and is projecting at least 1455mm above the boundary fence (plus build-up of green roof), which makes it therefore appear out of proportion and bulky within its restrained surrounds.
 - 2.2. The rear dormer is too dominant. Two nearby examples have been cited as comparable. That at 84 St Augustine's Road is quite a bit narrower, but, significantly, according the approved planning application 2015/1968/P has

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not been built. The dormer is significantly taller and appears wider than the drawing. (Calling attention to this development, of which another element has already been subject of a demolition and enforcement notice, the architect has helpfully revealed to us other aspects not constructed as drawn. Camden may also wish to take enforcement action against the much larger inset rear balcony and an apparent door to the flat roof of the extension adjacent.)

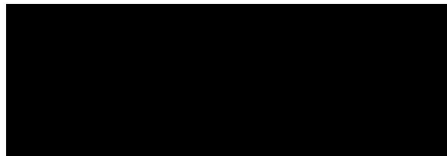
- 2.3. The other cited rear dormer, to 14 South Villas, is much smaller than the current proposal. The side clearances are labelled as 1160mm in the January 2012 application drawing, rather than 500mm shown in the current application for 81 St Augustine's Road. Moreover its front face is set far back from the eaves (about halfway up the rear pitch), significantly reducing its prominence.
3. The scale and proportion of the development do not relate to the neighbouring buildings
 - 3.1. The generally horizontal treatment of the rear extensions could be considered a reasonable contrast to the verticality of the original, but the large, wide sash window to the second floor rear extension is proportionally oversized for its high position as well as unlikely to be technically achievable as a timber sliding sash window.
 - 3.2. The rear and side elevations of the proposed building are mainly comprised of timber cladding (not further specified) with no elements to break up the bulk, which would make it appear oppressive and out of scale to the neighbouring properties.
 - 3.3. The claim in the design and access statement that "the eaves will exceed the height of the garden fence by 795mm only" and that "the building materials visible from the neighbouring properties will be mostly a sedum roof and a small portion of the vertical cladding" are no longer valid as the design has changed.
4. In the absence of information on the treatment and colour of the vertical timber, cladding informed comment on the appropriateness of the colour and appearance of materials is not possible.
5. The gap between the building and the garden wall (about 500mm) is very tight. Access to this space may be difficult thus compromising maintenance.
6. The proposal is likely to impact on the privacy of neighbours
 - 6.1. The new design proposal shows glazed panels at the sides of the building. As the top of the panels is only about 1650mm above the finished floor level, overlooking neighbours would be a concern.
7. With the partially glazed side elevations and a skylight, neighbouring properties will be affected by light pollution.
8. While the internal layouts appear attractive, numerous technical issues are not dealt with which could affect the feasibility of the development.

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- 8.1. The roof to the first floor room atop the rebuilt extension is shown as completely flat and implausibly thin, and a rooflight shown in plan does not appear in rear or side elevation.
- 8.2. No slope is shown to the front dormer roof.
- 8.3. The rear dormer is implausibly drawn, with areas of very thin walls and roof immediately behind the windows, which would represent serious cold-bridges and not receive building control approval.
- 8.4. Its roof and solar panel would be more prominent than drawn, and the proposed rooflight in the remaining slope above (shown longer in roof plan than in section) is highly unlikely to be practicable.
- 8.5. The section and lower ground floor plan show no way of supporting the retained rear bay above if the bottom storey were removed. This would have a significant bearing on the newly extended main room.

Technically unresolved representations showing roofs lower or thinner than feasible are extremely common in the planning applications on which we comment. The resulting structures are usually more prominent than drawn and it is disappointing that these technical issues are not recognised earlier in the planning process.

9. In its current state, given the oversized rear dormer, the need to address the numerous technical aspects more thoroughly with convincingly drawn plans and concerns over the overdevelopment of valuable garden space, privacy and light pollution, we would strongly recommend the application be rejected.



Signed:
David Blagbrough
Chair
Camden Square CAAC

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