

Planning Application 2018/4766/P 79 Gloucester Avenue - Objections

We object to this application for several reasons listed below.

1. The already-completed works violate, in a number of material respects, the planning permission granted with 2017/2170/P. Since the granting of that previous application the property has been sold and the present applicant has knowingly made unauthorized changes to the back building, including raising the roofline, raising a party wall, and adding wraparound windows, cladding and rendering the building -- in each case without seeking or receiving the relevant planning consent.

The building, which is now mostly built, has been constructed with blatant disregard for the rules applicable in Camden and the Primrose Hill Conservation Area and disrespect for the planning process and the Camden Planning commission.

2. The present application is defective, inaccurate or misleading in a number of material respects.

a. The current application has been done on a form for 'demolition of an unlisted building.' We are not sure if this is the correct form but note that no building is being demolished. If there is proposed demolition, we do not see it described in the application.

b. Regardless of the incorrectness of the form of application it also omits, misstates or is otherwise inaccurate in several material respects, for example:

- Section 3 - Description of the Proposal – the application mentions only “adjustment to the slope of the rear roof of the study room to insert frosted glazing.” The application fails to mention that 9 cm of insulation, cladding and rendering have been added to the exterior of the building on two sides. The formerly brick outbuilding is now covered in concrete render and is a stand-alone violation of the existing planning consent. The application also fails to state when the building works were started. We note they were started in August 2018.
- Section 10 – Materials – The application states that the existing walls are 'brick' and that the proposed walls will be 'as existing'. **This is misleading, as the existing walls are now covered in cladding and rendering, not brick.** The sections inviting information about materials used in the roof, windows, doors and boundary treatments have all been left blank. Nor are the materials that have been used noted on the drawings. **The application and the drawings omit material information regarding the application of insulation to the exterior and the application of rendering over the building.** We can only surmise this omission is purposeful, because the materials are not in keeping with the character of the area or the building and are in violation of the existing planning consent.
- Section 15 – Existing use – The application states that the site is not vacant and that it is currently used as a residential dwelling. This again is misleading. The site is vacant and under construction. The last use of the site/outbuilding (also blank) was as a storage facility for a business. The property as a whole has not been occupied as a residence for at least 12 years.
- Drawings are misleading – The current application seeks to minimize and otherwise disregard the impact of raising the roofline of the outbuilding. The drawing refers to raising the roofline as “minor adjustments” and states that our property is not impacted which is not the case. In fact, half of our main dining area looks directly into nearly all of the new proposed windows, and these would likewise overlook us. Camden guidance states that the

location of new windows should be carefully designed to avoid overlooking, especially into habitable rooms, and suggests a distance of 18m between windows as a guideline. Here, the new windows are less than 6m from our principal habitable room. There is also a direct line of sight to and from the new windows into three other rooms in our house, one of which is a living room and two of which are bathrooms including our family shower.

The proposed drawings also claim that the increased roofline height is limited to 523mm. This is incorrect; the actual increased height would be closer to 740mm measured from the previous roofline height. We can only surmise that the applicant seeks to intentionally mislead the planning officers in this respect.

We have sent images of the view of the existing property from our house to the Camden planning email address.

In addition to restrictions on overlooking, Camden and Primrose Hill planning guidelines contain significant processes for determining when a roofline may be raised, including the impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties (considering factors of visual privacy and outlook, sunlight, daylight and overshadowing, artificial light levels, and noise), and how the proposal impacts the character of the property.

We ask that the roofline as previously approved in 2017/2070/P of the property be maintained and that no additional windows or external rendering or cladding materials are permitted, beyond what has already been permitted in 2017/2070/P.

We note that we did not object to the original plan to convert 79 Gloucester Avenue from an office into a 2 bedroom property, or the plans for the 2 bedroom property itself, which did not include raising the roof of the back structure or creating windows that overlooked our living areas and blocked our light. The back structure shares a party wall with our property and is directly visible from most of the principal back rooms of our house, including the living area where we spend the most time. Thus, its use as low level garage/storage room that did not overlook our house was critical to our decision to purchase 81 Gloucester Avenue, and we were aware at the time of purchase that many protections are in place through Camden regarding raising the roofline, preventing overlooking, etc.

Specific reasons we object to the proposed variation and development are:

Overlooking and artificial light

The proposed new windows overlook multiple rooms of our home. They provide a direct line of sight into our kitchen/dining area, principal living area, a shower, a bathroom, and our garden. The proposed new windows abut a party wall with our property, and are between 5-6 feet from windows in these rooms. This impinges our privacy, would allow overlooking, and cause lighting and noise problems. At night, we would have new pollution from these windows from artificial lights.

Any proposed attempt to mitigate the overlooking using frosted windows would also have a detrimental impact on our quality of life. First, we will always see the windows, and movements behind them, from our kitchen table and living area and bathrooms. Furthermore at night, even frosted windows will cause the nuisance of artificial lighting due to light spillage and light trespass onto our property, specifically onto our kitchen and dining area and living area. This reduces our privacy and enjoyment of our property.

The approved application 2017/2170/P included approval for one window, fitting the character of the property, for the back-room of the property; with this window, the room will already have adequate light and ventilation. We did not object to this window and believe this should be sufficient. The room does not require wrap-around clerestory windows that overlook other properties (or the street) or cast artificial light into other properties, and do not match the character of the existing building or surrounding buildings.

Loss of light/reduced daylight

The change in height and width of the back structure is a significant issue for us as it creates loss of light amenity.

The property has a pitched roof visible from the street and adjoining properties. Roof alterations are proposed to change the shape and form of the roof making it a flat roof. **The application drawings state that the roofline has been raised by 523mm; the works already carried out to the property without permission has raised the roof by approximately 740mm, and this is most likely not the finished height.** This change in height has a detrimental impact on the light available into critical rooms in our property including our kitchen and living room which sit below the raised roofline. The proposed elevation of the roof level from a sloped roof to a flat roof at street level creates a loss of light and we request that it be restored to its original profile.

Our light is also reduced by the addition of approximately 9cm of cladding and rendering on the side of the building facing our house; this cladding is not mentioned in the application but has already been applied to the building in disregard of planning applications. This creates further loss of light and moves the structure closer to our house. The rendering of the cladding, in place of the original brickwork, fundamentally contravenes basic planning guidance for the conservation area.

The significant increase in bulk and mass of the outbuilding to raise the roof is also a material detriment to the light amenity available to our property and inconsistent with the character of the conservation area. We do not see, and have read no justification for in the current planning application, the need for increased roof height in the outbuilding. Review of the relevant building regulations and the existing ceiling heights show no justification for raising the roof to accommodate an increased ceiling height beyond that height accommodated by the current sloped roof.

Character of the area

Construction materials:

We strongly object to the materials used in the proposed development, including the use of cladding and rendering on the building, the style of the new windows, and roof materials. The application is silent and even misleading regarding what materials will be used, even where prompted. **The application does not detail any materials to be used, yet these materials have already been applied.** They are publicly visible from the street and neighbouring properties including ours. The materials are not modest, appear to be low quality, and cause harm to the character and amenity of the area, and the architectural character of the building. The rendering is not in harmony with the existing brick materials underneath the cladding. These brick materials should be retained wherever possible to maintain the character of the area. Moreover, the design, scale and materials proposed (cladding, rendering, clerestory windows) are not sensitive to the special qualities of the property; they undermine the features of the original building which is publicly viewable.

We strongly request that this application is refused with a Notice of Enforcement action, which includes a time frame within which works must be reversed.

Please advise us if it will be possible for us to attend your discussion of this matter and if so please let me know the date, time and location of your discussion.