

Application No: 2019/6023/P
 Consultees Name: [REDACTED]
 Received: 28/01/2020 21:29:28
 Comment: OBJ

Response: [REDACTED]

The scale of the proposal, which is set at 6 meters by 4.7 meters, in the middle of the open space created by the adjoining gardens of Belsize Square and Belsize Park Gardens, creates a new 28 sqm single storey building. This is unprecedented for size and impact in the back gardens across the neighbouring properties and substantially detracts from the generally soft and green nature of the gardens behind Belsize Park Gardens and Belsize Square.

The siting, location, scale and design of the proposed development has a huge visual impact on, and would visually dominate, the host garden. We note that this is contrary to Camden's Planning Guidance (Design) para 4.40-4.41 which states that "... permission is unlikely to be granted for development... [of] garden studios... which significantly erode the character of existing garden spaces and their function in providing wildlife habitat..." and "...the Council will resist development that occupies an excessive part of a garden..." - which the proposed development clearly does.

This application continues a worrying trend of over-development of rear gardens in the borough. As it says in Camden Planning Guidance (Altering and extending your home) (para 5.2 and 5.3) "...rear gardens have become particularly prone to development pressure where loss of vegetation has resulted in the erosion of local character and amenity, biodiversity..."

It will also have a large negative impact on the amenity value for the other occupiers of the property (and nearby properties) of overlooking green and open spaces, contrary to CPG (Altering and extending your home) para 5.21-5.23. This is even more likely given that adjoining properties have built garden rooms, with the combined effect of the proposed development and the existing structures all of these garden rooms detracting from the open character of the gardens around the property. (CPG (Altering and extending your home) para 5.21-5.23). In para 5.20 of that Guidance, it is expressly acknowledged that rear gardens are semi-public domains and that occupants of surrounding buildings benefit from the outlook - this proposal will substantially diminish the nature of that outlook.

We also note that the proposed development does not use suitable soft landscaping to reduce the impact of the proposed development (CPG (Altering and extending your home) para 5.23) - not least because there is a limited amount of garden left to landscape. The remaining part of the garden nearest to the house is covered in paving stones and is used as a dining terrace.

The attempt to mitigate the proposed construction by having a 'green roof' is to be considered only very theoretical, as a 'living roof' is very hard to maintain, and the effect would surely end up being of a new small scale building in the Belsize Conservation Area, and not the one of a small replacement of the existing garden shed, which is in fact retained as a separate structure.

In this respect, no details for foul water / sewage connections and provisions are provided in the application and the existing system may not be sufficient to cope with the new development, which is of great concern.

Finally, we consider that this proposal will lead the way to a number of new similar developments within the beautiful gardens of the area, and should therefore be considered detrimental to the Belsize Conservation

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Area, created in March 1973 with the aim to preserve the existing charm and character of the Victorian houses and their views across to gardens and rear elevations.

