

**COMMENTS ON OBJECTIONS**  
**Planning application 2019/4433/P and 2019/5045/L**

**Objection One from 98 Albert Street**

Comments follow the system of numbering and lettering used in the objection to address the issues raised.

**A. Height of Proposed Building**

The main concern raised through the objection appears to be that a building of 2.9m in height would appear oversized relative to other outbuildings and not be in keeping with surroundings. We do not think this is a valid concern for the following reasons:

- There will be minimal visibility of the garden room from ground level of private residences due to existing boundaries and trees. The use of a bio-diverse roof will minimise the visual impact from first and higher floors.
- The rear elevations of Albert Street, Delancey Street and Arlington Road are of varied architectural quality. The views in which the garden room will appear in of are little aesthetic merit.
- The proposed garden room will have no visibility from the public realm.
- It is not uncommon for outbuildings and sheds to span the width of gardens. Even those without bio-diverse roofs blend in well with surrounding trees.

The objector also acknowledges roofs in excess of 2m in height in the vicinity.

The concerns raised are addressed in more detail below.

1. The owner of 98 Albert Street believes that our proposed garden room would "significantly reduce the afternoon sun". This potential issue was discussed with the planning officer in Dec 2019. The garden room will not significantly add to the shadow cast by existing trees and buildings. There is a large tree in the garden of number 94 Albert Street which is South East of the paved patio of 98 and also the apple tree (approx 4.5m high) in the garden of 96, next to the boundary with 98 (see Photo 1). Both trees are much higher than the propose structure and cast a shadow on the terraced areas of 96 and 98 through most of the day. In addition to this the houses on Delancey street already block late afternoon sun (Photo 2).



Photo 1: Shadow cast onto gardens of 96 and 98 Albert street by large tree at bottom of 94 Albert Street



Photo 2: View of Delancey houses from proposed site of garden room at 96 Albert Street. These houses cast a shadow to the gardens of 96 and 98 Albert Street during late afternoon and early evening.

The 2.9m height of the building was given very careful consideration and is caused in part by the bio diverse sedum roof (thickness 0.45m) which Camden Council suggested. Although this roof is 0.17m thicker than alternatives, we agree with the Council that it makes the structure more sympathetic to the existing environment. A total height of 2.9m is therefore the minimum we can agree to since 0.22m is required for flooring and 2.23cm of internal height is required for the intended use (an adult male must be able to use an exercise cross trainer and other exercise equipment).

2. The objection incorrectly states that the proposed garden room would extend out into the garden beyond her terrace. The garden room would still be 1.6 metres short of our existing patio area which is approximately level with the patio area of number 98 behind the arch (Photo 3). There is a shed between the table on the patio of 98 Albert Street and our proposed garden room (Photo 4) which limits the visual impact.



Photo 3: View of gardens of 96 and 98 Albert Street from 96 Albert Street



Photo 4: The garden of 98 Albert Street as seen from proposed garden room site.

The objection states that the brick garden wall is 0.72 metres tall and then a “non-solid” wooden fence aka trellis with plantings extends upwards to 1.23 metres. This is misleading as the 1.23 measurement was taken from the top of the raised flower bed. The total height from ground level is 1.9 metres (see photos 5 and 6).



Photos 5 (left) and 6 (right). The total height of the boundary between 98 and 96 Albert street the location of the proposed garden room is 1.9m above ground level.

### 3. Non-ambulant Child in Wheelchair

There will be minimal impact to the use of the terrace for two reasons

- a) As can be seen from Photo 4, there is a large raised flower bed which extends approximately 2.2m from the rear wall of 98 Albert street. This area is obviously inaccessible to wheel chair users.
- b) A shed sits between the rear patio area of 98 Albert street and the proposed garden room (again see Photo 4). The garden room will therefore be mostly hidden to those seated in this area.

The non-ambulant child is 19 years old.

4. While the garden room will be visible from 98 Albert Street we do not agree with the statement that its addition will significantly impact visual relationships. The view to the rear of the properties towards Arlington road already contains a mixed collection of sheds and extensions of limited architectural merit. We also do not agree that the view towards Arlington road can be described as having uninterrupted open space (see Photos 1,3,7,8,9) or that the structure is outsized.

Edward Wollaston from Heritage Collective believes,

*The proposed garden room will have no visibility from the public realm and appear only in a minimally in views from private residences. Private views overlooking the gardens reveal nothing of the historical or architectural interest of the area due to the high level of change evidenced at the rear of the properties. These private rear facing garden views only minimally contribute to character or appearance of the conservation area. Often views from within the enclosed gardens are of modern rear elevations within a mostly modern context of mixed architectural quality. The views in which the garden room will appear in of are little aesthetic merit and makes a negligible contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.*

*Due to the diminutive nature of the proposed works they stand to only minimally change the character and appearance of the conservation area. The Garden Room offers a design that has closely considered its location and responds sympathetically to the constraints and heritage concerns of the site the new building is visually subordinate within garden the contemporary form does not jar with the surrounding area. The proposed garden room will not harm the Camden Town Conservation Area.*

*An extension of this form and appearance will not harm the setting of the listed terrace. The garden does little to reveal anything of the significance of the terrace, and while acknowledging that it plays a part in its setting and the traditional domestic arrangement of these properties, the arrival of the subservient low level garden room will not harm any experience of the heritage values of the group listing. Views between the properties are disrupted by mature planting and the mass of surrounding buildings. The proposed building will not materially change the setting of nearby designated heritage assets. (Taken from the Heritage Statement)*

In conclusion Mr Wollaston states that the erection of this garden room would not be detrimental to the amenity of neighbours' properties, nor would they detract from the appearance of the conservation area. He also points out that the views are already mixed as garden occupants look back at a melange of modern and older extensions on the houses themselves (see photo 7). Furthermore, the garden that backs onto number 92 from Arlington Road has a shed or garden room (with a flat asphalt roof) that is the entire width of their garden therefore we do not feel this garden room is oversized relative to existing structures. As pointed out by Camden's planning officer even that is fairly well camouflaged by the walls, trees and trellising.



Photo 7: Extensions made to the rear of properties on Albert Street



Photo 8: Extensions made to the rear of properties on Arlington Road



Photo 9: View from 96 Albert street to Arlington Road showing a mixed collection of sheds.



Photo 10: Sheds and outbuildings between Albert Street and Arlington Road

In addition to this we think that the objection does not take into account the benefit of the Sedum roof. Currently the view is of a concrete bench, garden shed and a patio area of mixed quality. We believe that replacing this area with a building with a Sedum roof will enhance the view and not detract from it. We are confident that from the upper stories the Sedum roof will blend into surrounding green areas and be substantially less intrusive than the existing layout. Photo 11 (below), taken from an upper storey window shows the gardens of 94, 96 and 98 Albert Street. One can see how a green bio-diverse roof would blend in, especially during summer months.

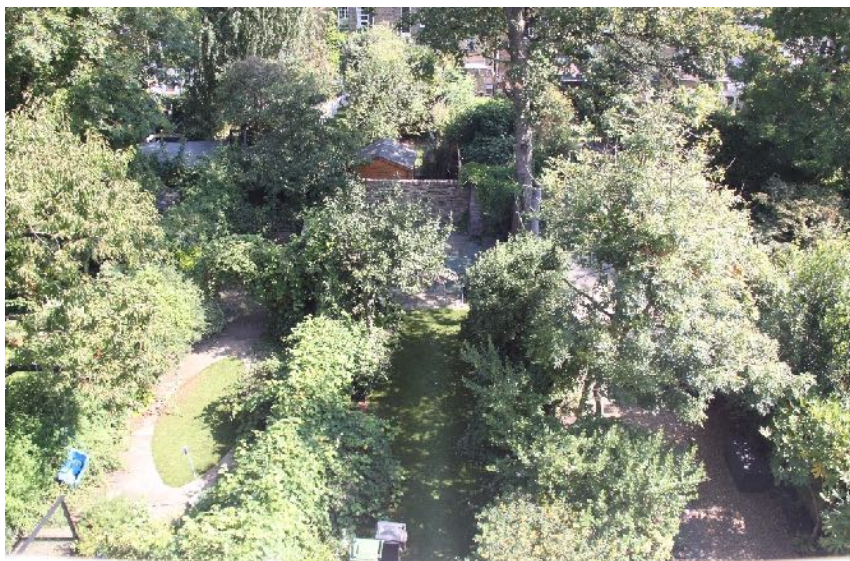


Photo 11: Gardens of 94, 96 and 98 Albert Street during summer

## B. Incompatibility with Conservation Area and Surrounding Listed Buildings

The objection states that the proposed garden room is incompatible with the conservation area and the surrounding listed buildings. We disagree.

Mr Woolaston, as already quoted above, says,

The change in appearance and form to the rear garden is deemed to have no effect on heritage values, recognising that it will not erode the heritage significance, or the setting of the listed buildings. The significance of the designated heritage asset of Camden Town conservation area is similarly unaffected. The scheme is thus compliant with national and local policy.

Overall effects on the character and appearance (significance) listed building, it's setting and of the conservation area would be negligible but not adverse. The significance of the area overall and in the immediate context would be preserved.

We would also like to point out the existence of the brick wall and a 4.5m high apple tree in Photo 10 as well as the fences in Photos 2 and 4. Therefore we think that our original statement regarding concealment is accurate.

### Care of sedum roof

There is no evidence to suggest that the owners of 96 Albert Street will not care for the bio-diverse roof. Indeed, the house and gardens are well maintained and indicate the owners' interest and intentions in good



maintenance. Furthermore, the brick walls that are referenced in the objection between properties 96 and 98 and the back wall across the entire back of number 96 and one metre of number 98 were repaired in the summer of 2019, paid for by the owner of the neighbour on Arlington Road and ourselves at 96 Albert Street (it was in such a state of disrepair that it was a hazard). Despite the fact that the owner of number 98 refused to make a financial contribution to the repair of this jointly owned wall, we went ahead with the repair, indicating our commitment to good maintenance.

### C. Further Comments on Design and Access Statement

- a. The measurement was taken to the highest point of the shed and is clearly shown in the diagram. It is unclear to us why this was misleading.
- b. These measurements contradict with measurements given by the person objecting earlier in point A.2. Our joint brick garden wall with trellising above does indeed reach 1.9 metres at the area in the back of the garden where our proposed garden room will be situated (Photos 5,6).
- c. We think the original calculation was accurate (floor area divided by total garden area). Again it's unclear to us why this was misleading.
- d. The owner of 98 believes that it is "totally unlikely and unrealistic" that the integrated venetian blinds would be used. This concern is unfounded since the intended use of the blinds is for privacy during evenings and also to reduce the effect of light pollution. It is logical that the owners of 96 would not incur the significant expense of installing these integral blinds (within the panes of glass) unless they expected to use them. In addition, it should be noted that many neighbours, including number 98, already have garden lighting.
- e. It was stated in the application that the applicant did not intend to place any beds or have anyone sleep in the garden room. Furthermore, the garden room does not have running water or plumbing. This means the nearest bathroom would be inside the house and in the basement (very inconvenient for sleeping). There is also no access to the garden room from the street except from through 96 Albert Street. Additionally, as stipulated by Camden Council this would never be a separate dwelling and would always be ancillary to the existing dwelling.

### D. Insufficient Evidence of Need for Application

The objection questions the need for extra space in a "five storey house" suggesting the house is so large extra space is not needed. We think to characterise the houses in Albert Street in this way is misleading. The houses are generally five stories because they have been extended but are very narrow. Ours is only 5 m wide and with the stair case makes the usable area much smaller than it would appear.

Therefore, residents over the years have tried to increase the usable space by expanding up into the loft to create a 5<sup>th</sup> storey, and by building extensions at the back, some of which are 3 stories high and an extreme example at 102-104 Albert Street where a substantial 4 storey modern extension takes up much of the garden (Photo 7). The owner of number 98 has, indeed, extended her house at the back by adding a "box" like structure across the entire width of the house occupying the basement and ground floor levels.

As stated in the Design and Access Statement the proposed garden room would be used for exercise and perhaps as a hobby room or area in which

to work from home in the future. The current basement rooms of the main house do not have a ceiling height sufficient for an adult male to use a cross trainer without hitting his head. The proposed garden room is the minimum height required for this purpose. The planned use of the hobby room is to exercise on a cross trainer and with a few free weights.

## **CAAC Objection Two**

This objection raises two issues:

1. Consideration for the protection of trees and
2. Light pollution from internal lights through the windows

### 1) Protection of trees

There is a section in the design and access statement that discusses the protection of trees. This was also discussed with the planning officer and hence our original plan was changed from a cement foundation, which might possibly damage some tree roots to a "screw base" method. Care will be taken when inserting the screws to avoid root damage to existing trees.

No trees will be removed in the construction of this garden room. The room will be constructed over the existing patio area and replace a cement bench and garden shed. The existing patio, cement bench and shed, which have been in place for at least 25 years, will be removed with care to avoid any possible root damage.

### 2) Light pollution

There is also a section in the design and access statement that discusses light pollution. The glass in the folding doors and windows will be fitted with integral venetian blinds which will minimise the effect of any light pollution.