

**TO**

Planning Inspectorate

CC

LB Camden

FROM

Montagu Evans

DATE

14 October 2021

SUBJECT

Albany House, 41 Judd Street, London WC1H 9QS

Application Reference: 2020/2247/P

Appeal Reference: APP/X5210/W/21/3275292

1. This document has been prepared by Montagu Evans LLP on behalf of Cliffgold Ltd (“the Appellant”) in relation to the section 78 appeal in relation to a proposed roof extension to 41 Judd Street to accommodate two additional dwellings. It sets out the Appellant’s response to the Council’s Statement of Case and consultation responses from interested parties.

RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL’S STATEMENT OF CASE

2. The Council has acknowledged in the legal agreement addresses the second, third and fourth reasons for refusal, so only the first reason for refusal needs to be considered by the Inspector.
3. As part of the description of the site in section 3 the Council claim that the existing building is “a fine example of a classically-inspired muscular Edwardian architecture” and that:

“The design of the building has clearly been driven by consideration of the Golden Ratio. A time-honoured notion in architecture which is employed to decide how a building’s floor plan will flow and determine features such as how to properly determine a buildings layout, space out windows”. (p. 3-4 in the pdf)
4. While we would agree the existing building makes a positive contribution to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (CA), it is marginal. It is not locally listed, and while the CA appraisal identifies it as a positive building there is no description of it, despite the fact that the appraisal is 155 pages long and describes many other buildings in some detail. The detailing is very plain compared to other Edwardian buildings, which are often highly decorated using a range of materials.
5. No evidence supports the Council’s claim that the design has been driven by the Golden Ratio. Two quantities are in the golden ratio if their ratio is the same as their sum to the large of the two quantities. Typically in architecture this applies to elevations which form a rectangle, which could be subdivided into a square and rectangle, where the smaller rectangle has the same proportions as that of the larger rectangle. The image below illustrates a rectangle formed of the Golden Ratio.
6. When one compares this to the east elevation of Albany House reproduced from the Council’s SoC, it is clear that the elevation was not designed following the Golden Ratio; the length of the elevation is too long in comparison with its height. Nor is there any evidence that the design of the plan or less coherent side elevation followed the Golden Ratio.
7. The design responded to the plot available, height of surrounding context and the brief. This is not a scholarly classical design as the reference to the Golden Ratio suggests, but a functional and ordinary building of its date.

Figure 1 – Rectangle in the Golden Ratio

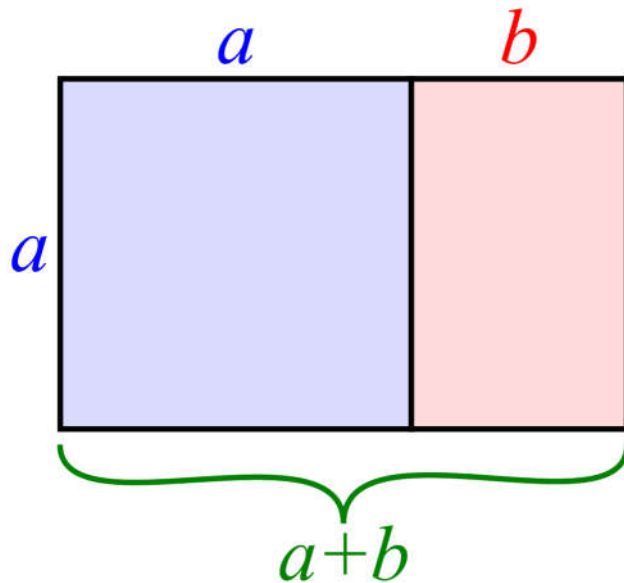


Figure 2 – east elevation of Albany House, which is clearly not designed following the Golden Ratio



8. Section 5 of the Council's SoC explains the first reason for refusal. It contains many assertions but limited justification. We summarise the Council's argument in bold, with our response following.

The roof extension is as visually prominent as the lower sections of the roof.

9. The verified visualisations in Appendix 4 of the Appellant's SOC were selected to illustrate the maximal effect of the roof extension, and the Council has not raised any concerns about the viewpoint selection.
10. The visualisations indicate that the proposed roof extension would not be visible from the west on Tavistock Place (view 1) and very little of the proposed roof extension would be visible in views further east on Tavistock Place (views

2 and 3) because it would mostly be hidden by the existing roof and filtered/ screened by street trees. The lower sections of the roof are clearly more visually prominent than the proposed roof extension in these views.

The proposed roof extension would ‘jar’ and be an incongruous addition to the roof.

11. As explained above, the roof extension would be hidden from view from street level to a considerable extent. To the extent that it is visible it is of an appropriate massing and in high quality materials (zinc), the colour of which would blend with the existing roof slates.

The flat-roofed, zinc clad extension would detract from the symmetry and significance of the pitched tiled roof.

- 12. The Council recognise that the east elevation is not symmetrical, but is “quasi” symmetrical. The visualisations reproduced in Appendix 4 of the Appellant’s SOC illustrate that the roof extension is not likely to be noticeable to most people at street level; and where it is visible from the east on Tavistock Place, it is not possible to see the elevation as a whole, so there is no sense that it would disrupt the symmetry of the building (which as the Council recognise is not symmetrical in any case).
- 13. The majority of the existing building has a flat roof, as illustrated in the birdseye image below, so the proposed flat roof is consistent with the existing design.
- 14. The existing roof material is a combination of slate and asphalt, and not is not tiled as stated by the Council. Zinc is a high quality material commonly used at roof level, the colour and tone of which would complement the existing roof slates.

Figure 3 – The majority of the roof on Albany House is flat



The proposals would be visible from surrounding public viewpoints.

15. The Council undertake no detailed analysis of the verified visualisations reproduced in Appendix 4 of the Appellant’s SOC to justify their case, aside from saying the roof extension would be visible.

16. The Council claim that the roof extension would be visible from Judd Street but our analysis indicates that the buildings to the north and south of the Appeal site would screen any views of the roof extension.

No additional storey is required to improve upon the composition.

17. There is no policy requirement for an extension to improve the architectural composition of an existing building, only that the design is acceptable, which we have explained it is.

The proposals would result in incremental degradation of the CA.

18. The Council gives no specific examples of other roof extensions in the CA which with the Appeal scheme would result in the incremental degradation of the CA, so there is no evidence to substantiate this claim.

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION RESPONSES FROM INTERESTED PARTIES

19. The interested parties are residents of the existing block. Their objections largely concern issues with the existing building, related to leaking pipes and a Fire Trace system. These are maintenance issues, not relevant to the planning decision.