

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2021/4990/L	Peter Cassidy	11/11/2021 23:00:49	OBJ	2021/4990/L and 2021/4146/P 5 The Grove London N6 6JU

These are Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee's comments in respect of the above applications.

These applications are for planning permission and listed building consent for an extension to existing outbuilding, including outdoor shower and roof terrace above; relocation of swimming pool; erection of pergola; associated landscaping.

Introductory comments

Members of the HCAAC and the Highgate Society had a Zoom consultation with the applicant's team led by Stuart Minty. Unfortunately, having reviewed the application documents there is no sign that the applicant listened to our concerns.

At paragraph 1.3 of the Heritage Appraisal, reference is made to the listing of the Dorchester House wall and paragraph 3.13 considers the impact of the proposals on the setting/significance of the Dorchester House wall (albeit inadequately). However, the Witanhurst wall is given little consideration at all.

At the Zoom consultation, we summarised HCAAC's concerns as follows:

- the state and preservation of the two parallel historic walls, namely, the lower one to Witanhurst and the one behind the pool house which was the boundary to Dorchester House;
- we criticised various aspects of the design of the pool house; and
- we asked for a calculation of the percentage of soil to paving, including pool, before and after.

We have set out our comments below on these concerns.

Dorchester House wall with bastion

At the moment, the wall is unobscured except by the existing summer house which was built leaving a small gap between it and the wall.

There is a 1930's (?) iron stair from the upper terrace (belvedere) to the lower terrace parallel with the wall. The Heritage Statement says that the wall is hidden from view by ivy etc. with the implicit, but incorrect, suggestion that it is fine to build up against it. The planting is ephemeral and likely to cause damage to the wall.

The proposed summer house is longer at both ends and, therefore, would cover more of the wall making yet more of it inaccessible for maintenance. The summer house has several impacts on the wall, but in terms of setting/significance, covering more of the wall, at the same time making it impossible to maintain such an historic structure, would materially harm the setting and, therefore, significance of the wall. These issues need to be satisfactorily resolved.

Witanhurst wall

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The Heritage Statement states the Witanhurst wall is probably no earlier than the end of the 18th century with some rebuilding of the top courses and it is not apparently listed. Even if what the applicant says about the significance of the wall is correct, which is disputed, it is undoubtedly of historic interest and is an important feature of Highgate Conservation Area. It is apparently out of plumb and needs considerable work. Details of the existing condition and the applicant's proposals should be included in the application.

Due and proper consideration must be given to these historic walls.

Biodiversity, ground conditions

We asked the design team for figures of the amount of hard to soft surfaces as existing and as proposed to include the swimming pool. Regrettably, insufficient information has been provided.

We are concerned about the detrimental impacts resulting from building across the line of the slope, including, but not limited to the impact:

- a. of the wider summer house;
- b. of the swimming pool;
- c. on the Dorchester House and Witanhurst walls;
- d. on surface water, ground water, heave and subsidence; and
- e. on biodiversity

Design of the pool house and summer house

We made the point to the applicant's team at the Zoom consultation that some aspects of the design were awkward, arising from the desire to have broad symmetry facing the pool.

The tall left-hand window, for example, gives on to a space without the gravitas it suggests, but a space with very limited headroom because the proposed external stair from the belvedere to the lower terrace winds down within a carved-out external space behind the window. This has not been aesthetically resolved.

In fact, there is a visual confusion because the centre section of the pool elevation appears lower than the arched elements on either side due to the railings having been introduced to the belvedere. The section and plan appear to suggest the stair from the upper to lower terrace must at all costs not be seen.

We consider covering more of the Dorchester House wall with an enlarged summer house causes harm to the setting and, therefore, significance of the listed wall and its bastion.

Concluding remarks

All of the above points must be adequately addressed by the applicant to allow the application to be properly considered and assessed.