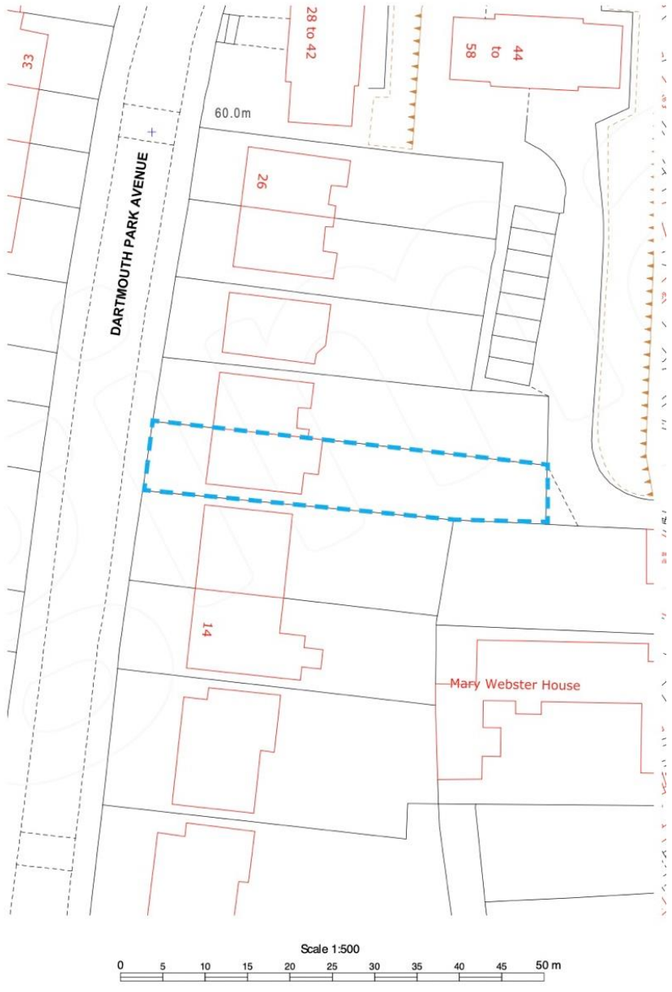
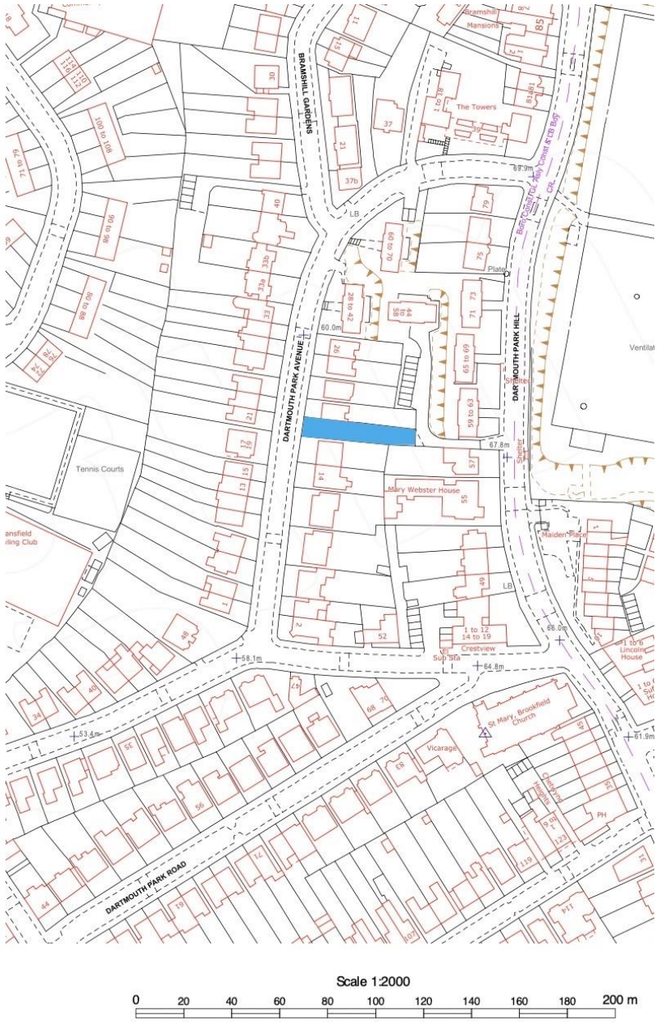
Design & Access Statement
18 Dartmouth Park Avenue, London, NW5 1JN

planning application ref: PP-10384517

This Planning statement describes the proposed works to 18 Dartmouth Park Avenue. The works are to a late-Victorian four storey, semi-detached house in the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area and the London Borough of Camden.
The following Design & Access Statement is to support a planning application for the proposed front garden landscaping with cycle storage and a new refuse store in a conservation area.
This should also be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Statement and drawings.

Existing Site





Context

Streetscape

Dartmouth Park Avenue comprises of terrace, semi-detached and detached Victorian housing, mainly built in the late 1800's. The front gardens are mix of low London-stock brick walls, high hedges and driveways.

With a mix of late 19th century large red and grey stock brick villas, all with slate roofs, [Dartmouth Park Avenue] is one of the grandest in the conservation area. Trees on the street and in the front gardens provide a verdant quality. There is a range of building heights from two storeys to three (most with basements, the slope being such that the basement is more of a 'garden floor'). The topology results in the properties on the east side being raised above street level."

Developments in a number of front gardens include a variety of bin stores, of brick or wood, which are now redundant due to changes in council-issued bins. The bin stores made of wood are no longer maintained and are rotting with disuse and lack of purpose.

Low walls are no longer able to hide the size and bulk of the bins, which are often left on the public path.

As gardens are quite exposed to the public path, there is no discreet manner to secure a bicycle in the front garden and where it is done, it is clear that the bicycles suffer from exposure to the elements.

Neighbouring properties

20 DPA

18 DPA

16 DPA

Proposed location for cycle storage and bin store

The proposed location for the cycle storage and bin store is currently an undeveloped garden, mainly due to recent extensive renovations. The garden itself has a significant slope up, away from the entrance path, and towards the house.

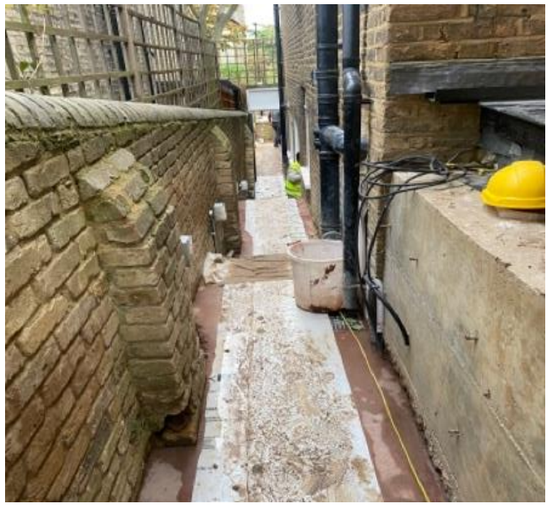
There is a mature bay tree mid-way along the north boundary, whose tree roots are near the surface of the existing ground level, making lowering the garden ill-advised. There are smaller plantings along the same boundary which have suffered the renovations.

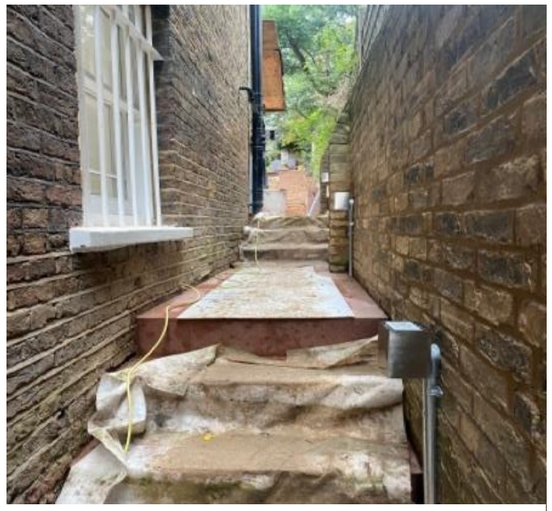
The chosen location offers the most suitable size to accommodate the council-issued bins and the various bikes and scooters of the family household, as it would respect the tree's root structure and offer suitable access.

Site Access

The house sits high on the road due to the steep slope across the site. The piano noble sits almost an entire storey above the street level with a large staircase leading up. Although this allows more light in to the lower storey it is a serious access problem.

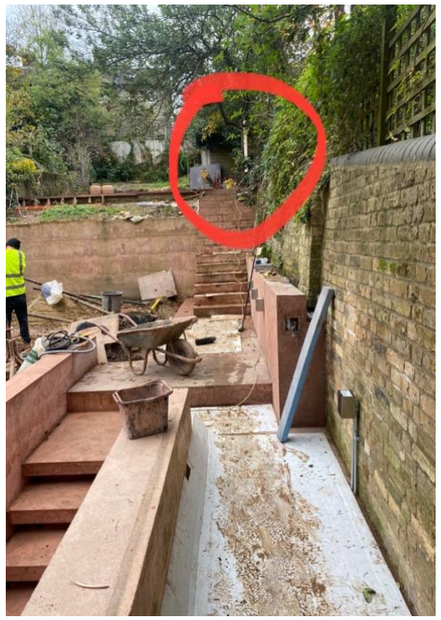
The access to the back garden is via a long and very tight pathway, of less than 800mm wide at some points, secured by a timber slatted door that is bound on both sides by brick walls. Staggered steps along its length allow for the height change across the site.





access to rear garden

The garden is sloped with the highest point at the rear, where a wooden garden shed is accessed by a series of steep stairs. Due to the access restrictions of the side path and its location at the very top of the garden, the garden shed has proven to be an inaccessible place to bring bicycles through for storage and remains used soley for garden tools.



access to wooden garden shed

Assessment of inclusivity of access

The geography and development of the existing site does not offer suitable options for storing or accessing bikes or mobility devices for children, infirm or those with limited mobility.

The chosen location offers the most suitable access to promote active and inclusive travel.

Proposed Design

The storage unit is a designed structure that is intended to have a minimal impact on the street, whilst maintaining a clear functional purpose. It is bespoke-designed to work in its specific context.

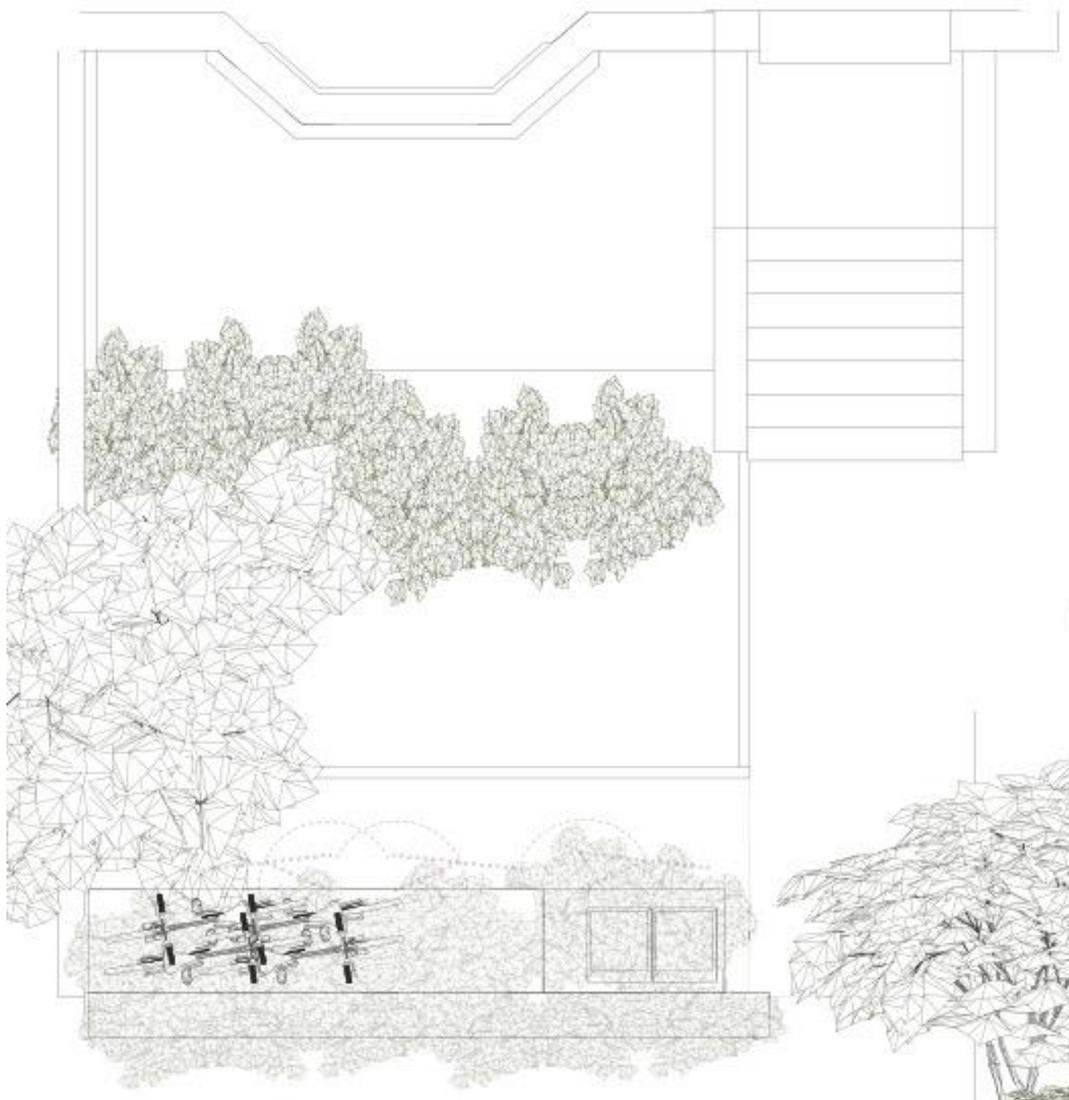
The main storage unit is topped with a planter that is of a sufficient depth (200mm) to allow for a diverse range of plants to grow.

It will sit behind the existing brick wall and the existing wall will be topped with a matching planter to disguise the elevation change.

The unit will step back from the garden path and will have different levels to match the internal-to-garden elevation changes.

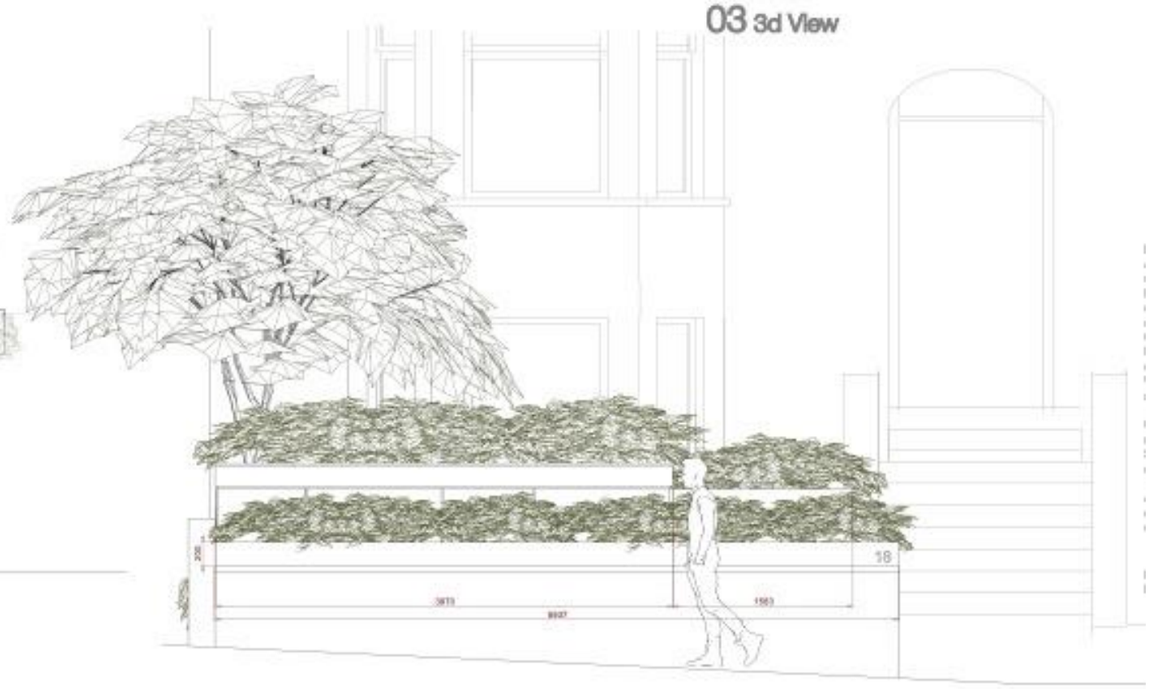
It provides ease of access, with accessibly wide doors that open to internal of the garden.

The placement of the unit ensures that the existing bay tree is not impacted with the development.



01 Plan View

03 3d View



02 Elevation

The Bikebox design considerations

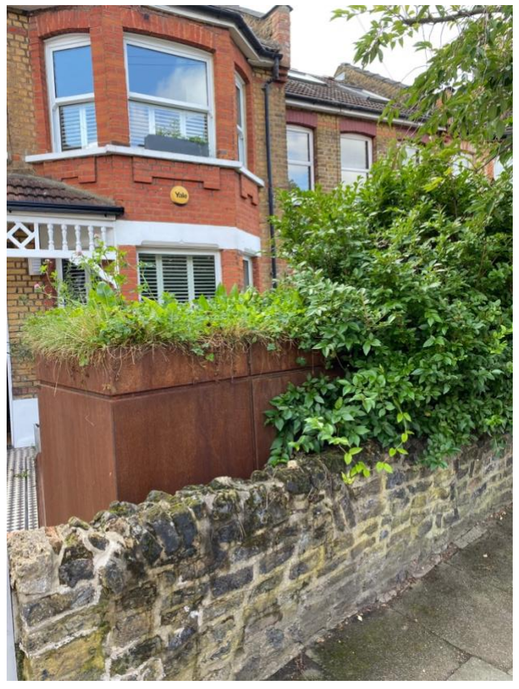
Context

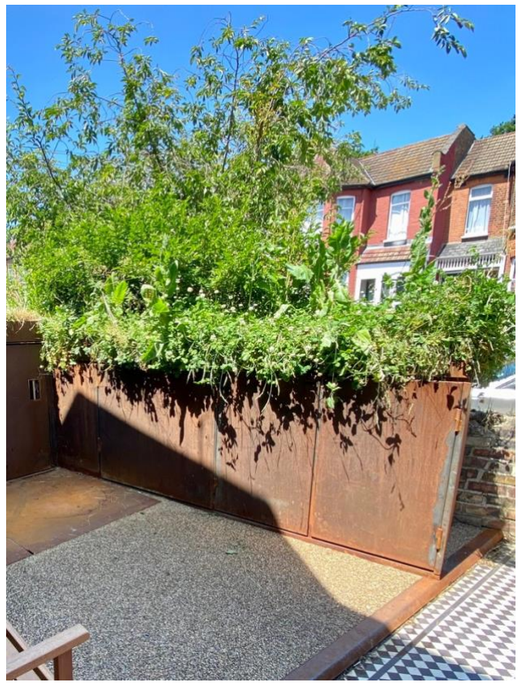
The Bikebox was designed to answer a typical problem in London and in other cities in the UK. It is a UK design that recognises that stock housing was never built to accommodate modern demands on citizens living in this city. Access to bicycles when stored inconveniently adds to the frustration of using bikes, making it the less desirable choice of transportation. At times like these when every room in the house is used, storing bikes in the front room or hallway is detrimental to the quality of life.

The front garden is the only option to store bikes conveniently. Where most front gardens are underutilised, the design of the Bikebox is to improve the frontage and make an aesthetic contribution to the streetscape, making it an enjoyable, living street.

The changes proposed will provide a secure and weather protected space for four bicycles that is easily accessible, thereby encouraging use of bicycles as primary transport option.

Making cycling convenient, accessible, and making cycling the first choice for getting around London.





Considerations

Purpose: Secure and protected from weather

Location: ease of access, discreet

Design: Biodiversity, security, accessibility

Size and Scale

The box design is as minimal in dimension as possible to adequately accommodate a number of bikes for the house hold. At 1150mm the box is similar to other structures on the street aligning to pier posts and other structures present on the street.

The bikebox is designed to fit the context of the street and area contributing positively to the street frontage and encouraging a ‘care for your street’ nature.

The planter promotes an attractive frontage to house and enclosure.

Cycle Access

Access to bikes is designed to be of ease, promoting the use of cycles for majority of tasks and activities. The front of the box is designed to be attractive to the street, while maintaining a garden on top. Taking ownership of bike storage alleviates pressure on cycle-stys for people who would not be able to accommodate in their homes or property.

Biodiversity

The depth of planter is to ensure the most diverse of planting cultures and promotes the biodiversity in the area. The planting on the box is an intentional component to provide a tangible positive asset to the street and environment.

Rejuvenating Front Gardens

London plan encourages a design approach to the management of waste and bins to encourage a cared for street frontage. Current bin blight has damaged streetscape and undermined the principles of conservation strategies.

Making use of the space available builds a more consistent and aesthetic streetscape.

Materiality

The Bikebox is built of steel that provides the security for the storage of bikes, The material softens in colour to a mellow colour chocolate brown that blends well with London stock brickwork and has a contemporary aesthetic that is natural and characterful.

Security

- The design presents as a garden wall and planter, which happens to have secure storage space for bikes, bins and buggies
- Designed with Security in Mind
- Design intent is to disguise the purpose of the storage unit as a garden - people are often very surprised that there is storage inside the planter
- There has been zero tampering to date of over 80 installations across London

The following page highlights our security features designed into the fabrication details.

Materiality & Security

Bikebox Works designs bespoke, discrete bike storage units – designed to look like a garden wall planter

Bikebox is made of 2mm mild steel, attached to concrete & steel base constructed in situ.

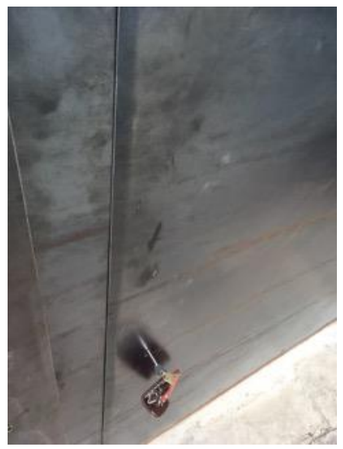
Steel box welded to metal frame secured in concrete base

BSI – anti-pick 5-lever mortice locks enclosed in steel frame

Heavy duty hidden double hinging and ply panel linings

Heavy duty hidden double hinges with anti-jemmy detailing

Anti Jemmy detailing



Flush finish doors with 5-lever mortice key locking.

Responding to relevant planning policies

We have taken the guidance from a number of planning documents issued by LB Camden:

Camden Local Plan 2017

- Guidance on Transport, Community Health & Wellbeing, Protecting Amenity, Design

Camden Planning Guidance January 2021 - Home Improvements

- Guidance to home improvements involving the front garden, and specifically bike and bin storage.

Access for All March 2019

- Guidance on inclusivity and access

The following provides our explanation for our design in relation to each of the relevant planning policies.

Policy C1 Health & Wellbeing

Our design proposal supports support health, social and cultural wellbeing and contribute to healthier lifestyle for all the family generations, by providing easy access to active travel options as the first option.

- easy access for all ages and mobility levels
- providing point of access for all, at the most convenient and level location available on the property

Policy A1 Managing the impact of development

Our design proposal does not cause unacceptable harm to amenity.

- amenity of the wider community and neighbours is not adversely impacted
- the design provides an opportunity for wider engagement on the street, which contributes towards strong and successful communities
- the design intent is to adequately address transport and the existing transport network by supporting active travel as the first option by the household
- The factors we will consider include

Specifically, our design proposal has no impact on the following:

- visual privacy, outlook
- sunlight, daylight and overshadowing

Policy A3 Biodiversity

Our design proposal enhances biodiversity by providing planting opportunity for a range of flora that supports pollination and contributes to ecological balance.

- provides habitats for insects
- protects the natural value of gardens
- the layout, design and materials used in the built structure and landscaping is proportionate to the scale of development
- provides opportunities passer-by neighbours to experience nature

Our design proposal seeks to protect the existing mature bay tree and provide further opportunity for additional greenery.

- groundworks approach will not impact the existing tree root structure
- overall design layout takes into consideration integrating the existing tree

Policy T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

Our design proposal promotes and encourages sustainable transport by prioritising cycling in the borough.

- provides for accessible, secure cycle parking facilities exceeding minimum standards outlined within the London Plan (Table 6.3) and design requirements outlined within Camden's supplementary planning

Our design proposal ensures that cycle parking is convenient and secure, so that users are more likely to use bicycles to travel to and from home, supporting the supplementary planning document, Camden Planning Guidance on transport.

Policy D1 Design

Our design proposal is for a carefully considered storage unit that is secure and of high quality in terms of construction and material.

- materials chosen are of natural materials with integrity
- the design and fabrication methodology uses the minimum materials needed to achieve structural integrity
- our fabrication and installation method is low impact fabrication and processing of primary materials
- the materials used are typically 40%+ recycled materials
- our material selection has a long in-service life (anticipated to be 25 years or more) and is highly recyclable
- secondary processing/fabrication is within 60 miles of London, creating a lower carbon footprint than other options
- our design details and materials are of high quality and designed specifically to meet the their purpose – neither over-engineered or designed for a limited lifespan
- the design is modular and adaptable to meet future change requirements
- the mass and structure is designed to be the smallest footprint it can be to meet the function and offer opportunities for biodiversity
- the design contributes positively to the street frontage
- location and design details are made to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all
- providing direct access to bikes and scooters promotes healthy lifestyles and active travel
- design considers security at all points
- the presence of plantings minimises crime and antisocial behaviour
- the planter is a key design feature to provide further greening and preserves gardens and incorporates high quality landscape design
- the design proposal maximises opportunities for greening
- creates outdoor amenity space
- preserves strategic and local views
- water management and electricity access for electric bikes is integrated within the design

Overall, the design proposal improves the character and quality of an area and the way it functions by providing secure, discreet, well considered solution to storing bicycles and bins.

Policy C5 Safety and security

Our design proposal disguises its purpose of storing bikes and bins, by presenting as a large planter, and has had

- 0% tampering attempts to date - 6 years and 80 installations across London – including Camden, Hackney, Brixton, Lewisham
- crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour are reduced due to the invisibility of the target
- design principles incorporate security, contribute to community safety and security
- the planters attract community interest and as such create community watch schemes, promote safer streets and public areas

Policy C6 Access for all

Our design proposal provides fair access and removes the barriers that prevent everyone from accessing their mobility devices and participate in active travel.

- provide the highest practicable standards of accessible and inclusive design that can be used safely, easily and with dignity by all
- located in the most accessible location of the home

5.4 GARDEN STORAGE

The increased need for storage in everyday lives could put significant pressure on the natural environment if located outside. Garden storage facilities if not designed carefully, could take over garden areas which could have been better used by plants, shrubs, trees and wildlife.

To make your home wildlife friendly, plant nectar rich plants which would attract insects and birds.

BICYCLES AND BINS STORAGE

If your structure to accommodate garden storage takes up garden space, you are encouraged to consider provision of a green roof on top of your garden storage structure. Consider an adequate substrate (soil) depth of 100mm or more and drainage for your green roof to allow plants to grow and mature easily whilst requiring lower maintenance.

When designing structures for your garden for bicycles and bins, you should be mindful of the possibility of requiring additional storage area in the future, such as plant equipment, space for pushchairs or water harvesting.

There are ways to accommodate adequate storage for your home, while also caring for the environment. We encourage innovative solutions which can incorporate wildlife habitats.

Photo 47

Photo 49

5.5 OUTBUILDINGS

Outbuildings are structures within a property's garden which offer a reasonably low-cost alternative to an extension, whilst providing usable space away from the main building for various functions such as storage, home office, studio, gym, children's playroom etc. They can free up space in the main dwellinghouse to allow for an extra bedroom, kitchen or living area, without the need for an extension. The outbuilding could be in the form of a shed, greenhouse, or others.

As they occupy space in the garden, the size and design of outbuildings must consider their impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, biodiversity and character of the wider area, so they do not detract from the generally 'soft' and green nature of gardens and other open spaces.

Large garden buildings may affect the amenity value of neighbours' gardens, and if used for purposes other than storage or other domestic uses, may intensify the use of garden spaces and cause loss of amenity through overlooking, overshadowing, lightspill and noise nuisance.

To result in an acceptable scheme, **development in rear gardens** should:

- Ensure the siting, location, scale and design has a minimal visual impact on, and is visually subordinate within, the host garden;
- In Conservation Areas, check the Conservation Area Appraisal in relation to outbuildings, to know what you should consider. The works should preserve or enhance the existing qualities and context of the site, and character of the Conservation Area;
- Not detract from the open character and garden amenity of neighbouring gardens and the wider surrounding area;
- Retain space around the building for suitable soft landscaping;
- Ensure the height will retain visibility over garden walls and fences;
- Ensure the size will maximise retention of garden and amenity space;
- Ensure the position will not harm existing trees and their roots;
- The construction method should minimise any impact on trees, mature vegetation (see CPG Trees) or adjacent structures;
- Use materials which complement the host property and the overall character of the surrounding garden area;
- Consider installation of green roof and/or solar panels;
- Address any impacts upon water run-off and groundwater flows, and demonstrate that the impact of the new development will be negated by the measures proposed. Reference should be made to CPG Water and Flooding.
- Consider installation of water butts;
- Consider installation of bird and bat boxes on the structure or in vicinity.