

## **Submissions of the Netherhall Neighbourhood Association (NNA)**

### **Planning application 2022/1967/P: 29 Maresfield Gardens NW3 5SD**

*Erection of single storey outbuilding with green roof in rear garden (Retrospective)*

#### **Introduction**

The NNA covers Maresfield Gardens, Netherhall Gardens and Nutley Terrace, located in the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area.

We do not support this application for the following reasons:

#### **Design and heritage impact**

The covering letter cites Policy D1 of the Camden Local Plan which requires a development 'to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality, and have particular regard to design and visual impact...and the contribution it makes to the landscape qualities of the area.' It also quotes the requirement in Policy D2 for the Council to 'preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden's...heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas.'

The covering letter claims that the outbuilding is domestic in appearance, of an appropriate size and scale for the garden setting, subservient to the existing property and 'purposefully sited to one side of the garden to appear less dominant'. That is not evidence of either policy condition, both of which require positive features. On the contrary, the reference to location amounts to a tacit acceptance that the outbuilding would be dominant were it not for its position at the side of the garden.

There is virtually no detail in the application on its dimensions – only that the gross internal floor area gained is 14.98 square metres (page 8). Bizarrely, the section requesting details of the proposed building (page 6) shows blank entries for 'Maximum height' and 'Number of Storeys'. In our view it is disproportionate to the size of the garden, already much diminished by the rear extension added in 2020. And from the drawings and photographs, it does not appear to be of any architectural merit or to make any positive contribution to the conservation area.

#### **Materials**

The covering letter points to the use of 'high-quality materials through the use of timber cladding, rather than brickwork', and the inclusion of a green roof, to create a natural appearance in tune with the landscaped garden setting and to add biodiversity benefits.

However, in the section headed 'Materials' at page 8 of the application form, the proposed materials and finishes for the walls are described as 'UPVC cladding and glazed panels'. The application makes no reference to timber cladding so the covering letter is wholly misleading. uPVC cladding is unacceptable in a conservation area.

It is also unclear whether the green roof will provide the biodiversity benefits suggested. The application form at page 10 answers 'No' to the questions on biodiversity conservation and enhancement. Moreover, what remains of the once-extensive lawn is now artificial grass. This is not an eco-friendly alternative to natural grass – it's the antithesis of biodiversity.

### **Amenity impact**

The covering letter refers to Policy A1 in the Camden Local Plan to protect the amenity of residents. The letter concludes that because it is only one storey high and located to the rear of the garden, the outbuilding will not have an adverse impact on the outlook, daylight, sunlight or [REDACTED]

We question how the applicant can make this judgement. It could potentially affect neighbouring properties and gardens on either side of No. 29 and in Netherhall Gardens backing onto the garden. The applicant appears to be relying on 'the intervening boundary treatments and landscaping to neighbouring properties and gardens' – it is not clear what this means.

### **Application form issues**

We have pointed to inconsistencies between the application and the covering letter in terms of materials. The application form replies 'No' to the question 'Will the proposal result in the loss of any residential garden land?' This is patently incorrect – the area that the outbuilding occupies clearly amounts to a reduction in garden space.

It is confusing to have separate applications for the outbuilding, the boundary wall and the entrance door, while treating them as one project for other purposes. Some of the details in this application appear to relate to the sum of the works rather than just the outbuilding.

For instance, the size of the 'site area' (page 4), which is common to all three applications, clearly refers to the whole site. The estimated 'total cost of the proposal' of 'Up to £2m' (page 6), is repeated in each application. The dates of commencement and completion of the works (page 7) are also the same. And there are inconsistencies between the applications. This one says there are trees or hedges on the site – again, presumably the site as a whole (page 9). The application for the entrance door says likewise; however, the reply in the boundary wall application is 'No'.

### **Conclusion**

We fundamentally disagree with the overall conclusion in the covering letter that the works will have an 'acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the property and conservation area, and neighbouring amenity', and that 'The development is therefore in accordance with the aforementioned Development Plan policies'.

The outbuilding lacks any design distinctiveness, is disproportionate to the size of the garden, uses eco-unfriendly materials, and contributes nothing to preserving or enhancing the conservation area. The test for amenity is not whether it has an 'acceptable' impact on neighbouring properties but whether it avoids 'harmful' effects. Without any factual basis to this claim, that must be questionable.

The NNA does not, therefore, support this application.