

Visibility

Highgate CAAC is concerned about the location of this garden building, as the trees along the roadside are already sufficiently thin that the building will be visible from the public realm (see photos below). This is unacceptable, and would be even more so if some of the shrubs and trees have to be trimmed or removed to allow sufficient space for the building.

The photos below also show that the fence is currently backed by unattractive plastic sheeting. Highgate CAAC regrets the ever increasing use of solid barriers of this type which detract from the 'permeable' view of trees and gardens, a key aspect of the traditionally open and leafy character of this part of the Highgate Conservation Area.

That said, since the plastic sheeting could easily be removed and the trees and shrubs behind are not well protected by planning policy, there is a significant possibility that the structure could be even more clearly visible from the public realm in future, to the detriment of the Highgate Conservation Area.

Is there space for this building amongst the trees?

Looking at Google satellite images and the photos taken from inside the fence included in this application and previous applications [CON/2022/0389](#) and [CON/2022/0159](#), it is quite hard to believe that a building of this size can be fitted into the space indicated without felling, pruning or damaging any trees, as stated in the DAS.

Drawing "2343 AL04A Site Plan as prpd.pdf" makes it clear how very close this building will be to surrounding trees and shrubs. The application photos show that some of the trees and shrubs have substantial trunks or branches which lean at an angle well below 2.5m in height, so that drawing them as small circles is potentially misleading in relation to the space available for the new building in reality.

Would any nearby shrubs/plants which are not technically classed as trees, including those shown on diagram "2343 AL04A Site Plan as prpd.pdf", have to be removed or reduced?

It seems extremely likely that, at the very least, some of these trees and shrubs will have to be pruned to allow enough space for the building. The applicant needs to clarify how the existing planting will alter as without it the new building will be even more clearly visible from View Road.

Realistic drawings should be provided which show the proposed building relative to existing shrubs and trees, indicating how much of this greenery will be lost.

Damage to tree roots

There are no details, drawings or plans of the proposed screw pile foundations relative to the trees and shrubs. The piles seem likely to damage the roots of the nearby trees unless they are very carefully placed.

The applicant will need to establish where the tree roots are before they start the mini-piling, for instance via "air spade" investigations prior to anything invasive being done.

Perhaps the tree officer should advise on whether the proposals are likely to work without causing damage, as the space available seems very cramped.

(We also note that replacement trees were to be planted to make up for the felling of a hornbeam, cherry, Lawson cypress and three holly trees under applications [CON/2022/0389](#) and [CON/2022/0159](#), so perhaps this would be a good opportunity to check how the replacement trees are doing, although of course new planting cannot replace the sustainability and environmental value of mature trees, whether TPOed or not.)

For all of the above reasons Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee thinks this application should be refused.

Photos of the application site from View Road, taken on 11 December 2023.



