Heritage Statement

Installation of a garden sauna — householder and Listed Building Consent application

Site address	12A Oxford Road, London, NW6 5SL
Applicant	Oliver Louis
Description of works	Installation of a freestanding garden sauna within the residential garden
Date	11 September 2026

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a householder planning application and associated Listed Building Consent application for the installation of a freestanding garden sauna at 12A Oxford Road, London, NW6 5SL.

The statement describes the heritage assets affected by the proposal and their significance, explains how an understanding of that significance has informed the design and siting of the works, and assesses the impact of the proposal on that significance, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and the London Borough of Brent's local validation requirements.

2. The Heritage Asset and Its Setting

The listed building

12A Oxford Road forms part of the terrace listed as “12-26, Oxford Road NW6”, a Grade II listed building (Historic England List Entry 1188693, listed 31 March 1978). The listing describes a mid-19th century range of paired villas with a wider end house, of three storeys and basement. Each house is generally three bays wide, with channelled stucco to the ground floor and brick with stucco dressings above, arched first-floor windows, and a bracketed eaves cornice beneath a low-pitch slate roof.

The listing derives its significance from this group of paired mid-19th century villas as a coherent architectural composition, and from the group value and townscape contribution the terrace makes along Oxford Road. This significance is embodied principally in the front elevations, roofline, and the group's consistent architectural treatment as viewed from the street.

The conservation area

The site lies within the Kilburn Conservation Area, designated by the London Borough of Brent on 11 January 1993, with an Article 4(2) Direction applied to the area in February 2005 to give additional control over alterations that would otherwise be permitted development. The conservation area's character derives from its consistent mid-Victorian residential development, including terraces and paired villas of the type found on Oxford Road.

The application site and its contribution to significance

12A Oxford Road is the lower ground floor flat of No.12, and the application relates solely to the private rear garden serving that flat. The garden is enclosed by close-boarded timber fencing on all sides, backed by mature trees and planting, and is not visible from Oxford Road, from the public realm, or from any wider public vantage point within the conservation area. As an enclosed, private rear garden space, it makes a materially lesser contribution to the significance of the listed building and the conservation area than the principal street elevation and roofline, which are not affected by this proposal.

3. The Proposal

The structure

The proposal is for the installation of an Odyssey Plunge “Vulcan” sauna, a factory-manufactured, single-storey timber garden building. Its key characteristics are:

- External dimensions: 2.4m long x 1.5m deep at the base (1.8m deep at the top) x 2.1m high
- Construction: Canadian Red Cedar timber cladding externally, finished in black, with natural cedar internally
- A full-height glazed front elevation
- Net weight of approximately 350kg, installed on a new solid (paved/concrete) base
- Powered by an 8kW electric heater on a single-phase, hardwired supply

The structure is entirely freestanding and is not fixed to, or bearing on, the listed building, any historic garden wall, or any other boundary feature. No historic fabric is proposed to be altered, removed, or affected in any way, and no excavation or tree works are proposed. The only ground works involved are the laying of the new solid base beneath the sauna and a pedestrian path connecting it to the existing patio.

Siting and layout

The sauna is to be positioned in the back-left corner of the garden, set against the rear boundary fence. This is the most enclosed and least visually prominent part of the garden, already screened by existing boundary planting and fencing. Its scale is modest and domestic in character, comparable to a garden shed or summerhouse, and its footprint occupies a small proportion of the overall garden area.

Access

The sauna will be used exclusively by the occupants of 12A Oxford Road; the garden is in the sole use of this flat and is not shared with, or accessible to, the other flats within the building. Access is directly from the lounge via the existing rear doors onto the patio, continuing along a new level path, laid along the left-hand flower bed, to the sauna in the corner of the garden. The garden is flat and level throughout, and the route involves no steps, ramps, or changes in level, providing straightforward and safe pedestrian access for all prospective users.

4. Assessment of Impact on Significance

The proposed works will have no effect on the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. The sauna does not touch, adjoin, or bear upon the historic building, and none of the elevations, roofline, or architectural features that contribute to the building's significance — all of which face and are experienced from Oxford Road — are affected.

Within the garden itself, the sauna's modest scale, its siting against an existing close-boarded fence in the least visible corner of the plot, and its recessive materials (natural cedar cladding, black external finish) minimise its visual prominence. It will not be visible from the listed building's principal elevations, from the street, or from neighbouring properties beyond the immediate boundary. As a demountable, freestanding structure, its presence is also readily reversible, with no permanent or irreversible change to the site.

On this basis, the proposal is assessed as causing no harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and no harm to the character or appearance of the Kilburn Conservation Area.

5. Justification and Conclusion

The proposed garden sauna has been sited and designed with direct regard to the setting of the listed building and the character of the conservation area: it is located in the least visually sensitive part of the garden, uses recessive and sympathetic materials, involves no alteration to historic fabric, and is fully reversible. No mitigation measures beyond this careful siting and choice of materials are considered necessary.

For the reasons set out above, the proposal is considered to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of 12-26 Oxford Road as a Grade II listed building, and to preserve the character and appearance of the Kilburn Conservation Area, in accordance with the statutory duties under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Sources: Historic England, National Heritage List for England, List Entry 1188693; London Borough of Brent, Kilburn Conservation Area Character Appraisal.