

31 Highgate High Street, London, N6 5JT
Design, Access & Heritage Statement - Rev 03

New rooflight to roof to rear outrigger, restoration works
to main facade.

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Background and Context

The property is located on Highgate High Street and forms part of a block of 4 Grade II units on the High Street. The property is within the historic Highgate Village Conservation area.

The front portion of the building is retail at ground floor and a single residential dwelling at upper level over two storeys. This portion of the building dates back to late 18th century albeit the shopfront has been updated in the mid 19th century.

There is a single storey outrigger to the rear which is a historic addition. This is accessed via an undercroft to the property and is currently an office under use Class E.

The unit benefits from a basement which has currently been split internally with the front portion designated as ancillary to the retail unit and the rear portion accessed via a secondary staircase from the office. The stairwell to this appears to have been formed from an original rear opening to the building. Albeit this staircase down is awkward in terms of access.

To the rear courtyard behind the unit a residential unit has been formed (prior to this it had industrial uses) and will remain unaffected by the proposal.



Rear single storey annexe to original building

This rear wing has been modified extensively over the years with the addition of glazed bricks and a glazed roof that is now in a state that needs attention.



Current staircase down to basement level



Rear courtyard with residential unit beyond



Ad-hoc nature of existing roof to annexe

Design & Layout

The proposal seeks to undertake the following works:

Ground Floor

- Existing walls to the outrigger - make good to brick work and repoint.
- Remove existing plasterboard and instate new timber frame with DPM to back face, to treat damp internally.
- Replace the roof to the rear outrigger to reflect the historic additions.
- Instate sliding over fixed pitched rooflight within the new roof.
- Replace door to the rear outrigger wing.
- Instate a replacement staircase down to the basement.
- New central heating system to be instated in space.

Basement Floor

- Create a replacement freestanding staircase down to the basement.
- Instate a shower room to support the legal requirements of an office.
- Create a storage area.
- Remove existing plasterboard and instate new timber frame with DPM to back face, to treat damp to walls internally.

Care and attention has been taken to design additions in a sympathetic and coherent manner such that the historic fabric of the building is enhanced and original form reflected in the changes.

It is thought that the rear wing was originally ancillary to the use of the dwelling at upper level and existing surveyed drawings of the current configuration denote that historic openings have been blocked up during the course of modifications to support the current use.

The original rear opening at ground floor is also to be utilised as the ongoing access down to the basement level. The glass block infill that has been added to the archway will be removed, and the original opening will be restored in its entirety: this will allow for better headroom down the stair into the basement which is currently awkward.



Existing opening which takes staircase down to the basement level

At basement level, to serve the office, a new shower room has been proposed along with a storage space to allow facilities to be located at this level. Ventilation for this will be taken through the existing chimney stack which is currently used for venting the kitchen extraction system.

At ground floor, the proposal allows for a sliding rooflight in the office space to maximise ventilation and natural light. Historic records show that this was originally built in two sections and the proposed structure reflects this.

The roof over this rear wing has come into a state of disrepair and a number of adhoc repairs have already been undertaken. This opportunity is being taken to renew the roof and restore some of the original detailing in terms of guttering and architectural articulation for this area, including the introduction of a parapet and cast iron rainwater hopper for the discharge of rainwater from the roof.

Scale

The scale of the proposal is modest relative to restoration of elements that need attention to serve the long term interest of the building.

Materiality

Where walls are being raised to form the parapet this is to be done in matching London Stock bricks. As part of the works it is anticipated to undertake some re-pointing works to the rear annexe.

The replacement front door will be Georgian in it's style to derive on the fact that the rear annexe was a Post-Victorian later addition.

To the roof of the rear annexe, this will be re-tiled in slate to match the original roof with some additional double glazed sliding over rooflights in a conservation area style.

Internally, damp treatment is proposed

Access

Access to the dwelling will be unaltered and will remain in its current position.



Sliding rooflights (for illustrative purposes)

Heritage Statement

31 Highgate High Street is inside the Highgate Conservation Area in Camden. The terrace is Grade II listed. It was built in the late 18th century, but the front elevation, which includes a historic storefront, was added in the mid-19th century.

There are now three different units, two commercial units at ground and basement, and residential above, in the building. The residential portion has two stories, with access to the rear yard. No. 31a Highgate High Street, is an office unit accessed from a ground-floor entrance located beyond the underpass. A separate retail space is located at the front of the building and takes up the front room on the ground floor and the front portion of the basement below. The rear portion of the basement and ground floor is within the demise of the office unit.

Statement of Significance

The mid-19th century front elevation, with its subdued, polite formality, is reminiscent of the late Georgian and early Victorian eras. On the ground level, a covered archway provides entrance to Bullens Yard in the rear, and a wooden shopfront from the early 19th century occupies the remaining space. Below a fascia with dentil cornice and pilasters is a canted bay.

Although the ground-floor structure added to the back has no architectural value, it adds to the building's historic value. It is a portion of the backyard known as "Bullens Yard." Highgate High Street is distinguished by these yards that run parallel to the main road. Historically, they would have had an auxiliary purpose to help the higher status properties along the frontage function. What remains of this significantly altered and modified structure reflects this.

It is challenging to interpret the original purpose and shape of this historic edifice because little of it remains. The map data makes it abundantly evident that the building has undergone considerable changes throughout time, including remodelling, expansion, and contraction. According to the map evidence, the outbuilding has typically been divided into two main sections, with a smaller piece adjacent to the main house's back elevation giving way to a bigger structure to the south. This is in accordance with the existing configuration, which can be seen in the roof structure's two distinct ridge heights and pitches.

The back extension's brickwork is in bad shape and has undergone significant changes. Given the shape of the back elevation of the house and the presence of two apertures that are presumed to have been a window and a doorway, it appears that the outbuilding is a later addition. This implies that there was once an external elevation here.

The back outbuilding's footprint, form, scale, and massing will all remain unchanged. Poorly done interventions have harmed the outbuilding externally. The suggestions will restore the structure to a decent condition, preserving the existing brickwork walls and repairing them with similar materials.

The replacement fabric was designed with care to emphasise its role in the main house's hierarchy and service orientation. Cast iron rainwater items will be used in place of the current ones. These improvements will maintain and strengthen the structure's auxiliary character while also improving the quality of the current materials.

Summary

To summarise, changes being proposed as part of this submission allows the office to be better serviced.

Modifications to allow for this have been designed to be sympathetic and in harmony with the original building fabric whilst maintaining the retail frontage to the front of the unit.

Changes being undertaken seek to preserve areas of historic value.

Critically, the existing original fabric remains in place such that it can easily referenced within the changes being proposed.