

Design and Access Statement
43 Downshire Hill NW3 1NU

1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Architecture for London and accompanies the application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the sensitive refurbishment and alteration of the Grade II listed property at 43 Downshire Hill.

The client seeks to refurbish and make minor alterations to the property to preserve and enhance the designated heritage asset.

2.0 Planning History

July 2022 - 2022/0993/PRE
Pre-app feedback received for the following proposals: the erection of a rear single storey side infill extension clad in weatherboarding, timber glazed doors to ground floor rear elevation, internal wall insulation to the external walls, re-glazing of sash windows with histoglass, existing first floor sash window to gabled extension reduced to three panes wide to match other sashes in that elevation and new conservation-type rooflights to extension, over the first floor en-suite and an enlargement of the existing roof light over staircase. Remodelling of the rear garden.

Sep 2021 - 2021/3937/P
Alterations to the front and rear elevations, including new openings in rear elevation and installation of a new door, installation of garden fencing to the rear elevation, installation of double glazed doors, replacement/ refurbishment of the existing single glazed windows to the front and rear elevations with new double glazed windows
Application withdrawn

Nov 2015 - 2015/5978/L
Removal of an existing ensuite shower room, and replacement with a new bathroom internally within a Grade II Listed Building.
Application permitted



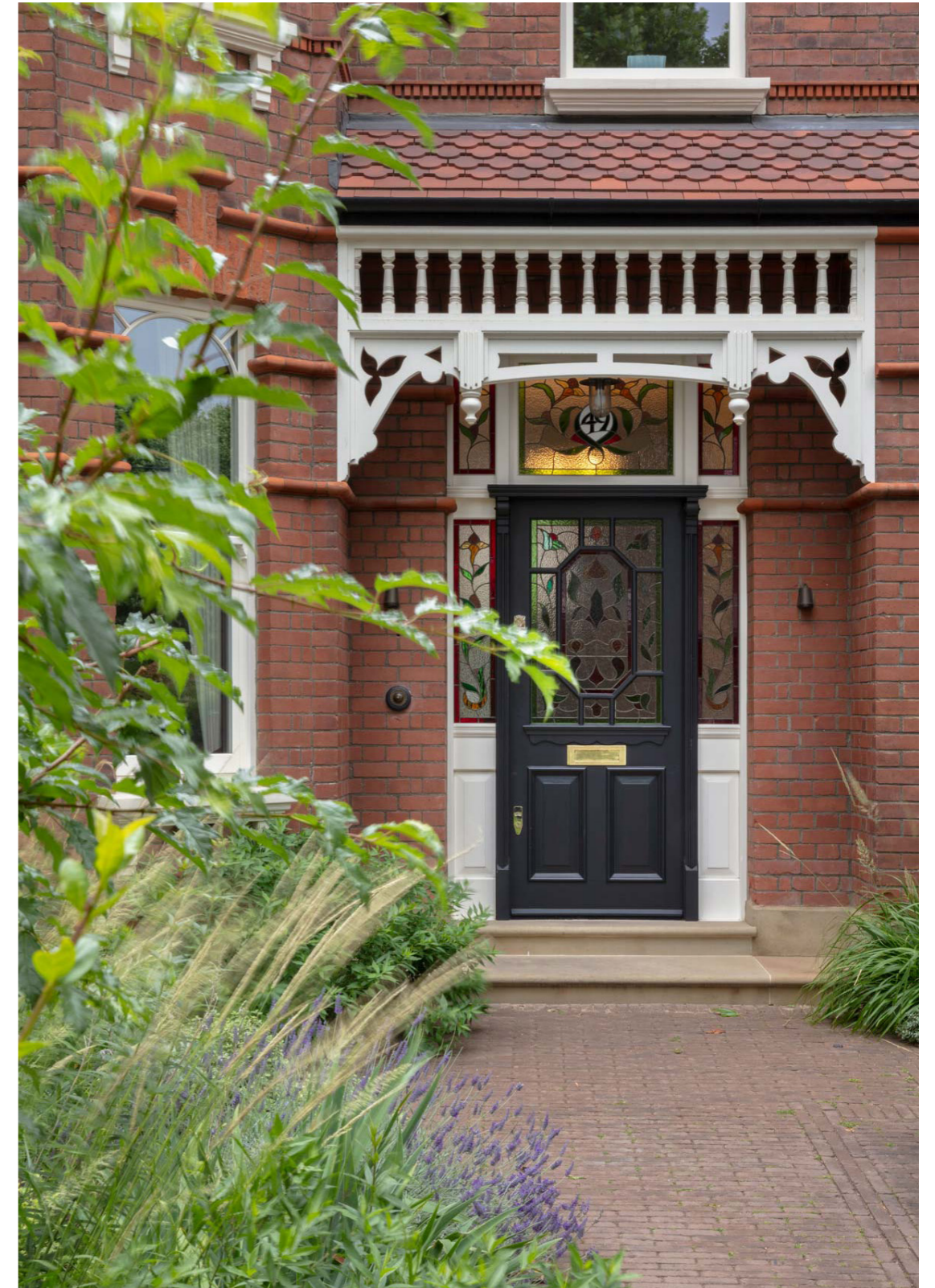
Rear outrigger extension to a listed building at Albion Street, Westminster by Architecture for London

2.1 Application Revisions Following the response from the planning officer in December 2022, we have revised the application and seek approval for the following:

1. New oriel window to the rear outrigger
2. Lowering the floor level of the existing kitchen
3. Amendments to the timber staircase to the second floor
4. New shower room layouts to the rear outrigger first and second floors
5. Alterations and refurbishment of the glazing including:
 - Refurbishment of the existing windows and replacement of window panes where necessary
 - Replacement sash windows to the rear outrigger
 - New and replacement conservation style rooflights to the main roof and outrigger roof
 - Replacement door to the rear elevation of the rear outrigger

We have omitted the following items from this application:

1. The external cladding and insulation of the rear outrigger
2. Internal insulation to the main house and outrigger
3. Replacement triple glazed windows to the rear extension
4. Larger rooflight opening above the staircase
5. New first floor bathroom to the main house
6. Remodelling of the ground floor WC and understairs cupboard
7. Landscaping works to the rear garden



Refurbished Edwardian house at The Avenue, Brent by Architecture for London

3.0 Context

43 Downshire Hill is a designated Grade II listed building (listed on the 14th of May 1974) alongside numbers 41 and 42 (listing entry number 1067414) and is located within the Hampstead Conservation Area, an area principally defined by its topography, built diversity and its historical association with The Heath.

Within the Hampstead Conservation Area, there is an abundance of built assortment and heterogeneity that provides the area with a rich architectural character. Pevsner, the architectural historian stated; “the delightful thing is the preservation of so much, yet no uniformity”

The street pattern of the original village is retained and reflected by the fragmentation of built blocks and the irregular groupings of historical buildings. Whilst the undulating topography gives rise to complex narrow streets and a diverse orientation of elevations, characterised by their diversity of periods and materiality. Decorative stock brickwork and horizontal timber weatherboarding are particularly prevalent.

43 Downshire Hill is located within sub-area 3 (Willoughby Road/ Downshire Hill) of the Hampstead Conservation Area, as outlined within the Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal.

There is an abundance of quality and the recurring theme of built diversity along Downshire Hill, ranging from unassuming terraced brick cottages to extensive detached villas. This assortment of formal and informal terraces comprised of buildings from contrasting periods leads to a miscellaneous streetscape, giving the area a strong identity.

Numbers 41-42 and 43 Downshire Hill compose a terrace of 3 early 19th-century brick cottages, a typical ‘micro-climate’ of related buildings within the greater area. The cottages are constructed from a stock brick laid in Flemish bond with utilitarian round-arched doorways, decorative patterned fanlights, prostyle porticos and flat gauged brick arches to recessed sashes.

4.0 Existing

The original dwelling at 43 Downshire Hill has undergone extensive development, setting it apart from the neighbouring 42 and 41 Downshire Hill. In two phases, the house has been extended resulting in a convoluted rear elevation that lacks any contextual relationship to the host building and wider context.

These development stages can be summarised as:

Phase 1 (1800’s) - Two-story extension above the existing closet wing

A two-storey extension was built to the original outrigger. This comprised a full-depth extension to the first floor rear bedroom and a smaller extension to the second floor rear bedroom. As part of these developments, the outrigger extents were also enlarged to internalise the former external side return passage, spanning the full three-storeys of the revised outrigger.

Phase 2 (Mid 1900’s) - Three-storey infill side extension

The later second phase of development at the dwelling comprised extending the depth of the earlier full-height side return infill element alongside the development of a new bathroom at the second-floor level.

This phase of development is evidenced in the external brickwork to the rear of the dwelling, with later brickwork subtly contrasting against the earlier Phase 1 works.

Contemporary timber doors and casement windows were added to the ground floor, Georgian-style timber sash windows were added to the first and second floor rooms and a timber casement window was added to the second-floor bathroom. A rooflight was also added above the existing stair.

Interior

Internally, a number of ad-hoc works have resulted in a patchwork interior that detracts from the integrity of the designated heritage asset.

Internal walls are mostly 20th century timber frames with modern plasterboard. There is only a small section of wall in lath and lime plaster on the first-floor surrounding the original landing.

The wall between the service passage and hallway has been removed with structural support added as a result. This comprises two beams supporting the existing joists with a column sited within the living room supporting these beams.

An original ironwork fireplace is extant within the living room but this has been adapted to be fuelled by mains gas supply. The original fireplace to the first-floor front bedroom also remains extant.

The original fireplace and chimney breast to the dining room has been removed. The chimney breast at the first-floor level remains extant but the fireplace has been removed.

A guest toilet was added to the ground floor hallway.

General

The property has experienced significant subsidence, with the front elevation exhibiting dropped sections of brickwork, a receding parapet and a structurally compromised portico. Internally, the historical fabric has also been compromised and distorted, with undulating floorboards, uneven floor joists and dropped lintels harming the heritage asset.

It is assumed that the first phase of alterations and extensions to the building may have magnified the subsidence, whilst the second phase may have included structural underpinning as an attempt to correct the foundation instability.

A butterfly roof with a central drainage valley remains extant, albeit with the addition of a rooflight sited within the western slope. The original Welsh slate tiles have been replaced with modern slate tiles.

Internally, large sections of the existing floorboards have been cut out, with replacement pine floorboards installed where works to the services underneath have been undertaken.

As subsequent owners have altered positions of bathrooms, windows have been bricked-up and new foul water drainage pipework, water supply pipework, gas supply pipework and ventilation fans have been installed which adds to the visual clutter on the rear elevation. The original rainwater downpipe has also been replaced with a plastic round pipe that is not compatible with the original hopper.

The property requires urgent sympathetic renovation to conserve and enhance its special historic interest, whilst aligning it with the needs of the owners' family. The previous ad-hoc development has resulted in a built asset that lacks any aesthetic cohesion and requires a comprehensive unification.



Refurbished listed building in Barnsbury, Islington by Architecture for London

5.0 Proposals

The applicant seeks to sensitively restore the Grade II listed property to conserve and enhance the character of the heritage asset.

The scope of the proposed works is predominantly orientated around the preservation of the historical built fabric and will follow the conservation principles set out in Historic England’s Conservation Principles Framework.

All built elements of historical significance will be retained and sensitively restored using the notion of ‘minimal intervention’. Whilst sensitively installed modern additions will enhance the future sustainability of the designated heritage asset. This revised application seeks approval for the following proposals:

5.1 Oriel Window

At present the kitchen is cramped and suffers from a lack of natural daylight and ventilation. To create a more open and inviting kitchen space, the proposal is to create a new oriel window with a window seat.

The existing kitchen window is non-original and modern in nature, likely dating from the alterations made to the property in the 1970s, and is of no historic value. These alterations are of low quality, both in design and materials.

The pre-app feedback strongly advised *‘that a ground floor extension to the rear of the existing part-width outrigger (i.e. attached to the gable wall) is considered, if more internal space is considered necessary.’*

The window seat will provide more space in the kitchen, whilst leaving the plan form of the current kitchen intact. It will provide more natural daylight and views out to the garden, and enhance the usability of the kitchen space.

5.2 Kitchen Floor

The window will be contemporary and high quality, with minimal details and frameless glazing. External shutters will be provided to alleviate overheating in the summer months.

The floor level of the existing kitchen was altered in a previous development of the property, and has now resulted in a kitchen with a low ceiling height. This is apparent as the original window to the side elevation is too low in relation to the existing floor level, and the floor boards in the hallway adjacent to the kitchen are non-original. The original floor layout is seen at No 42 (Refer Heritage Statement).

The proposal is to lower the existing floor level by 350mm, equivalent to two steps. This will increase the ceiling height and improve access to the rear garden. The steps down to the new floor level will be located in the hallway, giving sufficient clearance away from the door to the kitchen.



Refurbishment of a Georgian House by Architecture for London

5.3 Staircase

The existing staircase to the second floor bedroom is a remnant of the unconventional way the building has been extended over time. The staircase is steep and the head height is very low at the top of the stair.

Climbing up and down the stairs is difficult and does not comply with modern standards. The use of the house is limited by occupants as they age, as this staircase limits mobility within the house.

The proposed new staircase will be a shallower pitch than the existing, and provide improved head height to reach the second floor.

5.4 Shower Rooms

The existing first and second floors of the outrigger building are configured with a bedroom and bathroom on each floor. The existing bathrooms are large in size compared with the bedrooms and the clients would like to reorganise the spaces to improve the size of the bedrooms and convert the shower rooms to en-suites.

The layout of the existing bathrooms is non-original and the changes will not affect the plan form of the original property. The proposal will also rationalise the convoluted services apparent on the external walls

5.5 Windows and glazing

The existing sash boxes and window frames are to be retained and refurbished, polished plate or older glass will be retained. Modern glass will be replaced by hand-drawn Histoglass. Please refer to the existing window photo survey that accompanies this application.

The existing windows to the rear elevation of the rear outrigger at second floor level are non-original and out of proportion with the existing property. These will be replaced, and the window opening sizes will be altered to better fit with the windows to the main house. The replacement windows will be single glazed with Histoglass.

The pre-app feedback stated that *'The reduction in the size of the second floor sash casement to 6/6 is supported. The design of the replacement sash window must be appropriate to the original age and design of the property.'*

The existing rooflight above the main stair is in poor condition and will be replaced with a conservation style rooflight. It currently leaks and is likely harming the original building fabric.

To accommodate the revised layout of the second floor shower room, the existing side window will be bricked up. This will improve privacy to the adjacent property at number 42.



Listed Georgian house in Canonbury, Islington by Architecture for London

	<p>A new conservation style rooflight will be introduced to the roof of the outrigger to provide natural daylight. The proposed rooflight will not be visible from the street nor from surroundings views.</p> <p>The pre-app feedback stated: <i>‘Rooflights are therefore only considered acceptable if they are hidden from the public realm, and preferably as few in number as possible.’</i></p>
6.0 Planning Policy	<p>The proposed restoration and extension of 43 Downshire Hill complies with the Design - Camden Planning Guidance, Home Improvements - Camden Planning Guidance, Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy , National Planning Policy Framework and the Historic England Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance. Please see below the relevant policies outlined below:</p> <p>Design - Camden Planning Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council will only permit developments within conservation areas that preserve and where possible enhance the character and appearance of the area. <p>NPPF. Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the case of buildings, generally, the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed by ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. <p>Historic England Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance.</p> <p>Restoration of an asset should be acceptable if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The heritage values of the elements restored decisively outweighs the values of those that would be lost. <p>New work or alteration to a significant asset should be acceptable if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The proposal aspires to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future.

7.0 Heritage Statement	<p>Please refer to the heritage statement carried out by Martin O’Rourke, an independent consultant, in support of this application.</p> <p>Architecture for London have prepared a supplementary planning and heritage statement in support of the application.</p>
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8.0 Access	<p>At ground floor level the single step leading from the hallway floor level to the kitchen will be omitted. This is currently a trip hazard. Instead, the kitchen and hallway floor levels will be lowered to create a flush threshold at the door.</p> <p>The three steps required to reach this level will be moved further away from the kitchen door, and will return to their original location in the hallway as seen from the floor plan of No 42. This will provide improved visibility for the change in level and enable sufficient clearance in front of the door.</p> <p>At second floor level the amended staircase will provide improved access to the top floor room. The existing staircase has goings of 200mm and a pitch of 47 degrees, which is steeper than current building regs of 42 degrees. At the tightest point it allows a headroom of only 1350mm and allows an opening of 1700 mm to reach the top floor bedroom.</p> <p>Navigating the current staircase is precarious and is very easy to hit your head on the ceiling. The top step is also significantly lower than the rest of the risers which is a trip hazard. It is likely to cause an accident and injury. The staircase is not suitable for the current owners nor for any other occupants, especially older people.</p> <p>The proposed changes will create a staircase in line with current building regulations, at a pitch of 39 degrees with a minimum headroom of 1900mm. This will provide a much needed benefit to the usability of the property.</p>
9.0 Use	<p>Unchanged.</p>
10.0 Conclusion	<p>The proposals comprise external alterations to the rear outrigger and internal adjustments to the kitchen and bathrooms with reinstatement of original features. These changes are sympathetic to the historical fabric and form of the original building and have no detrimental effect on the building or surroundings.</p>

Architecture for London

We are award-winning London architects and designers, dedicated to the creation of sustainable buildings and places. Our residential projects include new homes, house extensions and refurbishments at all scales. We work toward Passivhaus and EnerPHit standards of comfort and low energy, creating sustainable homes that bring joy.

Our work includes both new build houses and alterations to existing homes, from house extensions and basements to lofts and garden rooms. Each provides inspiring, light filled spaces for living and entertaining.

We have extensive experience with heritage properties, where there is often a need to balance sensitive refurbishment with carefully considered contemporary extensions. Projects are designed holistically with architecture, landscape, joinery, and interiors each interlocking to form a coherent whole.

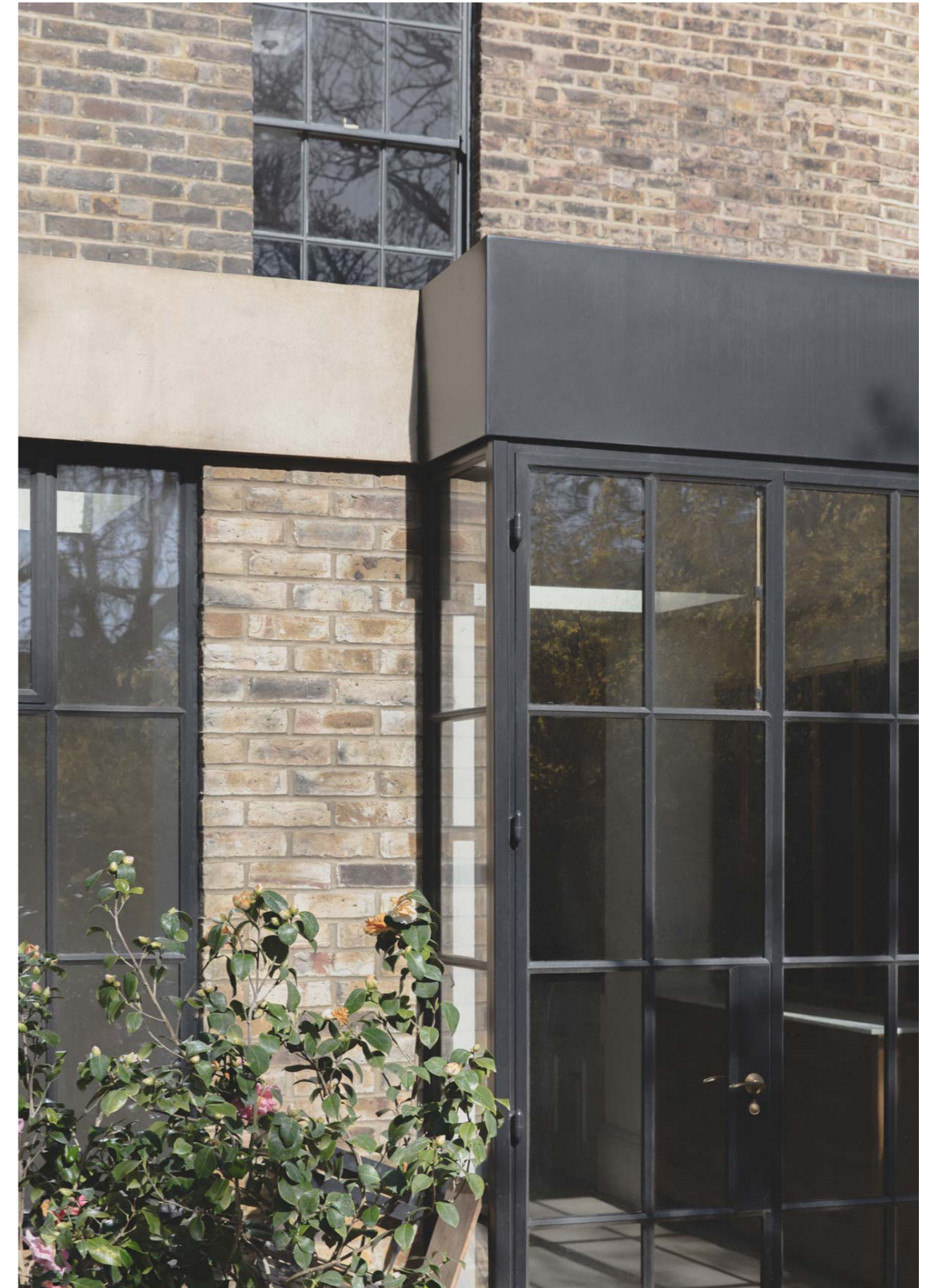
We often work with sensitive historic properties in Conservation Areas in Camden. Our recently completed house in Dartmouth Park is featured on page 58 of Camden's 'Home Improvements Planning Guidance' booklet as a successful example of high quality materials.

Recognition

Selected: RIBA Practice of the Month
 Finalist: London Construction Awards
 Finalist: Blueprint Awards Best Residential
 Finalist: BD Young Architect of the Year Award
 Finalist: Dezeen Awards
 Winner: RIBA Journal Rising Stars Cohort
 Finalist: BD Housing Architect of the Year Award
 Finalist: AJ Small Projects Award
 Finalist: Architizer A+ Awards
 Finalist: AJ Retrofit Award
 Finalist: NLA Don't Move Improve Award

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Rear extension to a house in London by Architecture for London