



Design & Access Statement

Including Heritage Assessment and Sustainability Statement

31 Agar Grove, Camden NW1 9UG

Ground floor rear extension to facilitate conversion of a 3-bedroom duplex flat to 1x3 bed flat at ground floor and 1x studio flat at first floor

October 2023



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for the:

“Ground floor rear extension to facilitate conversion of a 3-bedroom duplex flat to 1x3 bed flat at ground floor and 1x studio flat at first floor”

1.2 This proposal seeks to respond to a recent appeal decision at the property (Ref: APP/X5210/W/22/3303899), which saw a proposal to subdivide a three-bedroom duplex flat into a two bedroom flat and studio dismissed. The primary reason for the refusal and dismissal was the loss of a three-bedroom family unit, which was found to outweigh the acknowledged benefit of the additional single person unit. This revised proposal seeks to extend the ground floor property to provide an additional bedroom, thereby retaining a family sized unit with access to garden space, in addition to the new studio unit.



2.0 The Site

2.1 The application site is a four-storey semi-detached townhouse located in Camden in Central London.

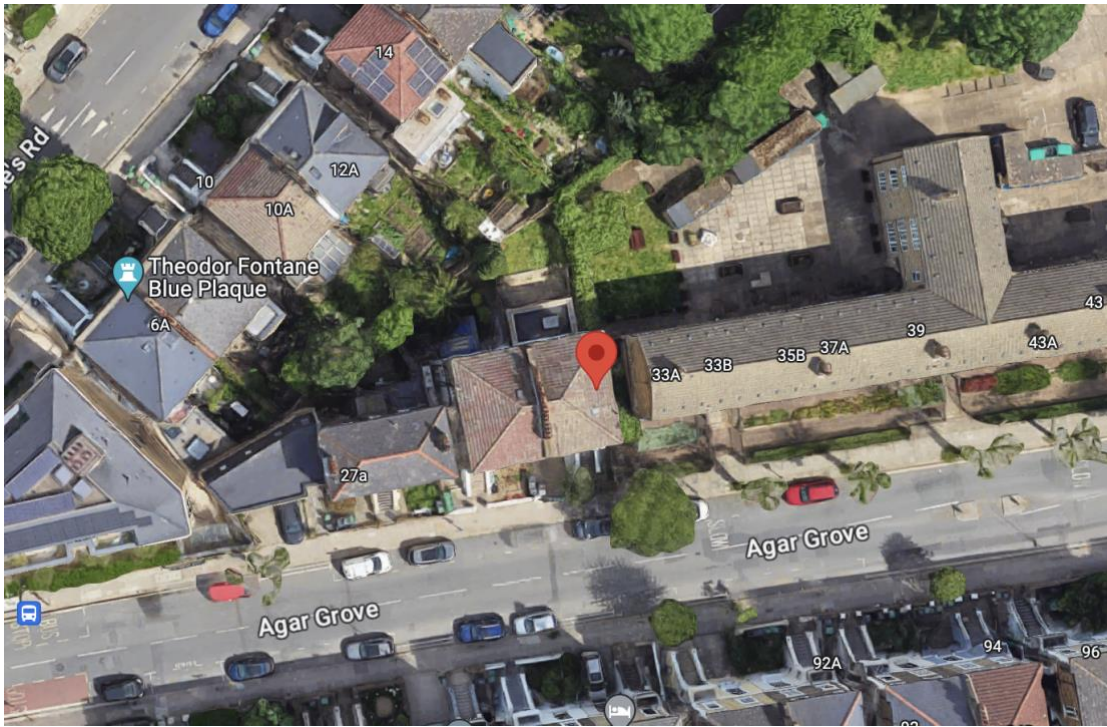


Figure 1 – Site Location

2.2 The site is within London Underground Zone 2 and is walking distance (600m) from Camden Road Overground Rail Station where there are local shops and services.

2.3 The area around the site is predominantly residential in character and made up of similar townhouses, the majority of which are subdivided into multiple flats. The adjoining property at 29 Agar Grove is subdivided into four self-contained flats, with one on each floor.

2.4 The rear gardens of the properties on this part of Agar Grove are of varying size as the plots narrow towards the apex at the junction of St Augustine's Road. The application site therefore benefits from a larger garden to 27 and 29 Agar Grove and 6, 8 and 10 St Augustine's Road. A similar arrangement occurs at 1-7 Agar Road where the plots narrow towards the apex at the junction with Stratford Villas. Ground floor extensions



of various sizes can be found in the surrounding area, many of which are under permitted development and some via the planning process.

- 2.5 The application site is within the Camden Square Conservation Area, which is described as a primarily nineteenth century inner London suburb. 31 Agar Grove is a period property in a good state of repair and is considered to contribute positively to the area. Immediately to the east of the appeal site there is a 20th Century Local Authority block of affordable housing which is considered to be a negative feature. The rear garden of the application property is not visible from any public areas within the Conservation Area.
- 2.6 The site is in a sustainable location and has a PTAL of 3 which indicates good public transport accessibility. The site is in Flood Zone 1 (Low Risk).

Site Planning History

- 2.7 The planning history of the property is listed below:
- 2021/3573/P – Change of the lower and upper ground floor from 1x3 bed flat to a self-contained 1x2 bed flat and 1 x studio flat – Application refused and appeal dismissed.
 - 2021/3573/P - Conversion from one 3 bedroom flat and 4 bedsits to one 2 bedroom flat and three 1 bedroom flats (Refused on 15/11/2021)
 - 2013/5196/P - Change of use from 4 x Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Use Class C4) at lower ground and ground floor levels to 1 x 3 bed maisonette (Use Class C3), including erection of a single storey rear plus side extensions at lower ground floor level; retention of 4 x HMO units at first and second floor levels (Use Class C4) including replacement windows on front, side and rear elevations. (Granted 06/11/2013)
 - 2012/0101/P An application for the entire property to change HMO use to C3 was submitted in 2012 then withdrawn. At that time the submitted plans showed that the property contained 8 bedsits.



- CTP20926 - The formation of a 4th floor at roof level to provide office accommodation and erection of a 6-storey and basement side extension at the corner of Gray's Inn Road and Britannia Street to provide basement laundry room and residential storage, ground floor office and showroom, first floor offices and 4 floors of residential (comprising 12 units) above at 344-356 Gray's Inn Road, WC1. Approved 30/7/1975

Local Planning Precedent:

2.8 Garden Flat at 6 St Augustine's Road

- 2006/0214/P - Erection of a single-storey extension at the rear and side of house at ground floor level (Class C3) – Granted Jan 2006
- 2016/5010/P – Erection of a single storey side and rear extension at lower-ground floor, following the demolition of the existing shed and the installation of rooflights all associated with the use as residential flat (Class C3) – Granted November 2016
- 2022/5219/P - Construct a rear, Ground Floor single storey extension to accommodate a dining room – Granted January 2023

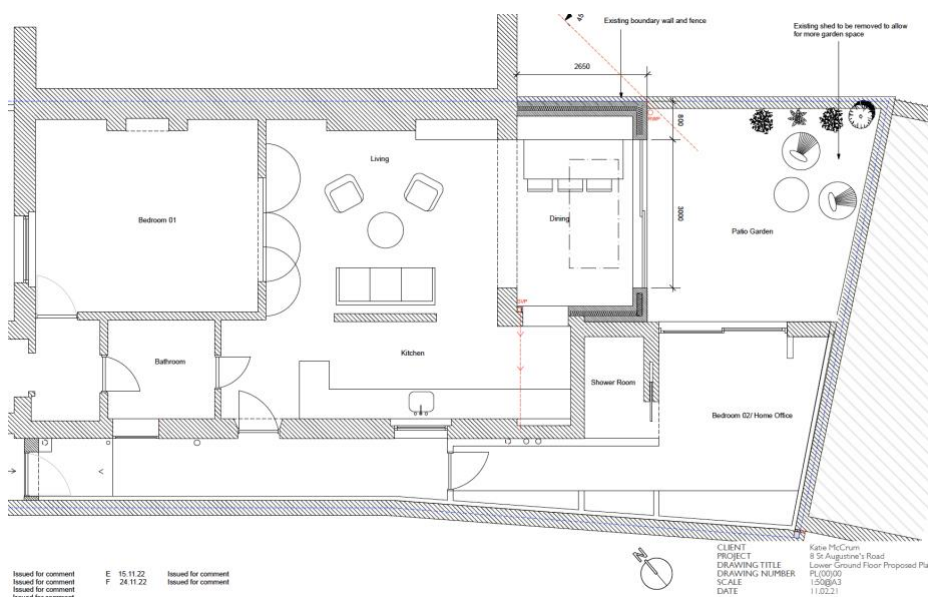


Figure 2 – Approved 2023 Ground floor layout at Garden Flat at 6 St Augustine's Road



- 2.9 The precedent at 6 Augustines Road is of particular relevance for the following reasons:
1. Close to the site (25m away)
 2. Within the same Conservation Area (Camden Square)
 3. Recent (2023)
 4. Incrementally extended (extension to a previously approved extension)
 5. Takes up a large proportion of garden space (over 50%)
- 2.10 However, it is not the only precedent of note. A further precedent of note is number 69 St Augustine's Road (2018/3546/P) where an application was approved for a 4.8m depth extension that was more than full width and wrapped around to a side extension. An appeal was later allowed and costs awarded to the applicant for a proposal to extend this even further along the side (2018/3546/P). The costs award stated *"...the Council is required by law to deal with similar applications in a consistent manner, unless material considerations point otherwise. The appellant has provided clear evidence to demonstrate that the Council has not done so. The Council has permitted several similar extensions in St Augustine's Road to the one under consideration now during the course of the last decade, including those at Nos. 6, 34a, 63a & 70..."*.
- 2.11 Another nearby example of precedent is at 84 St Augustine's Road where an additional 3m extension onto an existing 3m rear extension (total 6m) was granted permission in 2015 (2015/1965/P). This is the same proposal we are putting forward and is increasingly common place given that 6m extensions are now PD for terraced houses outside of the CA. Whilst each application can be considered on its merits, all of these precedents are material considerations that have been taken into account elsewhere. Consistency in decision making underpins confidence in the planning system.



3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal seeks permission for the conversion from 1x three-bedroom duplex flat with garden access, to two self-contained flats including 1x three-bedroom flat with garden access and 1x studio flat.
- 3.2 The proposal necessitates a ground floor rear extension to create sufficient floorspace to accommodate an extra bedroom. The extension would have rooflights to provide additional daylight and sunlight into the space, which would be set within a green roof to provide urban greening; sustainable urban drainage; enhanced biodiversity; cooling in the summer and insulation in the winter.
- 3.3 Internal rearrangements have been made to make the most efficient use of the space and to ensure that all minimum standards are met and that the units provide good quality internal accommodation. They would both be dual aspect and have good internal daylight levels, with the lower ground floor unit living area opening out into the garden space.
- 3.4 The areas of the proposed development are as follows:
- Total site area: 159.5m²
 - Original house: 53.2m²
 - Curtilage: 106.3m²
 - New Extension: 10.8m²
 - Total extensions (including past extension): 24.8m²
 - Extension ratio: 23%
 - Remaining Gardens Space: 35.8sqm
- 3.5 In terms of garden coverage, the proposal is significantly below the 50% guideline set by Permitted Development and is below the precedents identified in the previous section.



4.0 Planning Policy

4.1 The proposal has been designed in line with the following Policy Documents:

- National Design Guide
- Nationally Described Space Standards
- London Plan
- Mayors Housing SPG
- Camden Local Plan
- Camden Design SPG (CPG 1)
- Waste Storage Technical Guidance
- Camden Transport CPG
- Camden Access for all CPG
- Camden Energy Efficiency and Adaptation CPG
- Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal



5.0 Design Considerations

- 5.1 The proposed units meet minimum space standards and provide good quality internal accommodation.
- 5.2 The external form of the ground floor extension has been discussed with officers and is considered to be the optimal layout for delivering the required amount of internal space and minimal impact on the garden space, neighbouring amenity and the pattern of local development.
- 5.3 Various options have been considered in the design development:

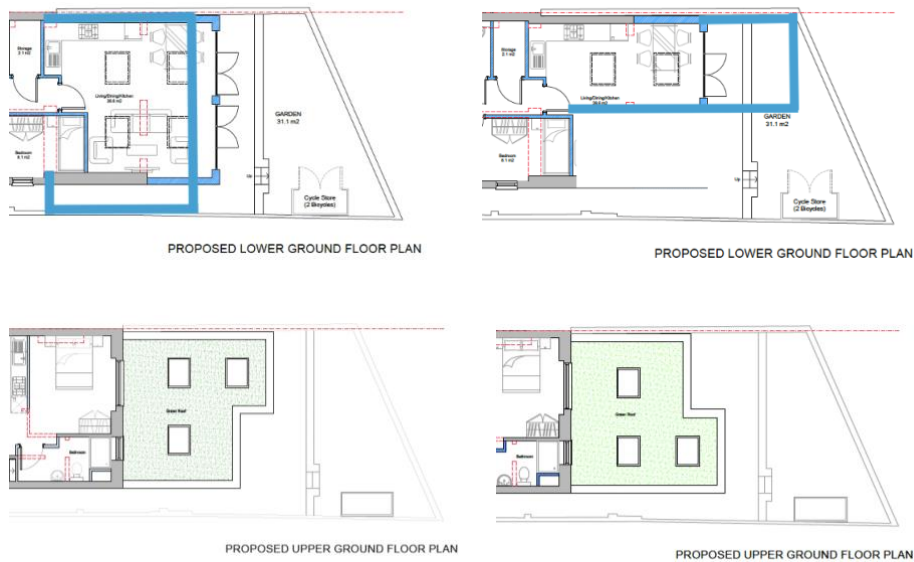


Figure 3 – Different Layout Options

- 5.4 The final agreed layout has been submitted as an amendment and is reduced in size from the original submission but still meets the minimum internal space standard for a three bed unit across one floor (Figure 4).
- 5.5 The units would both be dual aspect and have good internal daylight levels, with the lower ground floor unit living area opening out into the garden space. The internal layouts demonstrate that all necessary furniture can be accommodated and that there are sufficient kitchen units and storage spaces.

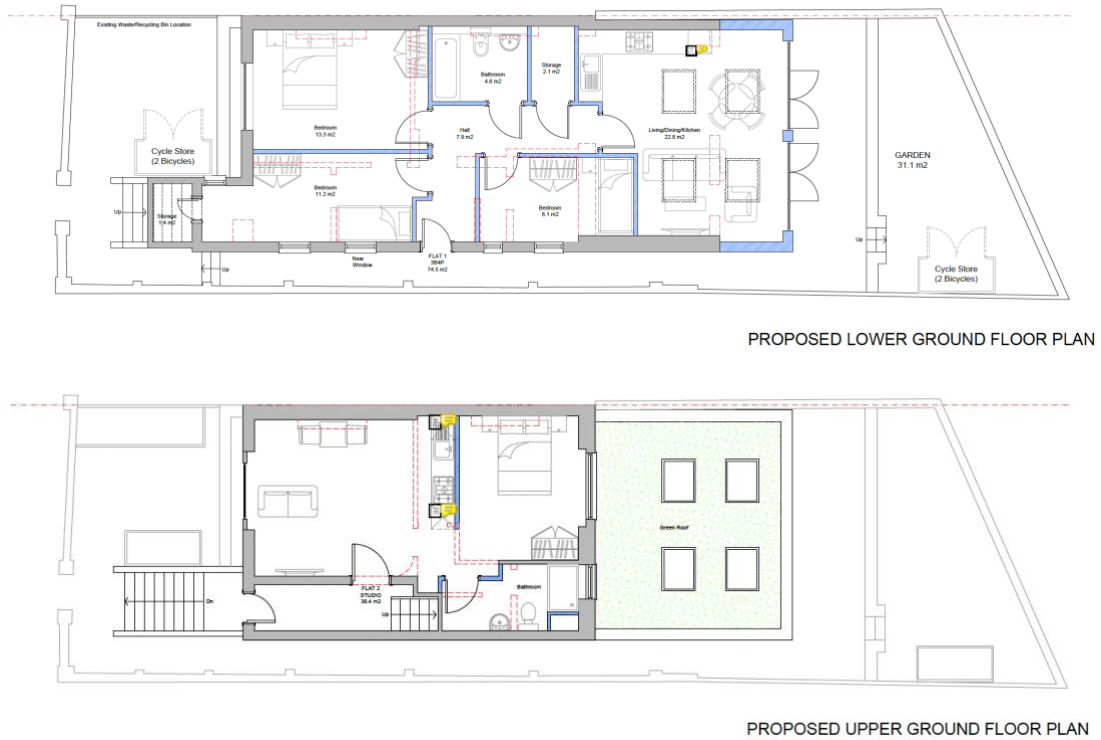


Figure 4 – Amended application proposal - Internal Layouts

- 5.6 The family sized accommodation provides over 35sqm of garden space accessible from the main living area. The studio unit does not provide any external amenity space but is close to a number of local amenities including public and private areas of open space and recreation such as Caledonian Park, Market Road Football Pitches, Regents Canal and Cantelows Gardens all within a 500m radius.
- 5.7 It is proposed that the development would be car free. Secure Cycle Parking is provided in the front and rear gardens.



6.0 Heritage Assessment

- 6.1 The application site is within the Camden Square Conservation Area. In accordance with Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- 6.2 In accordance with Section 16 of the NPPF not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Where harm is identified it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 6.3 The proposals are small in scale and located to the rear of the property at ground floor level thereby having no impact on views from public areas and severely limiting the potential for impact on the Conservation Area. Nevertheless, the design has sought to match the existing rear extension, which in turn matches the materials and proportions of the original dwelling.
- 6.4 Camden Square Conservation Area is described in the area Appraisal as a primarily nineteenth century inner London suburb. 31 Agar Grove is a period property in a good state of repair and is considered to contribute positively to the area. Immediately to the east of the appeal site there is a 20th Century Local Authority block of affordable housing which is considered to be a negative feature. The Conservation Area Appraisal notes the change in the gradation of plot sizes away from Camden Square towards the *“more modest houses at Agar Grove”*.
- 6.5 There was intermittent bomb damage on Agar Grove which has led to a loss of architectural detailing, infill plots and degradation of character. Agar Grove is classified in the CAA as a Boundary Road at the southern edge of the Estate. The street also physically runs along the lower edge of the sloping area. This was originally lined with semi-detached houses, with the gradation from larger houses to the west leading to terraces at the York Way end. This pattern is still legible but the character of the street has been eroded progressively, particularly on the north side. It is a busy thoroughfare; the pattern of buildings was divided by the gap caused by the insertion of the railway,



bomb damage and the replacement of houses with flats on the corner of York Way, 33-47 Agar Grove and Gairloch House and the surrounding Council estates. The CAA also notes that the condition of many properties is also poor and “*in need of investment*”.

- 6.6 The CA statement makes specific reference to garden development, stating “*Development which results in the loss of private open spaces is unlikely to be acceptable if it is considered to harm the contribution of these spaces to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Particular care should be taken when considering development within rear gardens in prominent positions, for example those on corner sites, where the visual impact of a proposal may be greater*”. The proposal is not on a corner site and is not in a prominent position. As such it is not going to harm the contribution of the space to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It therefore follows that there is no material harm either significant or less than significant. As such the Council’s responsibilities under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 are automatically discharged.
- 6.7 It should also be noted that there are public benefits associated with the creation of new residential units and with the economic benefits of construction. The proposals also allow investment in the building, addressing an identified need within the Conservation Area Appraisal.



7.0 Sustainability Statement

- 7.1 The extension will meet Part L Building Regulations and improve the external fabric of the building from the existing which pre-dates current standards.
- 7.2 The rooflights will provide higher levels of daylight and sunlight into the space. The extension will provide a new green roof to provide urban greening; sustainable urban drainage; enhanced biodiversity; cooling in the summer and insulation in the winter. This will be a benefit in sustainability terms and will provide a biodiversity net gain.
- 7.3 Finally, it should be noted that the proposal allows the creation of a new residential unit in a highly sustainable location.



8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 The proposal will have minimal impact on the site or surroundings and will provide additional residential floorspace resulting in a net gain in units including one ground floor family sized unit with access to a good sized garden.
- 8.2 There will be no negative impact on the neighbouring amenity as a result of the extension or the small uplift in potential occupants, and the additional built development will be completely hidden from view from the surrounding area.