

Proposed redevelopment of site at  
23 Ravenshaw Street, London NW6 1NP

# Design & Access Statement

## Part 1: The Site and Application History

28 Jan 2024



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Applicant: Mr C S Taylor, 23A Ravenshaw Street London NW6 1NP

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# The Site and its Current Use

The site comprises an existing three-storey Victorian end-terrace house with a bulky later addition, accompanied by a hard-standing car park. It is proposed to replace it with a contemporary three-storey plus basement level, six-unit apartment block. The front elevation will be a contemporary interpretation of the prevailing vernacular, featuring white bay window elements, red brick walls, and pitched tile roofs.

The rear elevation, constructed in London Stock brick, will have pitched tile roofs, proportionally sized dormers, and outriggers, all presenting a visual appearance, form, bulk, massing, materials, and colour palette closely aligned with adjacent rear elevations. The rear will also be divided into two distinct halves with a central gap, conveying the form of two individual buildings at the outer corner.

## Property details

23A and 23B and Land adjoining 23A and 23B Ravenshaw Street London NW6 1NP is in the Fortune Green Ward. Location Coordinates: Easting 524849 Northing 185034. The site consists of a two storey plus loft conversion end of terrace red brick house with an adjacent area of hard standing car park. It is assembled from three separate titles;

1. 23A, a two bed, ground floor garden flat.
2. 23B, a three bed first and second floor maisonette and garden.
3. Car park area, listed as 'Land adjoining 23 Ravenshaw Street London NW6 1NP'.

The broadly triangular site backs directly onto a railway banking, apart from the rear garden of 23A which backs partly onto the apex of the communal garden of Ellerton Tower on Mill Lane.



*No.23 Ravenshaw Street; a Victorian house with it's later side extension on the left, together with the extant crossover and car park gates.*



Aside from the original Victorian facade, much of the existing building's external appearance, particularly the late additions, has questionable merit in terms of its contribution to the area. Similarly, the quality of the accommodation, especially regarding layout, is far from ideal. The ground floor flat suffers from inadequate natural light, while the upper three-level maisonette is compromised by two flights of stairs and a lengthy connecting corridor. The house utilises the site very inefficiently, having expanded in an ad hoc manner over time. These issues, along with the build quality of the 1930s extension, lead us to dismiss the option of merely refurbishing the building. Even with extensive refurbishment, many of the building's fundamental problems would persist. Furthermore, since the design of any new development on the car park site would be significantly constrained by the existing building, redeveloping the house in conjunction with the car park emerges as the most practical and efficient solution.

The site comprises:

23A: 2 Bed Ground: 69.7m<sup>2</sup>

23B: 3 Bed Maisonette: 94.7m<sup>2</sup>

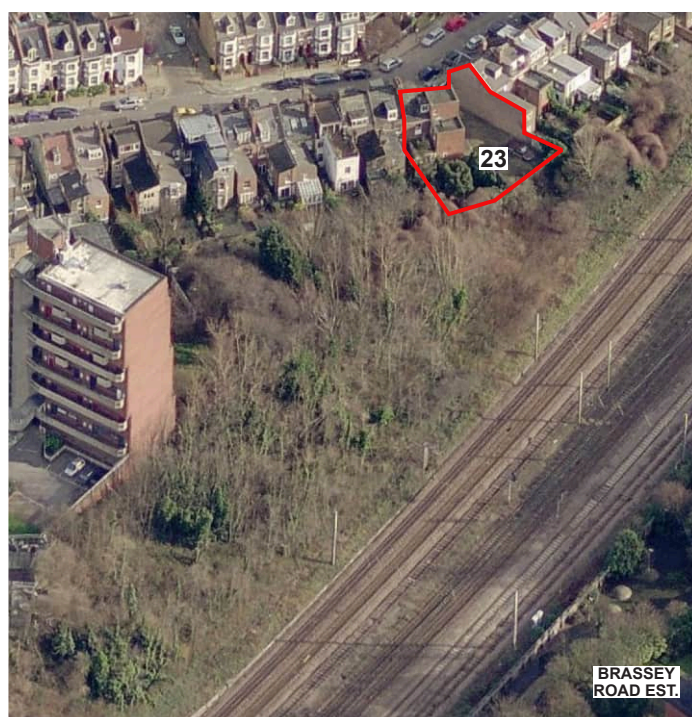
House Footprint: 86.3m<sup>2</sup>

Permeable Garden and Patio Area: 98.3m<sup>2</sup>

Semi-Permeable Garden Paving: 34.4m<sup>2</sup>

Hard Standing and Steps: 265.1m<sup>2</sup>

Total Site Area: 484.1m<sup>2</sup>



A. Aerial shot, including Ellerton Tower.



B. Aerial shot showing railway to rear.

# Site History

Originally built in 1882, the house is listed in a rate book of 1891 as: “Oak Lodge, House, Garden and Builders Yard”, later referred to as a ‘Stone-yard’. Through much of the 20th C the house remained as much a business premises as it was a dwelling.



A. OS Map from 1915. Shows just how extensive the site is compared to neighbouring plots.



B. Post-war photo. House, prior to the large block being built, with garages to the back wall.



C. Only one third on the building is the original comparatively small Victorian house.



D. Two-thirds of the house consists of ad hoc 20th century additions, shown above in pink.

**1953:** OS maps still show a row of 8 garages backing on to the wall to the rear of the site.

**1966:** Photo clearly shows garages and yard.

**1974:** LB Camden purchased the site, listing the house as vacant and in need of refurbishment.

**1976:** LB Camden converted the house to 2 flats but left the car park undeveloped, apart from laying the extant hard standing.

**1982 & 1989:** The flats were sold off by Camden Council and the properties have remained in their current use since then.

# Planning History

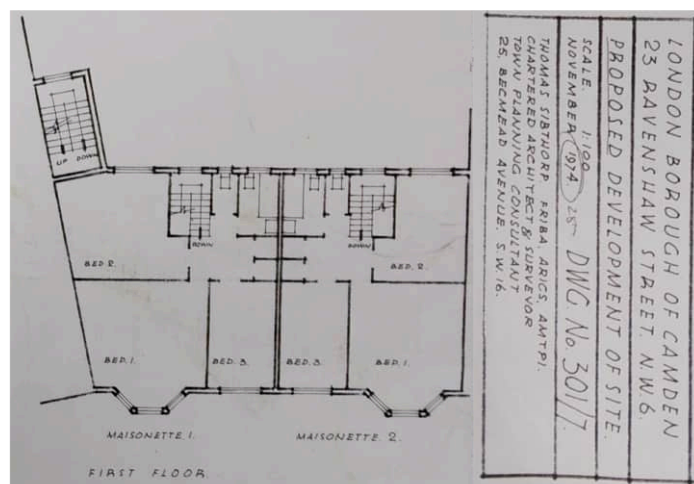
The house itself seems to have been built as something of an after thought, and deliberately as a commercial premises shortly after the rest of the parade. Probably in the early 1930's, the large side extension was added to the original 1880's house.

**1968:** Approval of erection of an additional garage which was not built.

**1974:** Camden Council purchased the site and explored plans to redevelop it with 2 maisonettes and 2 flats while retaining the 8 garages and 2 sheds, but the plans were abandoned.

**1975:** Camden Council change of use to 2 Flats / Rear Extension and Dormers GTP/F3/11/20357 06/06/1975. Work completed and the flats were both subsequently sold.

**1988:** Application approved for the rear kitchen extension to 23A, work which was completed shortly after.



Camden Council's 1974 abandoned scheme for the site found in the Holborn Library.

## 2007: First application

**2007/0967/P:** Re-development of an end of terrace building comprising two residential units and land adjoining with a 4 storey residential building with of 12 units with basement parking.

This was our first application to redevelop the site. The application was withdrawn pending amendments suggested by Design Officer Louise Drum. **The case officer, Paul Wood, had no significant concerns about the size or mix of the scheme, including the basement car park.** We couldn't resubmit the application within 12 months due to unexpected legal complications related to a property title. The 2008 financial crisis then ensued, leading us to suspend the project. Subsequently, planning policy experienced major changes post-2007, particularly in areas concerning basements and parking. As a result, we decided to revisit the project with an entirely new design.



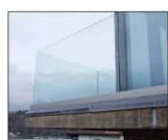
## 2015: First Pre-application

In our first pre-application for this development we provided the officers with very detailed plans and drawings, CGI images, materials details, site photographs and a full written summary of the proposal. The case officer and design officer who attended the meeting were shown every aspect of the scheme in detail. Officers then produced a ten page report (2014/7373/PRE), broadly supporting the scheme, with the usual caveats. On the basis of that report, and following the advice it contained, we submitted our 2017 application; which was recommended for approval then threatened with refusal.



### Style and Detailing

Contemporary brick design red/brown/multicolour.



Frameless glass channel rear balcony balustrade

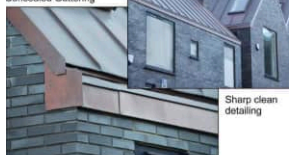


Stainless Steel Main Entrance Walkway



Folding patio doors to rear balconies with aluminium plantation shutters: internal at front, external to rear.

Concealed Guttering



Charcoal standing seam zinc roof



Sharp clean detailing

Pre Application for Site at 23 Ravenshaw Street, London, NW6 1NP  
Planning Consultant: RPR Planning, 14 Townsend Lane, Kingbury, London, NW9 7JH  
Tel: 020 3060 4215 / 01895 617 864, E-mail: info@rprplanning.co.uk

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A selection of the detailed 2015 pre-application drawings.

**Officer's Advice:** "The height, bulk and massing of **the proposed scheme is considered appropriate and the restrained design is an appropriate response to the location.** The proposed residential accommodation would largely comply with the relevant residential development standards. A noise/vibration report and air quality assessment would be required to demonstrate that future occupiers would not suffer as a result of the site's proximity to railway lines. **The proposal is not considered harmful to the amenity of adjoining occupiers** in terms of noise or overlooking, but a daylight/sunlight report would be required to demonstrate that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on daylight or sunlight to neighbouring properties" **Rob Tulloch: Senior Planning Officer 13th Feb. 2015**

## 2017: Second application

After minimal refinements, the 2017 application (Version A) was virtually identical to design that officers had seen and supported at pre-app. An internal case conference in March reported: ***“Design officers were broadly OK with the scheme”***. Though some facade changes are requested (Version B) along with some minor details to the rear, ***officers made no other objections and no comments about the rear elevation, or the front light-well design or size***. After the BIA was approved on the 18th Oct. the officer wrote up his committee report recommending approval, (see Camden FOI1224) concluding:

**Conclusion 7.1** The proposal would provide eight new flats which would provide a good standard of accommodation, and housing is a priority on the development plan. The proposal would also provide a well designed, sustainable building that would sit comfortably within its setting. The proposal is not considered to have a significant impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers in terms of light, overlooking or noise, and

**7.2** Conditional planning permission is recommended subject to a section 106 agreement containing the following heads of terms:

- Affordable Housing Contribution (£193,450)

The application was initially set to be presented to the Members Briefing Panel on 2nd Oct. However, we were later informed that it ***“did not make the schedule.”*** On 11th Oct., the Planning Committee chair and the Head of Development Management decided to refer the application to an internal 'Design Review Panel'. A week later we were told, ***“As you know, I recommended your application for approval,” [but] “unfortunately, the DRP does not support the proposal.”*** Eight months after submitting a design fully supported approved by a Senior Officer, with 11 years (11) service at Camden, we were told to withdraw it and start again scratch with another pre-application. We sought to address some last-minute concerns with a third revision in December (Version C), but were told, ***“the Council is now in a position where the application will not be determined.”*** Following the officers' advice resulted in nothing but an enormous waste of time and resources. Moreover, the officers were mistaken about the time limit for appeals, which PINS allowed.



**Version 1.** Application Feb. 2017. Follows very close the design approved at pre-app.



**Version 2.** Revised on officer advice, and the design recommended for approval Sept. 2017.



**Version 3.** Revised again in June 2017 on 'Design Review' advice, but refused determination.

## 2019: Appeal for Non-determination

An appeal to the Secretary of State against non-determination (3225592) was initiated on 28/03/2019 and dismissed on 09/07/2019. While losing an appeal is a significant disappointment, many elements of the scheme were not objected to, the inspector's comments provided a valuable opportunity for us to concentrate on specific issues.

In the subsequent pre-application design, we focused extensively on addressing the inspector's two subjective opinions; **A.** the appearance of the open front light-well, which he believed "*would have an adverse impact on the established character of the surrounding area,*" and **B.** the rear facade design, which he found "*obtrusive and out of character in the context of the wider terrace.*" Our 2019 revisions concentrated primarily on addressing these two issues, along with other minor matters raised by officers at the time.

## 2019: Second pre-application

Officers Richard Limbrick and Samir Benmbarek met with us in September 2019. At that meeting, we presented the revised designs (extracts of which are shown here). We explained the rationale behind the modifications to the rear elevation and front light-well.

In refining the pre-application concepts, we aimed to produce a rear elevation design that would blend seamlessly into the surrounding environment. While in reality the original lightwell would have had little to no visual impact on the broad "street scene" as it stood, the modified front light-well treatment is now so subtle that it's practically visually non-existent.

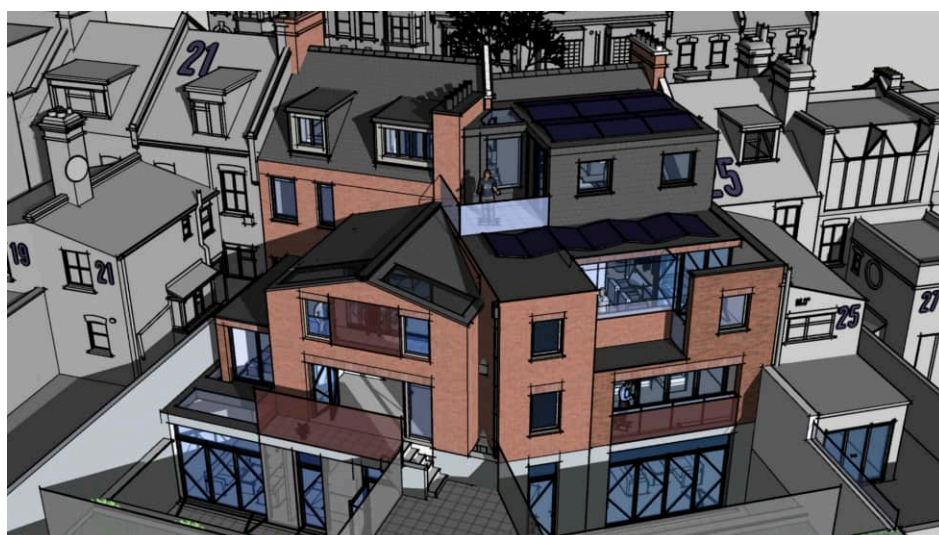
This new front lightwell design subsequently met with officer approval, making the whole front elevation a settled issue.



**A.** The front facade, above ground, would remain much the same since the inspector made no objection to this, most publicly visible element of the scheme.



**B.** Lightwells would be covered with grille and the front garden depth increased, obscuring the light-wells from view.



**C.** The rear would be heavily reworked to present as a collection of Victorian outriggers that had been extended organically over time with later extensions and dormers. All the forms, proportions and materials would be in keeping with adjacent dwellings.

# Previous Refusal Summary

Extracts from LPA decision 2020/2936/P 03/03/2021 and appeal decision APP/X5210/W/21/3281530 09/01/2022.

## LPA Refusal Reason 1;

The proposed development, by reason of the scale and bulk of its rear massing, would appear disproportionately large and out of keeping with the rear of the surrounding terraced properties, contrary to policy D1 (Design) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017 and policy 2 (Design & Character) of the Fortune Green & West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

## Inspectors Decision 1

*“36. However, the design of the building would harm the character and appearance of the area and be a lasting blight on the local area. This outweighs the benefits of the scheme. The proposed development would not accord with the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding.”*

## LPA Refusal Reason 2: “...an area prone to flooding..”

The proposed development, by reason of the provision of self-contained dwellings at basement level within the Sumatra Road Local Flood Risk Zone, would introduce highly vulnerable uses into an area prone to flooding contrary to policies A5 (Basements) and CC3 (Water and Flooding) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.

## Inspectors Decision 2

*“24. To conclude, whilst the site lies within a LFRA, a bespoke FRA has been submitted that demonstrates the site is not prone to flooding. Additional mitigation measures to safeguard the flats from any residual flood risk have also been proposed, which can be conditioned if I was minded to allow the appeal. In the absence of any substantive evidence to the contrary from either the Council or the LLFA, I am satisfied that the site is not prone to flooding and hence would be a suitable location for basement flats. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with Local Plan Policies A5 and CC3, whose aims are outlined above.”*

*“35. I have found the proposal would be acceptable in terms of flood risk.”*

## LPA Refusal Reasons 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7:

All the refusal reasons listed in the decision notice were accommodated in the provided Unilateral Undertaking and signed by all relevant parties: **3:** Legal agreement securing a Construction Management Plan, **4:** Legal agreement to secure car-free housing, **5:** Legal agreement securing a contribution to affordable housing, **6:** Legal agreement securing a highway contribution, **7:** Legal agreement securing an Approval in Principle.

### However, the inspector added this claim...

*“31. Under the appellant’s suggested payment trigger, the entire building could be completed and capable of occupation, but **there would be nothing to prevent the fifth, sixth and seventh flats from remaining unoccupied indefinitely**. As a result, the housing contribution may never be paid and the delivery of much needed affordable housing would be hampered.”*

The claim is made that after incurring the enormous cost and risk involved in providing 7 new flats, the developer may decide hold back 3 flats, 40% of the schemes value, in perpetuity, perhaps for their ornamental value?

Bob McGeady of Ashtons Legal is our legal adviser the author of our Unilateral Undertaking. His credentials include:

- Provides s106 training sessions for officers and members of various local authorities; including at least one of Camden's own legal officers I understand.
- Is a speaker at events organised by such bodies as the Local Government Group and the Royal Town Planning Institute and MBL Seminars.
- Is co-author 'Planning Obligations Demystified: A Practical Guide to Planning Obligations and Section 106 Agreements.
- Has 30+ year experience in planning and local government, 17 years working for various local authorities.
- Was an Independent Board Member of a large regional housing association and chaired a regional homelessness charity.
- In the Legal 500 and Chambers Directory he is rated as a leading individual for planning in East Anglia'

**His opinion on this comment was:** *"The whole point on payment is that the Inspector was completely wrong on the point as no profit would have been made by the time the affordable housing payment fell due. Her conclusion is, therefore, **not supported by evidence or reality** and would be regarded as unreasonable. If this was an issue she should have asked for representations on the point rather than reach an unfounded conclusion. **If this had been the only reason for refusal then a pre Action Letter to PINS would have resulted in the Treasury Solicitor agreeing to the decision being quashed.**"*

# Flood Risk



## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 January 2022

**by K Stephens BSc (Hons) MTP MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 20 April 2022**

**Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/W/21/3281530**  
**23 Ravenshaw Street, London NW6 1NP**

### Flooding

**16.** Local Plan Policy CC3 (Water and Flooding) seeks to ensure that development does not increase flood risk and reduces the risk of flooding where possible, and that vulnerable development is not located in flood-prone areas. The supporting text explains the key flood risk in Camden is from surface water flooding. Areas considered at risk from flooding are Local Flood Risk Zones (LFRZs) and previously flooded streets shown on Local Plan Map 6: Historic flooding and Local Flood Risk Zones ('Map 6'). The LFRZs are defined as discrete areas of flooding that do not exceed the national criteria for a 'Flood Risk Area' but still affect houses, business or infrastructure.

**17.** Local Plan Policy A5 (Basements) states that the Council will not permit basement schemes which include habitable rooms and other sensitive uses in areas prone to flooding. The supporting text reiterates this, but clarifies that no parts of the borough are currently identified by the Environment Agency as being prone to flooding from waterways, although some areas are subject to localised surface water flooding as shown on the above mentioned Map 6. For basement development within flood risk areas identified on Map 6, the Council requires the submission of a development-specific flood risk assessment.

**18.** Regardless of whether the 2 basement units are considered self-contained units or not, the fact remains that vulnerable habitable accommodation is being proposed at basement level. It is necessary to establish if the site and the basement flats are prone to flooding, and if so, whether appropriate mitigation can be incorporated to make them safe.

**19.** The Council has confirmed the site lies within the Sumatra Road LFRZ and within a Critical Drainage Area. The LLFA has been consulted and advise that as there would be flats at basement level the development would be contrary to Local Plan Policies A5 and CC3.

**20.** The appellant has submitted a bespoke Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) with his application as required by policy. In its Delegated Report the Council refers to the FRA in respect of sustainable drainage and that the BIA has a different focus. However, neither the Council or the LLFA have provided any conclusive commentary on the content and findings of the FRA with particular regard to flooding.

**21.** The FRA refers to Camden's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and that historically there has been no flooding events between 1975 and 2002. It also advises that the entire site lies within Flood Zone 1 (Low Probability) which means it has less than a 1 in 1000 annual probability of flooding from rivers. The Camden's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment states that no bedroom accommodation should be below street level in areas at "high" risk of surface water flooding. **The Environment Agency's map for 'Risk of Flooding from Surface Water', referred to in the FRA, suggests the site itself is at "very low" risk of flooding from surface water, and Ravenshaw Street adjacent to the site is at "low" and "medium" risk. Consequently, the site and proposed basement bedrooms and flats fall outside a "high" risk zone.**

22. Furthermore, the FRA draws attention to the Environment Agency modelling of surface water flow directions. These show that surface water runs from Mill Lane, downhill along Ravenshaw Street to a pond by the Black Path near the railway tracks, and that surface water does not flow from Ravenshaw Street onto the site itself. There is no evidence that the site has flooded from groundwater and the BIA confirms the site is at low risk from flooding<sup>23</sup>. The appellant is proposing a number of mitigation factors to deal with any residual surface water flood risk. The existing dropped kerb would be replaced by a new kerb upstand. In addition, the entrance floor level, and hence entrance points to the basement flats, would be raised 0.22m above the maximum predicted depth of surface water flooding for both 1 in 100 year and 1 in 1000 year events. In addition, a range of permanent and temporary flood-proofing measures would be installed on site to help ensure there are no active surface water flow paths to the

basement or ground floor flats. There will also be rainwater harvesting and green roofs. Additional surface water runoff from hard standings and roofs will be directed to an attenuation tank in the rear garden as part of a wider sustainable drainage system, to which the Council raises no objection.

24. To conclude, whilst the site lies within a LFRA, a bespoke FRA has been submitted that demonstrates the site is not prone to flooding. Additional mitigation measures to safeguard the flats from any residual flood risk have also been proposed, which can be conditioned if I was minded to allow the appeal. **In the absence of any substantive evidence to the contrary from either the Council or the LLFA, I am satisfied that the site is not prone to flooding and hence would be a suitable location for basement flats. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with Local Plan Policies A5 and CC3, whose aims are outlined above.**

## Lastly, we draw officers attention to the following

“Emphasis that the application of flood risk policy should be based on an up-to-date strategic flood risk assessment and/or **site-specific flood risk assessment**.”



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

### PLANNING NEWSLETTER

By Email Only

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022

#### Message from Chief Planner

This newsletter includes information on issues relating to planning policy and practice, including two important updates to PPGs (Planning Practice Guidance) on Flood Risk and Coastal Change and Health and Safe Communities.

It's a good time to thank and celebrate all the work being done to digitise planning application services led by Southwark, Lambeth and Buckinghamshire with support from DLUHC and partners. The launch of this technology into the public sphere marks an important moment in our investment to modernise planning services and improve the user experience. It forms part of our digital planning programme and there are details about how keep in touch with the latest innovations and lessons learnt through our collaborations with local authorities and the prop-tech sector.

It's been a summer of challenges for many and there is no doubt more to come. As we start to look forward to the new term, I hope you had the opportunity to replenish your batteries and enjoy some time off.

I had the pleasure this week of visiting the Lake District National Park hosted by the National Park Authority. What is striking about all the great work they do is the lessons we can all learn from the coalescence of thinking about how we manage the natural environments, agricultural environments, cultural and built heritage and the places where people live, work and visit. The National Park have their management plan and local plan working together and aiming to deliver through a strong collaboration of the many interests who should be part of the delivery of both. It's a timely reminder, as we seek to address climate change, adaptation (including flooding risk), nature recovery, housing need and affordability, economic growth and infrastructure delivery, that we are town and country planners.

Kind regards

Joanna Averley  
Chief Planner



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

### PLANNING NEWSLETTER

#### Planning Practice Guidance update: Flood risk and coastal change

Climate change will increase the risk of flooding from all sources including rivers, surface water, and coastal flooding. That is why it is more important than ever that we fulfil our commitment made in the [‘Review of Policy for Development in Areas at Flood Risk’](#) to publish updated Planning Practice Guidance on Flood Risk and Coastal Change. This update provides a significant refresh to the guidance and brings it up to date and in line with the latest policy position on flood risk introduced in the updates to the National Planning Policy Framework in 2018 and 2021.

Key themes of the updated guidance include:

- Elaboration of the hierarchical approach to flood risk of assess, avoid, control, mitigate and manage, that we want to see Local Planning Authorities following when allocating land for development through their Local Plans and when determining planning applications.
- Emphasis that the application of flood risk policy should be based on an up-to-date strategic flood risk assessment and/or site-specific flood risk assessment.
- Greater detail on the purpose and application of both the Sequential Test and the Exception Test. Including detail on key terms such as “reasonably available” and “wider sustainable development objectives”.
- Encouragement of the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), advocating their multi-functional benefits including for water quantity, water quality, biodiversity, and amenity.
- Further information on safeguarding approaches, the role of planning in relocation in coastal settings, and unsustainable locations.
- Additionally, there is further detail on flood risk in relation to Neighbourhood Plans, Design Codes, article 4 direction, permitted development/change of use, and the call-in process.

The updated Planning Practice Guidance on Flood Risk and Coastal Change is available [here](#).

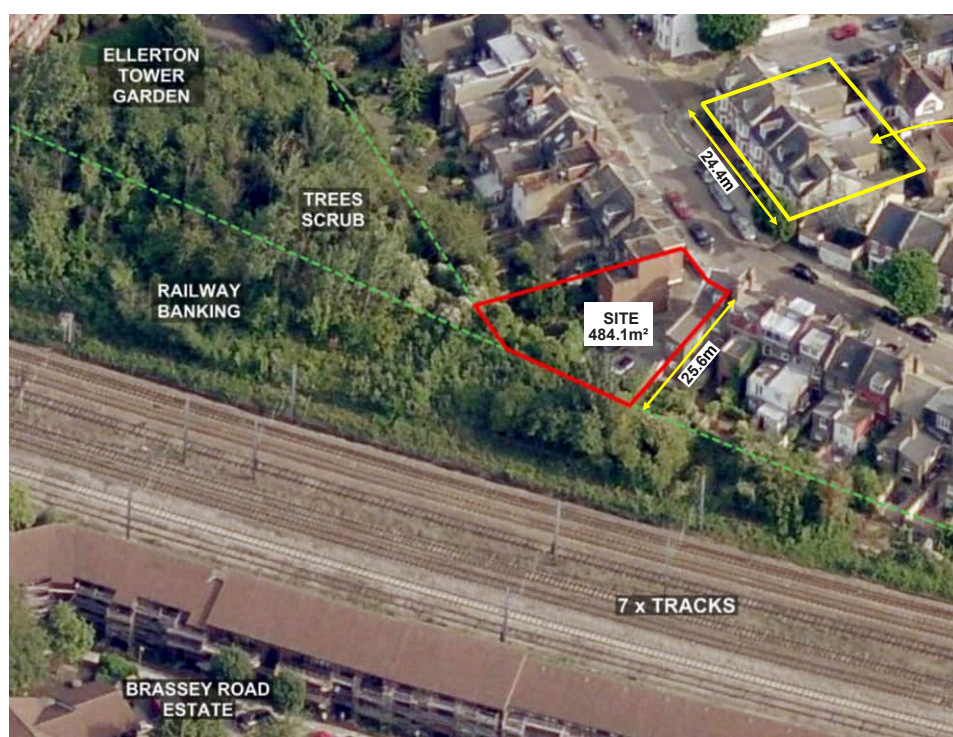
# Site Characteristics

The site presents a unique set of challenges, as well as several opportunities. Firstly, it's an infill site, is broadly triangular, narrowing at the front, situated on a gradient, and positioned at the apex of a corner on a slope. At the rear, any new development must also accommodate the living room window of No. 21, step down visually in line with the terrace and introduce gaps to reflect the pattern of gaps and outriggers in the rear of the terrace; in spite of the fact that broad sweeping planer views of the terraces rear, as presented in application plans, are not actually visible to anyone in reality.

## Site shape, size, orientation, location and surroundings.

The site is an infill, located in a traditional Victorian street lined with fairly typical two-storey houses, each featuring small front gardens enclosed by low brick walls. While the development needs to harmonise with the general street scene, respecting ridge heights, forms, massing, gap pattern and colour palettes of neighbouring properties; while still being clearly a contemporary design that reflects its own era, rather than simply mimicking the adjacent Victorian buildings.

The site is broadly triangular, narrowing at the front on Ravenshaw Street and expanding sharply to the rear and bordering out as it abuts the rear railway embankment. Viewed from the street, the site's shape is deceptive, leading observers to greatly underestimate its true area. In actuality, spanning  $484\text{m}^2$ , the site's area is just  $47\text{m}^2$  less than the plot occupied by the five Victorian houses opposite at No's. 12, 14, 16, 18, and 20 Ravenshaw Street.



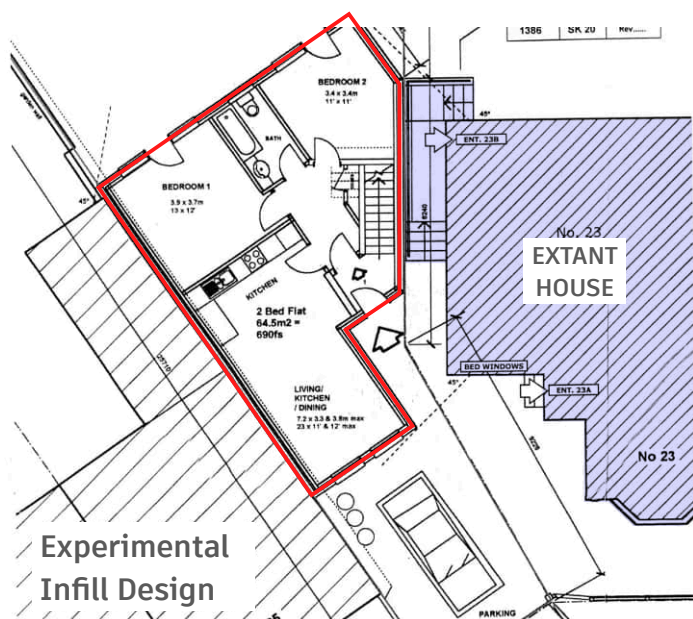
*Any visual impact of the rear facade is directed almost entirely towards the railway. Only glancing views over walls are possible from gardens to NW and SE.*



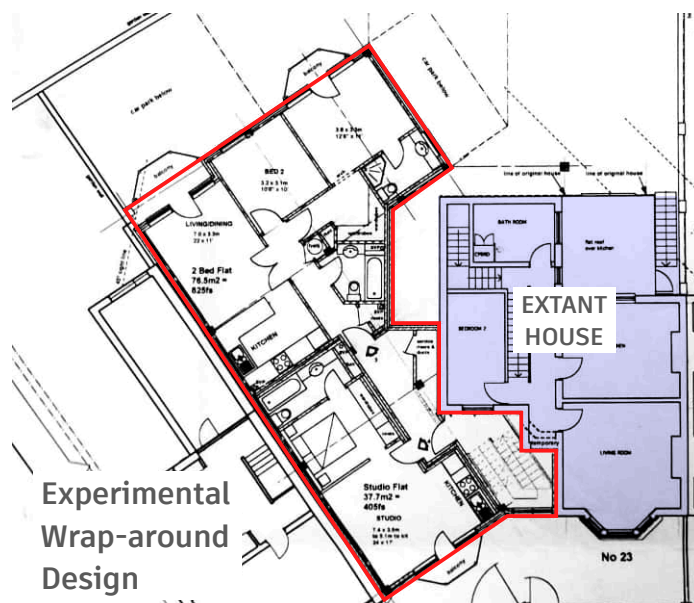
The site's shape lends itself to a design that widens extensively to the rear, affording open views to occupants while still having a limited impact on neighbouring properties' amenity. Lower level flats can have large windows while being protected from railway noise and vibration by the bank itself. Land at the very back of the site provides additional amenity space.

# Discounted Alternative Schemes

Before the 2007 application, we considered numerous development options that would leave the existing house intact. However, it became evident that such an approach would not address the fundamental shortcomings of the current building and would potentially compromise the new development. Any modifications might only exacerbate the building's already ad-hoc appearance. Furthermore, such changes could be just as costly and time-consuming as constructing an entirely new building. Below, we've provided snapshots that show the evolution of the proposal.



**A.** A build solely on the car park site would still leave an unsightly gap in the terrace and wouldn't fully utilise the potential of the site.



**B.** A wrap-around new build would necessitate extensive internal remodelling of the existing house and do little to address its shortcomings.



**C.** 2007, 12 x Flat design with no basement.



**D.** 2007 12 x Flat version with basement parking.