

sara amlani architects

architecture • construction • interiors

## Design Statement



Rev. A0 - 23.07.24  
Planning Application Submission



### Location Analysis

The property site is located on the south side of Swains Lane in Highgate, North London. The house sits to the east of Hampstead Heath, within the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area of the London Borough of Camden. The property is not listed.



No. 20 Swains Lane: Aerial View

Dartmouth Park Conservation Area is located to the east of Hampstead Heath and the south of Highgate Cemetery. As described by the Council in their Appraisal document, “the conservation area has a variety and complexity that charts the history of domestic architecture from the late 18th century to the present day’ and is described as having a ‘semi rural character’ due to the significant green spaces nearby and its leafy streets and mature gardens.

The suburban development of estate houses to the south and east of 20 Swains Lane likely date from the early part of the 20th Century. These houses are predominantly semi-detached and built in an ‘Arts & Crafts’ style, common to suburban / garden city housing of this period. The houses are characterised by large hipped roofs, tall chimneys, bay windows and roof dormer windows to the side and rear..



No. 20 Swains Lane is neither listed nor identified as a ‘positive building’ or ‘negative building’ in the Council’s assessment of the quality of the architecture within the Conservation Area. The property has evidently been quite heavily modified, since its original construction. Whilst the front elevation of the house bears some resemblance to the architectural detailing of the area (hipped roof / chimneys / bay windows), the protruding integrated garage has a flat roof uncharacteristic of the area and suggestive of its later construction. [In undertaking a planning search it appears there was also originally a flat roof element to the rear where the conservatory now stands - see notes below.]

20 Swains Lane is a four bed, two storey, detached house, located on the south side of the street, and as a result benefits from a south facing rear garden. The property is set back from the road, staggered between the front elevations of its neighbours on either side, and is accessed via a small front garden with private drive. The house appears modest from the street but due to its deep plan is deceptively spacious, particularly at ground floor level where the house has been opened up internally.



No. 20 Swains Lane: Front (North) Elevation / Rear (South) Elevation / Side (East) Elevation

The three storey properties either side of No. 20 Swains Lane appear to be blocks of flats and are of varying architectural style and quality. They are similarly not identified as having particularly positive or negative impacts on the character of the conservation area.



No. 22 Swains Lane



No. 18 Swains Lane

## Planning History

The following is a summary of the planning history available on the L. B. of Camden's online planning register - [https://planningrecords.camden.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/Generic/StdResults.aspx?](https://planningrecords.camden.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/Generic/StdResults.aspx?PT=Planning%20Applications%20On-Line&SC=Site%20Address%20contains%2020%20SWAINS%20LANE&FT=Planning%20Application%20Search%20Results&XMLSIDE=/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/SiteFiles/Skins/camden/Menu/PL.xml&XSLTemplate=/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/SiteFiles/Skins/camden/xslt/PL/PLResults.xslt&PS=10&XMLLoc=/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/Generic/XMLtemp/cvxxcpr1hcy1wyklsibnmyi/69176cf8-73b6-4135-ad7c-7542ab956368.xml)

[PT=Planning%20Applications%20On-Line&SC=Site%20Address%20contains%2020%20SWAINS%20LANE&FT=Planning%20Application%20Search%20Results&XMLSIDE=/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/SiteFiles/Skins/camden/Menu/PL.xml&XSLTemplate=/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/SiteFiles/Skins/camden/xslt/PL/PLResults.xslt&PS=10&XMLLoc=/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/Generic/XMLtemp/cvxxcpr1hcy1wyklsibnmyi/69176cf8-73b6-4135-ad7c-7542ab956368.xml](https://planningrecords.camden.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/Generic/StdResults.aspx?PT=Planning%20Applications%20On-Line&SC=Site%20Address%20contains%2020%20SWAINS%20LANE&FT=Planning%20Application%20Search%20Results&XMLSIDE=/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/SiteFiles/Skins/camden/Menu/PL.xml&XSLTemplate=/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/SiteFiles/Skins/camden/xslt/PL/PLResults.xslt&PS=10&XMLLoc=/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/Generic/XMLtemp/cvxxcpr1hcy1wyklsibnmyi/69176cf8-73b6-4135-ad7c-7542ab956368.xml)

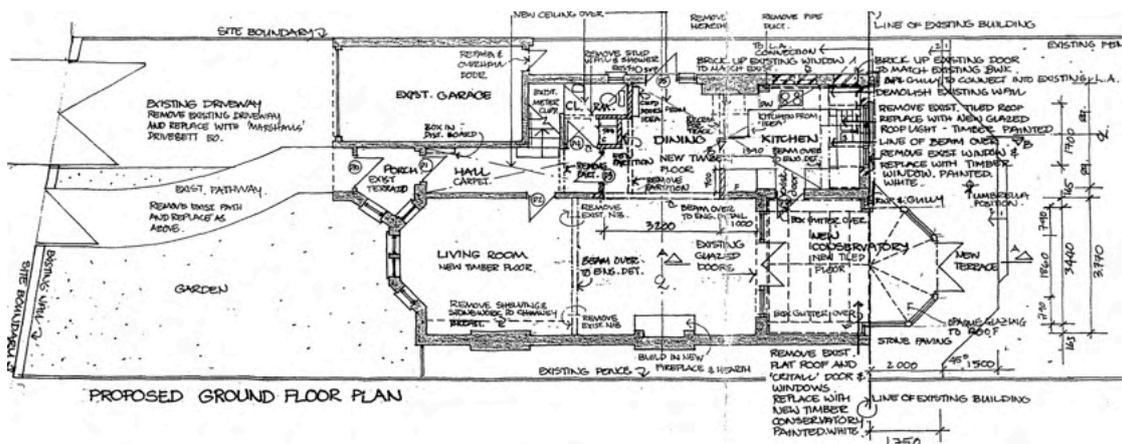
### Planning Application P9600763R1 12-03-1996 **WITHDRAWN**

Proposed alterations included demolition of an existing single story rear element and replacement with a conservatory. This application included evidence of the appearance of the house prior to 1996 - see photograph below:



Rear Elevation Prior to 1996

The application also included the opening up of the ground floor interior to create the open plan living/dining/kitchen space of the existing house - see plan extract below.



This application was withdrawn, presumably on the advice of planners, and a new revised application was submitted - see below

### Planning Application P9600762 10-06-1996 **APPROVED - 14-06-1996**

Revised proposals submitted. It is not clear from the documents available on-line what revisions were made to secure planning approval.

**Conservation Area Consent C9600763**

**APPROVED - 14-06-1996**

Conservation Area Consent (required at the time for any demolitions to unlisted buildings within a Conservation Area) was granted in connection with the main planning approval (noted above).

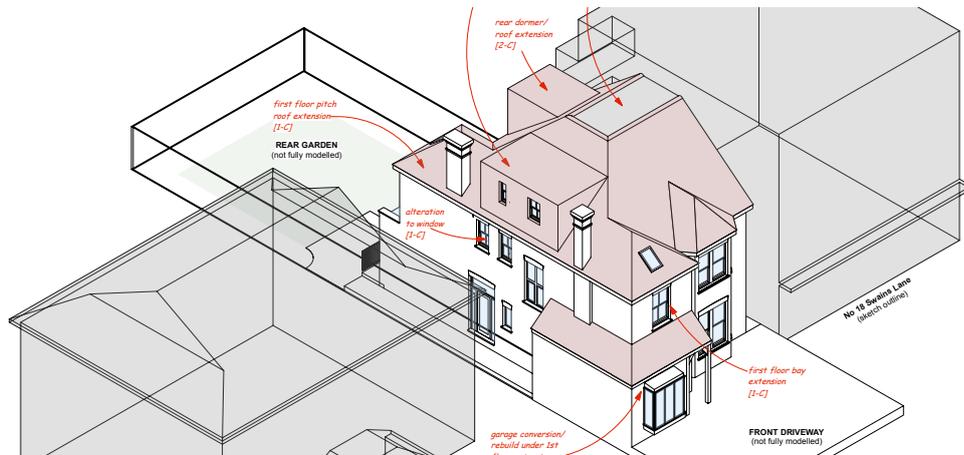
Note: there are **no records** available on-line of any previous planning applications being made for **conversion of the loft or garage** of this property.

**Pre-Application Consultation**

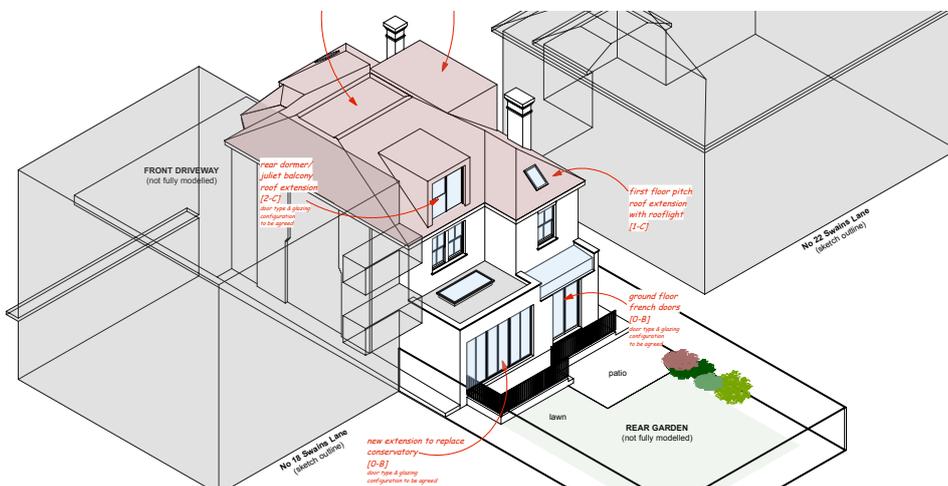
Sketch proposals were submitted to the Council for Pre-Application advice on 25th March 2024. This application was given council ref. 2024/1206/PRE.

The sketch proposals included the following proposed alterations to the exterior of the building:

- conversion / replacement of existing ground floor garage & porch to front
- new first floor extension over garage to front
- hip to gable loft conversion to west side
- new side dormer
- new rear dormer
- replacement of rear first floor flat roof with hipped roof
- replacement of existing rear conservatory with new single storey construction
- minor alterations to existing windows/doors to side and rear elevations



Sketch front isometric view of proposals submitted for Pre-application Advice



Sketch rear isometric view of proposals as submitted for Pre-application Advice

A response was not received from the council until June 2024, when case officer Brendan Versluys supplied a written memo response to the proposals.

The Council's views expressed in their memo, dated 5th June 2024, can be summarised as follows:

- conversion of the front garage was considered acceptable in principle
- the first floor extension over the garage was considered to crowd the existing front elevation bay window and for this reason was not considered to be acceptable - removal of this element from proposals was strongly advised
- the hip-to-gable roof conversion was considered acceptable in principle
- concerns were raised regarding the size and scale of the proposed side dormer with a redesign advised.
- the rear dormer proposal was considered acceptable in principle.
- the replacement of the existing first floor flat roof with a hipped extension to the main roof was considered acceptable in principle
- the replacement of the existing conservatory with a new extension of reduced footprint was considered acceptable in principle
- minor alterations proposed to existing windows/doors did not raise concerns

A request to further discuss minor alterations to the proposals was rejected, without resubmission of a new application for pre-application advice. Given the financial investment and considerable time taken to obtain the initial pre-application advice from the council, the Client has decided to proceed directly to a full planning application with revised proposals.

## Planning Application Proposals

The design has been further refined since early sketch proposals were submitted for pre-application consultation, retaining the elements of the original scheme which were accepted by the council.

### Alterations to Front Elevation

The proposal to extend the property at first floor on the front elevation has been omitted from proposals, in line with the Council's advice. The ground floor garage replacement/conversion has therefore been developed as a single storey bay with a mono pitch tiled roof wrapping around the north-west corner of the building and extending to form a porch over the new entrance door (this replaces the former incongruous flat roof and its awkward abutment with the original bay window at this level). It also allows for provision of an apex roof light to this north facing room, which will be inconspicuous from the street view.

This proposal has many precedent examples in the immediate area:



No. 28 Swains Lane



No. 30 Swains Lane



No. 44 Swains Lane

**Roof Conversion - Side Dormer**

The side dormer proposal has been reconsidered. The cheeks of the proposed dormer have been kept at least 1 metre clear of the existing chimneys to allow them to remain clearly distinct in the streetscape. In addition the dormer side facing the street has been aligned with the building line to the east, allowing the existing hipped roof standing proud of this building line to remain as existing. The west face of the dormer has been pulled back from the eaves to allow the eaves line and roof edge detailing to run uninterrupted across the front of the dormer. Finally an element of pitched roof has been introduced to the dormer sides visible from the street, reducing the apparent size of the dormer.

This proposal has many precedent examples in the immediate area:



Nos. 30 & 32 Swains Lane

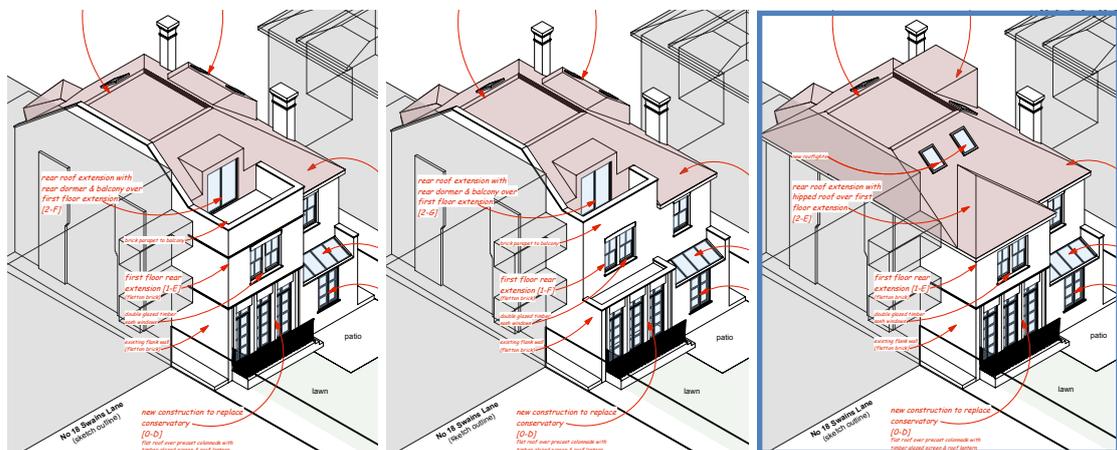


No. 45 Swains Lane

**First Floor Extension to Rear Elevation**

With the first floor extension to the front elevation considered unacceptable to the local authority, the Client was keen to explore the possibility of a first floor rear extension to generate the space required at first floor to provide a family bathroom, three double bedrooms and an ensuite.

A number of proposals were considered with the option least likely to impact the neighbours or alter the character of the conservation area selected. In connection, the Client has accepted loss of the previously proposed rear dormer in favour of providing a hipped roof to the proposed rear first floor extension to minimise its visual bulk and impact on neighbour's views and light.



Rear first floor extension options considered: selected option

## **Conclusion**

The proposals represent an opportunity for this existing detached property to be upgraded in terms of both building fabric and internal accommodation to meet the needs of the Client, whilst also respecting the context/setting of the Conservation Area and improving the appearance of some of the more incongruous elements of the existing building.