



Alexandra Road Estate

91B Rowley Way

Design & Access Statement

October 2024

Levitt Bernstein

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01

Introduction



Introduction

This Design and Access statement has been produced by Levitt Bernstein, on behalf of Camden Council, as part of a Listed Building Consent application for dwelling 91B in the Alexandra Road Estate.

Context

This application provides a detailed description of the proposed works to 91B Rowley Way in the Alexandra Road estate.

The application describes limited works to install an external handrail to the rear garden of the dwelling as requested by Camden Occupational Therapy Services (OTS). This upgrade will allow the dwelling to fulfil the occupants' needs whilst causing minimal alteration to the nature of the existing building.

This document forms part of the 'Application for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Works to a listed building' and should be read alongside the following material:

- Existing/Proposed drawings
- OTS Adaptation Request form
- Application form

02

The Alexandra Road Estate

The quality and importance of the estate has been widely recognised both in England and abroad. It is a powerful icon of the optimism and idealism that underpinned post-war public sector architecture.

Statement of Significance

The Alexandra Road Estate is a residential estate of 520 dwellings in Camden, NW9. The majority of the estate was listed Grade II* in 1993, the remainder now falling within the Alexandra Road Conservation Area, designated in 1996.

Designed in 1968 by Neave Brown of the London Borough of Camden Architects Department and built between 1972-78, the estate is among the most ambitious social housing schemes of this time, one of a series of low rise, high density schemes.

The street is the dominant element in the design, a modern translation of the traditional London street where the sum of the whole exceeds the individual parts. The linear, stepped section, influenced by Leslie Martin's work, by Denys Lasdun at the University of East Anglia (1962-68) and by Patrick Hodgkinson at the Brunswick Centre (1967-72), enables all dwellings to have a sunny outdoor space and the seven storey A block shields the estate from the noise of the railway line to the north.

The estate also represents a development of Brown's earlier work in private practice, for housing societies at Winscombe Street and Fleet Road. Though much smaller, these too were essays in high-density developments of stacked dwellings and the considered sequencing of spaces from public and semi-public to private and semi-private.

Internal features

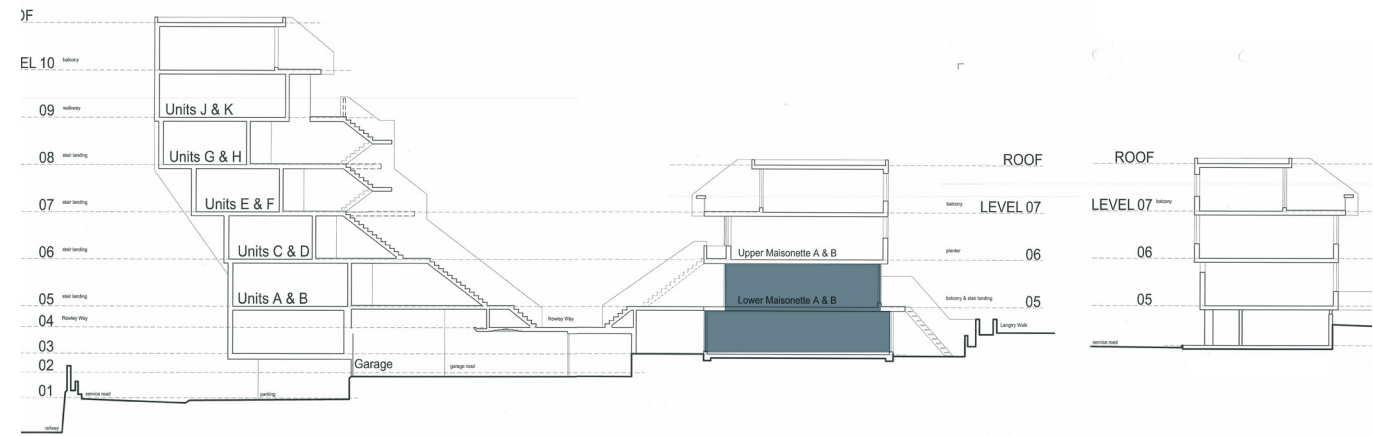
The estate contains a number of different dwelling types, all sharing a similar approach and a number of key features. The high density of the estate led to tight interior layouts, mitigated by open plan elements. Sliding doors and glazed partitions allow flexible arrangements, with the potential for views and light to pass through each dwelling.

The proximate relationship of public and private is eased by porches, decks and planting.

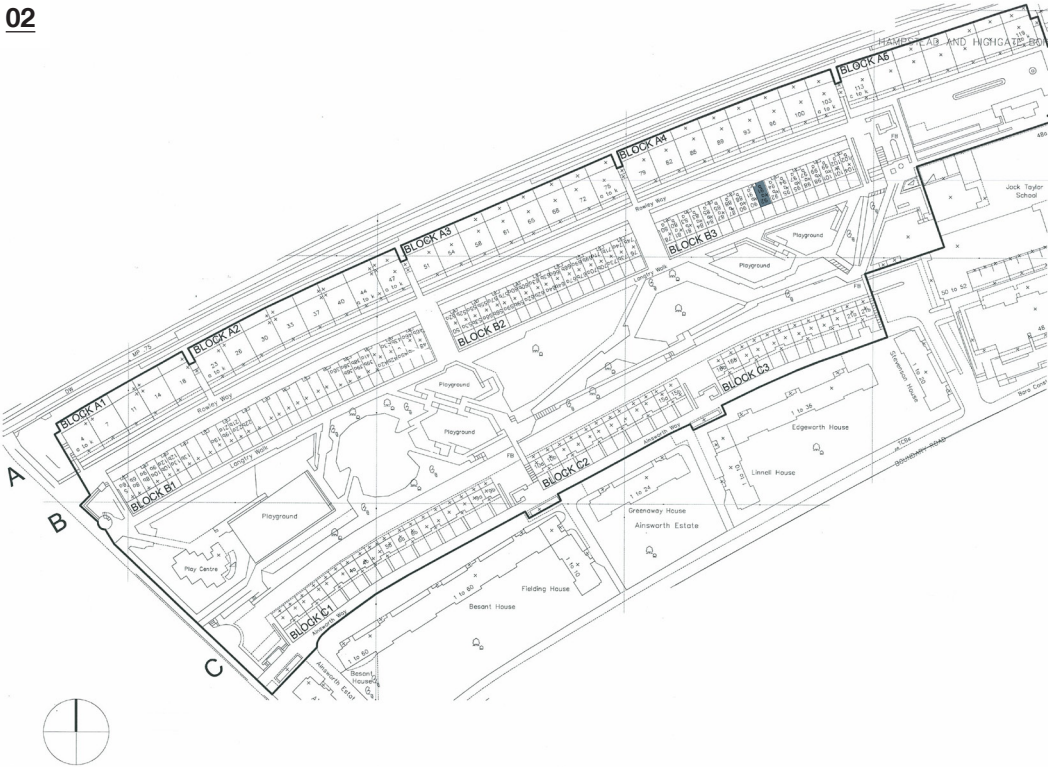
Finishes are restrained, white paint contrasting with stained timber and brown tiling. Simple joinery shelves and cupboards are formed from plywood, while the stairs are a more developed piece of joinery work. In the kitchens, concrete worktops form a striking, almost sculptural element. These are tiled, as are the walls, forming a very deliberate composition.

The number of bespoke elements is unusual in authority-built housing, and the level of ambition has led to some long-term issues. The tiled surfaces, for example, the best that could be done with the budget at the time, are now missing tiles, with the grout hard to clean. The sliding partitions are prone to stick and fail. These elements will have to be mended or replaced, as appropriate.

01



02



Key:
Dwelling location

01 Cross section
02 Location plan

The B3 Flat type

This maisonette is situated on levels 04 & 05 of Block B and is flat type B3.

Flat Description

This is a duplex arrangement with three bedrooms. The entry level contains the kitchen, dining and living room with stairs leading to the back garden. The lower level contains the bedrooms and the bathroom and WC.

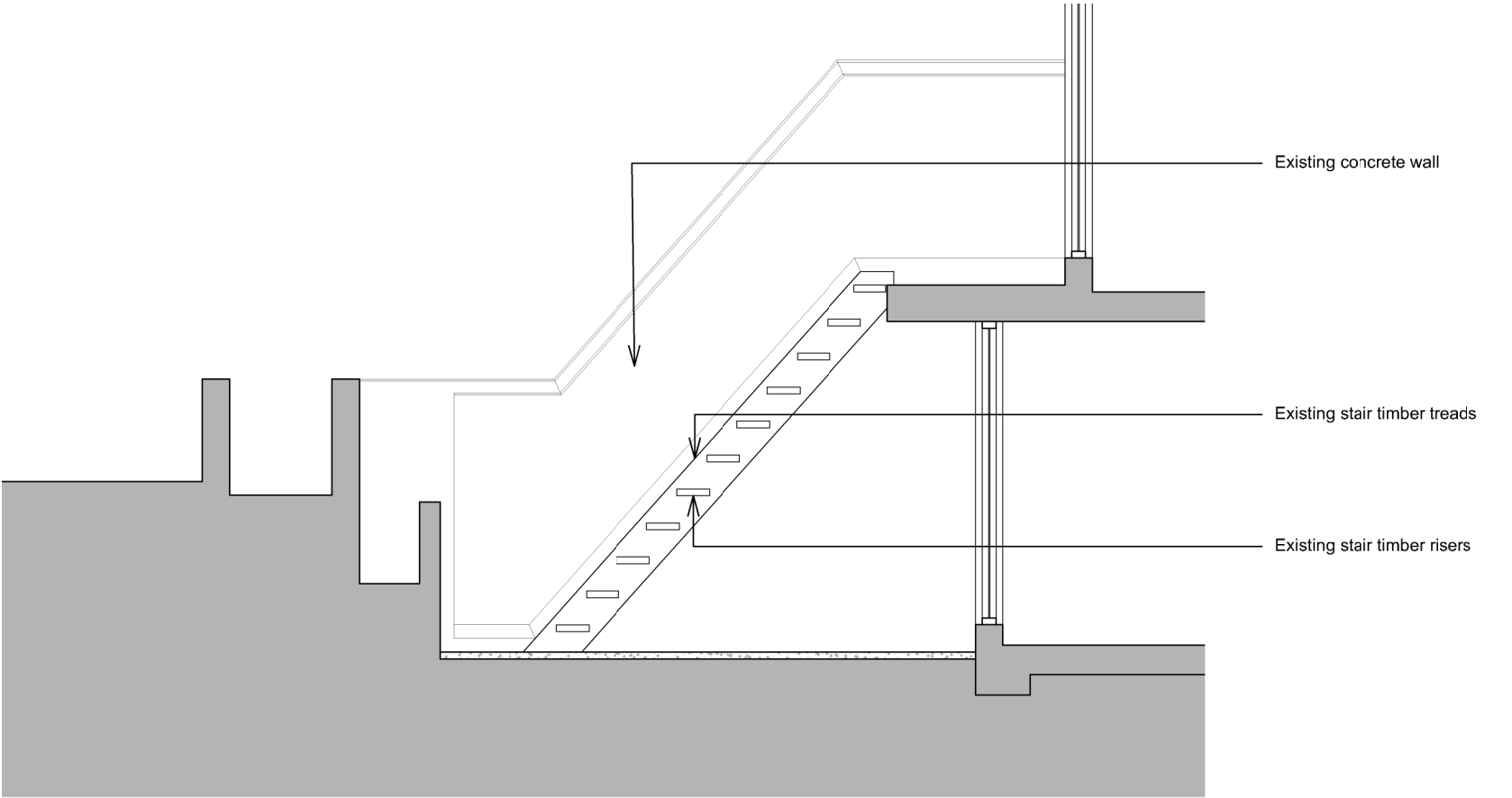
External Staircase

The external staircase is made of douglas fir timber and finished with black paint. The existing external staircase has timber guarding on one side and does not have any fixed handrail making it particularly challenging and unsafe for a disabled occupant or a person with mobility issues to use.

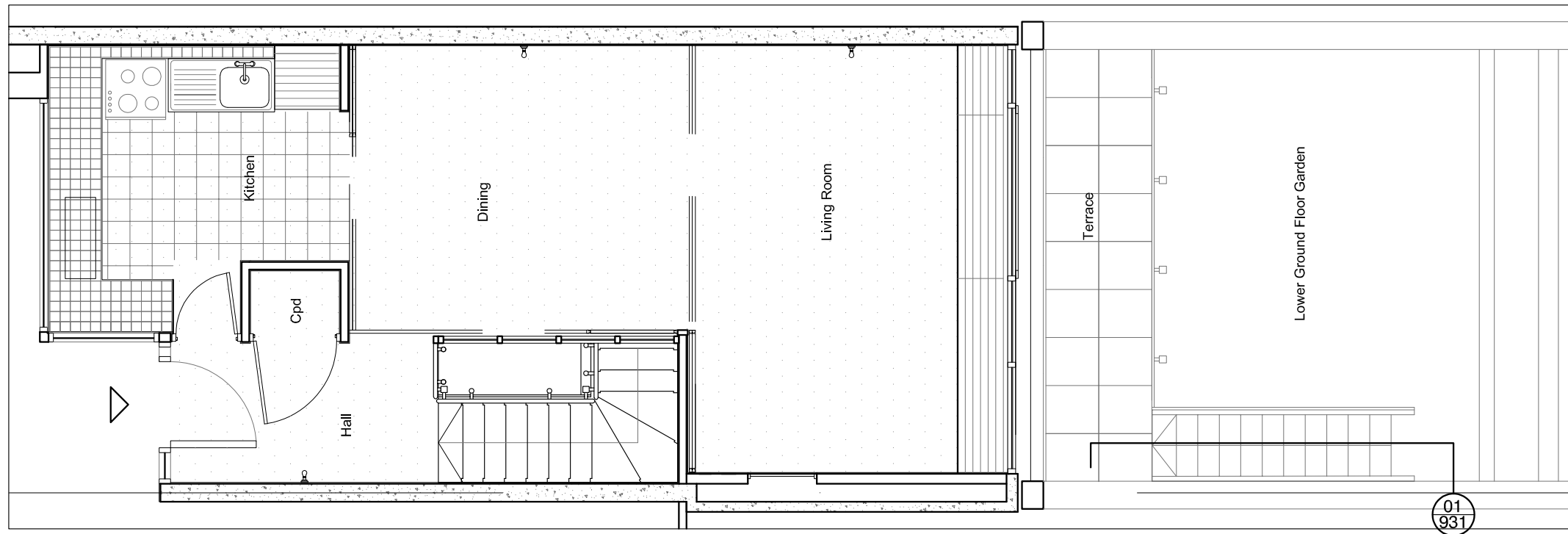
The proposal seeks to address this through the addition of an external handrail that complements the nature of the original design.



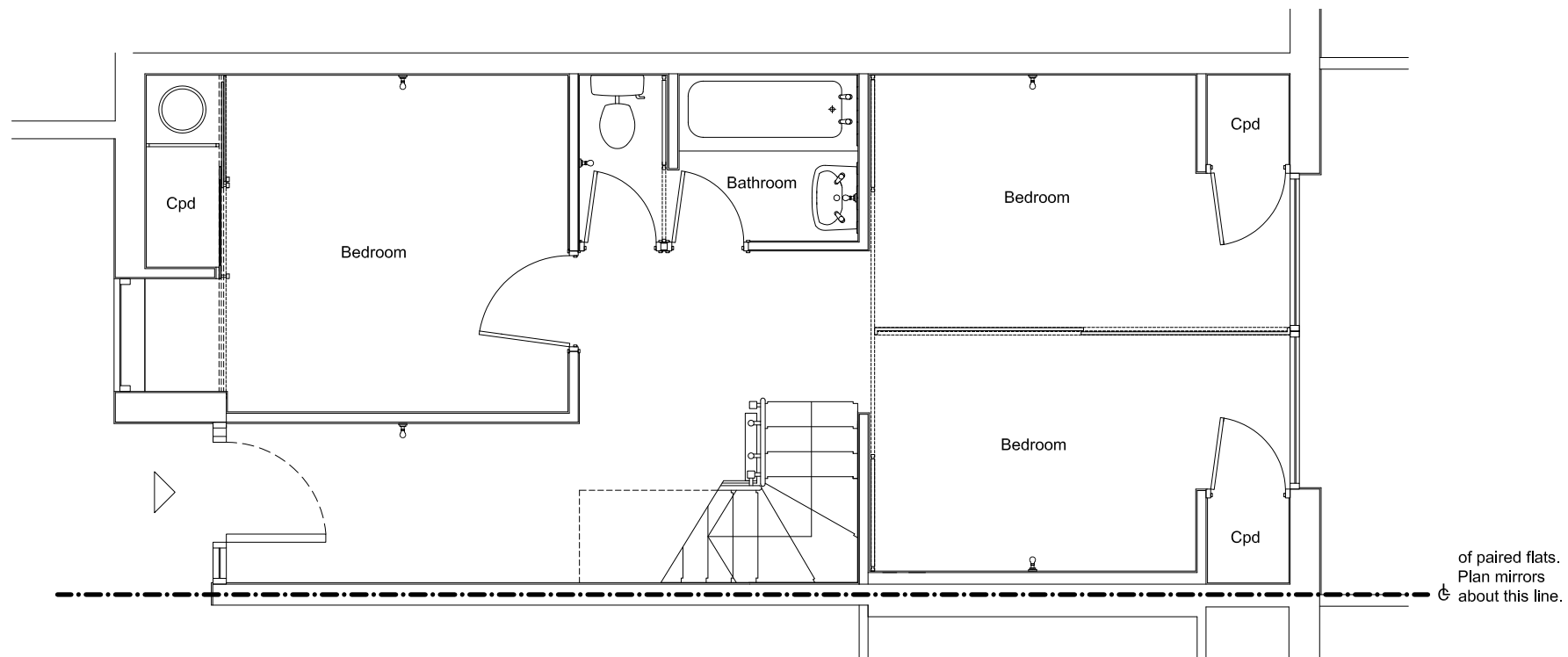
Photos of external timber staircase



Section through external staircase



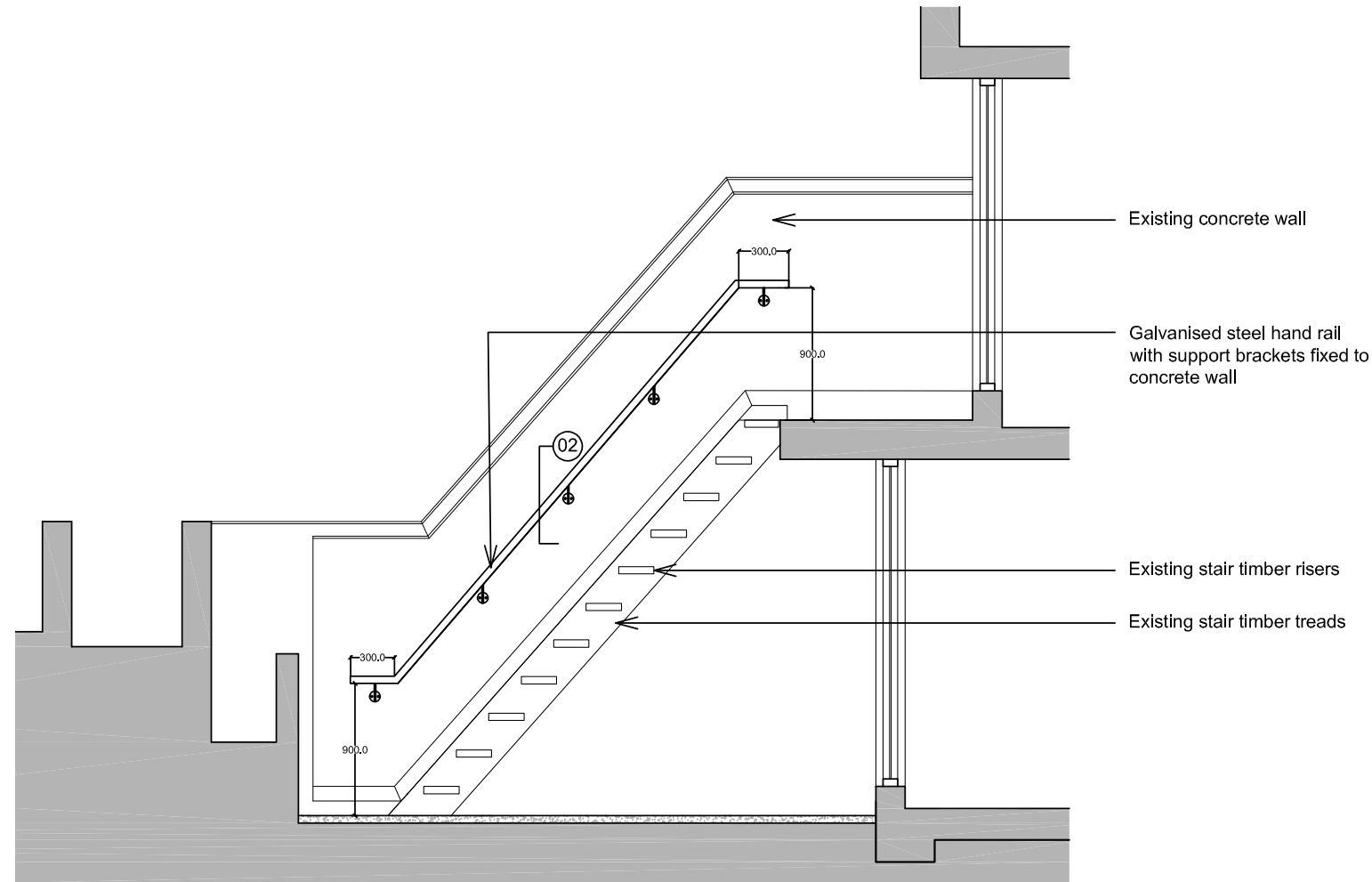
Upper Floor Plan



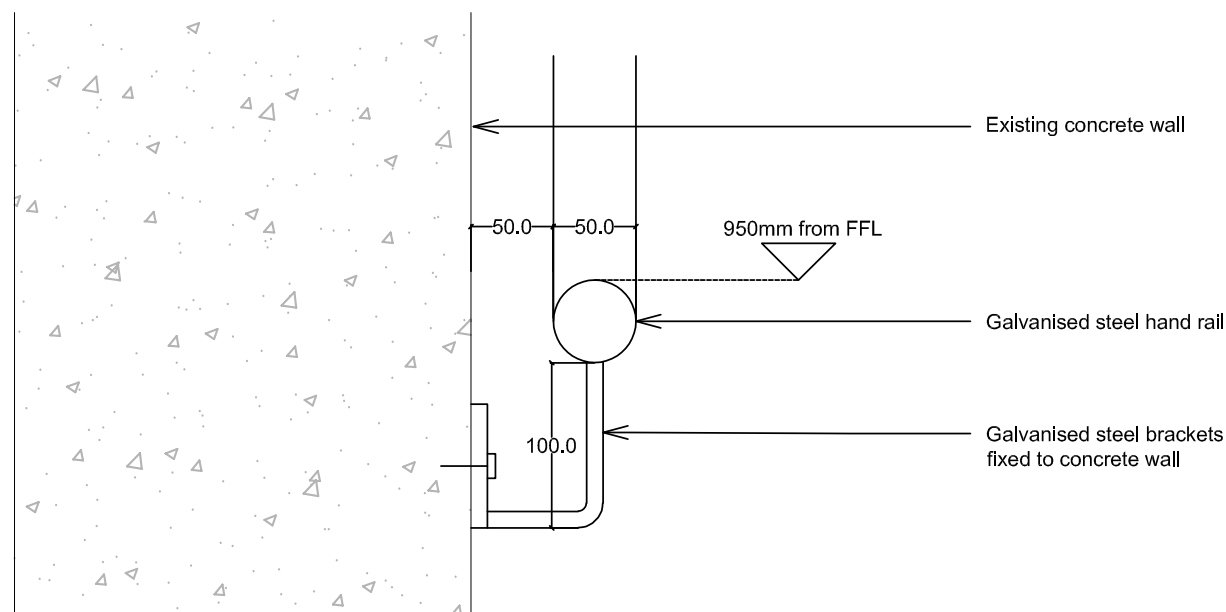
Lower Floor Plan

03

Proposed Works



Proposed section through external staircase



Detail section of handrail fixing to concrete wall

Section 03

Proposed Works

The proposed works are limited to the installation of an external handrail to the rear garden staircase

Use, scale and layout

There are no proposed changes to the use, scale or layout of the dwellings.

The design seeks to minimise the alteration to the nature of the existing building however some unavoidable features remain such as:

Access and Inclusive Design

There are no proposed changes to transport provision. It is not proposed to change the dwelling itself, beyond the addition of an external handrail to the external garden.

- Fixings to the concrete wall to support the proposed galvanised steel handrail. Proposed metal handrail to be of galvanised steel finish to blend with the concrete wall and to limit the visual impact / changes to the external appearance of the building.

Camden Occupational Therapy Service have deemed the proposed adaptations essential in order for the occupant to live as independently as possible.

The handrail design aims to emulate the external handrail design and fixings that already exists around the estate.

Precedents

Description of the works: Installation of metal handrail on the left side ascending of rear garden steps at a height of 900mm, ensuring that there is a 300mm overhang at both the top and bottom of the stair case. Stair rail to be galvanised steel finish.



Blue painted metal handrail to external staircase leading to the front of the dwelling with support brackets fixed to concrete wall



Galvanised steel handrail



Galvanised steel wall mounted handrail bracket

**Levitt Bernstein
London**

Thane Studios
2-4 Thane Villas
London, N7 7PA
T +44 (0)20 7275 7676

www.levittbernstein.co.uk

Manchester

Eastgate,
2 Castle St,
Manchester M3 4LZ
T +44 (0)161 669 8740