



Chartered Town Planners & Architectural Technicians

DESIGN AND ACCESS / PLANNING / HERITAGE STATEMENT

Alterations to front curtilage (retrospective).

Property Address: 40 Arkwright Road, Camden, London, NW3
6BH.

January 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design and Access / Planning / Heritage Statement is submitted on behalf of the applicant in respect of a planning application to retain alterations to the front curtilage. This Statement should be read in conjunction with other drawings and documents accompanying the planning application.

1.2 This Statement comprises:

- A description of the application property and surrounding area;
- A description of the proposed development;
- A summary of relevant planning history; and,
- An assessment of the proposed development against relevant planning policy.

2.0 APPLICATION PROPERTY AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The existing property is a three storey semi-detached property located to the north side of Arkwright Road. The property has an average size rear garden, relative to the area. The front curtilage comprises hard landscaping and shrub / tree beds. There are no street trees near the front boundary. It is readily apparent that the applicant has gone to great lengths and expense with high quality landscaping to the front curtilage and great pride is taken in enhancing greenery and biodiversity - see Figures 1-3 below.

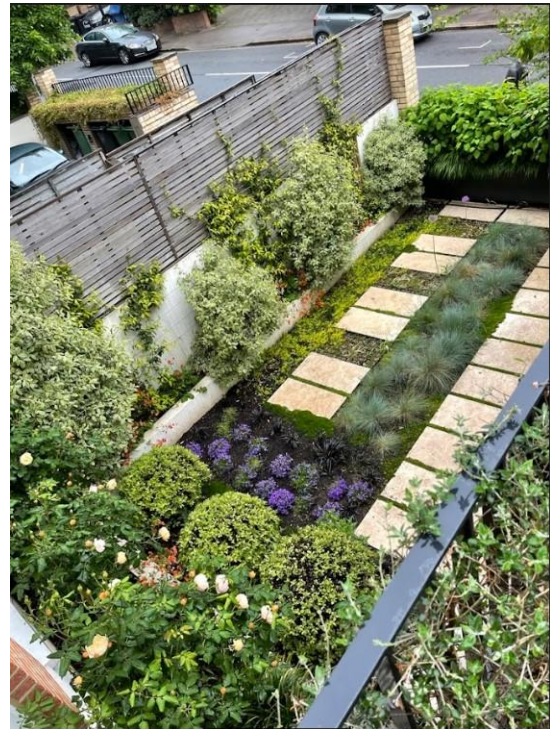
2.2 Properties to either side of No. 40 are of similar scale and form, however the front curtilages of properties vary as many houses have front curtilage parking with steps up to dwellings.

2.3 The site is located within a predominantly residential character area. There is a wide variety of building scale, style, and architectural detailing in the immediate area.

2.4 The site is in flood zone 1 and at low risk of flooding. The property is located in the Redington / Frognal conservation area.



Figure 1 – Existing front curtilage.



Figures 2-3: Recent pictures of front curtilage.

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 It is sought to retain the ‘as-is’ position (as per Figure 1 above). The ‘as-is’ position differs slightly from what was approved under 2016/4823/P mainly in that approved plans show a boundary wall to be built across much of the front boundary. The current application has a lesser extent of front boundary wall but proposes a fixed planter across much of the remaining gap. There are other variations in landscaping treatment too.

3.2 In differing from the most recent application / appeal (refer to Section 4 below), on-site parking and a vehicular crossover do not form part of the proposed works.

3.3 The proposed development is in keeping with the sustainable ethos of the applicant. There is a large bike store (with storage for up to 8 bikes) accessible from the front of the property. The cedar-clad bin store has a herb garden on its roof that is used to support sustainable cooking. Furthermore, the front curtilage significantly increases the greenery and biodiversity of the street. A large variety of flowering plants, supporting pollinating insects, are incorporated in the garden and are in flower from May to October each year. A view of the front garden enhances the neighbourhood. People regularly stop to admire the garden and enjoy the flowers in the front garden continually throughout the day. It is a regular comment that the front garden enhances the beauty and feel of the street.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Planning permission has been granted for various works to the property in recent years as follows:

2016/5120/P - Installation of a rooflight on the west side roofslope to top floor flat.

2016/4823/P - Alterations to the front garden of the residential building (Class C3) including landscaping and access configuration, bin storage with green roof, cycle storage, front boundary wall and replacement of a tree.

2016/2386/P - Conversion from 3 self-contained flats to 2 flats; replacement 2 storey rear extension at basement and ground floor levels; fenestration alterations; installation of rooflights and new timber sash windows.

2014/7184/P - Conversion of 3 residential flats into 2 residential flats.

4.2 Planning permission was most recently sought for the current works along with a crossover / on-site parking in 2021/2022/2023 under application Ref. No. 2021/2918/P. This was the subject of an appeal (Ref. No. APP/X5210/W/22/3308147) and although the appeal was refused on parking grounds, the Inspector concluded favourably in respect of the front curtilage works. The following extracts are taken from the Inspector’s Report:

“The extent of these walls differs along the street. While some serve to largely enclose their respective plots, many have sizeable gaps to allow off-street parking at the properties, accessed via vehicular crossovers”.

“...the mid-section of the front boundary wall at the site would be retained, such that its contribution to the character of the area would remain. Similarly, the proposal would not introduce any further hardstanding, such that the planting and grassed areas at the front of the site as experienced from Arkwright Road would remain, retaining the current contribution of the site to a green garden suburban character on the street”.

“I note the Council’s reference to a previous permission granted at the site which has not been implemented in accordance with the approved plans. As such, the current set up of the front garden does not accord with this permission, incorporating more hardstanding and a greater gap in the front boundary wall than the approved scheme. Nevertheless, the immediate surrounds of Arkwright Road contain a wide variety of front garden treatments. Many properties having crossovers and front parking areas with greater levels of hardstanding than the appeal property, limited planting or grass, and front boundary walls that have been removed to a much greater extent than that at the site”.

“...neither the current nor the proposed front curtilage at the site appear incongruous or visually harmful due to the presence of hardstanding or a gap in the front wall. Rather, by retaining a prominent mid-section of the wall and providing elements of soft landscaping, the current site layout allows the traditional style and green garden character of the CA to be experienced to a greater degree than many surrounding dwellings, thus contributing positively to this part of the CA”.

“...the development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and would preserve the character and appearance of the CA”.

4.3 There is planning precedent nearby for front curtilage works to neighbouring properties of a similar nature to that proposed. These include:

Ref. No.	Address	Works	Grant Date
2009/5809/P	38 Arkwright Road.	Additions and alterations including new access gate and associated off - street parking...	2009
2007/6313/P	13A Arkwright Road	Alterations and extensions to include new front driveway...	2008
2009/5490/P	44 Arkwright Road	Reconfiguration of front garden including...to create two parking spaces...	2010

4.4 In the case of 38 Arkwright Road, the delegated report of the Planning Officer notes:

“Furthermore, a study of the properties in the immediate vicinity of the application site indicated that the vast majority of dwellinghouses benefitted from parking in the front forecourt area; hence a precedent has been set along this section of the street and it is considered that a reason for refusal on the grounds that it would harm the character and appearance of the conservation area could not be sustained”

4.5 *It is submitted that the Planning Inspectors findings and the view as taken by the Planning Officer in the case of application Ref. No. 2009/5809/P should be taken into account in the assessment of this proposal.*

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (2024)

5.1 Para. 130 of the recently updated NPPF seeks to ensure a high quality of design in new developments. Point c) in particular seeks to ensure developments that:

“are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.”

The proposed development would be entirely compatible with the surrounding area where there are many types of similar works.

Camden Plan (2017)

5.2 As can be seen in Figure 2 below, the site is within a conservation area, and within an archaeological priority area.



Figure 2 – Extract from Camden Policies Map. Approx. Site is Indicated by Red Star.

5.3 Policy D1 of the Local Plan deals with design and states:

“The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:

- a. respects local context and character;*
- b. preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage;*
- c. is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation;*
- d. is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;*
- e. comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;*
- f. integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces, improving movement through the site and wider area with direct, accessible and easily recognisable routes and contributes positively to the street frontage;*
- g. is inclusive and accessible for all;*
- h. promotes health;*
- i. is secure and designed to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour;*
- j. responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;*
- k. incorporates high quality landscape design (including public art, where appropriate) and maximises opportunities for greening for example through planting of trees and other soft landscaping,*
- l. incorporates outdoor amenity space;*
- m. preserves strategic and local views;*
- n. for housing, provides a high standard of accommodation; and*
- o. carefully integrates building services equipment.*

The Council will resist development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.”

The proposed development is a typical addition / alteration to a property. The front curtilage is finished to a very high standard and complements the character of the area.

5.4 Policy D2 deals with heritage issues and states:

“In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas.

The Council will:

- e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;*

- f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;*
- g. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and*
- h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage".*

It is not considered the proposed works would not have a material adverse impact on the character of the Conservation Area (see para. 5.6 – 5.8 below). Many neighbouring properties in the conservation area have had similar works approved over the years. We note that in application Ref. No. 2009/5809/P it was concluded that similar works would not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. In addition, in the case of appeal decision Ref. No. APP/X5210/W/22/3308147 the Planning Inspector concluded very favourably in respect of the front curtilage.

Camden Planning Guidance. Housing. CPG 1 (2018)

5.5 Para. 6.25 of this Guidance refers to front gardens and states:

"The design of front gardens and forecourt parking areas make a large impact on the character and attractiveness of an area and in particular the streetscene.

The design of front gardens and other similar forecourt spaces should:

- consider a balance between hard and soft landscaping. Where changes take place no more than 50% of the frontage area should become hard landscape. Where parking areas form part of the forecourt enough of the front boundary enclosure should be retained to retain the spatial definition of the forecourt to the street and provide screening;*
- retain trees and vegetation which contribute to the character of the site and surrounding area;*
- retain or re-introduce original surface materials and boundary features, especially in Conservation Areas such as walls, railings and hedges where they have been removed. If new materials are to be introduced they should be complementary to the setting; and*
- prevent the excavation of lightwells as a means of providing access to basements where this does not form part of the historical means of access to these areas".*

With regards the above guidance it is submitted:

- In the stretch of Arkwright Road from Finchley Road to Frognal, Nos 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 39, 41, 43, 44 and 45 all have off road parking in their front garden, provided by hard standing. The proposed development would be consistent with established character.***
- The works do not necessitate any new front curtilage ground materials as the front curtilage already exists. In any case existing materials are high quality and appropriate to the area.***

Redington and Frognal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2000)

5.6 The Conservation Area Appraisal refers to “*an exceptional example of consistently distinguished Victorian and Edwardian architecture*”. No. 40 Arkwright is not a listed building.

5.7 The site is located within ‘sub area 8’ in the conservation area. This is the most varied sub character area within the whole conservation area. Development of the type proposed is not cited as a feature of threat to the area.

5.8 Whilst on page 29 reference is made to works to frontages and within the public realm, it does not state that such alterations are not permitted. Rather it is stated that the following often result in a detrimental impact:

- *Loss, alteration or replacement of boundary walls, gate posts, piers, railings, and balustrading.*
- *The formation of new crossovers.*
- *The loss of trees and boundary planting.*
- *Introduction of high railings to inappropriate front boundaries.*

With regards the above points the following is submitted the proposal does not necessitate the loss of any gate posts, piers, railings or balustrading.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with NPPF policies, as well as the Camden Local Plan and associated design / conservation guidance.

6.2 It is not considered there would be any adverse visual impacts or adverse impacts to the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. There is precedent along the street for similar type works.

6.3 In the case of appeal decision Ref. No. APP/X5210/W/22/3308147 the Planning Inspector concluded very favourably in respect of the ‘as-is’ front curtilage.