

5 Edis Street, London NW1 8LG

Refurbishment and Extension

Design, Access, Planning & Heritage Statement

March 2025

Executive Summary

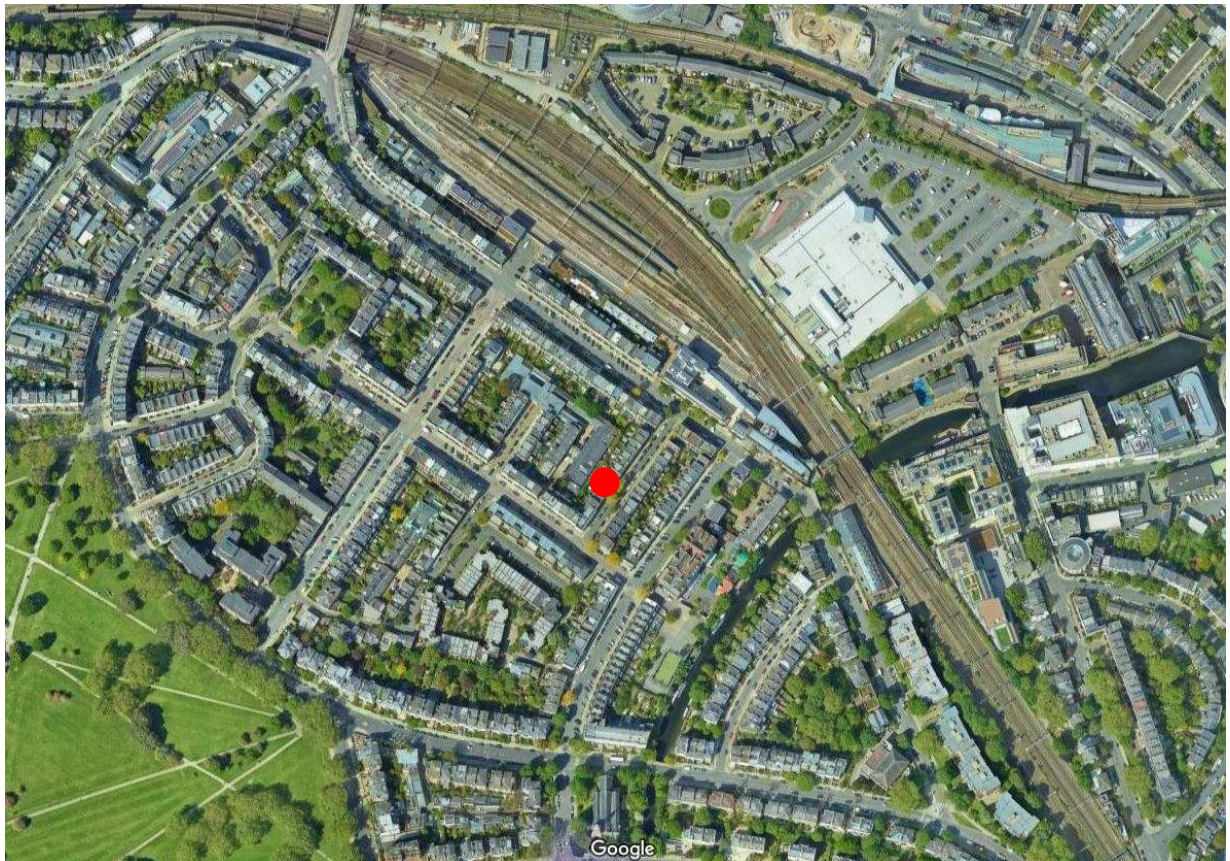
This application seeks planning permission for the modification and extension of 5 Edis Street, in particular the addition of a rear extension at lower ground floor level and the reinstatement of traditional metal stairs to the front lightwell.

Site context

5 Edis Street is a four-storey (plus loft floor) townhouse situated in Sub Area 2 of Camden's Primrose Hill conservation area. The property is not listed, but – together with the rest of its terrace – is considered by Camden to be a building that makes a *positive contribution* to the conservation area.

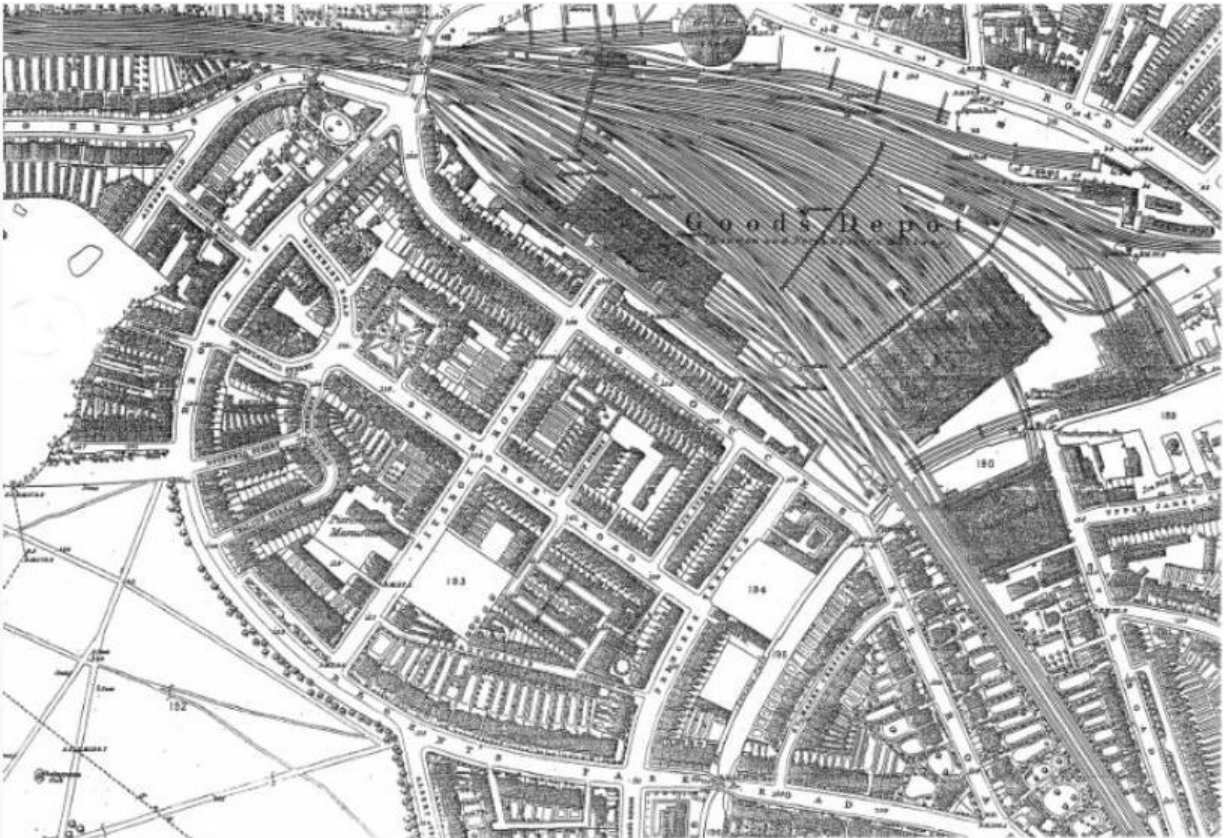
The site is well served by public amenities; Primrose Hill and Regent's Park lie a short walk to the South-East of Edis Street and public transport is readily available with several bus routes nearby and Chalk Farm Underground Station (Northern Line) located less than five minutes' walk away.

The immediate vicinity is characterised by well-maintained tree-lined residential streets with occasional clusters of small-scale retail premises, cafes, restaurants, and boutique offices.



Aerial view of Primrose Hill with 5 Edis Street identified by red dot. Courtesy of Google Earth.

Edis Street is understood to have been laid out circa 1870 as part of the later stages of development of the Southampton Estate. The terrace's architecture conforms broadly to a late Regency/early Victorian style and presents a rational and organised facade to the street, featuring many of the architectural elements that were popular at the time of its construction – timber sash windows variously embellished with decorative surrounds, stucco render to the ground floor and front lightwell, a characterful front door approached via three front steps which traverse the front lightwell below, and black-painted metal railings which line the street and guard the front lightwell.



Historic map of the Southampton Estate dated 1870. Courtesy of <https://primrosehillhistory.org/>

The property itself is two-bays wide and arranged internally in a conventional layout, with one room occupying the front portion of each floor, and one the rear; a principal stair runs along the left-hand-side of the building linking all floors. Like many of the other properties on the terrace, No.5 comprises a mansard roof extension which, though historic, is a non-original addition; the original roof-form is understood to have been a traditional 'butterfly' roof, examples of which can still be seen at No.3 and No.7 Edis Street. A closet wing appended to the rear of the building contains three floors and features a roof terrace which is accessed off the half landing between the first and second floor.

The front elevation is finished in a white-painted stucco at ground and lower ground floor levels, while the upper two floors are finished in traditional London stock brickwork laid in a Flemish bond. The top of the façade terminates in another band of stucco forming a simple cornice.

A front door at ground floor level provides the primary access to the building; the original secondary entrance at lower ground floor level via the front lightwell is no longer functioning as such, as the original metal stair which would have led to the lightwell from the street is no longer in place. This historic removal of the original front lightwell stair is common on the street, though a number of the neighbouring properties appear to have reinstated the stair in more recent years.



View of front elevation from street. Courtesy of Google Earth.



Birdseye view of rear of 5 Edis Street (identified by red dot) showing existing pattern of extension and alteration to rear of terrace. Courtesy of Bing Maps.

The rear elevation, though in reasonably good condition, is unremarkable and finished in the same London stock brick as the upper floors of the front facade. A single leaf non-original timber-framed glazed door provides direct access to the rear garden at lower ground floor level. This garden area currently features modern timber decking and is otherwise non-descript and contains little to no fabric of any historic interest or significance. The closet wing is similarly finished in London stock brick with a rear façade that features a single small timber-framed casement window on each of its three floors.



View of rear elevation from lower ground floor rear terrace.

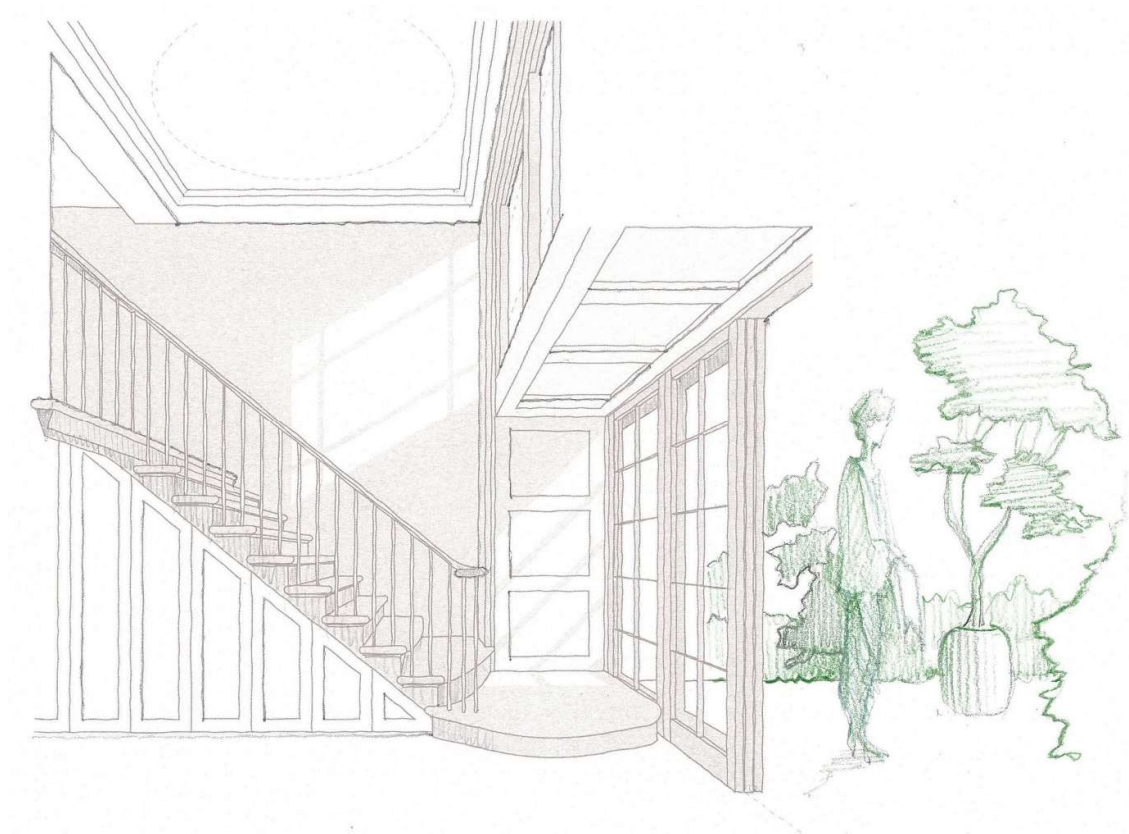
Together with the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF), the London Plan 2021, Camden's Local Plan 2017 and associated supplementary planning guidance documents (SPGs) form the primary planning policy context for any development at 5 Edis Street. Camden's Conservation Area Statement SPG for Primrose Hill (2001) is of particular relevance to the application. These policy and guidance documents have been duly referred to and considered in the formulation of the proposals which are the subject of this application.

Proposals

Extensive thought and consideration have been given to the form, scale and materiality of the proposals contained in this application, and a number of options were explored during the initial design process with the client to arrive at a design approach that meets their requirements while also presenting a sensitive architectural treatment that maintains the building's positive contribution to its setting. Due regard has been given especially to the relevant design criteria stipulated in Policy D1 of Camden's Local Plan, with an emphasis on local character and context (Policy D1.a), details and materials which are of a high quality and complement local character (Policy D1.e), and how the building relates to its surroundings (Policy D1.p).

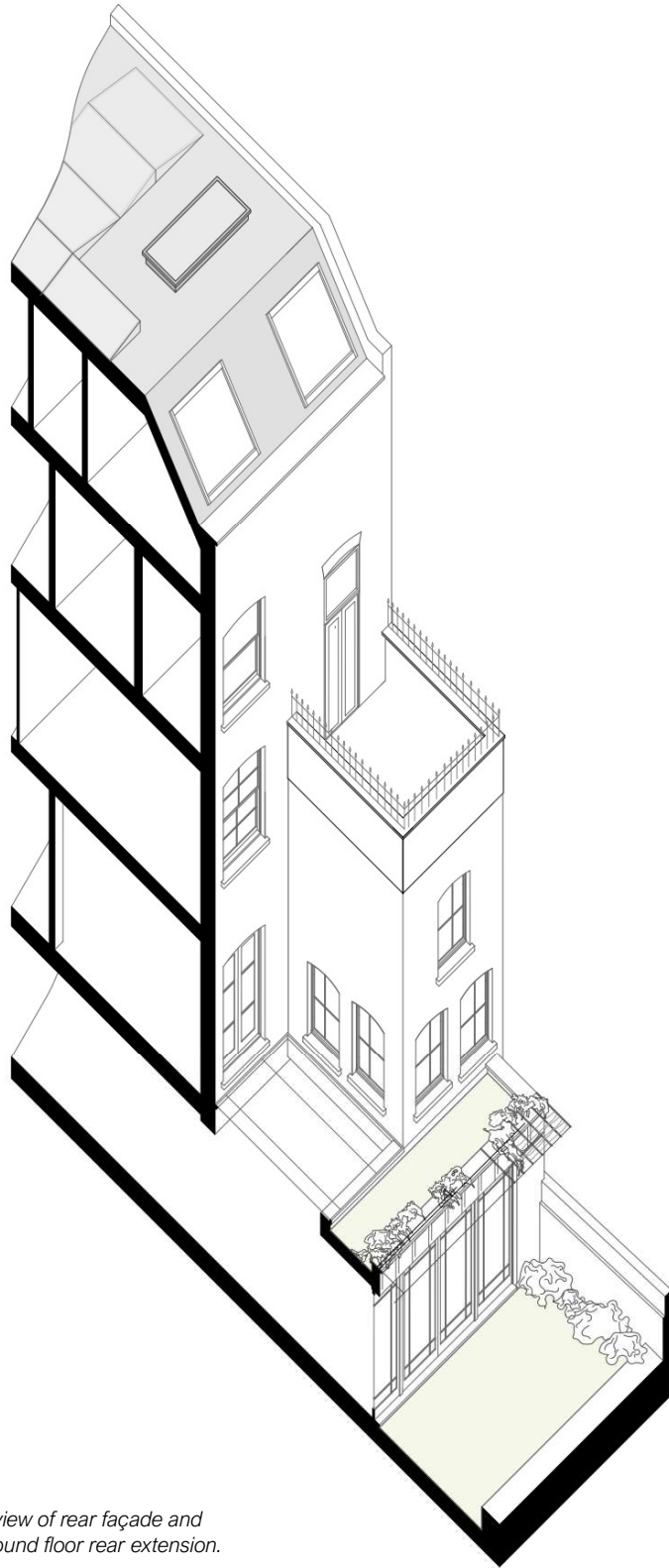
Rear extension

In response to the clients' brief to improve the quality and layout of the lower ground floor space to better suit the needs of their young family, the creation of a more open plan interior arrangement is proposed in tandem with the addition of a new single-storey rear extension. A simple form has been adopted for this extension with the intention to create an addition which sits comfortably with the existing built forms of the terrace and one that maintains the established building pattern and hierarchy of volumes. In particular, the rear line of the proposed new extension takes its cue from the line of the rear extension located immediately next door at No.6 Edis Street (Planning ref: 2014/5983/P).



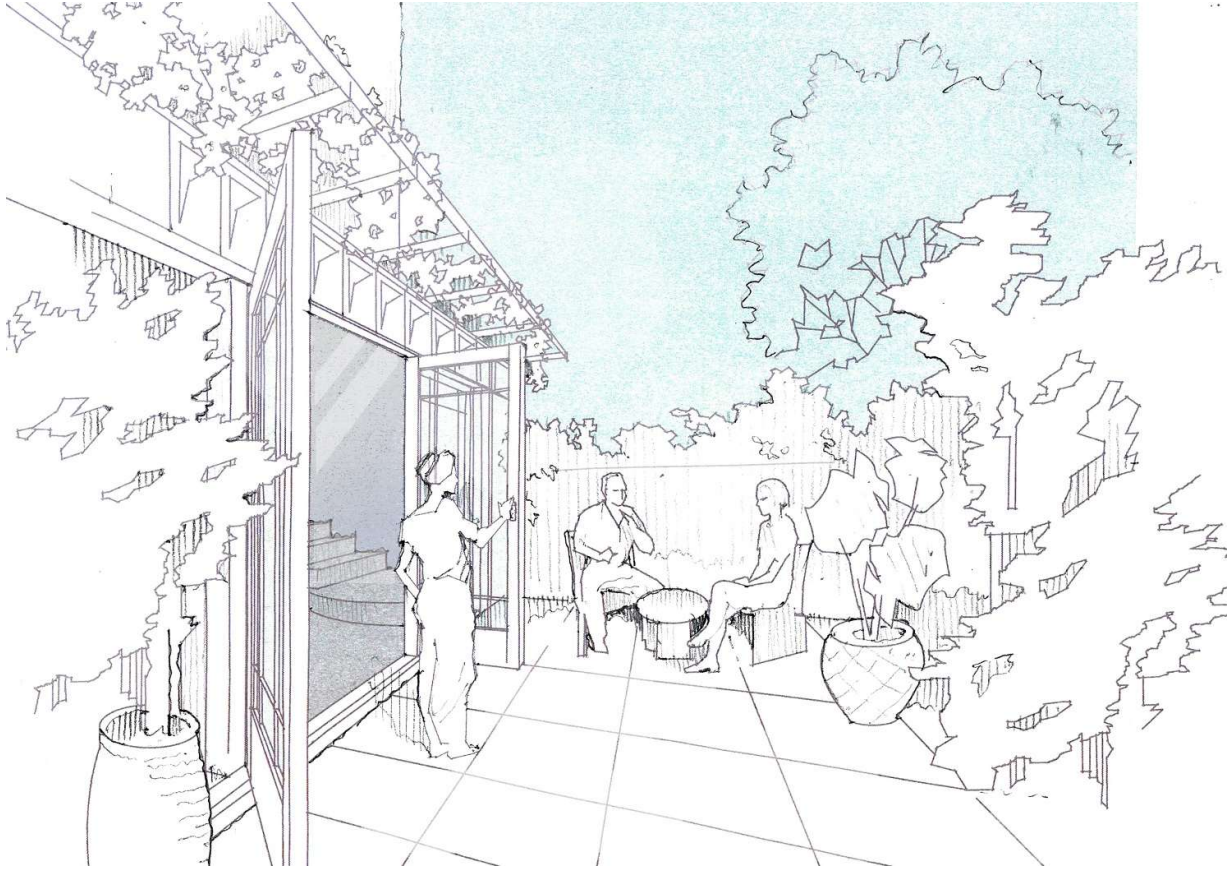
Architectural view of interior of proposed lower ground floor rear extension, with view out to rear garden.

A glazed roof is proposed in the space between the closet wings of No.5 and No.6, which allows the legibility and primacy of the original built forms to be maintained. A solid sedum roof forms the small portion of the new extension's roof that runs across the full width of the site. This roof seeks to appear as a sympathetic element which sits comfortably with the surrounding brickwork material palette while also presenting a form that is clearly identifiable as a new addition. This sedum section of roof will also provide a valuable addition to the biodiversity of the property.



Sectional axonometric view of rear façade and proposed new lower ground floor rear extension.

The elevation of the new extension presents a simple and rational composition; fenestration comprises a margin glazing style which echoes the existing window style featured elsewhere along the terrace and also serves to present a less monolithic façade to the rear garden area. Brickwork piers flank the framed glazing element of the rear extension façade, with a bespoke terracotta tile frieze running across the top with a traditional masonry coping.



Architectural view of rear façade of proposed new extension and rear terrace.

In accordance with the principles set out in Camden's Planning Guidance (SPG) on Amenity, January 2021, the rear garden continues to provide adequate private outdoor amenity space to the property.

Front lightwell

This application seeks permission for the reinstatement of a traditional metal stair to the front lightwell, restoring the historic access from the street down to the secondary entrance at lower ground floor level. It is proposed that an accompanying foot-gate to match in with the existing railings is also reintroduced. Similarly, the existing French doors situated in the front elevation at lower ground floor level are to be removed and replaced with a traditional tripartite timber sash window to match the historic window that would have been in place originally. Examples of the historic window form can be seen on a number of other properties on the terrace whose original windows have not been modified at this level. The wall is to be built back up to cill level and finished in stucco render to match existing. The reinstatement of these original features to the principal elevation of No.5 is considered to represent a significant heritage benefit and contribute directly to the enhancement of the value of the conservation area.

At present, No.5 lacks any dedicated bin storage. It is proposed that as part of the modifications to the front lightwell a simple metal platform is introduced that will over-sail the lightwell; a foot-gate which ties in with the railings in both style and rhythm is to be introduced in much the same way as the gate that is to be reintroduced in association with the reinstatement of the metal stair. Elsewhere on the terrace, the stair landing has been used informally to accommodate refuse bins, so this adaptation is not an uncommon feature on the street.



Example of refuse bin being stored on landing of lightwell stairs elsewhere on Edis Street.

The position of the lower ground floor entrance door is to be adjusted in order to create a more easily navigable entrance lobby. This entails the creation of a discreet projection below the ground floor entrance bridge, a typical historic modification found elsewhere on Edis Street and indeed on other properties of this period throughout London. Traditional detailing comprising lead flashing is to be employed, and the period panelled timber door maintained.

Other alterations

A number of other minor alterations are included in the application proposals.

The lightweight metal 'Juliet' balcony to the rear window at ground floor level is to be removed and the non-original French doors replaced with a traditional sash window arranged in a style to match its counterpart on the front façade. The existing poor-quality casement windows to the closet wing are to be replaced with new traditional timber sash windows, and their positions rationalised to be more centrally located within the facade. Each of these alterations are considered to represent a worthwhile improvement to the appearance of the rear elevation.

The existing rooflight to the main roof is to be adjusted to provide an Automatically Opening Vent (AOV) which comports with latest fire strategy best practice and will also provide for passive ventilation and better access to the roof for occasional maintenance. This rooflight will be low profile and is not understood to vary greatly in appearance from the current rooflight.

In line with the aims set out in Camden's 'Energy Efficiency and adaptation SPG (January 2021)', it is proposed that a series of solar panels are introduced to the main roof. These are to be set back from the ridgelines and assume a low profile.

Generally all rainwater goods, air bricks and vents will be rationalised and replaced where required as part of the proposed works. Any defective masonry or bonding (or other such building fabric) will similarly be made good where appropriate, and finished to match existing.

None of the proposals contained in this application comprise any substantive demolition works to the exterior of the existing building and as such are considered to comply with the imperatives of the conservation area (ref: CA SPG policies PH14-PH17).

Sustainability

The applicant is eager to improve where possible the overall energy performance and operational efficiency of the property as part of the proposed works. The new rear extension will be constructed in accordance with the latest requirements of the Building Regulations Parts L and F which will lead to a general improvement of the building's energy performance.

Furthermore, it is expected that the proposed introduction of the solar panels to the roof will provide for valuable supplementary renewable energy, in accordance with the aims of Section 5 of CPG Energy Efficiency and Adaptation, January 2021. The intended layout of the solar panels accords with the guidance noted in CPG Home Improvements' Sustainability section.

Biodiversity

The proposed new sedum roof to the rear extension is considered to represent a positive improvement to the existing biodiversity of the site, enhancing its capacity to host a range of species and meeting the aims set out in CPG Biodiversity, March 2018. It is hoped that the improvement to the quality of the rear garden area too by way of introduction of additional planting beds will provide a similarly positive opportunity for the flourishing of local flora and fauna.

Access

Primary access to the property via the front entrance door facing onto Edis Street remains unchanged under the proposals, however the reinstatement of the original historic secondary entrance at lower ground floor provides a

valuable additional means of access while also restoring an important feature of the original design to the front elevation.

Flood risk

A search of the Environmental Agency's flood risk mapping confirms the application site is in an area designated as flood zone 1, "an area with a low probability of flooding". Further, the site is not believed to be in an area with critical drainage problems, nor identified as being in a location which has been identified as being at increased flood risk in the future. As such, a dedicated flood risk assessment is not understood to be required in support of this application.

Conclusion

The proposals submitted for approval in this application have been carefully considered and developed with due regard to current planning policy and guidance as well as to the particular setting of the application site, its prevailing architectural character, and the established pattern of development and alteration in the immediate vicinity. An innovative yet contextual approach has been taken which seeks to synthesise the client's brief - to create improved high-quality accommodation for a growing family - with the architectural and spatial imperatives of the application site and the characteristics specifically recognised as contributors to the significance and heritage value of the Primrose Hill conservation area. For the reasons elaborated upon above, our view is that these application proposals conform to the aims and objectives of the relevant planning policies and associated guidance, and, importantly, represent a distinct improvement to the quality of the existing building, while reintroducing original architectural features which will enhance the property's contribution to the significance of the conservation area.

HUGH CULLUM ARCHITECTS.