

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		12/06/2013	
		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:		04/06/2013	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Jenna Litherland				(i) 2013/1426/P (ii) 2013/1888/L			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
41 and 42 Chester Terrace London NW1 4ND				Refer to draft decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Excavation of vaults at basement level and other internal and external alterations in connection with the conversion of two houses to form a single family dwelling (Class C3).							
Recommendation(s):		Grant conditional permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission and listed building consent					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	03	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		<p>A site notice was displayed from 01/05/2013 until 22/05/2013 and a press notice was placed in the Ham and High on 09/05/2013 (expired 30/05/2013).</p> <p>No representations have been received.</p>					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		<p>English Heritage: No objection</p> <p>Regents Park CAAC: No response received to date.</p>					

Site Description

The application site comprises a semi detached pair of grade I listed stucco villa by Nash dating from 1825 at the entrance to Chester Terrace within Regents Park Conservation Area.

The listing description states

'Grand palace-style terrace of 37 houses & 5 semi-detached houses. c1825. By John Nash. For the Commissioners of Woods, Forests and Land Revenues. Built by J Burton.

Stucco. Slate mansard roofs with attic dormers.

EXTERIOR: the longest unbroken facade in Regent's Park (approx 280m) with an alternating system of bays (ABCBABCBA). At either end projecting pavilion blocks connected to main facade by thin triumphal arches. Main Block (Nos 6-38): symmetrical composition of 3 and 4 storeys. 3 windows to each house. "A" bays, screen of 8 free-standing, fluted Corinthian columns supporting an entablature with modillion cornice above which a recessed attic storey with round-arched windows. Round-arched ground floor openings; architraved heads linked by impost bands. Recessed doorways with panelled doors and fanlights. Windows with margin glazing. 1st floors with architraved sashes and continuous cast-iron balconies. "B" bays, round-arched ground floor openings; architraved heads linked by impost bands. Recessed doorways with panelled doors and fanlights. Windows with margin glazing. Architraved 1st and 2nd floor sashes; 1st floor with continuous cast-iron balcony. Main projecting modillion cornice at 3rd floor level. Cornice and blocking course above 2nd floor. "C" bays, slightly projecting with screen of 6 attached, fluted Corinthian columns supporting an entablature with modillion cornice above which 2 recessed attic storeys with cornice at 3rd floor level and pediment above. Round-arched ground floor openings; architraved heads linked by impost bands. Recessed doorways with panelled doors and fanlights. Windows with margin glazing. 1st & 2nd floors with architraved sashes; 1st floor with continuous cast-iron balcony.

INTERIORS: not inspected.'

Relevant History

No. 41

None relevant

No. 42

2009/2957/L: Removal and replacement of existing window at basement level with single glazed french window of matching width. **Granted 25/09/2009**

2008/0871/L: Replacement of an existing window at lower ground floor level with a double door and side light. **Granted 06/06/2008**

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

London Plan 2011

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies 2010

CS5: Managing the impact of growth and development

CS13: Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards

CS14: Promoting high quality places and conserving heritage

CS15: Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces and encouraging biodiversity

DP22: Promoting sustainable design and construction

DP23: Water

DP24: Securing high quality design

DP25: Conserving Camden's heritage

DP26: Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

DP27: Basement and lightwells

Camden Planning Guidance 2011

CPG1 – Design

CPG4 – Basement and lightwells

Regents Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, 2011

Assessment

Planning permission is sought to convert Nos. 41 and 42 Chester Terrace from to single family dwelling houses into 1 dwelling house. Alterations proposed to achieve this include:

External

- Alteration to rear lightwells including new stone and metal balustrades;
- Partial removal of the iron balustrade
- Partial removal of the stone balustrade
- Landscaping in the garden.
- Removal of external security shutters at basement level

Internal

- Lowering floor levels in the existing vaults;
- Lowering of the floor to the existing basement extension (No 42)
- Removal of the existing lifts – both houses
- Removal of the existing stairs – both houses
- Removal of the existing floors – both houses
- New openings in the party wall, on all floors, to connect two houses
- Installation of new lift - No 41
- Installation of new stone cantilever stairs – No 42
- Installation of new timber floors – both houses
- New partition walls to form new layouts on all floors
- New cornices; new skirting – main rooms – ground to third floor
- New landscape design to garden
- New floor covering throughout

Amendments

The application originally included replacing the existing windows and doors with double glazed units, and installation of glass path at the ground level over the existing lightwells, however these aspects have been removed from the proposal following discuss with the Council's Heritage adviser and English Heritage. Additions also include the use of York Stone in the lightwells at the premises.

The principal considerations material to the determination of this application are summarised as follows:

- Land use (conversion of 2 units into 1);
- Design and Heritage;
- Trees and landscaping;
- Basement Impact;
- Amenity;
- Transport.

Land use

Policy DP2 of the Local Development Framework states that the Council will not grant planning permission for a development that would involve the net loss of two or more residential units. The application seeks permission for the conversion of the 2 dwellings into 1 dwelling. The proposal would result in the loss of one net dwelling and is therefore consistent with Policy DP2.

The application would result in a family sized unit which there is medium demand for in accordance with policy CS6 and DP5. This is considered acceptable. The application is accompanied by a Lifetimes Homes statement which demonstrates that the proposal would meet all applicable lifetimes homes standards as far as practicably given the grade I listed nature of the building.

Design and Heritage

Various works of alteration are proposed, to the interior and exterior of the buildings. The proposal is to connect the two buildings, which are currently a semi-detached pair, to form one dwelling-house including the forming of lateral links between the two buildings at all levels. It is also proposed to remove the two stair cases and 1960s lifts to both buildings.

Much of the special interest of these buildings lies in their value as a part of a planned townscape. It is well documented that many of the Nash-designed terraces around Regent's Park were comprehensively rebuilt behind the retained façade post-war, and as such, the interiors of the buildings are arguably of lesser interest than in other terraced buildings of the same period which retain their historic fabric and construction. The reconstruction was not a scholarly replica or facsimile, but some attempt - whether by accident or by design - was made to reinstate the general layout of the buildings, in the historic two room plan form and in the reinstatement of the principal stair flights in their previous position. The installation of lifts, however, means that the room proportions at principal floor levels are not as they were originally.

For this reason the Council have often taken a more flexible view regarding works to the interiors of these buildings than on terrace houses which retain their historic fabric and features, but would usually seek to ensure that the general plan form of the principal floor levels – ground and first – is retained, and that any proposed internal alterations do not have an impact on the appearance of the buildings from the outside which would confuse the understanding of the original domestic layout of the buildings or the proportions of the principal rooms in relation to the exterior. This is echoed in a recent Inspector's decision for internal works to no. 56 Cumberland Terrace, which has a similar history, which stated that, *"works within the house should complement and enhance the special character arising from the front elevation. As a result, they should not harm the elements of the dwelling that reflect the historic origins of the building as a London townhouse of some stature."*

Historic breaches in the party wall line dating from the later part of the 20th century have been confirmed during the opening up and investigative works. This scheme seeks to reopen lateral links through the spine wall, positioned so as not to impact on the exterior of the buildings and one's appreciation of these properties as a pair of two distinct houses from Chester Terrace, given the aforementioned significance of the front facade. The principal rooms remain relatively unaffected in terms of their scale and relationship to the front elevation. With the above in mind, the lateral conversion and alterations to the partitioning proposed here are considered to be acceptable in principle.

Vaults - The below-pavement vaults are a surviving original feature. The proposed works including a considerable amount of breaking through between the vaults and lowering of the floors. This work will

undoubtedly affect their special interest. During the site visit the vaults were inspected and it was noted that they have been tanked at some point in the past. The principle of the lowering of the vault floors and the lateral conversion of the vaults is considered acceptable given that they have already been altered therefore their significance is already somewhat diminished. However, in order to ensure this work is undertaken with minimal damage to the historic fabric further details, including a method statement, in relation to the proposed works would be required by condition.

Works to lightwells – It was originally proposed that the rear lightwells would be covered with large glass panels. This was considered to harm the setting of the listed building and has therefore been removed from the proposal. It is now proposed that the glass panels would be replaced with an iron grille. The existing glass infill over the side entrance of No. 41 would also be removed and replaced with an iron grille. This addition of the iron grilles would better preserve the appearance of the listed building and is therefore considered acceptable. Full details of the grilles would be required by condition. New stone stucco and metal balustrades are also proposed to the lightwells which would match the existing at the property. This is considered acceptable, however full details would be required by condition.

The proposal also includes the addition of york stone finishes to the open lightwells. At present the front lightwell have a concrete finish. It is considered that the proposed york stone would better reveal the significance of the listed building.

Works to basement level windows – The proposal includes the removal of the external shutters to the windows on the north elevation at basement level. They will be replaced with internal shutter. The existing shutters are considered to detract from the appearance of the building and their removal is therefore welcomed and would again better reveal the significance of the listed building.

In summary, the proposals are considered justifiable in the context of the 1960's interior. The essential special interest now lies in the external elevations of the building itself as part of the whole architectural set piece of the Nash terraces facing Regents Park, and this special interest is not detrimentally affected by the proposals.

Trees and Landscaping

The proposal includes the removal of 4 trees which are considered to be of low amenity value. They will be replaced by 5 trees. The tree officer has confirmed that proposed replacement planting will mitigate any loss of greenery within the streetscape and conservation area. Tree protection details for the remaining tree have been submitted within the application. These protection measures would be secured by condition.

Concern was raised at pre-application stage over the level of hard standing within the Tree Protection Area of the retained Mulberry Tree in the side garden of No. 42. The plans submitted within the application do not fully detail the landscaping proposals, however the applicant has confirmed that the Mulberry would be surrounded by soft landscaping. Full landscaping details would be secured by condition.

Basement Impact

The proposed basement excavations include lowering the floor of the basement vaults by 1.9 metres and lowering the floor in the fitness room to the rear of the property at basement level by 0.7 metres.

Visual impact, trees and landscaping - Policy DP27 states that the Council will consider whether schemes will lead to the loss of open space or trees of townscape or amenity value; provide satisfactory landscaping, including adequate soil depth; harm the appearance or setting of the surrounding area.

The basement excavation would result in no external alterations to the building above ground and would be entirely within the footprint of the existing dwelling, therefore there would be no impact on visual appearance, trees or landscaping.

Structural stability and hydrology Policy DP27 states that developers will be required to demonstrate with methodologies appropriate to the site that schemes maintain the structural stability of the building and neighbouring properties; avoid adversely affecting drainage and run-off or causing other damage to the water environment; and avoid cumulative impact upon structural stability or water environment in the local area.

CPG4 advises that the above should be demonstrated through the submission of a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA)

The application is accompanied by a BIA prepared by suitably qualified engineers. The report goes through the screening exercise recommended in CPG4 in respect of groundwater flow, land stability and surface flooding. This established that it was not necessary to take the BIA forward to the Scoping stage in relation to groundwater flow or surface water flow and flooding. In terms of structural stability one issue was raised from the screening exercise. This is that the basement construction would be within 5 metre of the highway. The proposed vaults extend under Chester Terrace. The report confirms that the proposal have been developed to safeguard the highway. This is considered sufficient.

It is considered that the detail contained within the BIA is commensurate with the level of subterranean development proposed. Based on the information provided and providing the recommendations of BIA are complied with the proposal will maintain the land stability of the site and the structural stability neighbouring properties; avoid adversely affecting drainage and run-off or causing other damage to the water environment; and avoid cumulative impact upon structural stability or water environment in the local area.

Amenity

The change of use from two dwellings to one is not considered to have a negative impact on neighbour amenity. All physical changes are proposed at ground and lower ground floor level and would not give rise to overlooking or loss of daylight.

The proposal does include plant however this would be located within an enclosed lightwell. Therefore, it does not require planning permission. However, the applicant has submitted an acoustic report which the Environmental Health Officer considered satisfactory. A condition would be placed on any permission requiring full details of any external plant or air inlets.

Transport

The conversion also has the potential to reduce the demand for car parking on Chester Terrace and it is therefore not considered reasonable to seek to secure the resulting flat as car-free.

Other Matters

The proposal would not be CIL liable as there is no increase in habitable floorspace.

Recommendation: Grant conditional permission.