



SQUARE FEET ARCHITECTS

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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Revision A

Project: 30A Thurlow Road, London, NW3 5PH

Date: 10th April 2013

INTRODUCTION

This submission relates to a single storey dwelling house that is located in the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area. Our clients would like to create extra space for a growing family. Given the site's particular setting, we aim to develop a proposal that is carefully in tune with its immediate surroundings as well as with the wider context of the Conservation Area, and that follows the Council's current policies and Government Guidance on Sustainability. The proposal would involve the demolition of the existing building on site, which is considered by the Council as 'neutral' in importance, and construction of a new two storey house, with a upper and a lower ground floor.



Front View of the House from Thurlow Road

1. Site Description:

Single storey dwelling house with a shallow pitch roof located on the eastern side of Thurlow Road. The house appears to have been built in the rear garden of 41 Rosslyn Hill around 30 years ago, and it is located in the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area.

1.1 Conservation Area and Development Parameters:

According to the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area Statement, Thurlow Road is 'one of the earliest of the 19th century roads. It has a gradient up from Rosslyn Hill south westwards, with a subtle but significant curve punctuated by gaps between the buildings'.

The conservation officer has previously stated that the site makes a neutral contribution to the Conservation Area in terms of its architectural design (See 2.2). This is in line with the initial discussion held with the Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee who also view this as a good opportunity to improve the architectural design of the site. A clear description of the character of the site can be seen in an Appeal Decision Notice dated 2nd November 1989:

'In my view, the character of the area is set by tree lined streets of substantial Victorian Dwellings of 3 to 4 storeys, with gardens and spaces enhanced by trees or other vegetation (...) In the present case, the appeal site itself is currently open and unused garden together with three significant trees. It is part of what was formerly the garden to No.41 Rosslyn Hill, rising up Thurlow Road to abut the site boundary of No. 30 (...) It is my view that these spaces have an important role in providing elements of open, often landscaped, relief, in contrast with the rather close-knit nature of the substantial semi-detached and terraced housing which predominates in the area. In my judgement it is highly desirable to preserve and enhance the essential elements of character which I have identified above.'

Paragraph HE9 of The Communities and Local Government Planning Policy Statement 5 on Planning for the Historic Environment states:

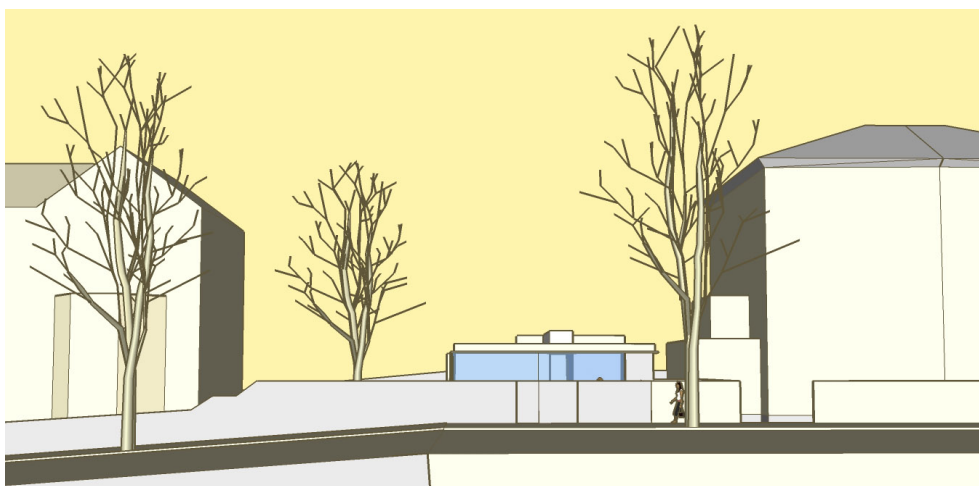
'There should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. Once lost, heritage assets cannot be replaced and their loss has a cultural, environmental, economic and social impact.'

The significance of the site is described above as being the space that exists between No. 41 Rosslyn Hill and No. 30 Rosslyn Hill and how this provides an 'open relief' from the close knit nature of the housing seen elsewhere within the immediate area. As such and due to the Conservation Officer's remark regarding the site's architectural contribution this 'open relief' should be considered the 'heritage asset' as outlined within PPS5. Through replicating the original ridge height and building footprint within the proposed design the open spaces described above will be maintained allowing the asset to the Conservation Area to be preserved.

Overall, as per the Conservation Area statement:

'The Council will seek to ensure that development in Conservation Areas preserves or enhances their special character or appearance, and is of high quality in terms of design, materials, and execution.' And *'All development should respect existing features such as building lines, roof lines, elevational design, and where appropriate architectural characteristics, detailing, profile, and materials of adjoining buildings'*.

Our proposal aims not only to preserve but also to enhance the character of the area by effectively preserving the existing building's footprint and height, and designing within the parameters of sustainability and great craftsmanship. Furthermore the house has been designed to minimise the impact on the amenity of neighbours, avoiding the loss of open space or trees of amenity value.



Proposed Front View of the house highlighting the preservation of the heritage asset – the open spaces that exist between buildings

1.2 Planning History:

A number of planning applications for houses of various sizes have been submitted throughout the years. Planning applications submitted for the site were refused on the basis of:

- a. Overdevelopment of the site.
- b. Daylight standards not met, and access of adequate natural light to adjoining premises would be prevented to the detriment of their amenities.
- c. Likely loss of existing mature trees.
- d. Proposal's bulk and design considered to have an adverse effect on the visual amenity of the conservation area.

1.3 Planning Pre-application dated 28th August 2012:

From the planning pre-application advice that we received from the Council on the 28th August 2012, a proposal for this site would be subject to three planning considerations:

- a. The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the host building and garden.
- b. The impact of the development on neighbouring occupiers and properties.
- c. The impact of the development on Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area and in the characteristic 'gap' in the development along Thurlow Road.

2. USE & AMOUNT.

2.1 Design Concept:

The proposed house is a four bedroom two-storey house, designed to appear from the street as a small garden pavilion. Traditional materials such as brick, wood and glass would be used. The design recognises that the site is 'tight' and seeks to establish a compromise between the house's intake of natural light on the one hand, and potential outlook onto adjacent properties on the other. The proposal aims to extend the surrounding garden by creating a green wall along the front façade of the house, as well as a green roof. In relation to construction, we aim to undertake a traditional approach in terms of using great craftsmanship.

On the 3rd April 2013 Daniel Leon of Square Feet Architects met with the Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) to discuss the proposals who in principle supported the proposal and saw it as a good opportunity to improve upon the existing design of the house.

2.2 Demolition of existing building:

In an email to our client in February 2011, the Design and Conservation Officer has stated: *'The site makes a neutral contribution to the Conservation Area in terms of its architectural design'*. The current building does not appear to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In fact, it seems to detract from the character of the area, due to the construction and materials used, and lack of detailing.

The proposed design would provide a significant improvement and contemporary asset to the Conservation Area, more sympathetic to its surroundings. committee

2.3 Lower Ground Floor Extension and Lightwells:

According to the Conservation Area Statement: *'Extending into basement areas will be acceptable where it would not involve harm to the character of the building or its setting'*. The proposal keeps within the height of the existing building and proposes to add a lower ground floor. This would be located approximately within the current footprint of the building. Given this, sufficient margins will be left between the site boundaries and lower ground floor construction.

Please find attached a Basement Impact Assessment for further information.

2.4 Trees and vegetation:

The proposal would not affect any trees existing on the site. The landscape intervention is of great importance and we would be seeking to appoint a landscape designer in due course. We intended to extend the garden through introducing a green wall, which descends from the garden, and a green roof where vegetation will grow, and significantly reduce the load on the local drainage system.

Please find attached an Arboricultural Report with details of the existing trees on site, including indication of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). We are committed to taking all appropriate measures to protect all existing trees on site.

2.5 Landscaping:

Soft landscaping is proposed throughout the garden, as advised by the Council, with the exception of the front of the house, which would remain hard-landscaped, suitable for car parking, as existing.

2.6 Daylight intake:

In addition to a large glazed façade at the front of the house, and windows to both side facades, natural light intake also happens through two large rooflights, one positioned over the circulation area and the other positioned over a void that connects to the dining area in the lower ground floor.



2.7 Neighbours and Privacy:

We have carefully considered the impact of the proposal on the adjoining properties, particularly in relation to outlook or loss of privacy. The north-east elevation of the house, which is the most exposed in terms of outlook onto the neighbouring property, would have wooden shutters that allow to fully close all the windows in this façade. We note that some of the shutters would merely open up to 45 degrees in order to bring natural ventilation to the house. The upper ground floor windows that can be fully opened in the north-east façade are positioned approximately in the same location as the windows in the existing house.

The contractors selected would need to be part of the Considerate Contractors Scheme and would cause minimum possible disturbance on the neighbouring properties.

2.8 Sustainability:

The Garden House would be designed in accordance with current legislation and guidance on Sustainability, following from the Climate Change Act 2008, the Building Regulations and The Code for Sustainable Homes. The proposal would be in line with the design of its particular setting and would use solely locally sourced materials. We would propose to use passive ventilation for cooling, and efficient management of lighting and heating. In addition to these measures, we propose a new green wall and green roof, which maximise the area available for vegetation to grow.

Due to the sites orientation it would be possible to take advantage of the sun's free energy. It is proposed that hot water solar/ photovoltaic panels are included on the rear section of the roof, where not visible from the street, to reduce the building's carbon footprint on the site.

3. Access:

The proposal will be designed according to the guidelines of the Building Regulations, namely Part M and K, and Lifetime Homes document. The design of the proposal will not affect the general circulation in and out of the site, or around the garden. The proposal does not affect current parking arrangements.

Referencing the '16 Design Criteria' –

1. Parking – there is on site parking for convenient access.
2. Approach – there are three steps to access the front door – currently there is one, but this slight adjustment allows for meeting Conservation Area and excavation constraints.
3. Approach to all entrances – as noted above this criterion has been met where possible. A handrail will be included to assist ambulant disabled users.
4. Entrance will be illuminated, have level access threshold, have clear opening widths, weather protection to an external landing.
5. Communal stairs – being a private house there are no communal parts.
6. Internal doorways and hallways – doorways and hallways are far in excess of the minimums set out.
7. Circulation Spaces are generous and comply with this criterion.
8. Entrance level living space has been provided in the form of a study, otherwise the main living space is on the lower level to meet the site constraints as explained above.
9. Entrance level bed-space is provided.
10. Entrance level wc is provided.
11. WC and bathroom walls will be capable of supporting fixings for grab rails etc.
12. Stairs and potential for a through floor lift is provided.
13. Potential for fitting hoists from bedroom to bathroom is provided.
14. Bathrooms are designed to be sufficiently spacious to meet the requirements of this criteria.
15. Glazing has been designed to meet this criterion.
16. Services controls are located to meet this criterion.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our proposal has taken the parameters referred to in 1.2 above into consideration as follows:

- a. The proposal keeps within the existing footprint, with the exception of a small extension to the rear, which adds 8m² to the overall GIA of the building, and a long narrow lightwell along the front facade. The house extends to a lower ground floor to create extra space. This is carefully set-out in relation to the house and the garden, avoiding harm to any of the existing trees and leaving a sufficient gap to the site boundaries as recommended by the Council.
- b. Daylight is brought to the new lower ground floor through a large glazed front façade, and windows that open onto a sunken garden. There is also a void at the back of the dining area that receives daylight from a glazed roof above. In relation to the effect of the proposal on

neighbouring houses, the proposal does not worsen the access to natural light from adjoining properties.

- c. The scheme does not involve the loss of existing trees.
- d. The Garden House does not extend from the footprint of the existing building. Thus maintaining the significant and well-preserved gaps between buildings, and providing views through to rear mature gardens, which contribute to the character of the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area.

In developing this planning application our aim is to seek the council's consent to develop a scheme that improves the appearance of the existing building seen from the street. We are committed to building excellence, achieved through using very good quality materials, and great craftsmanship.