35 South Hill Park, NW3

Design and Access Statement (heritage statement integrated)
for a rear, loft and basement extension of an existing dwellinghouse within a conservation area

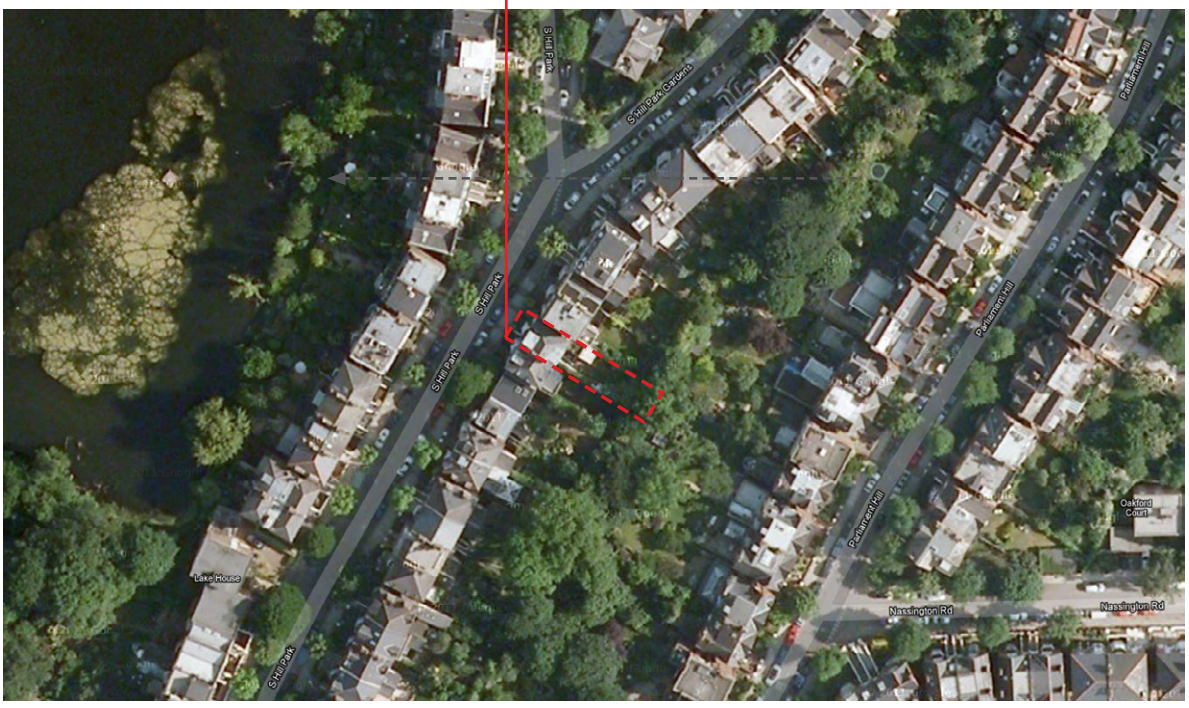
22nd March 2013

David Mikhail Architects
10-11 Clerkenwell Green
London EC1R 0DP

t: 0207 608 1505
f: 0208 616 4582
e: info@davidmikhail.com
www.davidmikhail.com

CONTENTS

Application site shown outlined in red



1 Introduction to no. 35 South Hill Park

The existing property is a three-storey semi detached dwelling, with rooms in the roof. It is located on the south east side of South Hill Park within the South Hill Park Conservation Area (Sub Area 1). South Hill Park is predominantly a residential street developed by Thomas Rhodes from 1871 onwards consisting mainly of substantial semi-detached villas. There are also several notable examples of post-war housing within the Conservation Area (including close-by, no. 31 built by Architect Michael Brawne in 1959) The Conservation Area is notably hilly, and has housing of varied height and scale as well as period. Together these examples create a diverse architectural character along the street.

No. 35 has an unusually raised rear garden, being higher even than first floor level. This unfortunate arrangement means that the lower levels of the house do not work well, being dark and disconnected from the south facing garden. In fact, in spite of being a big house, the owners find themselves gravitating to one room - the small south-facing conservatory on the first floor. They have two teenage boys at a local school, and elderly parents that regularly visit, but are finding it increasingly difficult to manage. They have lived in the house for eighteen years and put down roots in the neighbourhood.

The scheme underlying this application has been generated after many years considering how they can make this house really work for them and their family.

Due to the steepness of the site, the front door to the house is raised above the pavement by eight steps. At the back, the garden is raised again. The 'ground floor' which is elevated above the street, feels like a basement at the back, with poor natural light and stepped access up to the raised garden which sits a full storey higher.

No. 35 is one half of a semi-detached building, with a good degree of symmetry. From the exterior the property is typical of the area, constructed from red / yellow London stock brick with white render detailing around the sash windows, the recessed entrance porch and with white rendered horizontal banding. It features a three-storey bay window to the front and a dormer window in the roof to both the front and rear. The dwelling also has a two storey closet wing to the rear with a flat roof providing a second storey roof terrace.

view of front facade

view of rear facade

2 Introduction to this planning application

This planning application is for three key areas of the house:

- Rear extension
- Roof works
- Basement works (a simultaneous and separate application with the neighbours at no. 33)

Planning History

The property was split into a single storey flat on the ground floor with a maisonette above in 1990 (Application No.9005305). However in 1994 the current owners reinstated the property as a single dwelling (Application No. 9401671).

Pre-application meeting

A pre-application meeting was held with the Camden Duty Planner Mr Obote Hope and Kayleigh Hutton from David Mikhail Architects on 18th January 2013. It was a very positive meeting in which Mr Obote pointed out:

- A basement impact assessment would be required
- Any basement works visible from the street would need to retain the existing symmetry above

current overlooking issues from second storey roof terrace to be addressed and significantly improved

view towards varied extensions along the street from existing second storey roof terrace

3 Rear extension

The proposal for the ground floor extension is approximately the same length as the existing closet wing and conservatory structure. (For ease of comparison, the existing structure is shown dotted on the proposed plan dwg no. AL (1) 100)

The extension is also the same height as the parapet of the existing closet wing. In order to minimise any possible sense of overbearing to neighbours, the extension steps down in height on either side to minimise any impact.

The height of the extension is determined by being accessed from the half landing of the staircase. This allows for a 'one and a half storey' extension. This tall family room will feel light and spacious. It will function as the main room of the house, with a new kitchen and dining area. Tall glass sliding doors will give direct access out to the south-facing garden. Its height enables it to be overlooked by the study room of the main house, making for a generous series of interconnected living spaces.

Party Wall Structures and Boundaries

The flanking party structure to no. 33 is currently in London stock brick, and with stainless steel cables with ivy growing over them. The brick structure will require underpinning and raising slightly. Agreement has been reached between the owners of both properties on this matter.

The flanking party structure to no. 37 is in London stock brick and will remain in place, with no raising required.

view towards boundary with no. 33

view towards boundary with no. 37 showing brick parapet of existing closet wing, conservatory and flanking party structure

3 Rear extension continued

Materials

The sliding doors will be insulating glass panels, on a ball bearing track.

The roof of the extension will be planted with a wildflower sedum, softening the impact of the extension from the existing dwelling and the neighbouring properties, whilst also helping to regulate internal temperatures. An extensive wildflower roof acts as a sponge, thus the reduced water run off will therefore also reduce its impact on public sewers.

The roofs of the lower side wings will be a structural flush glass rooflight along their full length. This will allow walking access for maintenance and cleaning, whilst bringing daylight deep into the centre of the ground floor.
The material at the edges which provide the picture frame for the extension, and along its flanks at high level will be in a patented pre weathered zinc to match the dormers at high level.

Micro terrace

The current terrace off the half landing, which is on the roof of the closet wing, is to be substantially reduced in size into a ‘micro terrace’. This proposed arrangement would improve privacy for residents at no 33, with the new sight lines from the micro terrace shown on the drawing Rear Elevation AL (1) 201. The existing terrace suffers from being able to overlook the study at no. 33. This drawing illustrates how it would be impossible to look into the study room at no. 33 with the new proposals.

Garden works

The garden to no. 35 is one of the highest in the immediate area, and we propose to excavate it by about 900mm, to be similar in height to the garden at the end of the property. It is then terraced down further in a series of gentle steps and planted beds, to give level access between the new extension and a patio. (It is worth noting that even at this level, the lowest point of the revised rear garden, it is still approximately 3m higher than the pavement at the front of the house.)

view from first storey window showing the existing terrace above the closet wing, the separation of the garden from the main house and the low light levels available to the ground floor below

4 Roof works

New Side Dormer Window

The proposal includes the installation of a new dormer to the side of the existing roof. This is subservient in height and scale to the front and rear dormers, and is proposed as a way of bringing much needed headroom to the top floor room.

This dormer will also be much lower than the neighbouring building at no. 37 South Hill Park, which dominates the roof of no. 35, towering over it by a further two storeys. This dormer window represents no overlooking threat to no. 37, as there are no windows on its flank wall. Even so, after initial consultations, our client is aware that the owners of no. 37 are concerned about any rights to light or view being obtained, and propose that the dormer window facing no. 37 is obscured glass.
(Alternatively the side dormer could be constructed without windows, but with natural light coming through a flush glass roof light - a type of roof light that would be invisible from the street.)

The immediate area features many examples of side dormers, so much so that it could be said to be a characteristic of the Conservation area.


example of neighbouring dormer at no.101


example of neighbouring dormers at no.'s 95, 97 & 99


example of neighbouring dormer at no.93


example of neighbouring dormer at no.45

4 Roof works continued

Remodelling Existing Dormer Windows

The proposal includes the remodelling of the existing dormer windows to the front and rear of the property. These were previously constructed in accordance with a planning application number 7021 (21-04-1969). These dormers are unsympathetic to the original house, both in proportion and type of window, with a predominantly horizontal emphasis, and poor detailing and materials.

Our proposals include the remodelling of these dormers to be more sympathetic to the 19th Century house in the following ways:

- To reduce the dormer width to be the same as the main brick bay and windows below.
- To be slightly taller than the existing dormers, thus giving a more vertical emphasis, in line with the architecture of the house.
- To feature traditional sliding sash windows, with a tripartite arrangement reflecting the bay windows below.
- To be finished in zinc or lead, rather than the existing mineral roofing felt

General Roof Works

The current roof space is cramped with low headroom and is poorly constructed. It appears that the previous conversion of the roof used the original ceiling rafters rather than a new floor structure and subsequently the top floor suffers from deformation internally. Heating the space is difficult as insulation is minimal.

The proposals are to remove the roof entirely and to rebuilt it, using sympathetic finishes so that it appears to be the original roof, with natural slate tiles and lead flashing into the brickwork, and with ogee cast iron guttering / downpipes. Chimney stacks will be repointed and flaunched, with any rotten clay pots replaced with like for like.

There will be a new structure, which will be properly insulated and ventilated, thus minimising heat loss and bringing the house up to Building Regulation standards. The floor of the roof space will also be rebuilt in order for it to comply with current building regulations for domestic floor loadings.

interior view towards rear dormer, the current loft space feels cramped with low headroom

view of existing dormer to the front of the property

5 Basement works

Introduction

The application includes a new basement floor under the main curtilage of the house. The owners have elderly parents and easy access to a bedroom and bathroom without having to navigate flights of stairs would be hugely beneficial in encouraging them to stay, and in making the house more suitable to family life.

Simultaneous Application - no.'s 33 and 35

The house is a semi-detached villa, and both houses (no.'s 33 and 35) are making simultaneous applications for very similar basement extensions. This will mean that the usual concerns regarding differential settlement, which can occur when only one side undertakes such works will be avoided here. Similarly, concerns regarding noise and disturbance will be more easily managed.

With an opportunity to design both sides simultaneously, we have made the basement designs as symmetrical as possible.

Suitability for conversion

Due to the unusual topography of the area, this house easily lends itself to the installation of a basement, with a ground floor that is already raised nearly a storey above the road. Constructionally then, installation of a basement would be fairly straightforward here. The ground floor is seven steps higher than the pavement, and much of the required structure of brickwork for the basement is already in place.

Access

Access would be via a new gate on the pavement, with a York stone half-stair down to a new front area with an entrance door and an entrance lobby under the existing stairs up to the front door.
There will be a small bicycle storage area outside the basement bay window, protected from the weather with a planted wildflower roof, giving a green and pleasant aspect at street level.

Design

The design of the basement façade is to be such that the basement looks as if it were an original part of the house, with carefully matched second hand bricks forming the octagonal bay window down to the new lower ground level. Details will match exactly those above, with 'two over two' timber sliding sash windows on traditional lead weight pulleys. White-painted window lintels made from cast stone, the notably deep windowsills and the unusual cast stone brackets under the sills will all be made specially to match those of the bay window above

Basement Impact Assessment

A full basement impact survey has been undertaken by experts Ecologia, and is appended.

6 Relevant policies and responses

CPG1 4.10 / DP24.13 / CPG1 4.12 / CS5.8 / DP26 / CPG6 7
The proposed extension is designed to complement the existing building in terms of its proportions and scale, maximising the vertical emphasis and preserving the amenity and privacy of its neighbours by stepping away from both boundary walls before rising to its full height. This stepping away from the boundary walls also aids in reducing any perceived overlooking or overshadowing issues.

The rear extension is designed to be subordinate to the original building, respecting and maintaining the height of the existing closet wing parapet.

Reducing the size of the existing second storey roof terrace to form a mini-terrace increases the levels of privacy afforded to the neighbouring dwellings and reduces the current amount of overlooking as illustrated by the sight line on drawing number AL (1) 201.

CPG1 4.14
The width or height of the new extension will not be seen from the street, an existing brick parapet wall taller than the proposed structure is to be retained which obscures the view to the rear.

DP24.19 / DP24.22 / CPG1 4.10, 4.12
The proposal builds on the sunken patio to the rear of the ground floor and encompasses the upper patio accessed from the existing closet wing. The proposals therefore preserve a generous garden, whilst enhancing its usability by excavating and gently stepping down to meet the main living space.

CPG1 4.11 / CPG 3.8 / CPG1 5.28 / DP24.16 / CS14.12
Materials for the proposed extension are chosen to be sympathetic to the existing building, without detracting from it, and are to be detailed to the highest standard. The wildflower meadow roof will help to regulate internal temperatures whilst the reduced water run off will also reduce its impact on public sewers.

CS14 / CS5 / CPG6 9
Predominantly designed as accommodation for visiting elderly relatives, high quality access is to be provided to the proposed basement extension, with gentle steps and generous width ensuring it is safe, inclusive and accessible.

DP27 / CPG4 / New Basement Development and Extensions to Existing Basement Accommodation Guidance
The scheme has been assessed for its impact on drainage, flooding, groundwater conditions and structural stability as outlined in the appendiced Basement Impact Assessment and there are no significant changes to on-site, off-site flows. SUDS/semi-permeable materials will be implemented where appropriate.

CPG1 5.11
The proposed front and rear dormers are respectful to the proportions of the existing building and replace unattractive, unsympathetic 20th century additions. The proposed side dormer is subordinate to the other dormers and is designed so that its impact on adjoining buildings is minimal. High quality materials and details are assured throughout.

South Hill Park Conservation Area Statement / SHP1 / SHP7 / SHP8 / SHP17 / DP25
Acknowledging that no. 35 makes a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area, care has been taken to assure that the works to the front facade are sympathetic and appropriate, understanding the details, proportions and materials of the existing building in its locale and where appropriate, protecting and indeed replicating the originals in new work.

7 Recent planning permissions granted by Camden in South Hill Park

A) 71 South Hill Park (2008/5576/P) - Double storey rear extension
Buschow Henley Architects

B) 41-43 South Hill Park (2011/6140/P) - Loft dormer works onto street
Treatment Architecture Ltd

C) 47 South Hill Park (2012/5966/P) - Basement and rear extension
Metropolitan Development Consultancy