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# 16 ALMA STREET

Design & Access Statement – 19/03/2013

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# CONTACTS

Site Address

16 Alma Street  
Kentish Town  
London  
NW5 3DJ

Contact Details

Applicant

Name	Ronald & Sophie Sofer
Address	41 Cumberland Terrace London NW1 4HP

Agent

Name	Coffey Architects Ltd
	Contacts: Phil Coffey Ben Edgley
Address	48 Kingsway Place Clerkenwell London EC1R 0LU
Tel	020 7549 2141
E-mail	phil@coffeyarchitects.com ben@coffeyarchitects.com

# DESIGN & ACCESS

## General Site Context

The site is located at 16 Alma Street, between Kentish Town West train station and Kentish Town Underground station, falling within the Inkerman Conservation Area. The road was originally lined with 2 storey Mid-Victorian terraced houses and over time some properties have extended lower ground levels and built dormer roof extensions. The area is well served by local transport links due to its close proximity to Kentish Town which is served by the tube, national rail numerous bus routes.

## The Site

16 Alma Street is a terraced 3 bedroom property split over 3 floors. 2 Bedrooms on the first floor, a living room and bedroom on the ground with a WC off a half-landing and Kitchen/Diner and Bathroom are found on the lower ground level. A small lowered light well at the front allows light to enter the lower ground at the front of the property.

## Access

Access to the site is via Alma Street. Entrance to the building is via an entrance porch with three steps at the front of the property. Currently the rear garden is accessed from the lower ground level, the majority is raised and can be reached by several steps in the centre of the garden.

## Proposed Works

It is proposed that the existing rear extension is demolished and replaced with a new rear extension allowing the house to be configured to suit modern living.

Currently the floor to ceiling heights at lower ground make the space uncomfortable and the arrangement makes use of the space difficult, the bathroom which serves all the bedrooms on the upper levels is very small and is currently situated at lower ground level which is very inconvenient. The WC that is found off the ground floor half landing is small and awkward also and the property in general is in full need of refurbishment.

The proposed works seek to address these issues by lowering and opening up the lower ground level allowing more light to permeate into the spaces and making the space more usable. The ground floor bedroom is relocated to lower ground and the light well to the front lowered to allow more light into the room. A new staircase is proposed throughout allowing a larger bathroom to be accessed from the ground floor level, which is again re-configured creating a large living room. Generally the house will be repaired, refurbished and restored to a high standard, creating a modern family home.

## Previous Advice/Applications

The property has been subject to a planning application previously (2012/6325/P) where it was advised that it would be recommended for refusal. This was predominantly on the basis that the proposal required a Basement Impact Assessment and a BRE Daylight/Sunlight Study.

The resubmission is now accompanied by both a BIA and BRE Daylight/Sunlight Study. The BIA concludes that the lowering of the Lower Ground Floor to 16 Alma Street should have negligible affect on Groundwater Flow, Land Stability and Surface Flow and Flooding. Similarly, the BRE Daylight Sunlight Study concludes that the proposed development will have a low impact on the light receivable by its neighbouring properties and confirms that the development satisfies all of the requirements set out in the BRE guide 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight'.

## Scale & Appearance

The appearance of the extension has been designed to respect the existing terraced houses and read clearly as a new subservient addition, the lower ground level of the extension is predominantly glass and aluminium to sit lightly in between the two existing brick party / garden fence walls. Particular care has been taken with regards scale/massing/materiality of the extension.

The scale of the proposal responds directly to the existing neighbouring extensions at 15 & 17 Alma Street. The depth of the extension does not exceed that of the depth into the garden of the extension at 15 Alma Street and the height of the ground floor addition does not exceed that of the tall 3 storey tower extension at 17 Alma Street. The ground floor extension is tantamount to the success of the scheme ensuring that a modern family bathroom can be located in the centre of the house.

The height of the new full width extension at lower ground level does not exceed 3 metres from the existing lower ground level due to the fact that proposal intends to lower the floor level creating more comfortable ceiling heights internally. This has minimum impact on the neighbouring properties and respects the scale of the existing dwelling.

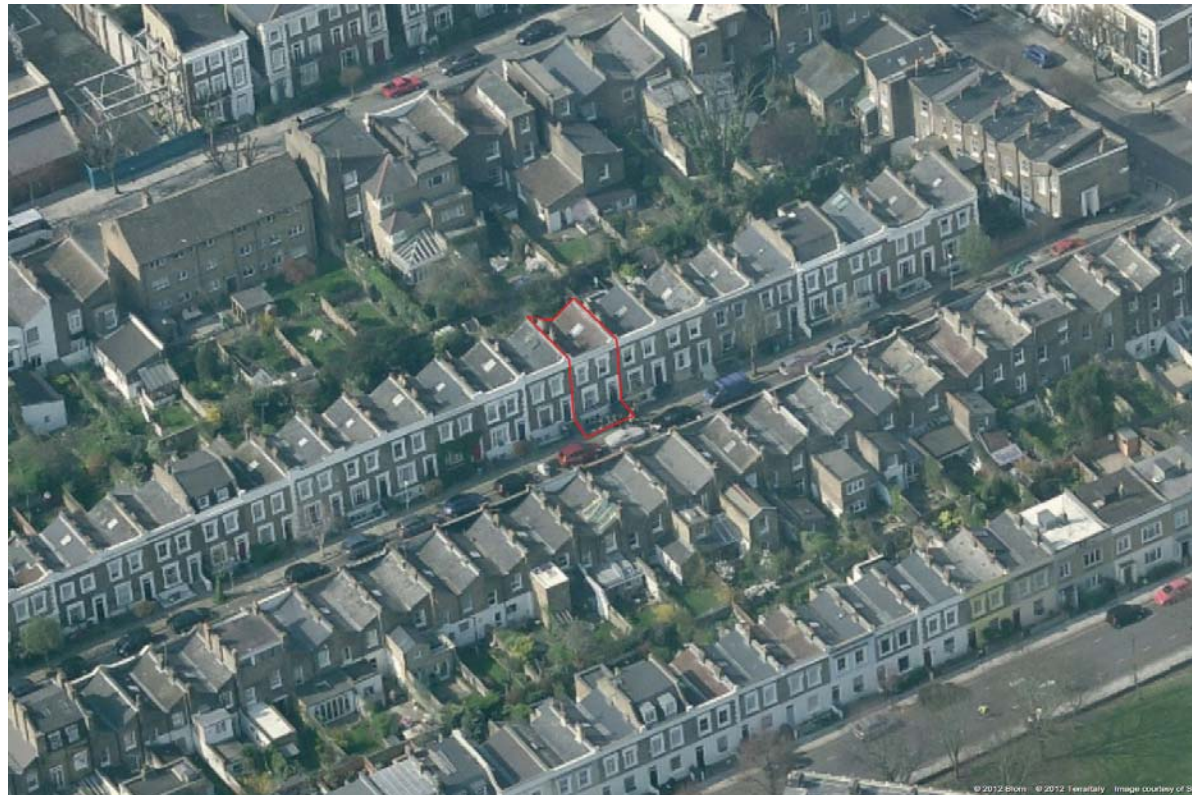
The massing of the ground floor extension is such that the angled roof allows light to reach the neighbouring windows, its form reflects the vernacular of existing additions to the rear of properties along Alma Street and is serviced by a large rooflight at the top of the pitch creating interest both externally and internally in this space.

The materiality has been carefully considered. Coffey Architects has a wealth of experience of creating award-winning additions to properties in conservation areas much like this project. We consider that matching, replicating and attempting to blend a new extension into the existing fabric is often unsuccessful. This proposal intends to read clearly as a new addition and respects the boundary between old and new, the chosen materiality sits well as a subtle addition within a complicated and varied blend of existing London stock brick, red brick and stucco buildings.



# 16 ALMA STREET

## AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS



VIEW FROM EAST



VIEW FROM WEST



SITE PHOTOGRAPHS  
FRONT ELEVATION





# SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

REAR ELEVATION / GARDEN





# DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

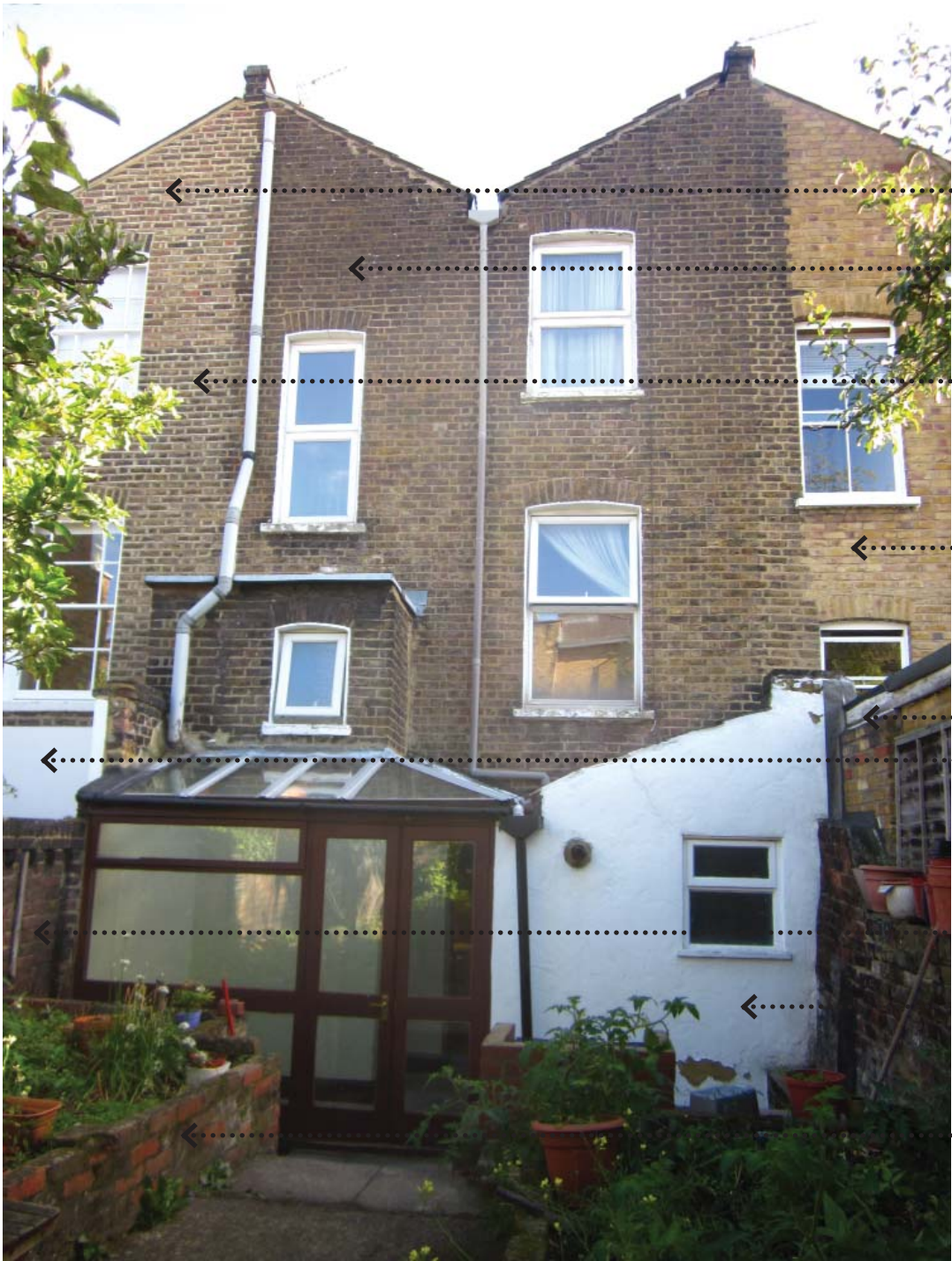
## MATERIALITY

### Existing / Proposed Materiality

During the previous planning application process (2012/6325/P) and in the email included as an appendice to this Design and Access Statement the previous case officer offered feedback and was said that the proposal should be of matching brickwork.

The photograph opposite shows the current rear elevation at 16 Alma Street and it can be seen that matching brickwork in this case is no easy task. There are currently 4 different types of brick used on the rear elevation and attempting to match and add to this complicated jigsaw of brick would damage the architectural integrity of the rear elevation. An addition constructed to blend in to the existing setting would not respect the heritage of the site and would make it hard to distinguish between what is historic and what is new.

Our proposal, of grey cementitious toned tile , seeks to clearly read as a new addition that sits subtly and comfortably amongst this blend of brickwork. This scheme has been carefully designed by award winning architects Coffey Architects to enhance the conservation area with a high quality new addition.



..... Re-Pointed and repaired London Stock Brickwork

..... Original London Stock Brickwork

..... Original London Stock Brickwork

..... London Stock Brickwork to match existing

..... New London Stock Brickwork

..... White Stucco

..... Original Red Brick to Garden walls

..... White Stucco

..... Original Red Brick to Garden walls

Ben,

Thank you for meeting me on site yesterday, showing me the property and discussing your proposals. As explained on site, I do have some concerns. These are:

### **Design**

#### *Front lightwell*

The proposed full width glazing in the front lightwell is overtly modern in terms of its design and appearance. Consequently it would be out of character with the period details of the main building and the character of the Inkerman Conservation Area. This is contrary to policies CS14, DP24 and DP25 and guidance CPG1. I would therefore advise that the design be revised to create a smaller window opening that is more traditional in character. Any fenestration should seek to match the prevalent pattern found on the main building and the rest of the street.

#### *Rear extension*

The rear ground/first floor extension is considered broadly acceptable in respect of its bulk, however, with no window openings, it would appear as a solid block that would relate poorly to the main building. This would be exacerbated by the proposed tiled finish which would be out of character with the building and the CA. I appreciate your rationale behind the principle of the design, however, these terrace rows are typified by their homogeny, repeat architectural patterns and rhythm. This should be maintained where possible. New precedents should not be set for intrusive extensions that would undermine the character of the terrace row and the wider CA. The visual harm this causes can already be seen in the extension at no. 17. As a result, this element of the proposals is contrary to policies CS14, DP24 and DP25 and guidance CPG1. I would therefore recommend you consider revising the extension to include a window opening on the rear elevation (fenestration to match the main building) and for the finish to be matching brickwork.

### **Amenity**

Notwithstanding the design of the rear ground floor extension, its height and projection would create a tunnelling affect on the lower ground floor window of no. 17 Alma Street. As a result it would be overbearing, would affect outlook and would overshadow this window during large parts of the day. This is likely to be contrary to policies CS5 and DP26 which seek to protect the amenity of the Borough's residents. Our adopted planning guidance (CPG6 (Amenity)) provides further advice on how to assess the impact of development proposals on daylight and sunlight. I would advise that you carry out an assessment in respect your proposals and its impact on the habitable room at lower ground floor level of no. 17.

### **Excavation at lower ground floor level**

Further to policy DP27 and our adopted guidance CPG4 (Basements and lightwells), all development that includes excavation works should be accompanied by a Basement Impact Assessment. In the first instance a screening report should be carried out, answering all of the questions in the three different sections outlined in CPG4 (stage 1). I note that Coffey Architects have answered some of these questions, however, this should be done by an appropriately qualified professional (see CPG4 for details of the required qualifications). The answers to these questions within a screening report will then determine the level and nature of any further investigation and information that may be necessary (stages 2 -4). As the screening assessment has not been adequately carried out, the proposals are considered contrary to policy DP27 and guidance CPG4.

### **Recommendation**

In light of the above, the proposals at present are contrary to policy and are likely to be refused. Owing to the amount of revisions that would be required in order to make the proposals acceptable in design and amenity terms and the further work necessary in order to demonstrate the acceptability of the excavation works, I would advise you to withdraw the application and compile a resubmission that seeks to address these concerns from the outset.

I trust this information has been of assistance. I am sorry I cannot be more supportive of your proposals at the present time.

Yours sincerely,

**Craig Raybould**  
Planning Officer

Telephone: 020 7974 2060

# PREVIOUS APPLICATION

## CASE OFFICER FEEDBACK