

Garden House at Rear of Oak Hill House.

1833/D&A

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT.

January 2013

1.0 Background.

- 1.1 The development site is set in the large rear garden of Oak Hill House, which is part of sub area six (Branch Hill / Oak Hill) of the Hampstead Conservation Area.
- 1.2 Oak Hill House is a large four storey (and basement) white stucco Italianate Villa, built around 1850 and set in a large open area containing mature trees and shrubs.
- 1.3 The adjacent properties in Oak Hill Park comprise a series of various large modern blocks (three to seven storeys high), of no great architectural merit, but also set in a mature verdant landscape.
- 1.4 Immediately adjacent to Oak Hill House (on its south western boundary) is a modern detached family house (Weeping Ash), again of no particular architectural quality, and of extremely contrasting scale and character to its neighbouring villa.
- 1.5 The surrounding large Victorian brick buildings in Redington Road and Redington Gardens are all some distance (as a consequence of their garden size) from the development site. Amongst these properties are some recent high quality modern design infill properties.
- 1.6 The conservation area character in this location is primarily as a consequence of its open and verdant nature, rather than primarily as a result of the contribution of the existing buildings to the heritage of the area.

2.0 Access.

A. Vehicular.

- 2.1 A single car parking space is provided on an existing hard surface area adjacent to the existing front forecourt of Oak Hill House.
- 2.2 Oak Hill House now has consent for a private gateway at the main entrance to the site, thereby controlling all vehicular traffic to and from the site.
- 2.3 The proposed car parking space is sufficiently large to facilitate disabled driver usage.
- 2.4 For construction traffic matters refer to the attached "Construction Management Plan".

B. Pedestrian.

- 2.1 Access to the main entrance of the property (for both residents and visitors) is either by way of a generous stairway, or by a (pedestrian) graded ramp to a hoist platform which provides access down to the entrance level of the dwelling.
- 2.2 Access to the dwelling itself will be at grade, to comply with Lifetime Home requirements.

- 2.3 The interior of the building has also been designed to comply with the relevant access and circulation requirements of Lifetime Home standards. (Refer separate accompanying submission with this application).
- 3.0 Design.**
- 3.1 The proposal is for a new single storey family dwelling set in part of the rear garden of Oak Hill House.
- 3.2 The new house will have a (gross external) area of 215m², set in its own landscaped garden site of some 1,120m² (i.e. approximately one fifth of the area). Very extensive landscaped areas will therefore remain to maintain the open and verdant nature of the site.
- 3.3 The development is set in the grounds of Oak Hill House which has a site area of some 2,320m², roughly ten times the size of the proposed building. Again, in context, the open and green nature of the whole site will be preserved.
- 3.4 The gross external plan area of Oak Hill House itself is some 240m², (which repeats on each of its five floor levels), and therefore is somewhat larger than the proposed new dwelling.
- 3.5 This proposal sensitivity and creatively exploits the existing man-made topography of the rear garden of Oak Hill House by partially excavating the existing ground, and then using the resultant space (and air rights) presently occupied by the existing grass banking and part of the garden area to form the new single storey accommodation. However, the overall 'green' surface area is maintained, to keep the character and open nature of the site.
- 3.6 There is no loss of garden space as the remaining open space around the building will be used and enjoyed as a garden by the occupants of the new dwelling. The balance of open space will be re-created in the form of a green roof for the dual purpose of recreation (being available as a communal garden for the residents of Oak Hill House), and as a positive enhancement to the biodiversity of both the site, and also the wider conservation area.
- 3.7 The proposal has been carefully planned and positioned to ensure the retention of all mature trees on the site, and the existing inherent biodiversity of the vegetation
- 3.8 This approach ensures that the important and desirable open and verdant nature of the site is maintained, and that the character and quality of the conservation area is enhanced, for both the new dwelling occupiers and the public at large.
- 3.9 The new building will not be visible from the public realm.
- 3.10 As a consequence of the topographical setting of the building, only a very insignificant part of its north and south elevations will be visible to any adjoining owners.

- 3.11 Only the main (N.W.) façade of the new dwelling will have any obvious physical presence. However, as the building is partly set into the existing ground contours, and it is also heavily screened, not only by both mature trees and shrubs on site and in the adjoining rear garden of a property in Redington Road, but also by an existing garden fence, its physical "impact" is minimal.
- 3.12 The N.W. façade is also some 60m distant from the neighbouring properties in Redington Gardens, and will therefore have no overlooking, or detrimental impact on their amenity.
- 3.13 There is no adverse impact on the daylight and sunlight enjoyed by the occupants of Oak Hill House. On the contrary, part of the (redundant) masonry at the top of the retaining wall to the rear of Oak Hill House will be lowered, thereby actually improving the light to, and the outlook from, the existing basement area accommodation in Oak Hill House.
- 3.14 The other occupants to the upper rear floors of Oak Hill House will continue to enjoy uninterrupted views over the new green roof garden, and beyond.
- 3.15 The new flat (green) roof garden will provide a more practical area for recreation.
- 3.16 The proposed dwelling extends ten meters from the existing retaining wall at the rear of Oak Hill House, thereby occupying the existing seven meter grass bank zone, which by its very nature is of limited active recreational use.
- 3.17 Whilst maintaining and enhancing the existing perimeter trees and shrubbery generally on the site, there remains a generous open garden space outside the N.W. façade. This reinforces the open character of the site as well as affording the occupants of the proposed dwelling both good views, and light.
- 3.18 The "setting" of Oak Hill House remains virtually identical to its present circumstances. On three elevations (front, and two sides) there is no change. To the rear, the villa is still "set" on a grassed base above an open garden area. Thereby maintaining its connection with its garden setting.
- 3.19 The new N.W. façade is positioned some twelve meters away from the main rear facade of Oak Hill House and is also lower than it. This relationship is really only experienced from the private garden by the occupiers of the new dwelling, and does not detract from the grandeur and architectural integrity of the large villa.
- 3.20 The architectural integrity of Oak Hill House itself is entirely unaffected by the new subterranean building as it retains entirely, retaining all its elevations, and its character.
- 3.21 Oak Hill House, by dint of its very large mass and position, clearly remains the dominant element, and the proposed dwelling is very much subordinate to it.
- 3.22 The proposed discreet 'underground' development creatively optimises the use of exiting land to provide much needed additional housing accommodation in the borough (in accordance with Camden Housing policies).

- 3.23 The scale, massing, proportions and bulk of the buildings in the proximity of the site is of a mixed nature, with no overriding influential theme, and hence no homogeneity. It is this very mix which provides the context for variety, and where the introduction of a different building type can be readily accommodated and absorbed into the townscape, and into this conservation area.
- 3.24 There is no adverse effect on the amenity of the various properties, no impact on their daylight or sunlight, and no overlooking from the new dwelling itself.
- 3.25 The new grassed area of the new green roof might afford an oblique view into the garden of the adjacent property (Weeping Ash). This can (if appropriate), be rectified by a condition (say to include a privacy screen, as was acknowledged by the council previously).
- 3.26 The site will continue to be experienced as an area of woodland, in which buildings play a subordinate role. The rear garden of Oak Hill House will continue to exude its soft, and green nature, in a mature landscape, thereby retaining its amenity value for both residents and neighbours.

4.0 Materials.

- 4.1 The exposed wall surfaces will be clad in FSC certified Iroko boarding which will mellow over time to muted silver grey to respond to the rural context of the site. This is a sustainable product.
- 4.2 The large glazed windows will have a slim grey metallic frame to achieve the modern minimalist effect of the main (N.W.) façade, and to reflect the retained mature trees and shrubs in the garden.
- 4.3 The "green" roof will provide a natural biodiversity habitat and amenity area. The perimeter guarding will be glass panels to minimise impact, and will be screened by new perimeter shrub planting. The "green" roof will also provide a natural drainage facility, good insulation and soundproofing characteristics.
- 4.4 All new hard surface materials around the building and the new stair / ramp access way will be finished with resin bonded simulated gravel paving, (brown in colour) to blend in with the natural environment. This material allows rapid drainage to the water table as part of sustainable construction.

5.0 Transport.

- 5.1 A single dedicated car park space (also capable of use by a disabled driver), is provided. This is in compliance with current policy (UDP Appendix 6; parking standards: C3 Residential Development (dwelling) car parking, and Policy T7 of the UDP).
- 5.2 The parking space will be reached via the existing vehicular access to Oak Hill House, from its existing paved parking forecourt.
- 5.3 Cycle storage (for 2 bikes) is provided to satisfy Policy T3.
- 5.4 Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development a Servicing Management Plan (refer UDP Policy T12) is not relevant (as previously accepted by the Council).

6.0 Trees / “Green” Roof / Landscaping.

- 6.1 All existing trees (including those covered by T.P.O.'s) are retained, thereby preserving the natural woodland atmosphere of the site, and the character of the Conservation Area.
- 6.2 The attached Arboricultural Impact Assessment clearly demonstrates that the proposed building and its construction would not be detrimental to any trees on or adjoining the site. This report should be read in conjunction with the tree protection plan and method statements also provided.
- 6.3 The attached Construction Management Plan takes due account of the existing vegetation in the proposed arrangements for constructing the dwelling, and any associated elements.
- 6.4 Some additional planting is intended on the site to further enhance its verdant nature.
- 6.5 A new timber enclosure is proposed (adjacent to the new bike enclosure) to screen the existing unsightly refuse and recycling containers for Oak Hill House, and also those for the new dwelling. This will reflect the natural context of the site, and enhance its amenity.
- 6.6 A detail of the construction of the intensive “green” roof is attached. Native species shrubs will be selected for the planted areas, the remainder will be grassed. This will contribute to the biodiversity of the site, augmenting the natural wildlife habitat and enhancing the conservation area. Maintenance arrangements will be the joint responsibility of the new dwelling, and the Oak Hill House management.
- 6.7 The open character of the site will be preserved and enhanced by the proposed development. There will be no removal of trees, or harm to ancient woodland. Trees will be protected where necessary. Policy N8 can therefore be satisfied.
- 6.8 Subject to a condition (if requested in due course), details of any external landscaping works can be provided for approval prior to the commencement of that element of the project.

7.0 Standard of Residential Accommodation.

- 7.1 The proposed dwelling comfortably satisfies the needs of future occupiers, in terms of layout, room sizes, facilities, daylight, sunlight, outlook, and both open and planted amenity space, all in compliance with CPG.
- 7.2 The proposal also complies in full with new development criteria for Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Accessibility (all to satisfy the requirements of Policy H7 of the replacement UDP). Refer attached Lifetime Home Statement.

8.0 Sustainability.

- 8.1 The proposed dwelling has been designed to be a sustainable house.
- 8.2 The proposed dwelling is designed to be efficient in respect of both building fabric, and appliances. The property will be insulated to a high standard to reduce energy requirements. A' rated kitchen appliances will be used in conjunction with low energy light fittings.
- 8.3 The proposed house occupies part of an existing rear (lawned) garden. The lawned area has not

been sacrificed but is recreated by means of a flat “green” roof over the (sunken) new dwelling.

- 8.4 The ‘underground’ nature of the house enhances the contribution of thermal mass to stabilising temperature throughout the year.
- 8.5 The new dwelling unit contributes to solving housing shortage in the Borough by allowing the creation of additional accommodation within an existing residential context, all in compliance with current government housing policies.
- 8.6 With the onset of global warming, protection from the sun is of increasing significance. The provision of a partly submerged building is a progressive step towards combating the impact of the sun.
- 8.7 The incorporation of a rainwater harvesting facility will assist in the collection and recycling of rainwater on the site, for the purposes of irrigation.
- 8.8 Water efficiency will be addressed by the use of measures such as low flush toilets and reduced flow taps.
- 8.9 Facilities will be provided for recycling, collection and composting for the occupants of the new dwelling (and also for those in Oak Hill House).
- 8.10 During construction, waste will be controlled to ensure minimal amounts are taken to landfill.
- 8.11 Proposed building materials will incorporate a range of natural or traditional materials which are selected for their durability and ease of maintenance.
- 8.12 Efforts will be made to obtain materials from local sources in order to reduce transport costs and pollution.
- 8.13 The building will be designed with a high level of insulation and thermal performance to satisfy current Building Regulations.
- 8.14 The building will be designed to air tightness levels to satisfy current Building Regulations.
- 8.15 The location of the proposed property is in a highly sustainable position being close to various community facilities, shopping, schools and public transport.
- 9.0 **Waste.**
- 9.1 A dedicated area is provided for storage of refuse and recycling material. This will accommodate the existing facilities for the occupants of Oak Hill House, as well as the bins for the new dwelling. The whole will be screened by new timber fencing to enhance amenity and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 9.2 Waste management issues are addressed in the attached Construction Management Plan.
- 10.0 **Additional Comments: with Respect to Policy B1.**

- 10.1 The proposed development is designed to the highest standards.
- 10.2 The proposed development makes creative use of the natural surroundings.
- 10.3 The proposed development is sustainable.
- 10.4 The proposed development will provide a healthy, safe and attractive environment.
- 10.5 The proposed development achieves the council's intention to "... encourage outstanding contemporary architecture..." recognising that " contemporary designs play an important role in the enhancement of the built environment."
- 10.6 The proposed development gives very careful and inventive consideration to the characteristics of the site and its context, and thereby achieves a very high quality development which sensitively integrates into its surroundings.
- 10.7 The proposed development has taken due regard of and responded appropriately to the prominence of the site and its surroundings.
- 10.8 The proposed development has taken into account the relevant elements of surrounding spaces, building lines and plot sizes.
- 10.9 The design of public area / spaces has been positively addressed by forming a level, accessible and safe communal garden thereby enhancing the setting of Oak Hill House and its amenity.
- 10.10 Where new landscaping will be provided to a high standard. The development therefore satisfies the Council's intention to achieve ".... benefits obtained from the imaginative use of planting on buildings, which can include roof gardens ...".
- 10.11 The proposal also responds perfectly and creatively to the Council's intention that ".... landscaping should form an integral part of the layout of a development design should respond to the natural assets of a site and its surroundings, such as trees slopes and height differences."
- 10.12 The proposal is designed to reduce environmental impact by providing adequate facilities for the storage, recycling and disposal of waste (all in accordance with Council policy).
- 10.13 The proposal responds to the Council's desire to incorporate sustainable energy systems (Refer 'Sustainability' in the Design and Access Statement).
- 10.14 The proposed development accords with council policy to promote sensitive change.
- 10.15 No other aspect of B1 is adversely affected or relevant.

11.0 Additional Comments with Respect to Policy B3.

11.1 The proposed dwelling house is a completely detached and separate building from Oak Hill House. There are no alterations to any existing building and, there are no extensions to any existing building. Policy B3 does not apply.

12.0 Additional Comments with Respect to Policy B7.

12.1 The proposal both preserves and enhances the conservation area by:

- a) Maintaining its 'green' character by retaining its mature vegetation, and creating the 'green' roof garden.
- b) Retaining the amenity of the rear garden for the use of Oak Hill House residents, and also improving its accessibility.
- c) Maintaining and adding to the habitats for wildlife.
- d) Making "... the best use of the scarce amount of land available in Camden by increasing the amount of development on a green site". (H10).
- e) The creative use of the existing topography maximises the opportunity for potential development, thereby adding to the councils housing stock. This is a positive contribution to accommodating the anticipated 14% population rise in the Camden area by 2018 (refer Central Government Office of Statistics), and the acknowledged shortage of housing in the area.
- f) "Unearthing" (sic!) places which might not have been previously regarded as having potential for development, but can answer a housing need in the area and thereby assist the local community.
- g) Responding to the desire of the council to "... encourage the use of high quality and sustainable materials that complement and enhance the conservation area."

13.0 Addendum: Comments on Appeal Decision 07/02/11.

Refer attached document (ref. 1833/ADC).