

The Poplars, Montpelier Grove

Design and Access Statement

January 2013



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1.0 Introduction

In April 2012, Edward Carter Design was appointed by the residents of The Poplars, Montpelier Grove to develop proposals for the extension of their block of flats. The residents of the building have been working together for some time to find a creative way to increase space in their currently overcrowded flats. Their space needs have changed over the last few years for various reasons including the arrival of new babies and changing lifestyles. While extra space is urgently needed, none of the residents wishes to leave The Poplars and this part of Kentish Town, from where they can easily reach their places of work, family and friends.

We see this as an exemplary project, which demonstrates how existing blocks of flats can be radically improved in a way that is economically and environmentally sustainable. The residents of The Poplars have worked together to agree a scheme that satisfies their requirements and makes best use of available space.

The scope of the proposed development is to extend the existing building with an additional 20.4m2 gross internal area for Flat 1 on ground level and an additional 23 m2 gross internal area for Flats 2-4 on first to third floors. The entrance to the property from Montpelier Grove will be adjusted to allow for the new location of the front door to the building.



Shared garden space at the Poplars, Montpelier Grove

Edward Carter Design is an architectural design and development consultancy established in London in 2009. The practice has been involved in commercial development projects as well as residential projects for individual owners. We enjoy collaborative working with our clients and, on this project, the evening meetings we have had with the group of residents have been incredibly useful for understanding the specific requirements of the users and looking together at proposals to produce the building needed.



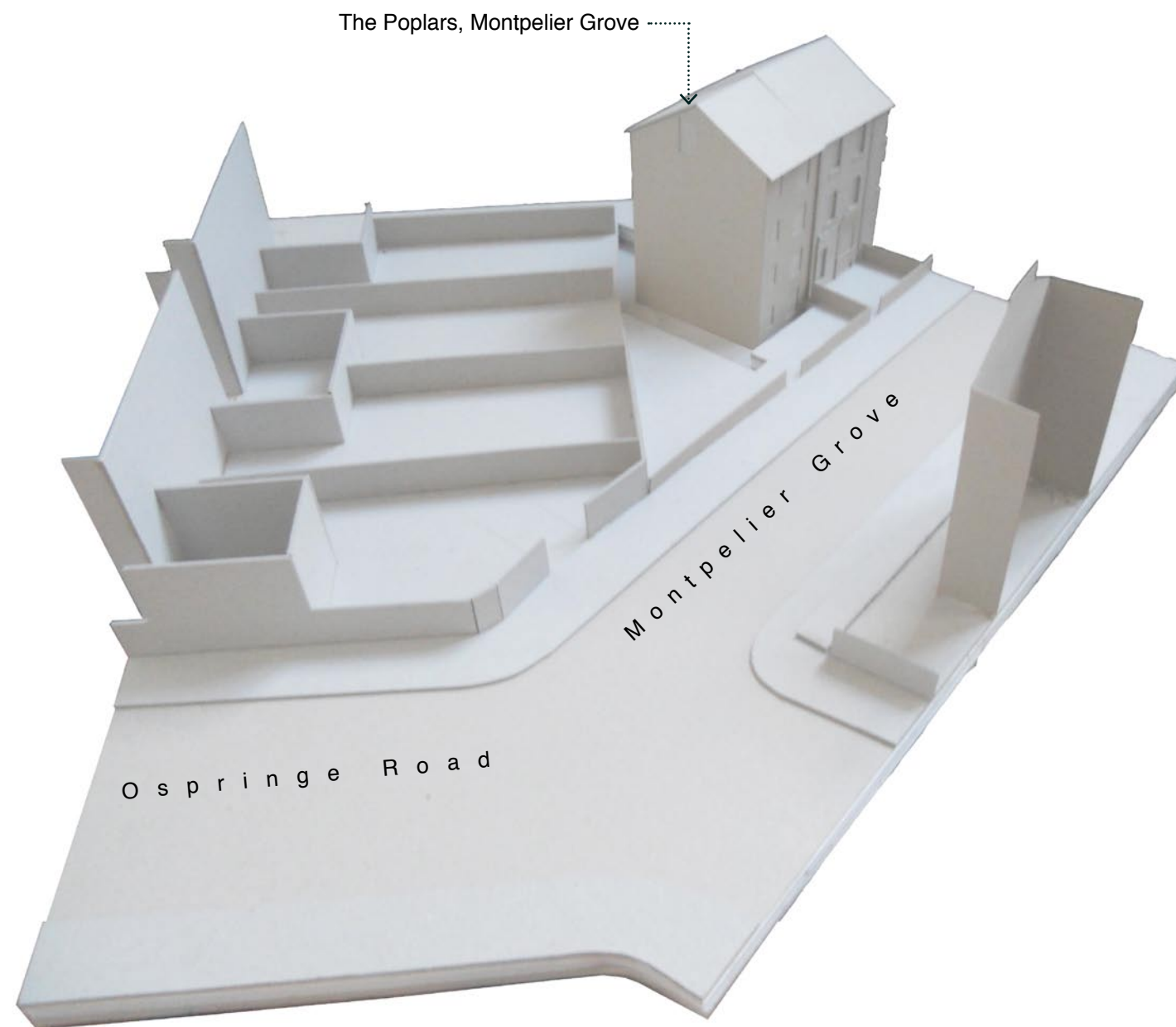
Aerial views of The Poplars at the end of Montpelier Grove terrace.

2.0 Existing building and site

The Poplars, Montpelier Grove is a four-story end of terrace building containing four flats. Planning permission for its construction was granted in 1960. The site is 111 M2 in area and the existing building contains 169 m2 of accommodation.

Few alterations have been made to the buildings since its construction, other than the conversion of the attic to provide additional accommodation to Flat 4 with new roof lights in 2006.

The entrance to the Poplars is located on Montpelier Grove. From the street, there are six steps down to access the entrance to the building, which is located below street level on the north facade of the building next to the garden.



Model of existing site showing relationship to neighbouring houses and gardens on Montpelier Grove, Ospringe Road and Brecknock Road



The Poplars building was designed to fit in as another house in the terrace, a brick building the same width as adjoining properties. It is clad in buff coloured brick and has a pitched roof consistent with its neighbours. Windows to the living rooms and kitchens of each flat are arranged in a pattern similar to the houses next door.



View of The Poplars and garden at the end of Montpelier Grove looking south east.



The north facade of The Poplars faces the garden. It was designed almost as a rear facade and small windows to bathrooms and the stair well are located here. This facade is actually very prominent on the corner of Montpelier Grove and Ospringe Road.



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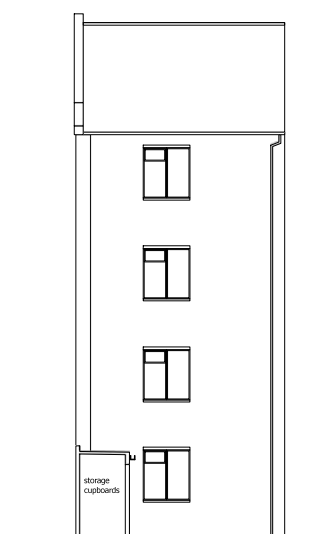
The existing bedroom windows located on the east facade facing the gardens of Brecknock Road. The original windows and doors are W20 Crittall windows with fine steel frames.



Measured survey of existing west elevation



Measured survey of existing north elevation



Measured survey of existing east elevation

3.0 Design principles and concepts behind the proposed development

3.1 Planning Policies

The proposals for this site have been informed, shaped and tested against relevant planning policies and guides (The London Plan, Camden Core Strategy and the Interim London Housing Design Guide) in order to achieve a proposal that contributes positively to the local and wider context, and offers a comfortable, safe and high quality place to live for residents.

The applicable policies of the London Plan and Camden Core Strategy are listed below together with our commentary in relation to this project.

London Plan (July 2011)

- 3.1 Ensuring equal life chances for all.
- 3.4 Optimising housing potential
- 3.5 Quality and design of housing developments
- 3.8 Housing choice
- 5.2 Minimising carbon dioxide emissions
- 5.3 Sustainable design and construction
- 5.10 Urban greening
- 5.11 Green roofs and development site environs.
- 6.9 Cycling
- 6.10 Walking
- 7.1 Building London’s neighbourhoods and communities
- 7.2 An inclusive environment
- 7.4 Local character
- 7.5 Public realm
- 7.6 Architecture
- 7.19 Biodiversity and access to nature
- 8.2 Planning obligations

London Borough of Camden Core Strategy

- CS6 Providing quality homes
- CS13 Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards.
- CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage.
- CS15 Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces and encouraging biodiversity
- CS18 Dealing with our waste and encouraging recycling

Camden Local Development Strategy

Throughout the design process we have referred to the Camden Development Policies which contribute towards delivering the Core Strategy by setting out detailed planning policies that the Council use when determining applications for planning permission in the borough. The key policies in relation to this application are:

DP5 Homes of different sizes

Policy DP5 sets out Camden’s objective to create an increased number of 3-bedroom housing units, which are designated as high priority on the ‘Dwelling Size Priorities Table’. In constructing additional bedrooms for each flat, this development would enable sub-standard units to be enlarged to be closer to current residential space standards. Increasing the size of these flats has a

positive effect on the density of child-friendly housing in the Borough and will enable an improved quality of life for residents.

DP23 Water

The amount and rate of run-off and waste water entering the combined storm water and sewer network will be limited in this development by increasing the depth of soil and planting new trees in the garden, which was formerly a hard-standing area for car parking.

DP24 Securing high quality design

The extension to the Poplars will be of the highest standard of design. It will be appropriate to its context and will take opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area and the way that it is used by residents.

The development is designed not to undermine the existing uniformity of the street and respects existing patterns of development. The extensions will be subordinate to the original building in terms of scale and situation. The new extension is set back from the building line on Montpelier Grove and below the existing eaves line. It is clad in a different material to the existing building and is designed to make clear the historic legibility of the street. The Poplars site is unique on Montpelier Grove, formed by the geometry of the junction at Ospringle Road - it is at the end of the terrace so has different size and shape to other plots on the street.

DP25 Conserving Camden’s heritage

The site of The Poplars is not located in a conservation area but we have designed the building in a way that is sensitive to the beautiful Victorian houses in the area. For the purposes of making this application, we have proposed a particular type of timber cladding that we think works well, in terms of tone, next to the old London stock bricks of the surrounding buildings. We would also be happy to have a dialogue with London Borough of Camden Planning about other materials that might be acceptable to the Council in this context.

DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours.

The Poplars residents have begun consulting with their neighbours to let them know what the proposal looks like and why they feel it is necessary to extend their property. We are proposing to improve the appearance of The Poplars building by making a good north facing elevation, which is a prominent facade on to the corner with Ospringle Road.

In considering construction systems for the new development, we are proposing to use a pre-fabricated solid timber panel system. This is an appropriate construction approach for this project because it is environmentally sustainable and it will allow for a shorter construction period, thereby limiting any nuisance to surrounding properties. Panel units would be constructed off site which would mean that less space for storage of materials during construction would be required and a smaller site compound.

The design of the proposed extension means that it will be possible for occupiers to have access to their flats during construction i.e. the existing staircase access will be kept in place until the new stairs has been completed.

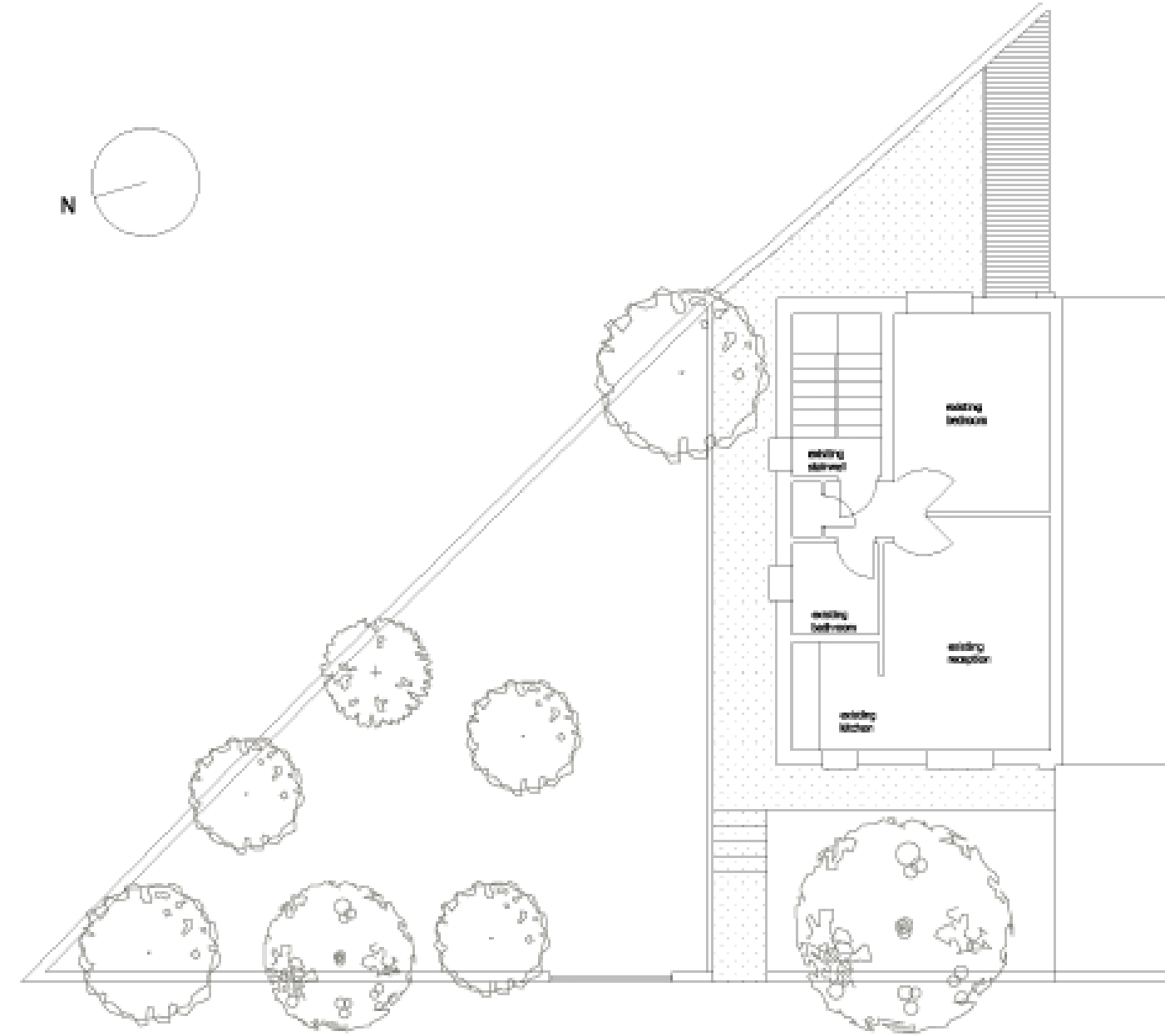
4.0 Intended use of the development

The building will continue in residential use - the extension will improve living and access arrangements. The flats are currently overcrowded - each of the apartments currently accommodates one bedroom, a kitchen, living room, bathroom and boiler room cupboard. Refer to existing plan drawings included as part of this submission for details.

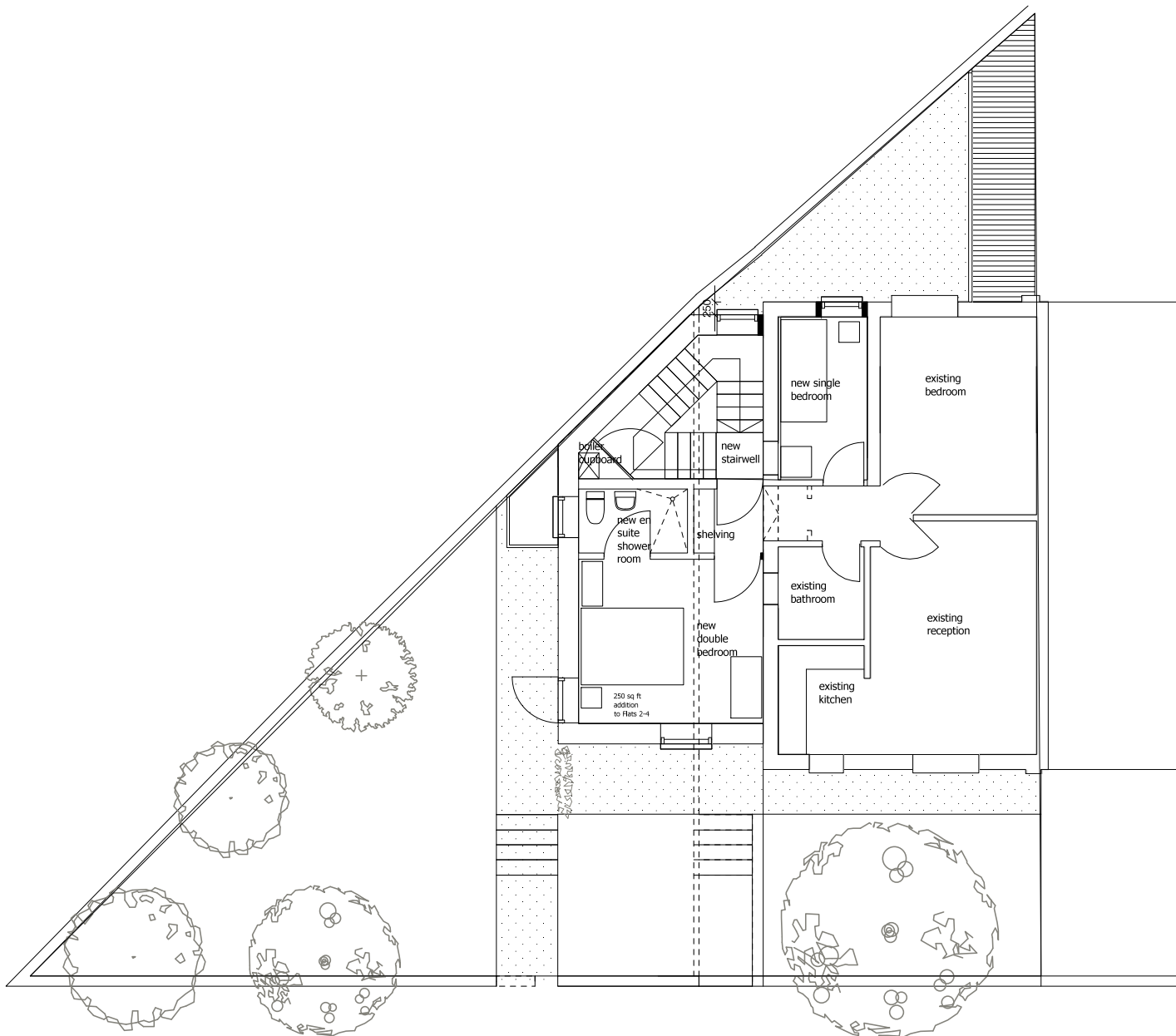
The drawings below illustrate the current use of the building and how this can be improved by extending. We propose to increase the size of each of the four flats in the building by adding an additional bedroom and re-using the stair core so that it can be used as a child's bedroom or study room.



The existing staircase is narrow and makes accessing the flats difficult, particularly for families who must carry prams up and down the stairs.



Typical existing floor plan. At 36 m2, the area of each flat is significantly below current London Plan / London Housing design guide space standards.



Typical proposed new floor plan. There will be an improved stair case arrangement that is spatially more generous and that has risers that are in accordance with Lifetime Homes standards. The new double bedroom's size is in line with London Plan / London Housing Design guide. Making more space in each flat increases its potential flexibility. Residents can have different arrangements of furniture and uses to suit their individual requirements i.e. the existing bedroom could be used as an extension of the living area the flats was to be occupied by a family of three.

6.0 Layout of the proposed development

Daylight and avoidance of overlooking

We have shaped the proposed extension so that it would not have an adverse impact on day lighting to neighbouring properties. Should a detailed report on adequacy of daylight and sunlight levels to neighbouring properties be required, we would request that this is be made a condition of planning permission.

The rooms of the proposed new extension are laid out to maximise sunlight to habitable rooms. This arrangement also allows for the avoidance of any potential overlooking problems. New bedrooms are oriented towards the street facing the blind side elevation of No. 1 Ospringe Road. Windows at the rear of The Poplars will be a minimum of 18m from neighbouring properties in line with requirements of 'Camden Planning Guidance 6' for windows of habitable rooms that face each other.

The privacy of both new and existing dwelling spaces will be protected using obscure glass windows where necessary.



Existing garden at The Poplars. The low brick wall separates the entrance from the garden. This situation will be improved by the new entrance arrangement, making the garden more accessible.

7.0 Landscaping of shared spaces of the development

In line with the proposed contextually sensitive attitude to the design of the extension, a number of landscape and planting improvements are proposed as part of this scheme. There is currently a brick wall between the entrance to the Poplars and the garden area. We are proposing to make the garden more accessible as it will be level with the entrance rather than having to climb over the wall as present. A new more accessible bin store is also included as part of improvements to the garden.

New planting of Robinia pseudo Frisia Acacia tree on the boundary with Montpelier Grove to help add to the quiet, domestic nature of these streets. This species has pale green foliage that is light reflective and suitable next to the windows of the extension.



Robinia Pseudo Acacia foliage, suitable for domestic garden situations

8.0 Appearance and scale of the proposed development

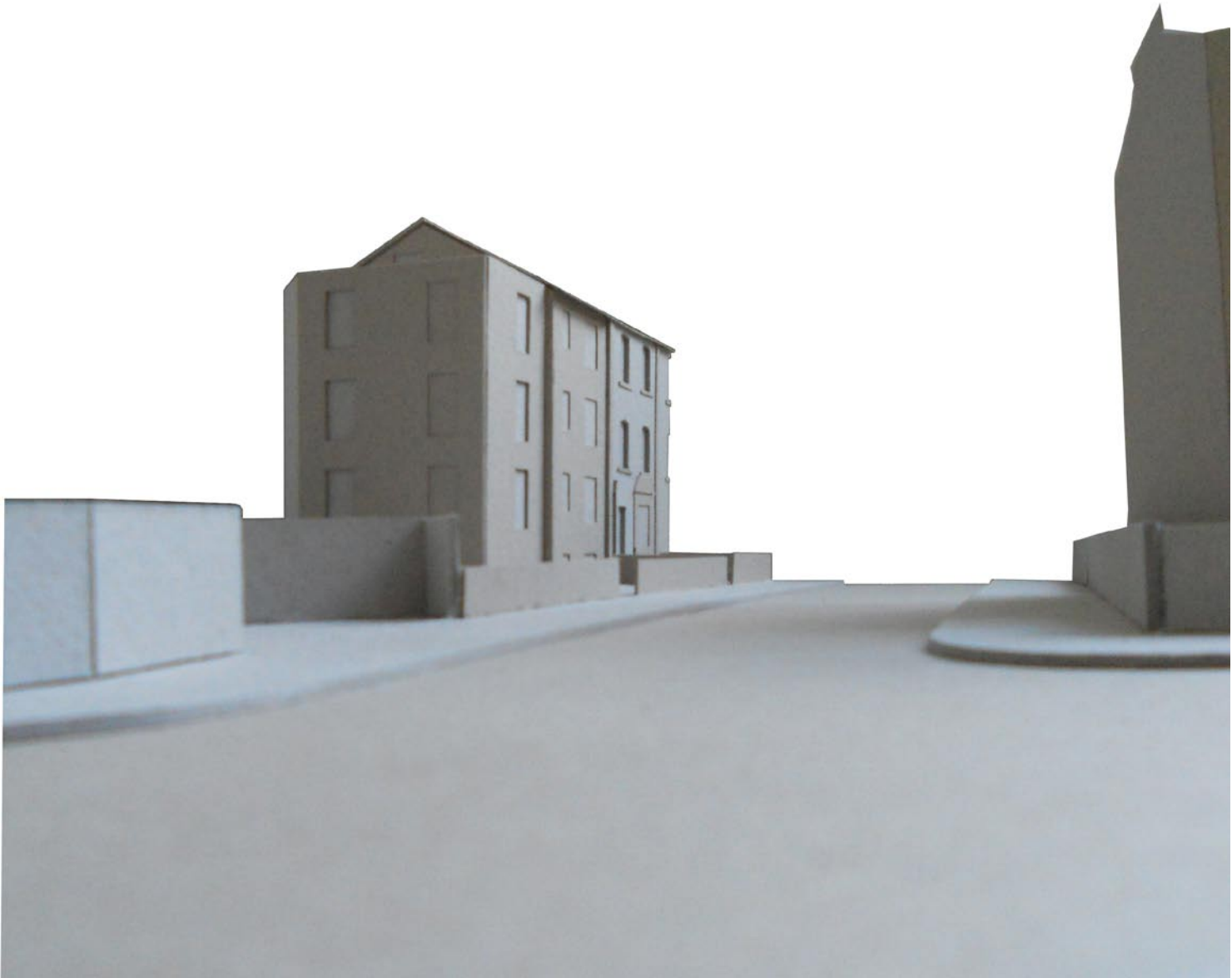
General arrangement of facades:

The three facades of the proposed extension are designed to highlight the site’s location between Montpellier Grove and Ospringe Road, as well as contributing to the setting of the shared garden.

The west facade is understood as a ‘street facade’ and picks up on the rhythm of windows in the Victorian terraced houses. This facade is clad with treated timber and there are big frameless fixed windows fixed flush to the facade at first floor to third floor. At ground floor there are openable ‘french’ doors with painted fine metal frames, a contemporary equivalent of the original Crittall windows of the existing Poplars buildings. These doors are recessed behind the plane of the external cladding. The new double doors will have little impact on the existing street elevation since they are below ground level and concealed behind existing trees and shrubs but will allow the occupants of Flat 1 to have a more direct relationship and sense of ownership over the front garden on to the street.

The north facade faces the garden. Its shape follows the edges of the site boundary. There are windows to the new bathrooms and a timber openable panels to ventilate the new bedrooms from first to third floor. The glass in the bathroom windows will be translucent so there will be no increase in overlooking of neighbouring properties. The timber ventilation panels are articulated in a similar way to the blind windows across the street, on the flank wall of No. 1 Ospringe Road. The timber openable panels have the same proportion as the fixed windows on the west elevation. At ground floor, the main entrance to the building has a painted metal door and is signified by a concrete canopy supported by two painted fine metal columns. This specific treatment of openings at ground floor gives a sense of it being the base of the building, just as the ground floor is signified through use of different materials in the Victorian houses next door.

The east facade has windows to new single bedroom and existing double bedroom. Access to the storage sheds at the rear will be maintained through the entrance hall.



View of model showing north and west facades of proposed new extension. The viewpoint is from outside No. 2-4 Ospringe Road.



Proposed west elevation



Proposed north elevation



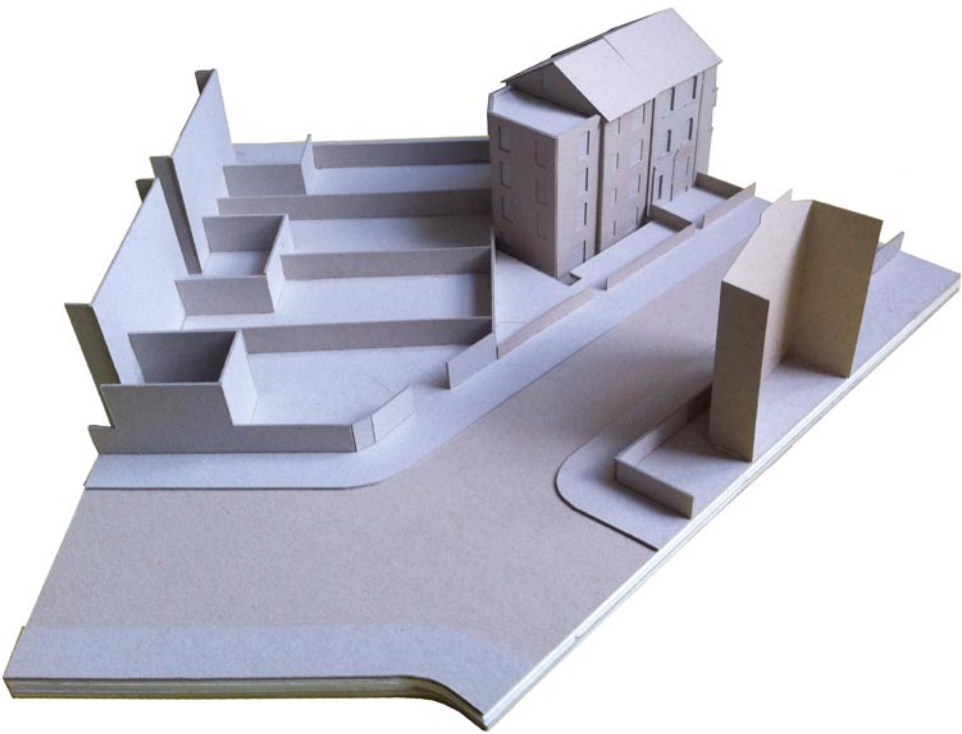
Proposed east elevation

Precedents - timber extensions:

We have looked at a number of other projects to look at cladding materials and architectural languages that are suitable in the context of Victorian London brick houses. We would also be happy to have a dialogue with London Borough of Camden Planning about other materials that might be acceptable to the Council in this context. We believe that this type of cladding material would be suitable because of its contrast to the modern brick of the existing Poplars building.

Influence of the local context:

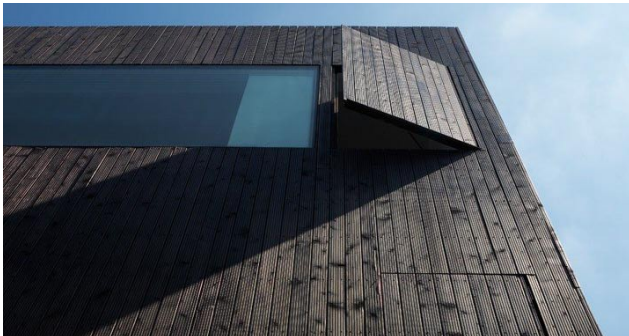
The appearance of the new extension is designed to be appropriate in this context. We have looked carefully at the surrounding buildings and landscapes and made study models to test proposals for this site. The proposed elevations pick up on details of nearby buildings including blind windows on gable facades.



Throughout the design process, proposals have been developed in the context of surrounding buildings and tested through models.



End of terrace house on the corner of Dunollie Road and Montpelier Grove. This language of blind windows at the end of a terrace is picked up on the proposed north facade.



Timber extension by David Adjaye in De Beauvoir town, London



Timber house by Bearth and Deplazes in Sevegin, Switzerland

