

Design and Access Statement

29 Aberdare Gardens London NW6 3AJ

Planning application for the creation of basement accommodation and the construction of an underground swimming pool. The erection of a home office within the rear garden area of the property.

Introduction

29 Aberdare Gardens is an existing semi detached dwelling house situated within the South Hampstead area (*Appendix 1- Drawing IS.729/A1*). Aberdare Gardens is a residential street and is served by Finchley Road, West Hampstead and Swiss Cottage underground stations. The property is located within the Swiss Cottage conservation area.

The existing internal accommodation is arranged into two self contained flats. The planning permission applicant is the sole owner of the property and occupies the ground floor flat. The first floor flat is tenanted on a short term lease arrangement. The proposed works are applicable to the ground floor flat and are additional to a previous planning application for the erection of a glass conservatory for which planning permission has already been granted. This planning application proposal is for the creation of basement accommodation and the construction of a swimming pool and gymnasium area beneath the lawn within the rear garden area as well as the construction of a summer house at the end of the rear garden which will also be utilised as a home office. Externally this planning application incorporates the creation of a light well to the rear which in part will provide natural daylight to the basement accommodation as well as creating a means of escape. A smaller light well will be constructed to the front as part of the basement dig out.

The proposals do not change the use of the property and are not detrimental to the existing area use designation. The existing housing stock of the area will be affected.

Layout

The existing ground floor accommodation is as shown on *Appendix 2 (Drawing IS.729/A2)*. The proposals are to utilise areas 9 and 11 (lobby and Bedroom 3) as a new bedroom and reduced width lobby. Area 10 (Lounge) will become a new bathroom and store with associated corridor. The accommodation to the existing rear extension (areas 12, 13 and 14) will become a new lounge. The remainder of the accommodation where disturbed by the basement formation works will be reinstated to its current use. The new basement accommodation and swimming pool general arrangement will be as shown on drawing *IS.729/A4 (Appendix 4)*. The proposals will create a four bedroom property more in-keeping with family

occupation. The home office will be sited as shown on *Drawing IS.729/A4 (Appendix 4)*. Careful consideration has been given to the overall massing and arrangement of the rear light well, summer house and associated hard landscaping so as not to create an imbalance between hard and soft landscaped areas. Note has been made of adjoining owners rear garden areas so as not to create a proposal which detrimentally affects visual aspects and general amenity within the rear garden areas of properties to the side and to the rear of 29 Aberdare Gardens. Consequently, the proposals provide for a subterranean swimming pool beneath the rear garden, which will be laid to lawn with peripheral planting beds, as is presently the case. The neighbourhood visual density repercussions as a result of these proposals are considered to be unaffected.

The design gives due consideration to the privacy and current levels of amenity of neighbouring properties and occupiers. The proposals do not include new windows facing existing immediate adjoining property fenestrations. In addressing the mass of the new summer house the design maintains the extent of new construction to an absolute minimum but sufficient to provide the amount of internal accommodation required and expected within proposals of this kind. The external appearance of the proposals is not considered to be visually overpowering and will be in balance with the overall dimensions of the rear garden area. A similar structure already exists at the rear of the garden to 31 Aberdare Gardens.

Landscaping

Existing landscaping comprises flower and shrubbery beds to both party fence lines with 27 and 31 Aberdare gardens. There is no existing planting area along the rear boundary which will allow the formation of the concrete slab for the summer house and a decking area to the West side. The areas laid to lawn will be maintained and not reduced so as to keep the current balance between hard and soft landscaped areas. The proposals do require the partial removal of the varying shrubbery adjacent to the party fence with 31 Aberdare Gardens nearest the new conservatory and associated patio area. The removal will be limited to the extent of the new building work and will be replaced with stand-alone planters to replace in part the shrubbery that will be removed. In so doing a similar visual aspect from the rear of the property will be maintained. The patio area within this location will be softened by the use of hardwood decking to provide a calm visual aspect as opposed to the use of concrete paving. The rear garden area has trees along the party fence lines with 27 and 31 Aberdare Gardens. Some are within the curtilage of 29 Aberdare Gardens and some are within the boundary lines of the adjacent properties with overhanging branches. No trees will be disturbed as part of these proposals, nor any pruning undertaken.



Rear Garden: East Party Fence Boundary



Rear Garden: West Party Fence Boundary

Visual Impact and Appearance

The proposals reflect the intention to improve the level of amenity to the property without visual impairment when viewed from the surrounding environment. The summer house flat roof profile will keep the overall height of the building to an absolute minimum and allow the greater majority of the mass of the building to be shielded within the overall height of the surrounding boundary fencing and walling and not be overpowering when viewed from neighbouring property view ports. As already stated, a similar construction is present within the rear garden of 31 Aberdare Gardens.

Following design consultation with the Planning Department and the residents of 31 Aberdare Gardens, the proposals have been prepared in order to address the visual impact of the scheme in terms of neighbouring properties and the subject property's location within a conservation area. It is understood that the main criteria governing basement formation approval is for basements to be as unobtrusive as possible. In this respect it has been acknowledged that the size of light wells providing natural light provisions has to be kept to an absolute minimum in order to preserve the unobtrusiveness of the building work when viewed from ground level. We have been informed that light well size proposals will be considered based on natural illumination to suit the specific use of the space and providing adequate means of escape from the building. The space within the basement is to be used as a large kitchen dining area. In assessing the natural light needs of this area reference has been made to the Daylighting and Window Design Guide 1999 as published by the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE). The primary criterion to be satisfied has been the provision of enough natural daylight to prevent the use of electric lighting during daylight hours. To determine the depth of the light well required to satisfy this criteria, the No-Sky Line principle has been adopted. This has been illustrated on drawing *IS.729/A5a (Appendix 5a)*. From the working plane height (kitchen unit worktop level) at the rear of the accommodation, the extending line passing outwards at window head height determines the point at which the light well should be positioned externally at ground level. From interpolation, this is shown to be 2500mm from the rear wall of the basement accommodation. With the area of glazing and the proposed depth of the light well opening at ground level, the need for supplementary electric light will be significantly reduced thereby improving the 'Green' credentials of the proposals.

The edge of the support slab to the swimming pool complex beneath the rear garden is positioned on the 'No Skyline' intersection. This cantilevers over the light well footprint at basement level and reduces the visual impact at ground level. The visual size of the unobstructed light well opening at ground level has been further reduced by incorporating a walkway immediately adjacent to the rear extension and rear wall of the conservatory. The unimpaired opening and visually exposed width of light well as seen from ground level will therefore be 1200mm. As the works are being carried out in the rear garden area of the property, the impact of the works within the conservation area are also significantly reduced as it will not be seen by the general public or passers-by. The proposals will also appear visually very limited from within

the rear garden area and when viewed from adjacent properties due to the walkway closure provisions to be incorporated at ground level.

Access Considerations

Access to the property will be maintained as existing. There will be no changes to the current side access to the rear garden. None of the proposals will be visible from the front of the property.

Disability Considerations

The requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) have been considered. The existing dimensions and layout of the property with respect to the side access will allow restricted disabled access to the rear garden. These existing conditions cannot be improved and will remain unchanged. There will be no paving provisions across the soft landscaped parts of the rear garden as access to the new summer house. It is considered that it would be difficult and unviable to introduce DDA design compliance measures due to the nature of the original construction and existing layout of the property. Notwithstanding this, ambulant disabled access will remain uncompromised.

Summary

The proposals provide for improved levels of accommodation for people of all ages and within an existing and established residential area very close to shopping facilities and the transport infrastructure. The creation of these additional amenities will not be detrimental to the existing environment, which will continue to be sustained by the proposals.

Integrated Solutions

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