

2_{C&D} Belsize Park Gardens Design and Access Statement



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Zuber

INTERIORS URBAN DESIGN ARCHITECTURE

49 Kingsway Place
Sans walk,
London EC1R 0LU

t. +44 (0) 20 7251 9439
m. +44 (0) 7800 528 619
e. luke@zuberarchitecture.

1.0 Introduction

This Design & Access Report has been prepared in support of the application for planning consent to infill the existing courtyard with a single storey extension for each of the bungalow houses and creating a new central party wall at 2C & 2D Belsize Park Gardens.

The purpose of the proposal is to resolve the current privacy conflict between the two dwellings, improve the current living conditions and improve the existing building fabric & thermal performance.



Aerial Photograph

2.0 Site & Context

Belsize Park Gardens is lined by grand semi-detached neoclassical style houses within the conservation area of Belsize park.

Site number 2C&D was formerly the rear garden of the adjacent property 'Avenue House'. The rear garden was purchased from the Church of England in 1978 by Robin Webster. The current steel framed bungalows with basements were completed in 1981.

The bungalows are largely hidden from street view by a large masonry wall with an average height of over 1800mm. The property is further screened by four prominent mature trees running along the front boundary.



Street Front Photograph

3.0 Existing Houses

General:

The site accommodates two steel framed bungalow houses with partial basements centred around a shared courtyard. The houses share the same roof and are organised on an 1800mm by 1800mm structural grid comprising 60mm x 60mm steel supporting columns and stiffened by an exposed 110mm deep structural deck roof. The internal layouts are flexible and can be easily altered by moving internal partitions within the 1800mm grid confines to create larger or smaller rooms. The houses presently accommodate 4 bedrooms, two bathrooms, a large open dining, living and kitchen area with a utilities and storage area downstairs. The houses can either be entered from the front or via the shared court-yard.

Materials:

The houses are flanked by concrete block walls on the side boundaries. The side walls entering the shared courtyard and rear storage sheds are clad with metal corrugated sheeting. The remainder of the elevations are clad in full height glass windows and sliding doors to the front, rear and court-yard elevations. The flat roof is clad in felt with a double glazed roof light fixed to a light aluminium frame.

Condition:

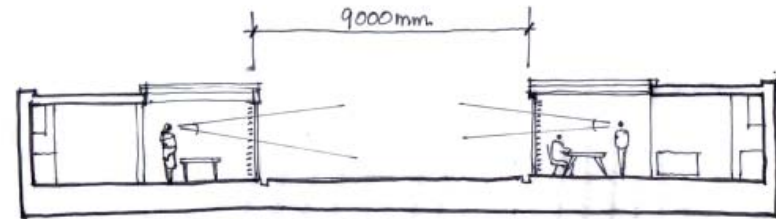
The current condition of the roof is poor with several leaks causing water damage and surface rusting to steel sections. The low performance glazed sliding doors perform badly both in thermal performance and mechanically their ability to slide freely. The external metal clad walls have a construction depth of only 90mm and subsequently also have a very poor thermal performance.

Alterations:

Due to the deterioration and low thermal performance of the roof, additional insulation, a new felt surface and subsequently a substantial increase in fascia depth to the perimeter of the houses were added in the late 90's. The felt is now in need of replacement.

Privacy - Layout:

The two houses are "C" shaped in plan and face in towards each other around the shared courtyard. The courtyard measures 9m by 6.8m in plan. The fully glazed elevations of the open dining and kitchen areas offer no privacy between the two houses. The current lack of privacy between the two houses has resulted in the windows being permanently screened to avoid overlooking.



Court Yard Section

4.0 Design Concept

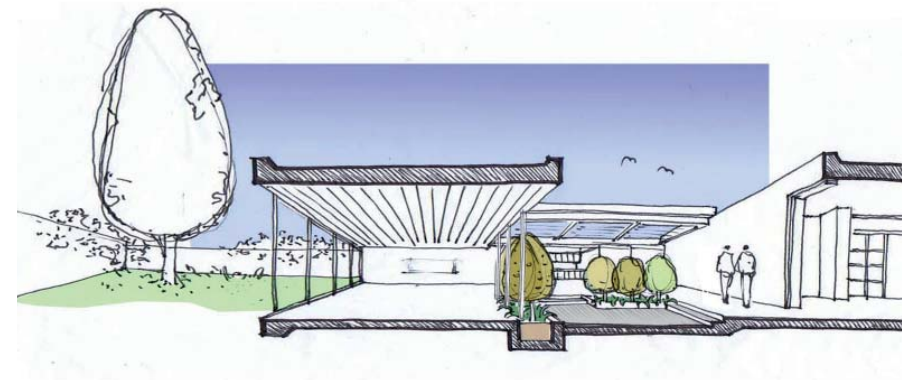
The brief requirement is to overcome the privacy issues between the two houses, improve the quality and thermal performance of the external skin and finally respect and acknowledge the merits of the existing structure and design.

A simple and crude solution to partially resolving the privacy issue would be to construct a fence through the centre of the courtyard between the two houses. However, it is considered such a solution would deteriorate the spacial quality of the court yard without affording the occupants complete privacy.

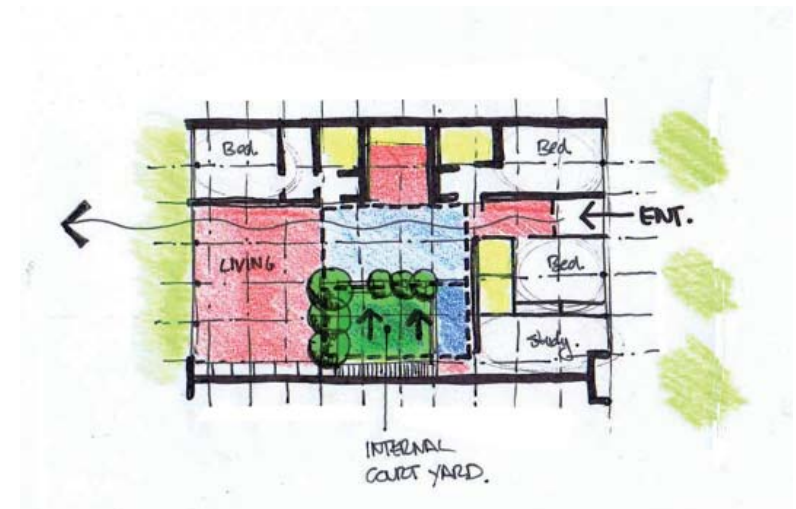
The proposed solution is to combine each half of the courtyard with the adjacent kitchen and dining areas and create a new party wall between the two properties. Each enclosed courtyard would be serviced by a large retractable glass roof allowing the space to be enjoyed in all seasons.

The effect of joining half the courtyard with the dining/kitchen has overcome the problem of creating an inferior reduced external courtyard. The new party wall dividing the two houses offers the occupants complete privacy from one another whilst also improving the thermal performance of the houses.

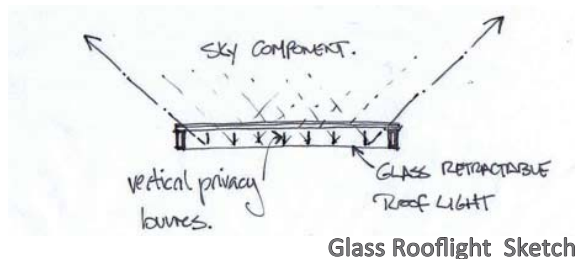
The location of the new flexible internal courtyard is positioned in the same location as the existing court yard. It pays homage to the original design intent by facilitating flexible rooms which can be roofed or open to the sky.



Concept Sketch



Plan Sketch



Glass Rooflight Sketch

5.0 Area Summary

	GEFA m2	GIFA m2
Existing Ground Floor	195.6	187
Existing Basement	43	36.4
Total Existing Area	238.6	223.4
Proposed Infill	41	41
Total Area	279.6	264.4
Amenity Area	N/A	211

6.0 Use

The site is occupied by two residential bungalows with basements. There is no change of use proposed.

7.0 Layout

Very little change to the existing layout is proposed. The living and master bedroom will remain to the rear exploiting the garden access. The two existing entrances for each house will be limited to a single dedicated entrance to the front of the house. Secondary bedrooms will remain to the front of the house and the basement will continue to accommodate the utilities.

The proposed internal court yard will be accessed from the living/dining area. During reasonable weather conditions throughout the year the room can operate as an open courtyard via the proposed retractable glass roof light.

8.0 Scale

Other than a slight increase in internal floor area there is no change of scale to the bungalow structures.

9.0 Appearance

It should be noted that the house elevations themselves cannot be viewed from the street. Nonetheless, the design of the proposal has been developed to have a minimal change of appearance to the existing bungalow. The inclusion of a central party wall will fall short of the front elevation leaving a recessed elevation clad in the same metal corrugated cladding as existing.

The enclosure of the courtyard will have a light minimal touch ensuring that the appearance of the court-yard remains similar to the existing condition. It is proposed that a retractable steel-framed, high performance, double glazed, glass roof light will slide across and rest above the existing fixed roof light in its opened position. The existing fixed roof light will be lowered slightly to accommodate the retractable roof light above.

The existing felt roof and glass sliding doors are in a dilapidated condition. It is proposed that the roof membrane is replaced with a dark grey durable single ply membrane and the sliding glass doors be replaced with a similar profile and improved glazing specification.

10.0 Access

The proposal does not effect the existing pedestrian and vehicular cross over.

11.0 Sustainability & the Environment

The existing late 70's and early 80's structure has minimal insulation throughout. Although the roof was improved in late 90's with the installation of additional insulation above the existing roof level. The proposed new central party wall and high performance roof lights together with the upgrading of the existing glass specification throughout will significantly improve on the thermal performance of the house.

The total amount of glass envelope will be reduced by 9.6m² for each house further improving thermal efficiencies. The introduction of a central party wall will create a 'warm' wall reducing the overall amount of external envelope by 40m² for each house.

The ability to retract or partially retract the glass roof over the internal court-yard provides a simple method of regulating temperature and ventilation requirements.

The upgrading to the existing fabric and the new works will exceed part L of the building codes.