

6 Fairhazel Gardens NW6 3SH: Design and Access Statement.

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Roof and Ground level extensions to existing 3 bed-roomed detached-house, to form 5 bed-roomed family-house, with existing access and parking maintained.



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Overview:

This planning application is to be read in conjunction with a parallel and similar planning application for a near-matching property at 4 Fairhazel Gardens. The two home-owning applicants are seeking to refurbish their individual properties, including roof level additions and kitchen extensions.

They have adopted to do this jointly to ensure continuity of architectural expression and to maintain continuity of the townscape.

The Applicant/Owner

The applicant for this planning application Mr Edward De Mesquita has owned and lived at this property for seventeen years.

Mr De Mesquita has long held the view that the house appears unfinished when viewed in the context of other contemporary houses in the area, which share a common architectural language, but have the addition of a mansard roof with additional bedrooms.

Having considered the prospect of adding a mansard roof, the applicant concluded it would only be likely to be acceptable if the “Paired” house at 4 Fairhazel Gardens, were to be extended, in the same manner, and at the same time.

He discussed his proposal with the adjoining owner Mr Michael Lynn, and the current planning strategy emerged.

Pre-Application Consultation:

Having agreed a joint strategy for redevelopment of their homes, the two applicants met with London Borough of Camden’s Planning Department to consult them at pre-application stage. They met with Officer Amy Spardle in the summer of 2012, and have since contacted Camden to confirm the date and advice given. Camden have replied that records of meetings, and opinions offered are not routinely kept.

They were advised the Planning Department would be minded to support their application, subject to design and material issues meeting with the Council’s approval. A view was also put forward that the ground floor extensions may not need planning approval due to the householder’s “Permitted Development Rights”. Photographs of the existing houses were presented, together with photographs of the similar houses nearby with mansard roofs.

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THE PLANNING ISSUE

The application has an established residential use as a detached house, with associated garage, and therefore the planning issue is the scale of the development and the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

THE PLANNING ISSUE: THE EFFECT OF THE PROPOSAL ON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA

This house together with the associated house at no. 4 Fairhazel Gardens, on the opposite corner of Fairfax Place, were built in the early 1960's as part of a more widespread development of the area.

Context: Typology

The houses are typical of the period, yet they are only two storeys high with a flat roof concealed by a parapet wall, whereas the majority of similar houses in the area, have a similar lower two floors, but with the addition of a mansard roof.

Context: Materials and Finishes

External materials are load-bearing brick walls with timber windows. An enclosing garden wall is formed from matching brickwork.

The local properties with a second floor mansard roof have similar brickwork and window openings however they also have tiled roofs with a concealed flat roof set behind an implied ridge line. Projecting dormer windows are clad in copper cladding which has oxidised over time.



6 Fairhazel Gardens South Elevation as existing

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Parking

Off-road parking is available for both houses in adjacent garages which are indicated on the site location plan. Additional parking is deemed unnecessary and undesirable.

Development Proposal

The proposal makes provision for two 2 additional bedrooms within the roof space, each with en-suite bath or shower-rooms.

To allow for extended family living, within the newly formed five bedroom homes, the kitchens are proposed to be extended to form appropriately sized cooking and dining spaces.

Existing rear patio gardens are to be re-landscaped to provide modest outside patio gardens linked to the living-dining spaces with increased door and window openings to maximise light into the interiors.

The use of photovoltaics [PVs] on the roofs of the development has been considered and a PV array could be installed on the rear elevation of the houses where the aspect is not beneficial but less visually intrusive. As a consequence of a largely North-facing orientation the use has been discounted.

Context

The site lies within an established residential area with excellent local facilities suited to family living within the city. Swiss Cottage underground station is less than five minutes walk away, thereby reducing the dependency upon car ownership. The townscape is varied and character-full with no predominant style or typology thus making the streetscape rich and capable of accommodating the proposed change, which will seek to enhance the townscape.

Use

It is proposed to maintain the existing residential development, redeveloping the typical 3 bedroom, 1 bathroom houses which are in plentiful supply locally' Into 5 bedroom, 3 bathroom houses which provide greater flexibility for extended family living.

Amount of development

The erection of a roof extension and kitchen extension is consistent with London Borough of Camden's Planning Policy. Car parking, at one space per residential unit, is in accordance with the parking standards appropriate for an accessible urban site.

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Site design layout

The proposed changes are modest in scale, with the ground floor rear extension largely un-noticeable from the street, and the second floor mansard roof extension set back behind an existing parapet wall approximately 1100mm, thereby rendering the changes at roof level similarly unnoticeable at pavement level outside the home and only partly visible from the pavement on the opposite side of the street.

Internal Design and Layout.

The existing homes are modest in size and were conceived at a time when houses together with families were contracting in size. Kitchens were largely conceived as functional rather than as today, recreational, and dining was largely separated from the activity of food preparation.

Similarly bedrooms were smaller than their historical antecedents and insufficient thought was given to the storage of clothes, possessions and domestic artefacts.

This design proposal is seeking to address some of the short-comings of the original house, and bring it in line with current lifestyle demands.

The kitchen is increased in size, and connections to the dining and living spaces are enhanced to maximise family life and sociability. Similarly the kitchen and dining spaces are brought closer to the garden to enjoy a year-round relationship with the outside world.

The master-bedroom on the top floor enjoys greater light and ventilation than its predecessor on the first floor and enjoys the benefit of an en-suite bathroom, an amenity which was uncommon when the house was first conceived but is now commonplace.

Also on the second floor, adjacent the master-bedroom, it is proposed to have a smaller nursery room to give infants or toddlers the security of being close to their parents bedroom. Whilst this facility is not essential to the applicant, he is wisely taking the view it may be of value to his extended family or subsequent occupiers. This room also has the benefit of an en-suite shower room.

Scale

The scale, or apparent size, of the two storey detached house is proposed to be extended approx 1.4 metre above the level of the existing 1.1 metre high enclosing parapet wall. The new development is modest in scale, sympathetic with local precedents and capable of enriching the local townscape.

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Proportions

The height to width ratio of the existing house is unusual for London. Typically London townhouses are narrow in width and taller than they are wide. This existing house has an almost cube shape which will be enhanced by the addition of an extra floor making the house more in keeping with the local typology.

Appearance

The building will be finished in roofing tiles to match the local precedents with extended brick gable walls in matching brickwork. The projecting dormer windows will be clad in zinc cladding to compliment the local precedent of copper clad dormers. Doors are introduced at roof level set-back behind the parapet wall to maximise light into the master bedroom and increase the sense of space in what are otherwise modestly sized bedrooms.

Landscaping

This is an urban site where hard landscape predominates and the existing patio garden is small, enclosed, and enjoys little direct sunlight.

The design proposes to enhance the existing landscaping of the private rear patio garden and increase the size of window openings onto the patio, maximising light to the interior and allowing valuable views out onto a green space.

Amenity

The existing patio garden to the rear of the property is largely North-facing and overshadowed to a degree on the West. As a consequence the garden is in shadow for most of the day and receives little direct sunlight. Whilst the patio provides some useful amenity space for the occupants, it fails to provide access to sunlight with the associated health and well-being benefits. To address this we are proposing a modest roof terrace at the front of the property which is largely South-facing. This will provide a small amenity space sufficiently large to accommodate two small chairs and a coffee table, if required, thus allowing the occupants to take a coffee or read the newspaper to enjoy the benefit of access to sunlight and views to the South. The roof terrace is largely hidden from the street behind an 1100mm high existing parapet wall and therefore will not be noticeable from the street. The terrace will overlook the street and should not present any issues regarding privacy and over-looking.

Access

This is a highly accessible urban location served by regular bus routes and the London Underground. The house is within walking distance of the town centre of Swiss Cottage with its variety of retail and cultural opportunities.

ENERGY / WATER CONSERVATION AND DRAINAGE STATEMENT

Orientation

All living rooms have a southerly aspect so as to minimise energy usage for heating and lighting and maximise passive solar gain. The garden sitting out areas to the houses are not partially shadowed in the afternoon and early evening but not sufficient to maximise their potential use as “outdoor rooms”.

Insulation

The properties are designed to incorporate high levels of insulation within the new ground floors slabs (insulation batts under the slab as a heat store), walls (insulated cavities) and the roof-space (insulation batts between the timbers). Windows will be double glazed units with solar reflective glass.

Energy consumption

Thermostatic controls to the latest high efficiency gas central heating systems will minimise energy use in conjunction with passive solar gain from a beneficial orientation of the buildings. Roof mounted PVs could be installed on the flat roof to each house to maximise their beneficial orientation as a means of reducing domestic electricity demands from the grid.

Pre-installed electrical appliances will be specified to achieve A+ rating. Lighting will be low energy units or LEDs. PIR detectors will be installed to any communal external lighting and fitted with cowls to minimise spillage.

A fast broadband connection is available by fibre optic cable to facilitate working from home (and to avoid the use of individual satellite dishes).

Potable water conservation and surface water discharge

House roof water will be piped to soakaways with diverters to allow the harvesting of rainwater for gardening and outdoor cleaning. The roof water from the rear of the houses will feed a combined sustainable drainage system.

Taps will incorporate spray options and toilets will be dual flush in order to minimise potable water usage. Pre-installed washing machines and dishwashers will be selected for their low water consumption.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposal is modest, well-mannered, and consistent with the established mixed residential character of the local area. The design reflects the typology of Swiss Cottage's housing stock from this period. The design provides additional amenities for the house-owner, and provides additional housing stock which can cater for extended family living - a contemporary need caused by housing shortages, and the lack of affordable homes.

The proposed construction technology to be employed will improve the carbon foot-print of the house, and sustainable materials and technologies will be introduced to minimise energy use.

The selected external finish materials will blend in well with the appearance of this local residential area. The house and it's "paired" house at no. 4 Fairhazel Gardens, if approved will enrich and enhance the townscape.

Finally the applicants were encouraged to bring forward their application during pre-application consultations with Camden Planning Department, and were advised the application was compatible with local and national planning policy, and that the Council would be minded to support the application.

We will be pleased to deal with any points arising from this submission.

Yours sincerely,

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