

**34 FITZROY ROAD
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT
AUGUST 2012**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application is for a change to the rear elevation of the mansard roof extensions at 34 Fitzroy Road which has recently been completed pursuant to consent 2009/5151/P.

1.2 The Council refused an application ref 2011/5869/P for a similar change to nos 19-29 and 26-36 Fitzroy Road on 30 January 2012.

2.0 DESIGN

2.1 Interior design.

The proposal is to replace the mansard to the rear with a wall incorporating glazing to the staircases and bifold doors to the living spaces.

2.2 The benefits which the interior design provide are significant, even if the external impact is the main planning consideration.

This new space will provide a contrast with the formal design and masonry construction of the rooms in the existing Victorian house. As a result of this design the new room will enjoy an abundance of light and sun and an outlook of trees and sky. It will have a flow of space and a sense of connectivity between inside and outside, which will be heightened when the doors are opened in fine weather. It will mean that the new extension is an authentic expression of our own age, as good design should be, rather than the pastiche of an imagined 1870s attic which we have just finished building.

2.3 External appearance.

The main planning consideration is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. In the applicant's opinion it would both preserve and enhance this character and appearance.

The character and appearance of the area are described in the Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement published in January 2001. This includes a section dealing with sub area two, in which the application property is located.

The great majority of this section relates to the character and appearance of the area as experienced from the street side. It is significant therefore that the proposed alteration is barely visible from the street side, and that the effect on the aspects of the character and appearance of the area as described in the Statement is negligible.

The only reference in the Statement to the garden side states '*To the rear elevation, the windows are staggered in order to serve the staircase landing, and the roof form has a butterfly profile. A number of properties also have a closet wing to half width and part height of the main building.*' It is therefore worth noting that the proposals do not affect these aspects and in particular that the butterfly profile of the parapet and the staggered windows of the rear elevation are preserved.

2.6 Regardless of the relative unimportance of the garden side of the area in the Statement, it is important to note the great difference between the character and appearance of the area on the street side and that on the garden side. The former is

generally formal and uniform and retains predominantly the original nineteenth century design. By contrast the character and appearance of the rear of the buildings generally lacks formality, order or uniformity. Whereas at the front most houses are near identical, at the back, unless they are in the same ownership, no two are the same. (See pics 2 and 3)

The backs of these houses, particularly at basement and ground floor levels but also above, tell a story of how people have changed their once identical homes over time as their needs and tastes have changed. 19th century uniformity has been replaced by 20th and 21st century individuality. This constitutes the actual character and appearance of the conservation area as it has evolved and as it exists today.

By introducing a design which is authentic, of our own time and different from its neighbours, the proposal preserves and enhances this character. At the same time it is calm, simple and restrained. It incorporates a simple rhythm of identical vertical elements which is set back from the original masonry elevation, subservient to it, and respectful of it.

It is noteworthy that the Assessment contained in the Delegated Report appended to the Council's Decision regarding application 2011/5869/P states '*Whilst isolated example of these (i.e. full width glazed doors) are found within the conservation area they are not considered something which should be repeated on mass to this terrace (a large group of such roof additions would have a much more harmful affect than isolated examples.)*' This statement acknowledges that isolated examples of design which are similar to that which is proposed have been approved within the conservation area and the implication is that where full width doors are proposed (as in the current application) for a single property rather than 'on mass' they are considered to be acceptable in the conservation area.

3. 0 CONSULTATION.

The visual impact of the proposal is minimal, since it is barely visible from the surrounding streets, the backs of Chalcot Crescent houses are far distant, those in Chalcot Road and Chalcot Square are at right angles, and any views are in any case obstructed by several large trees. (See pics 1 and 2)

Although no public consultation has yet been undertaken on this application, the results of the consultation on the previous application 2011/5869/P are relevant because the design proposed is identical. In that consultation 23 letters of support for the proposal were received and in addition Councillor Neumark expressed his support. No objections were received.

4. 0 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

The Delegated Report appended to the Council's Decision regarding application 2011/5869/P states '*Whilst the proposal would result in the creation of full width bi-folding doors on the rear elevation, the properties along Chalcot Road are at an acute angle and a sufficient distance from the terrace which ensures that there would not be an unacceptable loss of privacy to the occupying residents. In addition the properties to the rear are located over 18m from the site which also ensures there is no overlooking. The proposal is considered not to harm residential amenity, in accordance with the guidance set out in CPG6 and Policy DP26 of the LDF.*'

5.0 ACCESS

5.1 The access to and within the buildings will not be affected by the proposed alteration.

6.0 ILLUSTRATIONS



pic 1 – view from application buildings towards North-West (Chalcot Crescent)



pic 2 – extensions at 32 and 34 Chalcot Road



pic 3 – extensions at 45 and 46 Chalcot Road