

Design Statement

62a Fortess Road
London NW5 2HG

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Removal of window on lower ground floor, to be replaced by door. Removal of door on garden level, to be replaced by window. Conversion of small WC and rear entrance to bathroom and WC. Landscaping works to garden to incorporate stair between lower ground floor and garden level.

The building is part of a listed terrace of 26 houses in 4 blocks linked by recessed entrance bays. The dwelling is a two bed flat on two floors on the lower ground and upper ground floor level, with a front entrance at lower ground level and rear entrance at garden level. A mature rear garden, with a lightwell to the existing kitchen is accessible only to the dwelling.

The existing internal arrangement of the home has the living room, kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor level, with the living room facing the street, and the kitchen and bathroom facing the garden. In order to access the garden from the living areas, it is necessary to ascend the stairs to the garden level, through the rear access door. The proposal seeks to improve access to the garden from the living space by changing the kitchen window into a door, to allow direct access via a new external stair, and change the existing rear access to a bathroom for the main and secondary bedrooms. The proposals also provide a new bathroom space at upper ground floor level, as the existing bathroom is limited in its floor to ceiling height, currently making showering difficult. The new bathroom will be tall enough to use normally.

The light well to allow light into the kitchen and retaining wall to the garden is currently in a poor state, and the proposal is to add an external stair to the garden from the kitchen at lower ground floor level.

There are a number of benefits to these changes:

- Use of the garden is currently limited, as access to it is not direct from the main living spaces. Improving access to the garden from the living spaces will make full use of the dwelling, and improve the use of the flat.
- The current bathroom is distant from the main bedrooms within the dwelling, and causes privacy issues when the dwelling is fully occupied. By including a bathroom at first floor level, extending the current WC, access is closer to the main bedrooms.
- By reconstructing the poor quality retaining wall outside the kitchen window, and making good the ground directly outside the kitchen, the exterior of the building will be improved, and the garden made more usable to the existing dwelling. The retaining wall to the garden is currently in need of repair independent of this application

The new door at lower ground floor level replacing the existing window will be retained in the same plane as the existing window. Structural alterations to the existing wall will not be required as the door will retain the same opening as the existing window. We propose providing a bespoke softwood for the doorframe and jamb, with a high performing double glazed insert for the new door to retain a similar quality and amount of light in the kitchen as existing.

The new window at garden level will be retained in the same plane as the existing door, and will be constructed softwood, with a toughened double glazing. The window will be openable from the inside for emergency egress, and the stone steps at the base of the existing door removed. Where possible bricks from the existing building will be recycled to infill below the window, or brick to the same specification as the existing will be used otherwise. Any new bricks will be painted white to match existing.

A number of adjacent properties in the terrace have made changes similar to the changes proposed in this application.