

Design and Access Statement:

*Addition of external rear first floor
roof terrace and internal works to
First Floor flat, No.6 Princess Road NW1*



Fig.1 No. 6 Princess Road

The significance of the architectural and historical interest and character of the building

Princess Road is within Area 2 of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area, established in Oct 1971. Due to the complete nature of the terrace façade onto Princess Road (Fig.1), no alterations other than like-for-like repair to existing windows is proposed. To the rear, the addition to the original extension, dating from 1961 is of a scale and pattern common with much of the terrace as the single-family houses were subdivided into flats. These extensions, over four floors, provide service spaces to the simple Victorian layouts, adding onto the rear services provision for the houses (both bathrooms and kitchens). The wholesale alterations to the rear of the terrace (Fig.2, 3) have therefore actively protected the integrity of the street.



Fig.2,3 View of adjoining rear elevations towards Primrose Hill School showing amenity spaces.

The principles of and justification for the proposed works at No. 6

The scale and function of the rear extensions to No. 6 are strategically positive, however at a detailed level fail to contribute positively to the original building, being constructed from modern hard fired brick and using aluminium windows throughout with exposed concrete lintels. Large insulated water tanks with associated plumbing are visible and detract from the appearance of the rear façade.

It is the intention of this proposal to seek to ameliorate the uncompromising appearance of the rear elevation through the replacement of the modern windows of the first floor flat, and to remove the two tanks on the flat roofs of the existing extensions (Fig.4 shows the lower of the two tanks). In addition it is proposed to soften the presence of the flat roof with planting, a strategy successfully employed further along the terrace (Fig.3). The adjoining property, No.4 Princess Road already possesses a raised ground floor and second floor terrace (Fig.5, 6).



Fig.4 Water tank to be removed



Fig.5,6 View of adjoining raised ground floor and second floor terraces from flat roof of No. 6

The impact of the proposal on the setting of adjacent listed buildings.

Unlisted, the terrace is framed at either end by listed buildings, Primrose Hill Primary School and Regents Park Terrace. No.6 is sufficiently removed from these buildings, and the alterations proposed are already common within the terrace to create no direct or adverse impact on the setting of these buildings.

The sources that have been considered

A review of the planning history of the house reveals the 1961 origins of the conversion to flats, and to the requirement of the permission letter dated 19th October 1961 (Fig.7) to maintain visual compatibility with adjoining properties on the terrace. The permission for a second floor roof terrace on the existing extension flat roof of No.16 (dated 30 June 1997, Fig.8) is one of a number of such terraces that add visual softening to the rear, ameliorating the extremely small gardens of the terrace and adding valuable biodiversity that extends the green corridor of the nearby Regents Canal into the urban block. The proposal to use the existing flat roof at first floor level seeks to strengthen the entire terrace's emerging character as one of a vertical green space -desirable for visual, natural and human amenity. The garden elevation of Princess Road is visible from the canal corridor and glimpsed from St Mark's Crescent, so its 'greening' provides a more appropriate backdrop to the canal (Fig.9).

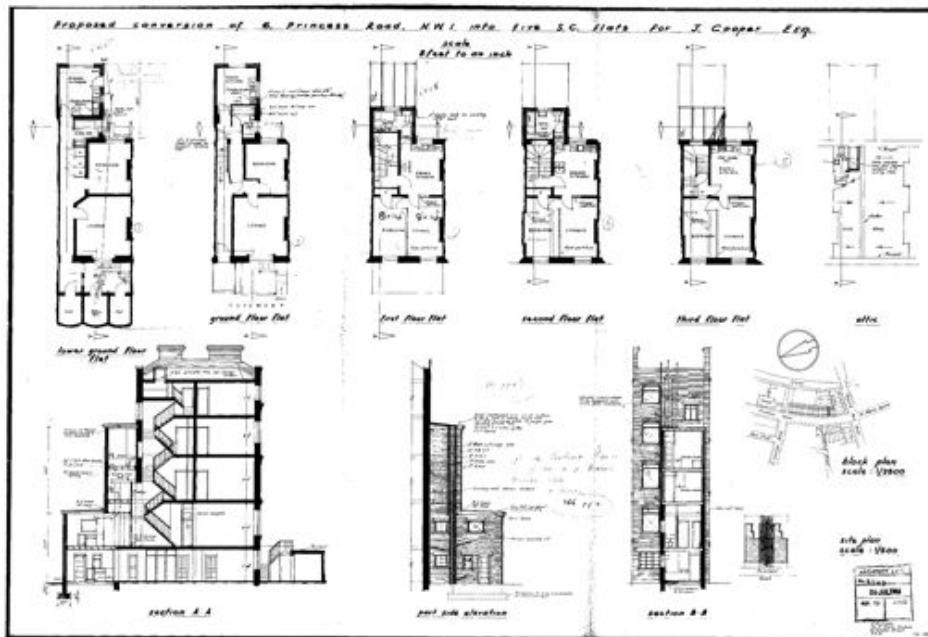


Fig.7 Approved drawing for No.6 princess Road (1961).

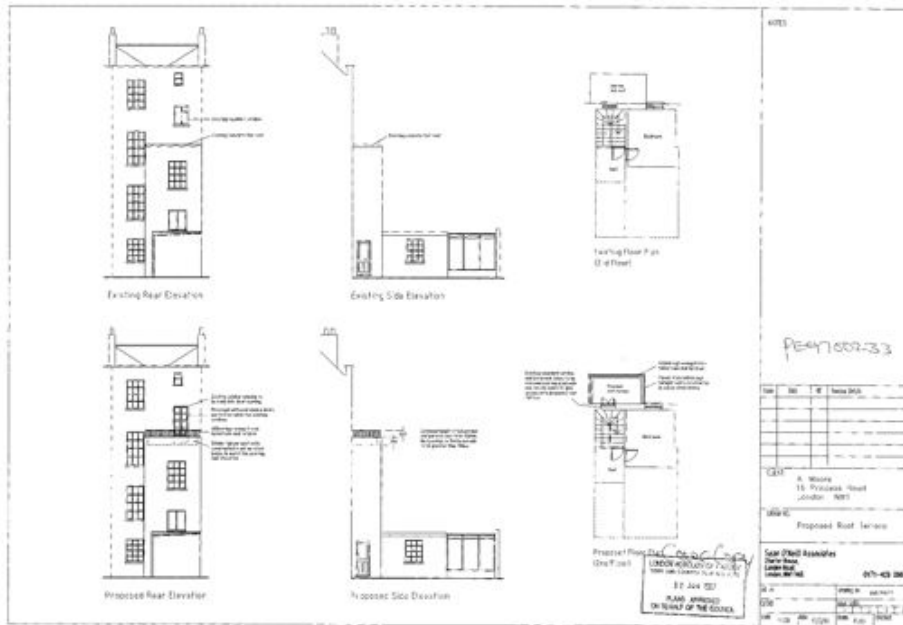


Fig.8 Approved drawing for No.16 princess Road (1997) showing rear terrace.



Fig.9 Existing view of the garden elevation of Princess Road seen from St. Mark's Crescent, Note glazed double doors to second floor terrace of No. 4, and first floor window of no.6 that is proposed as access to the new terrace. Note the flat roof in question is not visible above the tree line.

The steps that have been taken to minimise any adverse impacts on the building.

The manner in which the proposed roof terrace is to be realised seeks to minimise intervention in the built fabric of the rear elevation. The existing, centrally located window in the current bathroom lines through with the window above. The proposal retains the lintel and opening width but provides a new door and opening casement to allow access to the proposed terrace and a view for the new kitchen. The narrow door and casement with fixed light below are designed to appear as a single opening with minimal meeting jambs. The current bathroom is of poor quality (Fig.10), and will be relocated within the interior.



Fig.10 The current bathroom within the rear extension – note the aluminium window to be replaced with a glazed timber door and casement under the retained lintel.

Fig.11 The existing sash windows to Princess Road, retained and refurbished.

The guarding to the terrace is a simple steel handrail with steel rod balusters to achieve visual transparency through traditional means – a glass privacy screen is provided on the North side to prevent overlooking into the utility room at no. 10 Princess Road.

With the current kitchen location in the rear of the original house removed, the opportunity to reinstate the correct six-over-six timber sash window is taken, re-using the original recesses for the sash boxes in the proposed study.

The sash windows to the Street elevation are in poor repair, and refurbishment (retaining as much of the original fabric as possible), with redecoration as part of the proposed works (Fig.11). New timber, if needed for bottom rails, will be scarfed into the existing timber.

Whilst an internal alteration does not impact on the visual appearance of the conservation area, as the flat concerned is on the first (piano nobile) level, the enriched cornice provides visual interest to the passerby as well as the occupant. As such the stripping of unsightly paint accretion and the sensitive repair of cracking due to structural movement is proposed (Fig.12). The removal of part of the 1961 central dividing wall within the principal front room will enable views of the relationship between the windows and the front façade to be reinstated as original.



Fig.12 Existing overpainting and cracking to the principle room facing Princess Road

Access statement

Number 6 Princess Road is an early Victorian house, and the property concerned is on the first floor, accessed via steps directly from the street, and an internal staircase with a turn. As such, the flat has limited accessibility that is not affected by the proposal.

Conclusion

The character of the rear of the Princess Road terrace as an emergent vertical green space is outside the significance attributed to the terrace within the Primrose Hill Conservation Statement, but the greening of this shared private realm is considered to be a positive enhancement to both the existing appearance (Fig.12), shared amongst the residents of the block, and the status of the block as a habitat to insects and bird life.

Drawings List

Fig.7 : 6 Princess Road conversion approved drawing
(D.W. Lines July 1961)

Fig.8 : 16 Princess Road approved drawing
(PE970023, Sean O'Neill Associates March 1997)

ALT PR 001 1:1250 Location Plan
ALT PR 002A 1:50 Existing/Proposed Floor Plan
ALT PR 003 1:100 Existing long section AA
ALT PR 004A 1:100 Proposed long Section AA
ALT PR 005A 1:50 Existing/Proposed long section BB
ALT PR 006 1:100 Existing rear elevation
ALT PR 007A 1:100 Proposed rear elevation/detail
ALT PR 008 1:500 Proposed rear section (context)

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