

Firstplan



7C GAINSBOROUGH GARDENS
LONDON, NW3

PLANNING,
HERITAGE,
DESIGN AND
ACCESS
STATEMENT

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning, heritage, design and access statement has been prepared by Firstplan in support of planning permission and listed building consent applications by Donald Davis.
- 1.2 The application seeks planning permission and listed building consent for a number of external and internal works at 7C Gainsborough Gardens.
- 1.3 The proposed works will bring the existing loft space into use, making better use of the available space and upgrading the property whilst preserving its historic interest.
- 1.4 The external alterations include the installation of two rooflights to the rear elevation and additional drainage pipes.
- 1.5 Internal alterations at second floor level include: the removal of some existing internal partition walls and the installation of new partitions; the removal of an existing chimney breast; the installation of 2 new doorways into existing partition walls; the boarding up of the internal side of an existing small window; and the replacement of an existing internal window to the communal stairway. Other internal alterations include: the installation of an internal staircase between second floor and loft levels; strengthening of the second floor ceiling; the installation of partitions at loft level; and associated fixtures and fittings.
- 1.6 Background information on the proposal, including a description of the site and relevant planning history is outlined in Section 2. Section 3 provides details of the proposed works. Section 4 discusses the relevant planning policy issues. Section 5 provides an analysis of the impact on the heritage asset. Section 6 considers the design and access issues. Our conclusions are drawn in Section 7.



SECTION 2: RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

a) Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site is located on the southern side of Gainsborough Gardens, a leafy residential street based around a central oval communal garden and backing onto Hampstead Heath, in the Hampstead Conservation Area.
- 2.2 No. 7C forms part of a grade II listed semi-detached pair comprising Nos. 7 and 8, though all the houses on this street are now listed grade II. No.7 was a family dwellinghouse, converted to one maisonette and two flats in 1952, with Flat C itself (on the top floor) featuring two bedrooms.
- 2.3 The property was constructed in 1884-5, designed by Henry Simpson Legg and built by Thomas Clifford. Designed in the Domestic Revival style, no.7 forms an asymmetrical pair with no.8, with both constructed of red brick, tile-hung upper floors, red sandstone dressings and pebble-dash render.
- 2.4 Internally, no.7 has been altered somewhat. The English Heritage listing advice report noted that, though the property was only part inspected, some walls had been knocked through, doors had been replaced and original chimneypieces removed.
- 2.5 Photographs of the property are submitted in support of the application.

b) Relevant Planning History

- 2.6 At no.7 in 2006, planning permission (2006/3724/P) was granted for the erection of a balcony at rear upper ground floor level with an ornamental metal railing and metal spiral staircase to the garden, the installation of two sets of French doors in existing window openings at rear upper ground floor level and one set at rear lower ground floor level, and the infilling of an existing window on the side elevation in connection with the existing garden flat.
- 2.7 At no.11 in 2010, planning permission (2010/1640/P) and listed building consent (2010/1644/L) were granted for alterations at roof level to include a new rooflight on the rear roofslope, along with various internal alterations.
- 2.8 At no.9a in 2009, planning permission (2009/4395/P) and listed building consent (2009/4338/L) were granted for additions and alterations to include enclosure and a



partial infill of the 'valley' roof, replacement roof lights at the front of the property, cleaning of external brickwork and pebbledash, and minor internal alterations.

- 2.9 At no.14 in 2003, listed building consent (2003/0609/L) was granted for the erection of a two storey rear extension, external alterations, including the removal of a roof light, the replacement of a roof light and the installation of a new staircase window with pitched roof at the rear, and internal alterations.
- 2.10 At no.4 in 2001, listed building consent (LWX0102121) was granted for the remodeling of the ground floor rear extension, the replacement of a window with French windows and the installation of a lantern rooflight at rear first floor level; the enlargement of the window below the first floor bay; and internal works of alteration at ground, first, second and third floor level.



SECTION 3: APPLICATION PROPOSALS

3.1 The application proposes the following works:

External Works

- Installation of 2 conservation style rooflights to the rear roofslope at loft (third floor) level, located discreetly behind existing original dormers
- Installation of 2 cast iron downpipes to eastern elevation, painted to match existing

Second Floor

- Removal of existing modern internal window between hallway and communal staircase and replacement with smaller stained glass window
- Infilling of three internal doorways
- Removal of three internal partition walls
- Removal of a chimney breast and installation of support brackets
- Installation of new partition walls and associated doorways
- Installation of internal staircase between second floor and loft level
- Internal boarding up of existing small window on the east elevation
- Installation of high level cornice detailing to the living room
- Installation of en-suite bathroom, kitchen units and low level storage units

Loft (Third) Floor

- Infilling of existing loft hatch
- Fitting out to enable use as a habitable space, reusing roof support cross timbers where possible
- Installation of internal partition walls to create shower room, storage/utility space and bedroom



- Installation of shower room fittings, low level storage units and venting for washing/drying appliances to roof cowl



SECTION 4: RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 This section of the report discusses the key planning issues affecting the application proposal in the light of the relevant planning policies.
- 4.2 The Camden Local Development Framework (LDF) comprises the local statutory development plan.
- 4.3 The key issues relate primarily to the proposals' impact on the listed building and their impact on the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area.

a) Draft National Planning Policy Framework (July 2011)

- 4.4 This recently published draft document sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. The Planning Inspectorate has confirmed that it is now a material consideration.
- 4.5 The document specifically states that at the heart of the planning system, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a "golden thread" running through both plan-making and decision taking. Following on from this, the document highlights that local planning authorities should plan positively for new development, and approve all individual proposals wherever possible.
- 4.6 It goes on to state that decision-takers at every level should assume that the default answer to development proposals is "yes", except where this would compromise the sustainable development principles set out in the framework. Specifically, the document states that:

"local planning authorities should look for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved wherever it is practical to do so."

b) PPS5 – Planning for the Historic Environment

- 4.7 This recent guidance sets out a policy approach to determining applications and to formulating policy affecting heritage assets including listed buildings and conservation areas. Decisions are based on the nature, extent and level of that



significance, investigated to a degree proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset. Policy HE7.5 is relevant and states:

“Local planning authorities should take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and use.”

4.8 Policy HE9.1 states that:

“There should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification”

4.9 Policy HE10.1 goes on to state:

“When considering applications for development that affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities should treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the heritage asset. When considering applications that do not do this, local planning authorities should weigh any such harm against the wider benefits of the application. The greater the negative impact on the significance of the heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.”

4.10 An assessment of the designated heritage assets, the listed building and the Hampstead Conservation Area, is set out in the next section of this report together with an assessment of the positive contribution to the heritage asset that can be achieved by the proposed alterations to this building.

c) Camden Core Strategy (2010)

4.11 The Core Strategy sets out the strategic policies for the Borough. Core Strategy policy CS14 deals with design. It requires that all development should be of a high standard of design and should preserve or enhance Camden’s heritage assets. The proposed alterations are of a high quality of design, which respects the historic character of the building. The proposal therefore accords with this policy.

4.12 Core Strategy policy DP22 requires development to incorporate sustainable design and construction measures. The proposals will comply with this policy as demonstrated by the Heritage Statement provided in Section 5 of this report.



- 4.13 Core Strategy policy DP24 requires all development to be of a high quality design and to be in keeping with its surroundings, while policy DP25 seeks to protect and enhance Camden's heritage assets. The proposed external works have been designed to be in keeping with the historic property and the surrounding conservation area, through use of conservation style rooflights as seen on surrounding properties. The roof support cross timbers will also be reused where possible in the construction of the loft room. The internal works will be sympathetic to the fabric of the listed building while bringing the loft space into more active use as a habitable space. The proposal thus accords with this policy.
- 4.14 Core Strategy policy DP26 requires developments to preserve the amenity of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal would not affect neighbours' amenity, as the proposed rooflights would face toward Hampstead Heath and away from surrounding properties, allowing no opportunities for overlooking. The proposal thus accords with this policy.

e) Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal (Adopted 2001)

- 4.16 As the application site falls within the Hampstead Conservation Area, consideration has been given to the adopted Conservation Area Appraisal, adopted 2001. This guidance is considered in the next section of this report.



SECTION 5: IMPACT ON THE HERITAGE ASSET

- 5.1 The site is a designated heritage asset as it is a grade II listed building and is located within the Hampstead Conservation Area. PPS5 sets out the clear policy that there is a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets. It is therefore important to understand the character of the listed building and conservation area and what role the existing building plays, in order to assess the impact of the proposals and their potential for enhancing the asset overall.

a) The Listed Building

- 5.2 The building forms part of a grade II listed pair comprising nos. 7 and 8. The official listing states that the building was listed in January 2011 and describes the group as follows:-

“Pair of semi-detached houses. 1888 by HS Legg, Surveyor to the Hampstead Wells and Campden Trust, for Thomas Clifford, lessee, as part of the development of Gainsborough Gardens between 1882-1895. Subsequently divided into flats. Materials: Red brick with rubbed and moulded-brick details; red sandstone dressings; tile-hanging; pebbledash render to gables and eaves cornice; clay tile roofs... Assymetrical composition, but united through symmetrical first floor and coved eaves cornice. Varied fenestration, comprising sashes, some paired with central mullion and top-hung casements; and French windows to balconies.”

b) The Conservation Area

- 5.3 The Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal (2001) provides information on the history of the area. This confirms that Gainsborough Gardens:

“...was laid out in 1882 on the site of the old spa buildings and their pleasure grounds with a fine group of Arts and Crafts villas of red brick enriched by tile hanging and white painted woodwork encircling the mature, well-maintained gardens in the centre.”

- 5.4 The Appraisal goes on to discuss considerations when assessing proposals for roof alterations in the area, stating:

“Because of the varied design of roofs in the Conservation Area it will be necessary to assess proposals on an individual basis with



regard to the design of the building, the nature of the roof type, the adjoining properties and the streetscape.”

It also states that roof extensions are unlikely to be acceptable where:

- **“The property forms part of a group or terrace which remains largely, but not necessarily completely, unimpaired.**
- **The property forms part of a symmetrical composition, the balance of which would be upset.”**

c) Impact of the Proposals

- 5.5 The proposals will represent an investment in the listed building, by bringing the underused loft space into habitable use and creating a new bedroom. The proposal will have minimal effect on the historic plan form, by keeping the large reception room to the rear and two rooms to the front, while upgrading the property to meet current demands.
- 5.6 The property was partitioned to provide two bedrooms at the front, a bathroom off the internal hall and a reception room and kitchen to the rear when it was divided into flats in the 1950s.
- 5.7 The external alterations proposed are minimal. The installation of the 2 proposed conservation style rooflights to the rear roof slope would be unobtrusive and would preserve the existing roofline. They would be located behind the existing original dormers, making them very discreet from ground level. The property is not part of a homogeneous group of buildings and is part of, as the listing states, an “asymmetrical” pair with “varied fenestration”. In addition, several properties along the street feature rooflight additions similar to those proposed. Therefore, the proposal would not threaten any existing uniformity. The 2 proposed cast iron downpipes to the west elevation would be in keeping with existing pipework and painted to match. The proposal would thus be in keeping with the guidance in the Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 5.8 The pre-application advice received from a Conservation and Urban Design Officer advised that the proposed rooflights should not disrupt the roofline and should relate to the original dormer windows below. This advice has been heeded and the design revised to propose 2 rooflights instead of 3 and to bring the proposed rooflights in



line with the existing dormers, creating a more harmonious and respectful design. Whilst these roof lights will be visible from some viewpoints within the public realm this is not unlike the situation with regard to other properties in Gainsborough Gardens, where roof lights and alterations to the roof profile of listed buildings has been accepted by the Council.

- 5.9 In the pre-application submission the proposal was to remove the chimneybreasts throughout the flat to gain more useable space. The comments of the conservation officer have been heeded and the design has been revised to preserve all but one of the existing chimneybreasts. The proposal is to remove the chimney breast from the area which will be used as the kitchen in the revised layout. The chimney above will be retained and supported on a knee braced gallows bracket so that the external appearance of the building will remain unaltered. This work will involve the loss of a small amount of historic fabric but the loss is not significant in relation to the building as a whole and will facilitate the improved layout of the proposed flat without detrimentally affecting the overall historic character of the property.
- 5.10 The application proposals have been amended to take account of the conservation officer's comments and the loft space has been included while avoiding a significant loss of historic fabric. The proposal would preserve the fabric of the majority of the existing ceiling between the second floor and loft levels and would not alter the existing ceiling level. The structural engineering works have been designed to create minimal disruption to the historic fabric of the property. Fully detailed plans are submitted as part of the application demonstrating the works which are required. Within the loft itself, the only fabric to be removed would be the existing chord of Howes roof trusses, which is unavoidable in the course of the loft's conversion to a usable space. Two new fitch beam purlins are required to support the roof once the trusses are removed. The existing roof rafters will be retained and additional intermediate rafters inserted and the roof rafters doubled up around the roof lights. The new loft floor joists and floor timbers will be supported on a limited framework of new beams, with the four main beams being supported off the lateral masonry walls and the joists running front to rear. The impact of these works on the listed building has therefore been minimised to preserve the historic fabric, whilst bringing the space into use.
- 5.11 In order to ensure that the main stairwell within the property remains unaffected by the proposed use of the loft space, the original proposals to extend this stairwell have



been abandoned. This will ensure that the grand and open nature of this feature can be retained. The partition wall enclosing the second floor flat will be enhanced by remodelling the existing internal window opening in this non original wall. An alternative proposal has been developed to provide a new staircase from second floor to loft floor level entirely within the second floor flat. This requires a slight realignment of the central partition wall to ensure there is adequate room for the stair to be accommodated and the repositioning of the access into the front bedroom.

- 5.12 On the second floor the small existing front room will be converted to provide an ensuite bathroom for the proposed bedroom, which will occupy the other existing room to the front of the property. This will necessitate the closing off of one door to the internal corridor and the creation of a door linking the bedroom and ensuite room.
- 5.13 It is also proposed to remove the non original partitions which were constructed to enclose the existing bathroom and kitchen and which cut across the back chimney breast. This will allow for a much improved kitchen and living space. The proposal seeks to block the small section of the side window (which previously provided a bathroom window) from the inside only, so that its appearance externally will be retained as a pair with the window on the other side of the balcony door.
- 5.14 None of these works adversely affect the original layout of the property at this level, that having been lost with the conversion to a flat in the 1950s. The original proportions of the rooms are better reflected by the revised layout and reflect the layout of rooms on the floors below. The proposed alterations do not therefore adversely affect the historic significance of this property.
- 5.15 Overall, the application proposal seeks to respect the original fabric of the property and will enhance the interior, bringing the loft into habitable use. It will preserve the listed building and the character of the conservation area.



SECTION 6: DESIGN AND ACCESS ISSUES

a) Use

- 6.1 The flat is a single family dwelling, providing living accommodation over two floors and no change of use is proposed.

b) Scale and Amount

- 6.2 The application proposes to bring the existing loft space into use as habitable rooms. The space is relatively small and will be used efficiently.

d) Layout

- 6.3 The main layout change through the proposed internal alterations would be to accommodate a staircase between second floor level and the loft. This would involve moving and altering some existing partitions, though would keep the basic plan layout the same, i.e. locating the reception room to the rear and the bedroom to the front.

e) Appearance

- 6.5 The overall appearance of the property will be preserved. The proposed rooflights would preserve the existing roofline and will not impact significantly on the property's appearance. The proposed cast iron downpipes would be in keeping with the existing.

f) Landscape

- 6.6 The proposal would not affect the surrounding landscape of the property.

g) Access

- 6.7 The entrance to the property is via a communal staircase from lower levels. This would not be altered. Internally, the proposed staircase would provide the only access to the loft.



SECTION 7: CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 It is considered that the proposal is fully in accordance with all relevant national, regional and local planning policy.
- 7.2 The proposals will preserve the appearance of the listed building and the conservation area. The proposed external alterations would be minor and in keeping with similar minor alterations to surrounding properties. The proposed conservation rooflights would be unobtrusively located behind and in line with the existing dormers and would have a very limited visual impact.
- 7.3 The alterations will preserve almost all of the existing roof fabric, with limited intervention. There are minor amendments to the plan form and the original proportion of rooms at second floor level will be better reflected in the revised layout.
- 7.4 The proposals will result in a significant investment in the listed building, providing high quality family accommodation that meets modern needs and bringing back into use vacant and disused floorspace.
- 7.5 Taking into account all the material considerations which have been detailed in this statement, the proposal is considered, on its individual merits, to be entirely acceptable and appropriate.



APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1: Heath Cottage, showing rooflights



Figure 2: 5 Gainsborough Gardens, showing rooflights





Figure 3: 5 Gainsborough Gardens, showing rooflights



Figure 4: 3 Gainsborough Gardens, showing rooflight



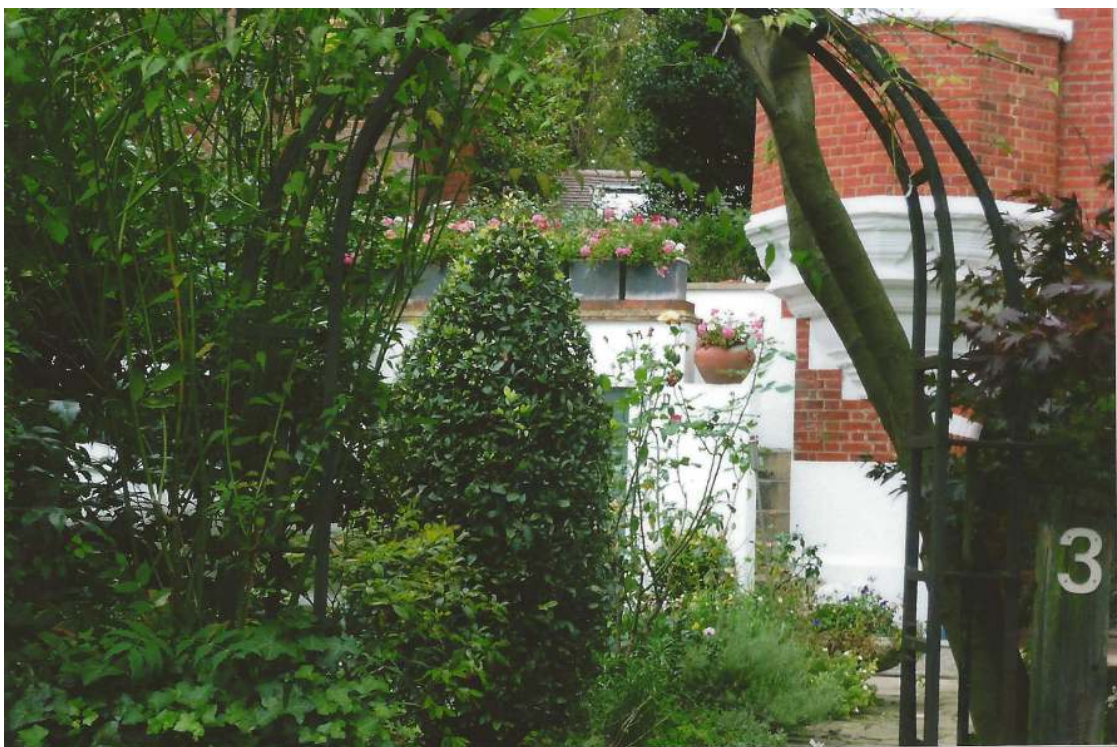


Figure 5: 3 Gainsborough Gardens, showing rooflight



Figure 6: Nearby property viewed from Gainsborough Gardens, showing roof alterations



Figure 7: Rear of 11 Gainsborough Gardens, viewed from Christchurch Hill



Figure 8: Rear of 13 Gainsborough Gardens, viewed from Christchurch Hill





Figure 9: 7 Gainsborough Gardens, viewed from the Heath – proposed rooflights would be hard to spot behind existing dormers



Figure 10: 7 & 8 Gainsborough Gardens, viewed from the Heath





Figure 11: Side of 8 Gainsborough Gardens, showing roof alteration



Figure 12: Rear of 8 Gainsborough Gardens, viewed from the Heath, showing rooflights



Figure 13: Front of 8 Gainsborough Gardens, showing rooflights





Figure 14: Side of 8 Gainsborough Gardens, showing roof alteration