

37DH/DS1
DESIGN and ACCESS STATEMENT
37 Downshire Hill NW3 1NU

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DESIGN STATEMENT:

Downshire Hill is one of Hampstead's most beautiful residential streets running from Rosslyn Hill to West Heath Road with a very interesting collection of late Georgian/early Victorian terrace houses, villas (including Michael Hopkins' essay in West Coast Modernism), semi-d's and St John's C of E church at the end of Keat's Row.

No. 37 Downshire Hill is a charming early 19th Century Semi Detached house (1825 approx.) which has been altered internally on the Lower Ground/ Garden Floor ie. wall between FRONT and BACK rooms has largely been removed and on the Ground and First Floor where openings in the Flank wall have been made in relation to the later (date unknown) undistinguished side extension which currently houses a Utility Room and WC on the Lower Ground Floor and 2 Bathrooms, one on each of the upper floors. The back attic has been converted into a spare bedroom with a dormer added sometime in the 1990's.

The Ground Floor retains the majority of its period details with the First Floor landing arrangement considered original. A small exploratory hole was carried out to ascertain whether or not the partition between the small bedroom and the landing was part of the original layout and it would appear to be so and as a result a small closet is proposed which only requires the removal of one stud following an email exchange with Charles Rose. See drawing 37DH/12.

Our proposals respect the surviving period elements and our prime concern is to alter the house as sympathetically as possible to achieve small changes to help the owners adapt the internal arrangements more in line with their specific needs.

At Lower Ground Floor level we propose to increase the size of the entrance to the side extension by creating a porch which then would allow direct access into the Kitchen Dining Room and space for buggies.

This porch would be on the same line as the neighbour's (no. 36) garage and would be in painted rendered blockwork with a large flat glass roof light set into an asphalt roof and a black painted Front door. It is considered that this porch would have an extremely slight effect on the Front Elevation of No. 37 inasmuch as it is at Lower Ground Floor level and behind the existing side door and would be virtually invisible while providing great amenity for the owners. It is also considered that it would have little effect on the neighbours (No.36) as the parapet/party wall would be kept at the same height as the front wall.

We also propose to incorporate one of the front vaults as storage for the Kitchen which necessitates the creation of a very small glass roof (and glazed door below) beside the Ground Floor Entrance. This glass roof would be kept below the level of the Ground Floor Garden Paving (see section on drawing 37DH/06) and would be invisible from the street. Following a discussion with Charles Rose in the course of his site visit the door opening to the front area from the kitchen is left as it is.

The proposals involve very slight structural alterations at Lower Ground Floor Level with the removal of a small nib where the 2 rooms have been combined into one room at some time in the last 30 or 40 years. The window to the playroom is retained following Charles Rose's visit as it is considered a fairly unusual single hung sash with integrated stoppers. A new conservatory is proposed which sits against the party wall with No 38 and doesn't intrude any further into the garden than that neighbouring back extension. This conservatory is designed as a contemporary white painted steel and glass structure with white painted glazed hardwood sliding doors.

Very little change is proposed to the Ground Floor other than to replace a set of later shelves set into a recess in the Flank Wall with a door. This will be designed to be unobtrusive as suggested by Charles Rose ie. it will retain the existing architraves/mouldings and be set back in the opening.

We consider that the overall scope of the proposed internal alterations is modest and respects the character and surviving original details of the house.

We have shown the possibility two Photo Voltaic Panels on the interior slope of the front roof, which my clients would like to consider as a possibility as part of a general sustainable strategy.

ACCESS STATEMENT:

No changes are proposed to the existing front steps up to the FRONT DOOR or down to the SIDE DOOR. Within the house no changes in level to the existing are proposed other than the need to lower the floor to one of the vaults to achieve a more reasonable headroom.

Brendan Woods
28th. November 2011