

GH10_05_02_001

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

The Garden House

29 November 2011

Proposal

The site is currently occupied by a brick built 1960's 2-storey dwelling house. The house is surrounded on three sides to first floor level, by a raised earth bank. Adjacent to the house is a dilapidated brick outhouse. This application proposes re-cladding the existing house and upgrading the insulation, replacing the chimney, upgrading the windows and doors to meet current part L legislation, adding dormers to the loft and a light well, and refurbishing the outhouse.

Additions and extensions

The scheme shows the property extended to the rear and below ground, which are all understood to be single story extensions within the definition of Permitted Development rights and have been covered by a separate application for a Lawful Development Certificate. The basement and the ground level excavation was previously confirmed to be Lawful Development on 17th November 2010 (ref: 2010/3118/P). A second application for Lawful Development has recently been confirmed by Camden Council for the remaining single story extensions marked as areas A and B on the submitted plans. This The height of the original dwelling will remain as is, with new dormers proposed within the existing roof space and a new chimneybreast to the north. A light well is proposed alongside the southern elevation, allowing light into the basement space. A timber terrace is shown along the eastern elevation, replacing part of the existing concrete paved patio.

This represents a minor increase in the volume of the existing house of 4.7%. This calculation is based on the volume of the original house and does not include the Permitted Development proposals described above.

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Access

Access to the house remains through the archway to the Vale of Health.

The path leading towards the house will remain sloping down at it's current gradient. The surface of the path will be made good allowing easier access for all potential users. The entrance to the house will have a level threshold. One of the bathrooms on the ground floor will be suitable for an ambulant disabled person as will the stair from ground floor to first floor. Internal doors, door openings, and corridors within the house will assist ease of maneuver for an ambulant disabled person in line with the building regulations.

Landscaping

The landscaping will remain as existing.

Sustainability:

The existing house is being refurbished and upgraded to more closely comply with current Part L legislation.

The re-cladding of the house will involve insulating the external walls and roof to a high standard that, along with the new fenestration being proposed, will vastly reduce the heat loss to the property.

The proposal is to clad the house and the extensions in slate, a natural material that has a long life span, contributes no detrimental substances to the environment, and can be recycled should the slate outlive the building itself.

The timber cladding for the outhouse will come from sustainable managed woods. Timber is a low energy material to produce, and can be easily recycled once it has reached the end of it's useful life on a home.

Rainwater from the roof will be collected in water butts and replacing the existing concrete patio with permeable paving and timber decking will reduce run off and contribute to the Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy.

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Appearance

Viewed from the Heath, the Garden House is set against an informal high level back-drop of differing fenestrations, rear extensions and varying roofscapes, mainly comprising white rendered rear extensions under slate dormered roofs.

The existing brick house is of low quality construction without any significant or obvious design merit. Its scale, quality of materials and style appear disharmonious with its surroundings. The existing white window frames contrast glaringly with the uniform yellow brick of the house and the poor quality roof and wall finishes do not fit with the traditional materials of the neighbouring architecture.

It is the intention to clad the house in a material that fits within the context of the area and slate is a traditional material used locally to the Heath and throughout London – as can be seen on the neighbouring houses. The Garden House sits within the buffer zone of gardens that is located between the rear facades of the perimeter buildings and the open space of the Heath. Slate is also an appropriate traditional material for a garden building. It is an attractive natural material that is very durable and further improves as it weathers over time. Slate requires virtually no maintenance, is long lasting, and is suitable for the UK climate.

By recladding the house, it will be transformed into a simple slate building that will sit calmly and unobtrusively in amongst the green foliage of the landscape. The new fenestration, which will have frames coloured to match the slate tiles, will provide slender high quality windows and patio doors. The detailing and materials will also be simplified to provide cohesion to the elevations. The darker, uniformly clad building will recess into the landscape and therefore shift the focus of attention on to the grander buildings behind and adjacent. This proposal seeks to use beautiful, high quality, natural materials to revitalize this tired mid-century home into a high quality well executed house, in a manner which is sensitive and harmonious with its setting.

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