

Planning Services
Camden Town Hall
Argyle Street
London WC1H 8EQ

10th October 2011

REF: 077, 57 Lawford Road Design & Access Statement

Design Process, Appearance & Access

Key points

The existing extension is not up to current standards of materials, design or energy conservation. The new extension will address these points

The new extension is not as large or imposing as the one next door at 55. Especially at first floor level the extensions at no 55 are more dominating than 57's.

The elegant designs of the new extension and library at no 57 enhance the original building, are in scale with it and positively add to the character of the neighbourhood.

The design has been made as light as possible to minimise visual impact. Glass has been use extensively to allow views through to the original architecture.

Issues such as conservation, security and privacy have been addressed by the design.

Green roof and additional outdoor garden space have been added.

Introduction

The property is located on Lawford Road, within the Bartholomew Estate Conservation Area in Kentish Town, London Borough Camden (LBC).

The proposal comprises the extension of the ground floor to the rear of the property and a small addition to the first floor to create a glass enclosed library. A small terrace is also proposed on the new roof to the extension.

The existing extension is built from cheap non-environmentally friendly materials. When it was built in the 1970s it was not designed with energy efficiency in mind. The double glazing was probably never efficient and now leaks. The design is very unsatisfactory especially in that the ceiling height is very low which is compounded by the fact that the adjoining room (kitchen) is at a slightly higher level: when you are in the kitchen the ceiling of the extension seems barely above head height. In general the proportions of the extension are very unsatisfactory, being boxlike. The amount of daylight let through into the kitchen is minimal, as there are no roof windows. The aspect to the garden is unsatisfactory and restricted. It looks along one side of the garden, rather than towards the whole. From the kitchen the view is very much limited as to the height, due to the factors described above. The sliding doors are a security risk as they can easily be lifted from their runners. There is a significant step down to get into the garden and this creates a barrier between inside and outside space. The existing 1970s extension could not be said to contribute towards the amenity of the neighbourhood.

The new extension will address the above issues.

Materials will be of a high standard and will more than address the current requirements on energy efficiency. Where bricks are used they will be reclaimed mixed London stocks matching the bricks of the main house to replace the 1970s "modern" yellow bricks.

The design will be contemporary in style paying great attention to proportion, use of space, materials and light. New roof windows will wash the walls with light and will help to bring light to the kitchen area. The aspect will be directly towards the centre of the garden. Access to the garden will be as seamless as possible with minimal step of levels between the inside and the outside. As the owners care deeply for their garden and spend as much time as possible using the garden it is intended that the boundary between the inside and outside will be as indistinct as possible. There will be a significant element of the design which allows for plants on the inside.

The appearance from the outside will be elegant and stylish. Every effort is being made to build a structure that the owners will be proud of and that will enhance the architecture of the neighbourhood. The scale of the new extension is larger than the old extension. However it is still very much subservient to the main house and is not as large as the extension of the neighbours at no 55 – built in the last few years

On the upper floor the library has been designed to create an elegant and light feature. The owners of the house have a large collection of books which they value highly. They need to find additional space for books and the library will provide a creative and attractive solution to this problem. Accessed through the first floor rear bedroom the glass structure of the library will let additional light into the bedroom and will create a compact and useful additional space. Glass doors will lead out to the roof terrace. A curved glass roof will mirror the elegant brick arches that are to be found over the existing windows, connecting the old with the new through design

The roof terrace will be part green roof, part walk on glass and the remainder well-covered with flower pots and planted troughs. In this way although the new extension will occupy a larger footprint than the existing one the total area of garden or outdoor green space will be increased. The green roof will help with water conservation and the well-planted terrace will provide an attractive green space for neighbours to view as well as for the owners. The balustrade for the terrace has been devised from glass panels. These minimise the visible impact of the terrace. Indeed it can be seen from the enclosed photograph of a grass balustrade of a house in the next-door street that sometimes they are nearly invisible.

The plan of the balustrade and relationship between green roof (outside the balustrade) and roof terrace (inside it) again considerably lessen the visual impact of the terrace, with only 1/3 of the frontage needing the balustrade. The proposed terrace occupies the middle portion of the roof avoiding the corners where the over-looking would be most apparent. The small access corridor to the stair is against the house and minimises the overlooking to No. 55.

In addition this plan keeps to an absolute minimum any possible loss of privacy aspect as regards the first floor rear window of no. 59. It is intended to erect a trellis – not large but carefully positioned- in order to reduce this overlooking aspect to zero. In addition the side wall of the new library, that adjacent to no 59, will have louvered-type cladding so as to permit daylight to enter into the library from that side but to preclude any possibility of artificial light spillage on to the no 59 1st floor window.

Although not part of the planning application the owners also intend to install solar panels in the roof of the house, in line with current government recommendations and plans. They intend to install photo voltaic panels and to supply electricity to the national grid.

The intended staircase from garden to terrace will be of minimal impact visually. It is intended to bring the existing side-passage gate (at the back garden side of the house) further to the north (effectively at the end of the passageway between the garden wall and the side of the extension.) This will effectively hide the stairs and provide additional security.

Consultation with neighbours

The client, Jason Shenai has visited both adjoining neighbours, Nos. 55 and 59. Points raised as follows:

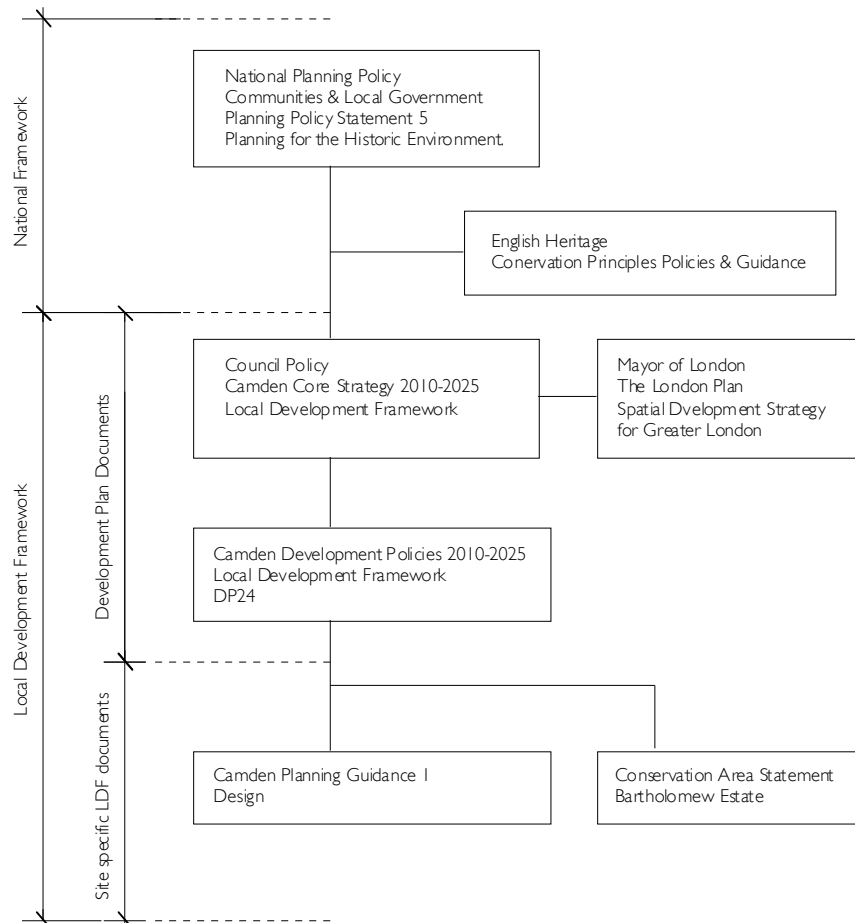
No. 55: concern raised with over looking and loss of privacy. Jason explained that the accessible part of the roof, the terrace, does not cover the full extent of the area. The terrace only covers the middle third at the leading edge. The corner has been avoided precisely to minimise any overlooking.

No. 59: concern was raised regarding security and noise to the rear room at first floor level. Jason explained that the proposed trellis at first floor level will eliminate any possibility of privacy being compromised. The trellis would also help with any noise problems. (Jason also expressed his desire to be a good neighbour as regards possible noise problems in any eventuality, irrespective of any new development) . Security has been addressed by introducing a gate to the side passage and an additional trellis is proposed at high level to deter any potential intrusion.

It is also noted that the gardens of both no 55 and no 59 are currently significantly overlooked from balconies at 1st floor level of houses in Patshull Road. In addition the views from the top windows of No 57 into the gardens of 55 and 59 are significantly more direct than would be afforded from anywhere on the new proposed roof terrace

Statutory Context

As well as the pre-application advice contained in Appendix One, the following framework documents are referred to:



National Framework

Communities & Local Government
Planning Policy Statement 5
Planning for the Historic Environment

Policy HE7: Policy principles guiding the determination of applications for consent relating to all heritage assets

HE7.5 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.

ANNEX 2: TERMINOLOGY

CONSERVATION

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance.

In our view the proposed works are respectful of the local heritage and seek to celebrate and enhance the historical character.

The current first floor extension at 57 is much smaller than the extensions of the neighbouring houses. The proposed 1st floor extension would bring 57 into line with its neighbours.

The proposal is mindful of scale, height and massing. The proposed extension is modest compared to recently approved developments. The proposed palette of materials, the London stock brick, the zinc and the glass compliment well the existing fabric.

The development seeks to enhance the local heritage by creating a contemporary new addition that responds to current needs.

English Heritage (EH)

CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES POLICIES AND GUIDANCE FOR THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Assessing Heritage Significance

Understand the fabric and evolution of the place

62 To identify the cultural and natural heritage values of a place, its history, fabric and character must first be understood. This should include its origins, how and why it has changed over time (and will continue to change if undisturbed), the form and condition of its constituent elements and materials, the technology of its construction, any habitats it provides, and comparison with similar places. Its history of ownership may be relevant, not only to its heritage values, but also to its current state.

We would like to see this statement from EH as an acknowledgement that change is a natural and welcome process. Granted the historical character of the property should be preserved and enhanced where possible but changes and additions from part of the natural development of buildings.

Local Development Framework

Mayor of London
The London Plan
Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London

Policy Areas

Design principles

4B.1 Design principles for a compact city

The Mayor will, and boroughs should, seek to ensure that developments should:

- * maximise the potential of sites*
- * promote high quality inclusive design and create or enhance the public realm*

- * contribute to adaptation to, and mitigation of, the effects of climate change
- * respect local context, history, built heritage, character and communities
- * provide for or enhance a mix of uses
- * be accessible, usable and permeable for all users
- * be sustainable, durable and adaptable in terms of design, construction and use (see Chapter 4A)
- * address security issues and provide safe, secure and sustainable environments (policy 4B.6)
- * be practical and legible
- * be attractive to look at and, where appropriate, inspire, excite and delight
- * respect the natural environment and biodiversity, and enhance green networks and the Blue Ribbon Network
- * address health inequalities (policy 3A.23).

These principles should be used in assessing planning applications and in drawing up area planning frameworks and DPD policies. Design and access statements showing how they have been incorporated should be submitted with proposals to illustrate their impacts.

We would like to offer that in the spirit of the London Plan the proposed development seeks to maximize the use of the historical property.

The existing ill conceived and badly executed rear extension will be replaced by a much more interesting and amenable space. Daylight will be maximized and high insulation values will minimize heat loss.

The proposed development will be well detailed and of a high quality build.

We believe it will be a positive contribution to the urban context.

Security issues have been addressed by enhancing the level of protection to the side passage in order to avoid unwanted intrusion.

Council Policy

Camden Core Strategy 2010-2025

Local Development Framework

A sustainable and attractive Camden – Tackling climate change and improving and protecting Camden's environment and quality of life

CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

Policy

The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

- a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;*
- b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;*

Camden's heritage

14.9 Camden has a rich architectural heritage with many special places and buildings from throughout Camden's history (see map 6). 39 areas, covering much of the borough, are designated as conservation areas, recognising their special architectural or historic interest and their character and appearance. We have prepared conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies that provide further guidance on the character of these areas. We will take these documents into account as material considerations when we assess applications for planning permission and conservation area consent in these areas.

14.11 We have a responsibility to preserve and, where possible, enhance our heritage of important areas and buildings. Policy DP25 in Camden Development Policies provides more detailed guidance on the Council's approach to protecting and enriching the range of features that make up our built heritage.

In line with EH and the London Plan there is an emphasis to preserve and enhance the historical context.

It is our view that the proposal is respectful of the historical building and contributes positively to the local context and character.

The ongoing development of the historical neighborhood is as important as the preservation of the historical fabric. We believe that from the future's perspective the proposed development will be seen as a positive contribution to the evolution of the neighborhood.

Camden Development Policies 2010-2025

Local Development Framework

DP24. Securing high quality design

24.1 Core Strategy policy CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage sets out the Council's overall strategy on promoting high quality places, seeking to ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe, healthy and easy to use and requiring development to be of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character. Camden has a unique and rich built and natural heritage, with many areas with their own distinct character, created by a variety of elements including building style and layout, history, natural environment including open spaces and gardens, and mix of uses. We have a duty to respect these areas and buildings and, where possible, enhance them when constructing new buildings and in alterations and extensions.

Policy DP 24

Securing high quality design

The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

- a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;
- c) the quality of materials to be used;
- d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;
- e) the appropriate location for building services equipment;
- f) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;
- g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;
- h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and
- i) accessibility.

In line with DP 24 the development will be of the highest design and standard.

The small scale addition to the first floor is mindful of the urban setting context and form. The glass structure will allow the brick of the rear elevation to still be visible from the rear gardens.

The proposed materials are respectful of the original building, London stock bricks will be used for the walls and steel and glass construction for the library.

External pipework will be tidied up and routed to the side alley where possible.

Existing features such as the flat arch lintel to the window will remain visible.

The garden works and hard landscaping will be in-keeping with the local character.

Camden Planning Guidance I, Design

2 Design Excellence

General guidance on design

2.6 Camden is committed to excellence in design. The borough contains many special and unique places, many of which are protected by conservation area status. In accordance with draft London Plan policies

7.1–7.7, Core Strategy policy CS14 requires development schemes to improve the quality of buildings, landscaping and public spaces and we will not approve design which is inappropriate to its context or fails to improve the character of an area.

2.7 We are working with our partners to promote design excellence and improve public buildings, landscaping and the street environment. We have established the Camden Design Initiative which seeks to encourage involvement, awareness and understanding of good design and this is promoted through the bi-annual Camden Design Awards which acknowledge high quality and innovative design. We are also a promoter of the national Civic Trust Awards which are awarded to buildings judged to have made a positive cultural, social or economic contribution to the local community.

2.8 In order to achieve high quality design in the borough we require applicants to consider buildings in terms of context, height, accessibility, orientation, siting, detailing and materials. These issues apply to all aspects of the development, including buildings

and other structures (e.g. substations, refuse or cycle storage), outdoor spaces, landscaping and access points and should be considered at an early stage in the design of a development, as these elements are often difficult to change in later stages.

Context

2.9 Good design should:

- positively enhance the character, history, archaeology and nature of existing buildings on the site and other buildings immediately adjacent and in the surrounding area, and any strategic or local views. This is particularly important in conservation areas...

Building design

2.10 Good design should:

- ensure buildings do not significantly overshadow existing/proposed outdoor spaces (especially designated open spaces), amenity areas or existing or approved renewable energy facilities (such as solar panels). For further information, refer to CPG3 Sustainability Renewable energy (A shadowing exercise may be required for tall buildings or where they are near open spaces);
- consider the extent to which developments may overlook the windows or private garden area of another dwelling;
- consider views, both local and London wide, and particularly where the site is within a recognised strategic viewing corridor (as shown on the policy Proposals Map);
- consider the degree of openness of an area and of open spaces, including gardens including views in and out of these spaces
- contributions to the character of certain parts of the borough;
- provide visual interest for onlookers, from all aspects and distances. This will involve attention to be given to both form and detail;
- consider opportunities for overlooking of the street and, where appropriate, provide windows, doors and other 'active' features at ground floor; and
- incorporate external facilities such as renewable energy installations, access ramps, plant and machinery, waste storage facilities and shading devices into the design of the development. Careful consideration must be given to ensure that the facility does not harm the built environment.

As described at the beginning of the document, consultation with both neighbours has taken place to address all concerns they might have. The photos contained on the sheets clearly show the current level of overlooking and how the terrace will have minimal effect.

Materials

2.12 Materials should form an integral part of the design process and should relate to the character and appearance of the area, particularly in conservation areas or within the setting of listed buildings. The durability of materials and understanding of how they will weather should be taken into consideration. The quality of a well designed building can be easily reduced by the use of poor quality or an unsympathetic palette of materials. We will encourage re-used and recycled materials, and further guidance is contained within CPG3 Sustainability (Sustainable use of materials).

4 Extensions, alterations and conservatories

KEY MESSAGES

- Alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings.
- Windows, doors and materials should complement the existing building.
- Rear extensions should be secondary to the building being extended.
- You can make certain types of minor alterations without planning permission (see below) external alterations.

Scale

4.8 Extensions should be subordinate to the original building in terms of scale and situation unless the specific circumstances of the site, such as the context of the property or its particular design, would enable an exception to this approach. More detailed guidance on design considerations is contained within CPG1 Design (Design excellence chapter).

Rear extensions

4.9 A rear extension is often the most appropriate way to extend a house or property. However, rear extensions that are insensitively or inappropriately designed can spoil the appearance of a property or group of properties and harm the amenity of neighbouring properties, for example in terms of outlook and access to daylight and sunlight.

General principles

4.10 Rear extensions should be designed to:

- be secondary to the building being extended, in terms of location, form, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing;
- respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style;
- respect and preserve existing architectural features, such as projecting bays, decorative balconies or chimney stacks;

- respect and preserve the historic pattern and established townscape of the surrounding area, including the ratio of built to unbuilt space;
- not cause a loss of amenity to adjacent properties with regard to sunlight, daylight, outlook, overshadowing, light pollution/spillage, privacy/overlooking, and sense of enclosure;
- allow for the retention of a reasonable sized garden; and
- retain the open character of existing natural landscaping and garden amenity, including that of neighbouring properties, proportionate to that of the surrounding area.

4.11 Materials should be chosen that are sympathetic to the existing building wherever possible (see also CPG3 Sustainability on Sustainable use of materials).

The green roof and additional planting will increase the extent of green landscape and more than make up for the loss of the paved area at ground floor.

Height of rear extensions

4.12 In order for new extensions to be subordinate to the original building, their heights should respect the existing pattern of rear extensions, where they exist. Ground floor extensions are generally considered preferable to those at higher levels. The maximum acceptable height of an extension should be determined in relation to the points outlined in paragraph 4.10 above. In cases where a higher extension is appropriate, a smaller footprint will generally be preferable to compensate for any increase in visual mass and bulk, overshadowing and overlooking that would be caused by the additional height.

Points addressed with the photos showing precedents approved under the current planning framework.

4.13 In most cases, extensions that are higher than one full storey below roof eaves/parapet level, or that rise above the general height of neighbouring projections

Width of rear extensions

4.14 The width of rear extensions should be designed so that they are not visible from the street and should respect the rhythm of existing rear extensions.

4.15 In addition, the rear of some buildings may be architecturally distinguished, either forming a harmonious composition, or visually contributing to the townscape. The Council will seek to preserve these where appropriate. Some of the Borough's important rear elevations are identified in conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans.

5 Roofs, terraces and balconies

Balconies and terraces

5.23 Balconies and terraces can provide valuable amenity space for flats that would otherwise have little or no private exterior space. However, they can also cause nuisance to neighbours. Potential problems include overlooking and privacy, daylight, noise, light spillage and security.

The plan of the balustrade and relationship between green roof (outside the balustrade) and roof terrace (inside it) again considerably lessen the visual impact of the terrace, with only 1/3 of the frontage needing the balustrade. The proposed terrace occupies the middle portion of the roof avoiding the corners where the over-looking would be most apparent. The small access corridor to the stair is against the house and minimises the over looking to No. 55.

5.24 Balconies and terraces should form an integral element in the design of elevations. The key to whether a design is acceptable is the degree to which the balcony or terrace complements the elevation upon which it is to be located. Consideration should therefore be given to the following:

- detailed design to reduce the impact on the existing elevation;
- careful choice of materials and colour to match the existing elevation;
- possible use of setbacks to minimise overlooking – a balcony need not necessarily cover the entire available roof space;
- possible use of screens or planting to prevent overlooking of habitable rooms or nearby gardens, without reducing daylight and sunlight or outlook; and
- need to avoid creating climbing opportunities for burglars.

Conservation Area Statement Bartholomew Estate

Sub area two, Dartmouth Family Estate

Views

Glimpse views

The gaps between buildings provide attractive views through to mature rear gardens and green spaces. This is particularly evident along Caversham Road, Patshull Road and Bartholomew Road.

The proposed extension does not obstruct the alleyway. Only the stair balustrade occupies the space at first floor level. This is well set back from the street and would be unlikely to be noticed at all.

New Development

BE1 Proposals should be guided by the UDP in terms of the appropriate uses. New ... All development should respect existing features such as building lines, roof lines, elevation design and where appropriate, architectural characteristics, detailing, profile, and materials of adjoining buildings.

Rear extensions & conservatories

BE 21 Extensions should be in harmony with the original form & character of the house and the historic pattern of extensions within the terrace or group of buildings. The acceptability of larger extensions depends on the particular site circumstances.

Conclusion

In our opinion the proposal complies with all the requirements established in the local Development Framework, the Design Guidelines and the Conservation Area Statement. It also addresses points raised in discussions with owners of neighbouring properties.

Use

The current use of residential is maintained.

Layout

The internal layout remains very much the same, access from the highway remains the same. The only change to the internal layout is to create an additional study to the rear of the property.

Yours sincerely,

Sebastian Camisuli

On behalf of:
Martins Camisuli Architects