



12 OCTOBER 2011

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

job: **2a conway street**
job status: private
job address: **2a conway street**
london, W1T 6BA
document number: cws_da_001
date: 12.10.11
document status: planning

This document is the design and access statement relating to the above addresses. It is important that reference is made to all other documents which form part of this application.

contents

- introduction**
- context**
- use**
- design strategy**
- policy**
- materials**
- landscaping**
- accessibility**
- flood risk**
- renewables**

introduction

This document describes the design proposal for creating a new studio flat within a rooftop extension to 2a conway street

context

Conway street is located at southern end of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area and is described in the conservation area audit as a:

" relatively narrow street, enclosed by largely four-storey terraces, retain[ing] much of [its] original character "

2a conway street comprises an existing three-storey brick building. It stands out on the street as the only three-storey building in the southern portion of conway street. The building is not listed, but it is a positive contributor to the conservation area as shown on the 2008 built heritage audit plan. It is surrounded by taller buildings as follows:

- 4 conway street to the north is a four storey brick public house, also not listed and also a positive contributor to the conservation area.
- 2 conway street to the south is a four-storey brick multi-unit dwelling, which is grade II listed, as are its neighbours the taller but also four-storey buildings at 42 and 44 maple street.
- Opposite the site is 1 conway street, a five-storey plus rooftop plant building - it is not a positive contributor to the conservation area but is described in the conservation area audit as:

"faced in white render that has a more horizontal emphasis in its elevational treatment, but its windows align with those in the street and it is of an appropriate scale"

- behind the site lies conway mews and the 6-storey plus rooftop plant office building County House. This is also a neutral element within the conservation area and is described as:

"the large overhanging structure of the late twentieth century County House which obliquely bridges the roadway and is out of scale, but not visible elsewhere in the Conservation Area"

- directly aligned with the site to the south lies the BT Tower:

"a landmark feature standing 177 metres high to the south of the conservation area boundary"

Please refer to attached photosheets ph_001 and ph_002 for further information.

use

2a conway street currently consists of A1 gallery on the ground floor with B1 office and supporting space to the two stories above, along with a partial basement of storage space.

The proposed scheme will add a single residential unit in the form of a studio flat to the currently undeveloped flat roof.

Access to the new flat will be via the existing exterior stair in the courtyard to the rear/side of the building. The existing rear balcony will be extended and a new doorway and internal stair formed within the fabric of the second floor.

This stacking of uses and density of development is consistent with and contributes positively to both the ongoing history and pattern of the wider conservation area; as noted in the area audit:

"The area retains a broad mix of residential uses, generally small-scale businesses and independent retail premises. There is significant amount of residential accommodation on the upper floors of buildings which contributes to the levels of activity and sense of community within the area. The mix of uses is also notable within buildings which contain several small-scale uses."

Also:

"The form of development is very dense, reflecting the speculative nature of the original development."

design strategy

The overall design strategy for our scheme is two-fold.

At the front of the building we plan to fill in the 'missing tooth' in the overall four-storey terrace that forms the southern end of Conway Street by extending the existing brick facade up to meet the established parapet line currently running from no 10 Conway Street to no 4. The scale, finishes and detailing of this facade will generally match the existing building below and neighbours to either side.

This approach is consistent with the wider context - as the conservation area audit notes:

"The terraces ... are mainly four storeys in height... Roof forms are commonly defined by a parapet and give a strong and often consistent roof line."

At the rear of the building we plan to introduce a contemporary architectural element that reflects and complements the wider developmental context of the site, in terms of history, massing, scale, materials and detailed design.

The insertion of a contemporary element at the rear of the site is in keeping with the history of the conservation area for a number of reasons.

As the area audit states, Conway Square is no stranger to contemporaneous interventions:

"The Conservation Area boasts a sizeable number of buildings which are architecturally innovative of their period of development"

And also:

"The character of the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area is derived from its original character as a wealthy residential district, and is influenced by subsequent social and economic changes that have affected patterns of use and occupation of buildings. This, and subsequent changes in architectural tastes and styles, is expressed in the changes to the physical fabric and current occupation of the area"

Thus the deployment of contemporary architecture is consistent with the ongoing development of the conservation area as a whole.

Furthermore, as noted in the audit, the area has historically celebrated artistic and creative aspirations that challenge the status quo, with previous residents including George Bernard Shaw and Virginia Woolf, and that:

"Nikolaus Pevsner described the area as, 'an appealing small-scale mixture of domestic and commercial Georgiana with a Bohemian aura'."

This approach of clearly defining what is new while respecting existing patterns is also in line with both English Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings best practice, which recommends reference to the internationally accepted best practice document, the 'Burra Charter'.

"Matters to be considered in all development proposals:

- ensure old and new work is distinguishable;*
- ensure new work is similar to existing fabric in its consideration of matters (including siting, bulk, form, scale, character, colour, texture and material) but that it is clearly contemporary for its time"*

In terms of massing and scale, the proposed scheme fits within its context as follows.

The front portion of extended brickwork to a consistent parapet line is clearly in keeping with its neighbours in terms of massing and scale.

The rear contemporary portion of the extension also reflects the scale of its neighbours. Primarily it responds to its immediate context which is the 20thC office building facing it in Conway Mews. This building is also very clearly 'of its time' and is described as a neutral building within the conservation area and so must be considered as an integral part of the site context. While it is described as "out of scale" this is also discounted as it is "not visible elsewhere in the Conservation Area."

While we feel that our proposed scheme is in scale with the other buildings forming the rear of the site, it is similarly not visible from elsewhere within the conservation area and therefore should benefit from the same approach - see sheet CWS_s_102 for more information.

Furthermore, the remaining buildings to the rear of the site do not represent a consistent design approach, with a variety of roof heights and forms, as well as something of a 'hodge-podge' of extensions, alterations, additions and rebuilds over time. Our scheme proposes a clear and discrete architectural approach that both fits in with and celebrates this mode of historical piecemeal development that is the context.

The proposed materials will be dealt with later in this document, but other aspects of the detailed design are germane to this discussion of context.

Where the front and rear portions of the proposed scheme intersect, we are proposing a lateral skylight across the width of the building. This is a response to the context in front of and at the side of the building.

At the front it is a direct response to the fifth floor of 1 Conway Street opposite, where a full-width, angled, glazed facade will be directly opposite the proposed skylight. The proposed skylight will directly reflect the existing glazing pattern across the street with exposed framing elements within a frameless glass box.

To the south side, this skylight is a direct response to the BT tower, affording a full height, panoramic view of this landmark building to the inhabitants of the space within.

Another aspect of detailed contextual response is the side and rear glazing to the proposed extension.

To the side, the glazing pattern of the existing building below is carried into the new extension, but rendered in obscured glazing to avoid overlooking concerns to/from the rear windows on the properties facing Maple Street.

To the rear, the contemporary horizontal glazing of 1-10 Conway Mews is reflected in the full width, metal-framed, operable glazing that forms the lower portion of the rear wall.

Also, the overall form and detailing of the proposed contemporary rear extension reflect the wider conservation area. The area audit states that:

"The former mews and warehouse properties historically have simpler detailing, often with garage doors, larger openings and hoists."

We are proposing to continue this tradition with the size and scale of the openings as mentioned above and also in the transition to a simple metal and glass skin, as outlined in 'materials' below.

policy

We believe the strategy outlined above complies with Camden Core Strategy CS14 and with Development Policies DP24 and DP25. More specific policy issues have been raised in the conservation area audit as follows:

A common problem in the conservation area has been the detrimental effect of insensitive alterations to existing buildings. As stated in the area audit, this is particularly due to:

- *"Inappropriate external painting, cleaning and pointing of brickwork.*
- *The replacement of historic fabric with inappropriate materials or details such as inappropriately detailed or proportioned doors, windows, downpipes or railings.*
- *Inappropriate roof level extensions- particularly where these interrupt the consistency of a uniform terrace or the prevailing scale and character of a block, are overly prominent in the street, including the addition of prominent roof level ventilation plant.*
- *Loss of original details"*

With this in mind, our strategy for the design of the rooftop extension addresses the conservation area audit concerns listed above as follows:

- the proposed brickwork to the front facade will be detailed and painted to match the existing brickwork below.
- no historic fabric or original details will be lost with the proposed extension. The proposed windows to the front facade will match the existing windows below and will be scaled in keeping with the established pattern of the street. The exception will be the proposed projecting glazed box at the third floor, and we believe that this variation reflects both the change in massing and scale as the terrace reaches the existing roof terrace to number 2 conway street, and also signals the building's unique status within the streetscape. It is the only shopfront in this portion of conway street, and it's use as a gallery is celebrated with this unique sculptural feature.
- far from 'interrupting the consistency of a uniform terrace or the prevailing scale and character of a block' - the proposed parapet line for the street front of the building will in fact complete this portion of terrace and alleviate the gap that the 20thC warehouse addition of 2a to the street had produced.
- furthermore, the complaint that roof extensions '*are overly prominent in the street, including the addition of prominent roof level ventilation plant*' is also avoided with our design. The front portion of the extension will blend seamlessly with the existing streetscape and, as shown on sheet cws_s_102, the proposed raised portion of roof to the rear will not be visible at all from the street, or from the ground and first floors of the building opposite. There will be no rooftop plant, and any rooftop solar panels will also be out of sight from below.

The proposed scheme also responds to specific Camden planning policies as follows:

Roof extensions in the Camden Planning Guide, section 41.13 and the design guide section 5:

Additional storeys and roof alterations are likely to be acceptable where:

- *a) there is an established form of roof addition or alteration to a terrace or group of similar buildings and where continuing the pattern of development would help to reunite a group of buildings and townscape;*
- *b) alterations are architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and retain the overall integrity of the roof form;*

- *c) there are a variety of additions or alterations to roofs which create an established pattern and where further development of a similar form would not cause additional harm.*

The proposed scheme clearly satisfies parts (a) and (b) for the front portion where an existing parapet line is established for the group and where the extension is visible from other parts of the conservation area. The rear portion clearly satisfies part (c) at the rear of the site, where a variety of historical additions and rebuilds have resulted in a mixed group of roof forms.

Also, section 41.22 states:

There are cases, usually on contemporary buildings, where a less traditional form of roof addition will be more appropriate. Where the principle of an additional storey is acceptable there should be regard for the following general principles:

- *the visual prominence, scale and bulk of the extension;*
- *use of high quality materials and details;*
- *impact on adjoining properties both in terms of bulk and design and amenity of neighbours, e.g. loss of light due to additional height;*
- *sympathetic design and relationship to the main building.*

In the case of 2a conway street, the existing building is a 20thC brick warehouse that has an existing flat roof. Since this does not fit into any of the traditional roof form categories found in the planning guide, we feel a flat roofed extension is the appropriate form for this building.

As outlined in design strategy above, we have considered all of the principles mentioned.

The proposed roof terraces also comply with Camden Planning Guidance as follows. Section 41.33's and design guide section 5's guidance for roof level terraces:

A terrace provided at roof level should be set back behind the slope of a pitched roof in accordance with Figure 4, or behind a parapet on a flat roof. A terrace should normally comply with the following criteria:

- *the dimensions of the roof should be sufficient to accommodate a terrace without adversely affecting the appearance of the roof or the elevation of the property.*
- *a terrace will only normally be acceptable on the rear of properties*
- *it should not result in the parapet height being altered, or, in the case of valley/butterfly roofs, the infilling of the rear valley parapet by brickwork or railings.*
- *any handrails required should be well set back behind the line of the roof slope, and be invisible from the ground.*
- *it should not result in overlooking of habitable rooms of adjacent properties.*

The proposed roof is of sufficient size to comply with the first requirement. The siting of the terraces, one to the rear and one on the rear portion of roof comply with the second requirement. The parapets will not be altered to accommodate the terraces and the handrails are invisible from the ground, as shown on sheet cws_s_102. No habitable rooms will be overlooked to the rear of the property and screens and/or planting can be used to screen the short sides of the terraces if any overlooking issues are found there.

As noted in sections 41.35, 41.36 and section 44, as well as cpg3 section 10 and development policy 22 we are proposing green roofs and areas for solar panels that are hidden from general view.

materials

existing

The existing building is concrete-framed with painted brick exterior walls incorporating metal-framed, single-glazed casement windows, along with more recent shopfront glazing to the front facade

proposed

As described above, the new roof extension will match these materials to the front and will deploy more contemporary materials to the rear.

The front facade will use the same painted brick and metal framed glazing, except at the proposed projecting frameless -glass box.

The rear will be composed of dull metal cladding with flush mounted obscured structural glazing to the side and with openable metal-framed, double-glazed doors to the rear

The roof will have a frameless-glass skylight and timber decking to a green roof.

Both terraces will have glazed balustrades.

site access and landscaping

Existing access to the rear of the building and courtyard is via a doorway directly on conway street and this will be retained. The existing exterior metal stair will also be retained for access to the second floor balcony. This balcony will be extended and a new doorway will be formed to access the flat.

There is no parking on the site and all existing landscaping to the courtyard and existing rear balcony will be retained.

A green roof and additional planting will be deployed on the proposed extension

accessibility

The flat will conform to the Lifetime Homes standards where appropriate, given its location on the proposed third floor of the building.

flood risk

The site is not within a flood risk zone

renewables

Per Camden Core Strategy Policy CS13, the proposed scheme will use sustainable and sustainably sourced materials.

It will also incorporate several technological sustainability solutions including both solar thermal panels for water heating and a photo-voltaic array on the roof in line with the government's tariff scheme. All roof-installed equipment will be behind the parapet and not visible from the street.

All new windows will be double-glazed units and particular attention will be paid to energy efficiency in the new extension per CPG3 section 4 on existing buildings.