

16 Daleham Gardens London NW3

Conservation Assessment

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1 **Scope**

- 1.1 This assessment has been prepared at the request of Marcel Rahm of Milkstudio to accompany a planning application. It is based on an examination of the site and the surrounding area and on relevant documents including the conservation area statement, current local and national policy documents, the Survey of London and similar material.
- 1.2 The assessment has been prepared by Anthony Walker, a conservation architect on the Register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation, who has extensive experience of similar assessments and of nineteenth and twentieth century buildings.
- 1.3 The site is located in the Fitzjohn's Netherall Conservation Area. The building is not listed but is identified as making a positive contribution to the Area.

2 **Relevant national and local legislation and guidance**

2.1 **Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5)**

This document sets out Government policy with regard to the conservation of the historic environment.

Under Objectives, paragraph 7, the key aspects are to consider the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of conservation, to recognise that intelligently managed change may be necessary and to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

All the policies relate to heritage assets but the following are of particular relevance to this site.

HE6 Information requirements.

HE6.1 Applications should provide a description of the significance of the heritage asset.

HE7 Policy Principles.

HE 7.2 Consideration of the particular significance of the heritage asset.

HE 7.5 The aim that new development should make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctive characteristics.

HE 8 The assumption that a pre-application discussion will identify any heritage assets.

Conservation Principles is referred to in PPS5 with regard to the identification of significance. In Principle 4 it is confirmed that change in the historic environment is inevitably caused by natural processes and by responses to social, economic and technological change. Paragraph 4.2 states that Conservation is 'the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways which will best sustain its heritage values'.

2.2 **Camden Local Development Framework (LDF) Policies** as adopted in 2010.

DP24 Securing High Quality Design

This confirms that in new development, including alterations and extensions, it is expected that the character, setting, context, form and scale of neighbouring buildings will be considered, as well as the character and proportions of the existing building. The quality of materials used, together with the topography and accessibility should be taken into account.

In paragraph 24.5 it is stated that '*Design should respond creatively to its site and its context*'.

Paragraph 24.6 confirms that '*Innovative design can greatly enhance the built environment and... high quality contemporary design will be welcomed*'.

Paragraph 24.7 sets out a number of considerations including the character and constraints of the site, the prevailing pattern density and scale of surrounding development, and the impact on views and vistas.

DP25 deals with conservation areas and listed buildings.

Conservation areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas the Council will:

- a) take into account any conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within those areas;*
- b) only permit development within conservation areas that will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of that area;*
- c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building which makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this would harm the character or appearance of that area, unless exceptional circumstances can be shown which outweigh the case for retention;*
- d) not permit development outside a conservation area which causes harm to the character and appearance of that area;*
and
- e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.*

Paragraph 25.18 deals with the archaeology and confirms that there is an area of interest to the east of Daleham Mews but that it does not affect Daleham Gardens.

DP27 Deals with basements and light wells. With regard to the latter it states that:

- 'in determining applications for light wells the Council will consider whether:*
- i) the architectural character of the building is protected;*
- ii) the character and appearance of the surrounding area is harmed;*
and
- iii) the development results in the loss of more than 50% of the front garden or other amenity.'*

2.3 Camden Planning Guidance 2011 (CPG)

The CPG is emerging policy which is gradually replacing the previous advice from 2006 and is intended to support the LDF. The relevant sections on design have been adopted.

Paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10 set out a number of general aims.

Under section 3 the key objectives include the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of conservation areas and note that Conservation Area Statements provide additional information on specific areas.

Paragraph 3.5 confirms that '*Conservation Areas are not designated to stop development or change but to ensure that change is managed to conserve the historic significance of the area as a whole*'

Paragraph 3.16 sets out what each Conservation Area Statement will contain, including a description of its character, an outline of key issues including the identification of the elements contributing to the historic significance of the area and the features which have a negative impact.

Section 4 deals with extensions and alterations which are required to take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings. Rear extensions should be subservient to the property as a whole.

Paragraph 4.7 confirms that a harmonious contrast with the existing property and surroundings may be appropriate to distinguish it from the existing building and paragraph 4.9 confirms that rear extensions are often the most appropriate way to extend a house. Paragraph 4.10 provides more detailed criteria to be considered and paragraph 4.13 confirms that, in general, extensions of up to one whole floor below the existing eaves are acceptable. Paragraph 4.15 acknowledges that the backs of some buildings may be architecturally distinguished, either by forming a harmonious composition or by contributing visually to the townscape, and notes that these may be identified in the Conservation Area Statements.

2.4 **Conservation Area Statement.**

DP25 confirms that consideration will be given to relevant Conservation Area Statements. The relevant document for this site is the Fitzjohn's / Netherall Statement prepared in 2001. The Conservation Area was designated in 1984 and Daleham Gardens, together with other roads, was added in 1988. This document provides a general historical background and assessment of Daleham Gardens. Several buildings, including 16 Daleham Gardens, are identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the area.

3 **Assessment of the Area**

3.1 The site lies on the eastern edge of the Fitzjohns Netherall conservation area. The Ordnance Survey map of 1873 shows the area as open farm land with Belsize Park fully developed to the south. Development commenced in this area in the 1880's with large houses around the existing Fitzjohn's Avenue. Two houses were built in Daleham Gardens in 1888 and the whole area was developed by 1891 as shown on the OS map for 1896.
[APPENDIX A]

3.2 According to the Survey for London the area was classified as 'upper middle-class, middleclass and wealthy'. A number of significant figures lived in the area including artists, writers and social reformers and work was carried out by, among others, the architect Norman Shaw.

3.3 The conservation area statement emphasises the significance of Fitzjohn's Avenue at the heart of the area. Work started on its construction in 1875 and in 1883 Harpers magazine described it as 'one of the noblest streets in the world', being fifty feet wide. It is noted that the adjoining streets were less spacious but all had good sized sites and that during the 1870's and 1880's, the period during which Daleham Gardens was created, a free style of pre-Victorian architectural influences emerges within the Conservation Area which include Queen Anne, Jacobean, Domestic Revival and the Arts and Crafts movement which was strongly influenced by Norman Shaw.

3.4 In the Conservation Area Statement it is recognised on page 9 that significant decorative elements are present in the area, including chimneys, terracotta enrichment and tile hanging. Roofs are identified as an important element which dominate the skyline and it is noted that back gardens are often not visible from the street but can form large blocks of open land which contribute to the character of the area.

3.5 Page 11 of the Conservation Area Statement includes a section specific to Daleham Gardens which has been endorsed by examination of the site as set out below. In the final paragraph of this section it is noted that the properties have small gaps between them and that the projecting eaves

provide a strong linear emphasis, with tall chimneys punctuating the long-distance views. It also states that '*Originally built with no vehicular access from the front, the quality of the street is in part due to the close proximity of the properties and the continuous frontage of brick wall.*'

- 3.5 The area has retained most of the building layout shown on the 1896 OS map. Daleham Gardens is, as noted above, significantly smaller in scale than Fitzjohn's Avenue to the west. The building plots are also noticeably smaller with very small front gardens. It is clear that the properties on the eastern side of the road are much larger than those on the western side.
- 3.6 Behind the buildings on the eastern side is a small street called Daleham Mews which lies within the Belsize Conservation Area and which has a number of listed buildings on the eastern side. The buildings in the mews do not link directly to the houses or gardens in Daleham Gardens and there does not appear to have been any direct relationship. From a visual inspection, the buildings on the two sides of the mews appear to have been built at different times and with different architectural treatment. The back of the buildings on the western side of Daleham Mews have some decorative terracotta work built into the party wall facing Daleham Gardens and the upper floors are set back from that wall.
[APPENDIX B]
- 3.7 The general impression of the street is of a leafy road rising significantly to the north. Unlike Fitzjohn's Avenue, the trees are not in the street but in the front gardens of the majority of the houses, often screening them from the street. The views in both directions along Daleham Gardens is noted in the Conservation Area Statement as being of significance.
[APPENDIX C]
- 3.8 The low brickwork wall with stone dressings along the street frontage is not completely uniform in appearance and is sometimes surmounted by railings of varying designs but it does provide a unifying feature.
[APPENDIX D]
- 3.9 The houses appear to be in groups with similar detailing, indicating that some at least may have been speculative developments to a fairly standard pattern. The Conservation Area Statement refers to a variety of styles including Queen Anne revival, Arts and Crafts and Gothic. This variety is reflected in Daleham Gardens although the predominant influence is probably Arts and Crafts.
- 3.10 The materials used are predominantly traditional brickwork, tile hanging and roofing, and decorative plaster work.
[APPENDIX E]
- 3.11 The buildings were originally laid out as independent villas with small gaps between them. Some of these have been infilled, generally with single storey side extensions which close the gap and some of the buildings have basement windows facing the road.
- 3.12 There are examples of modern buildings and, in particular, modern extensions to existing buildings. To the north of 16 Daleham Gardens there are two buildings with substantial and inappropriate roof conversions, resulting in heavy and overbearing roof lines. The Conservation Area Statement refers to the loss of front gardens and to the presence of timber fences as negative features throughout the sub-area; there are however no

other items identified as negative within Daleham Gardens, despite alterations having been made to a number of buildings.

- 3.13 The buildings on the eastern side of Daleham Gardens are not generally visible from the east since Daleham Mews is too narrow for them to be seen over the existing buildings lining the Mews. There are glimpses of the roof lines of Daleham Gardens properties from Belsize Lane but not of the main back elevations. It is considered that works to 16 Daleham Gardens will not affect the setting of the listed buildings in Daleham Mews. While the back elevation could be seen from the upper floors of the properties on the western side of Daleham Mews, it is notable that most of these have provided screening for their own purposes and that, to the south of the subject property, modern innovative design extensions have been permitted in the Mews.
- 3.14 An arboricultural survey has been carried out and recommendations for protection of trees on the site have been prepared. It is noted that the lime hedge along the front of the building will be enhanced by the removal of an intrusive, poor quality lilac. Some small insignificant bushes at the front will be removed and it is understood that replacement semi-mature trees will be provided at the back where existing trees are lost.

4 **Significance of the building**

- 4.1 The building is not listed but is included in the Conservation Area Statement as one of a group of buildings, 7-29, which are unlisted but which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.2 It is one of several similar buildings on the eastern side of the road. There are small variations such as the use of tile hanging to the front gable in some situations, and plaster pargetting in others.
- 4.3 The gaps on either side of the building have been retained although there is a small lean-to garage on the southern side which compromises the appearance of the building. There is also a current planning consent for a small two storey side extension on the southern side.
- 4.4 The building is on four levels: basement, ground floor, first and second floor, the last being largely set into the roof with dormer windows at the front.
- 4.5 The design is asymmetrical with many influences but predominantly those from the Arts and Crafts movement.
- 4.6 The front of the building has considerable decorative features and details while the back has some strong modelling but is generally very much simpler with a stronger vertical emphasis. Much of the back elevation is in poor condition and in need of restoration.
- 4.7 There is a substantial change in level between the front of the building and the back, so that the basement at the back is in effect at ground level. The relationship with the garden is poorly resolved largely on this account with the principle ground floor rooms lacking a positive relationship with the garden and the basement service level facing directly onto the garden. This could be resolved with some rearrangement of the accommodation.
- 4.8 Although there are a number of decorative features there are none which appear to be of special individual quality; they do however make a significant contribution to the character of the building as seen from the street.

- 4.9 At the back the building, despite the use of traditional materials, is more austere in appearance and presents a simple, strong central form with wings on each side.
- 4.10 Some decorative features have been lost, for instance the tops of the chimney stacks which have clearly been rebuilt at a lower level with untypical plain copings.
- 4.11 At the back there appear to have been some alterations giving scope for more substantial changes, preferably maintaining the major massing elements of the existing façade.
- 4.12 Some of the details such as the inlays in the back party wall should be preserved.
- 4.13 The main significance of the building lies in its contribution as one of a series of individual structures combining many of the same features and built over a reasonably short period, thus reflecting the social as well as aesthetic development of the area. It is considered important that this contribution to the street scene should be maintained.
- 4.14 No architect has been identified as responsible for the design and it is quite possible, as with other roads in the area, that the houses were built by a builder using an in-house designer as the plan does not appear to be particularly distinctive. No persons or events of significance have been identified as associated with the property.

5 **The proposals**

- 5.1 The proposals are described by the architect in the Design and Access Statement and comprise, in principle, internal alterations combined with alterations to the back wall of the building, a side extension which replaces the inappropriate small garage and is broadly on the scale of the side extension already approved, and an extension at ground level and existing lower ground level which provides a glass floored terrace. A further basement level will also be constructed below ground level which is not apparent from either the front or the back of the building.
- 5.2 The main form of the house will be preserved, as will the decorative detail of the front elevation. A small light well will be provided at the front of the building to bring natural light and ventilation into the basement area.
- 5.3 It is understood that the tree planting and the garden to the front of the building will be generally retained while at the back some additional planting and remodelling of the garden are proposed. Timber fencing will be replaced with brick walls of traditional construction.
- 5.4 The reconstruction of the back of the building will improve the lighting and outlook from the main rooms and provide better access to the outside from ground level as well as resolving the current uncomfortable relationship between the garden and service areas. The main form of the building will be retained, including the roofs.
- 5.5 The proposed distribution of the windows follows the informal pattern of the historic building.

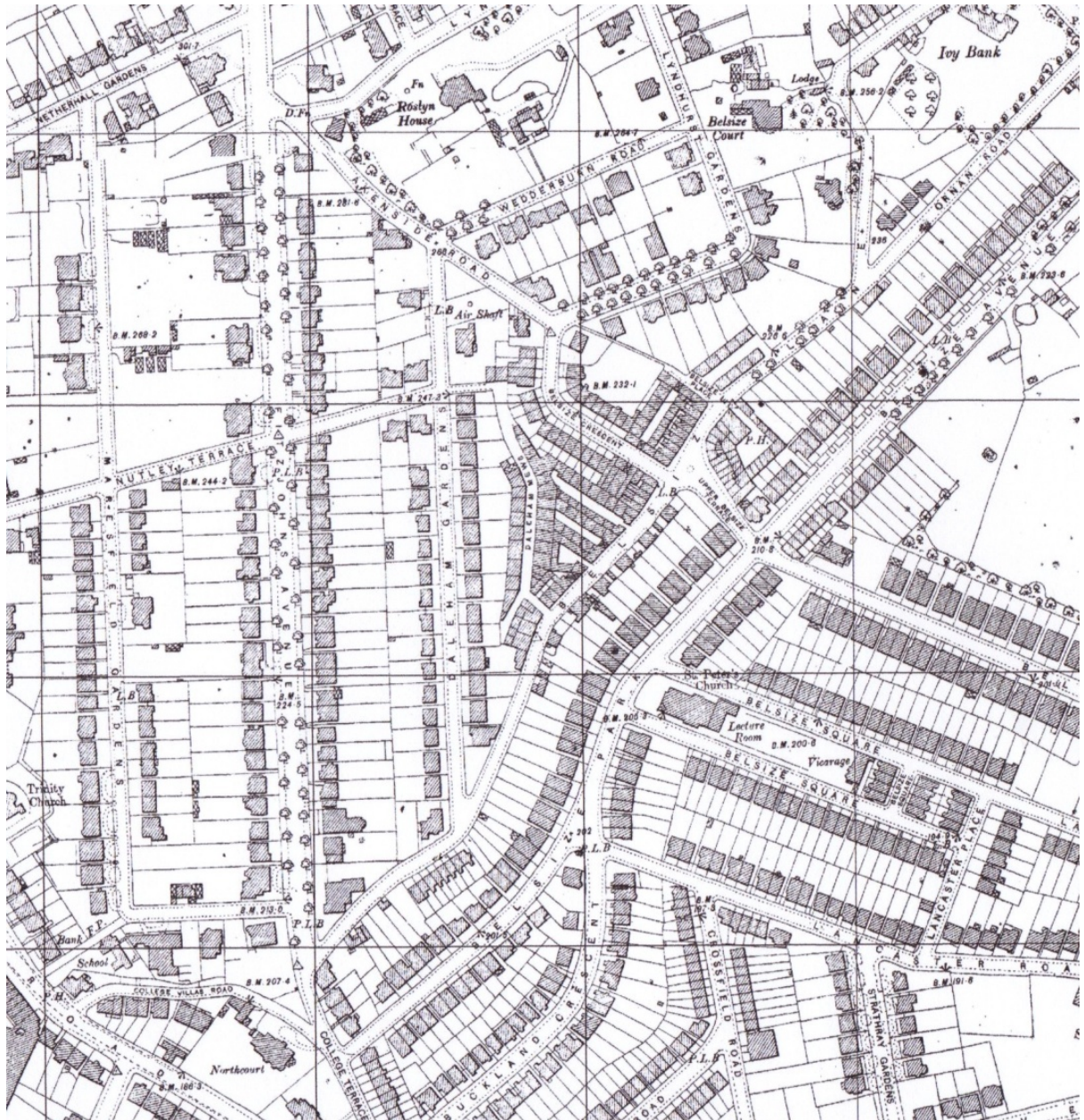
- 5.6 The framing of the lower ground level opens up the interior to the garden and provides a terrace directly outside the ground floor rooms. While not a traditional arrangement, this does reflect the nature of the change of level from front to back of the house and creates a more integrated relationship between garden and house which is beneficial and would have been of interest to designers of the Arts and Crafts period who often sought harmony between the two.
- 5.7 In retaining and restoring the front elevation of the property and the main gaps at the side, the significance of the house remains and its future is assured. The retention of trees and the wall detail along the front maintains the features of the conservation area as described in section 3 above.
- 5.8 The light wells are small and close to the building. They are not readily visible and do not harm the appearance of either the building or the Conservation Area. They are considerably smaller than 50% of the front garden and comply with the guidance cited in DP27. They do allow natural light and ventilation to the existing basement.
- 5.9 The back of the building respects the historic form while reflecting the enhancement of the interior accommodation and the increased sustainability of the proposals.
- 6.0 **Assessment of proposals in relation to local and national policy.**
- 6.1 The applicant commissioned this conservation assessment to inform the design process and to accompany the planning application in accordance with PPS5 HE6, HE7 and HE8.
- 6.2 The proposals reflect that conservation is a process of managing change in accordance with Conservation Principles, Principle 4.
- 6.3 It is considered that the proposals, in accordance with DP24, respond creatively to the site, the building and its architectural and historic context in preserving the main elevations and restoring key features such as the chimney stacks and the innovative design proposals for the back elevation in accordance with paragraph 24.6 and 24.7. In particular the back elevation retains the form of the existing building and the roof line which are the significant elements. The relationship between the house and the garden at the lower ground level is significantly enhanced and allows the building to sit more comfortably on the site. The views identified as being of importance in the Conservation Area Statement are those along Daleham Gardens and these are preserved and enhanced by the restoration of the building fabric and the removal of the projecting leanto on the south side.
- 6.4 The proposals to restore the front and side elevations of the building preserve the decorative features and the roof line and enhance the appearance through the restoration of the chimney stacks. The back of the building is acknowledged as not significant in the conservation area which, as noted in paragraph 3.5 above, is largely defined by the front elevations, their horizontal emphasis and the small gaps between properties which emphasise the street frontage and the tree lined roads with continuous brick frontages. The removal of the existing inappropriate leanto garage on the southside is a positive enhancement of the appearance of the building and the Conservation Area. The proposals therefore comply with DP25 and preserve the setting of the Conservation Area.

- 6.5 The small light well at the front of the building does not occupy 50% of the front garden and does not detract from the appearance of the building or the architectural character. It is considered that the proposals are in accordance with DP27.
- 6.6 The proposals represent the change which is anticipated in CPG paragraph 3.5, and take into account the character of the area as set out below. The back elevation design pays due attention to the pre-application advice to combine the use of traditional materials with a clear statement of contemporary architectural detailing, in accordance with paragraph 4.7 of the CPG. Additional accommodation is provided with a back extension in accordance with paragraph CPG 4.9 and is below the height identified as the maximum acceptable in paragraph CPG 4.13. The existing back of the building is of no specific merit as shown in paragraph CPG 4.15 and is not identified in the Conservation Area Statement as significant as required by CPG 3.16. It is acknowledged that due to the close spacing of the properties the backs of the buildings are not immediately apparent.
- 6.7 It is agreed that the building does make a positive contribution to the Fitzjohns Netherall Conservation Area in accordance with the guidance noted in paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 above which note the contribution of roof lines, chimney stacks and detailed decorative schemes of the elevations which address the street. It is considered that the restoration of the chimneys, the conservation of the building fabric and the replacement of the timber fences which are noted in the Conservation Area Statement as being a negative feature in the area with brick walls will all reinforce that positive contribution.
- 7.0 **Conclusions**
- 7.1 In restoring and preserving the front and side elevations, together with the roof line and decorative details, the removal of the intrusive existing lean-to garage and the replacement of timber fences, the proposals **preserve and enhance** the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 7.2 The proposals for the back of the building are in accord with the policy as set out above and **enhance** a currently undistinguished elevation while maintaining its secondary status with regard to the main street frontage.
- 7.3 The proposals retain the open space at the back of the building and will **preserve** the main leafy appearance of the site, both on the main street frontage and at the back.
- 7.4 The proposals do not affect the setting of the listed buildings in Daleham Mews.
- 7.5 It is therefore concluded that the proposals do comply with both national and local policies as set out in section 2, and that they **preserve and enhance** the significance of the building and the character and appearance of the Fitzjohn Netherall Conservation Area.

Anthony Walker
15th August 2011

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
1896 Ordinance Survey



APPENDIX B
Decorative detail of Party Wall at end of garden



APPENDIX C
Tree-lined aspect of Daleham Gardens



APPENDIX D
Front walls



APPENDIX E
Use of traditional materials and decorative features

