

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

SITE AT 23 SOUTH HILL PARK GARDENS, LONDON NW3 2TD

PLANNING APPLICATION BY MR GERWYN SAMUEL & MR GARETH DAVIES

FOR RETENTION OF TIMBER GATES AND BRICK PILLARS TO FRONT
BOUNDARY

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

February 2010

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement accompanies the planning application submitted to Camden London Borough Council (the “LPA”) by Mr Gerwyn Samuel and Mr Gareth Davies for the retention of the existing timber gates and brick pillars to the front boundary at 23 South Hill Park Gardens, London NW3 2TD.
- 1.2 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in DCLG Circular 01/2006.

2. ASSESSMENT

Physical Context

- 2.1 The application site, which is located on the south (inner) side of South Hill Park Gardens, is occupied by a three-storey, double-fronted, detached house. The application site forms part of the South Hill Park Conservation Area, an area which was developed from 1871 onwards by Thomas Rhodes. South Hill Park Gardens is laid out in a ‘squash racket’ shaped loop which maximised building frontages between the reservoir to the west and the railway cutting to the east.
- 2.2 The residential properties fronting South Hill Park and South Hill Park Gardens are of a broadly similar scale and design although the detached application property is unusual in that it has a long, curving road frontage due to its position on a sharp bend in the road. In addition, the principal elevation of the house is set well back from the highway, and as such, the site incorporates a deep front garden. By contrast, the position of the dwelling within its plot results in a small rear garden. The front and side

gardens have been landscaped to a very high standard, and incorporate lawn, shrubs, and pathways.

- 2.3 The frontage of the site is enclosed by a brick wall interspersed with brick pillars, and by two metre high privet hedges. In addition, three timber gates (one pair and a single gate) have been constructed directly in front of the building's main entrance. These gates are 'framed' by brick pillars. It is these gates and adjacent brick pillars which are the subject of this planning application. The single gate provides pedestrian access to the house via the pathway which leads to the main entrance. The double gates are required on a more occasional basis to provide access for large items, such as a grand piano, which need to be delivered to or collected from the premises.
- 2.4 The surrounding area features a wide variety of frontage treatments but is generally characterised by tall brick pillars, and by brick walls and other forms of enclosure of varying height.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.5 Planning permission was granted under reference 2005/3597/P for the conversion of the property from 3 non self-contained flats into a single dwelling house. Planning permission was granted under reference 2005/5245/P for alterations to the roof. Planning permission was granted under reference 2006/5749/P for the erection of a rear ground floor conservatory extension.
- 2.6 The existing brick pillars and timber gates, the subject of this planning application, were constructed during the latter part of 2007. At that time, discussions were undertaken with Ms Mary Samuel on the appropriate materials to be used for the gates. Ms Samuel suggested that these should

be finished in cedar to match an extension which had been constructed on a property opposite the application site. On 26th November 2009, the LPA's Enforcement Team wrote to the applicants suggesting that planning permission was required for the works in question, and seeking either the submission of a planning application for retention of the works or their removal. The LPA was subsequently advised that a planning application would be submitted.

Planning Policy

The statutory development plan

- 2.7 The statutory development plan for the area comprises the London Plan of 2004 and the Camden Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which was adopted in 2006. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 requires decisions on planning applications to be taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The adopted UDP

- 2.8 The following saved policies of the adopted UDP, as summarised, are considered to be relevant to the issues raised by this application:-
- Policy B1 lays down a series of general design principles for new development. Schemes should be of a high design standard, and be safe and accessible to all. The spaces around and between buildings should be improved, and development should be sustainable, adaptable, provide high quality landscaping and boundary treatments, and should protect amenity. Particular regard will be paid to building lines,

plot sizes, the bulk and scale of neighbouring buildings, existing topography and landscaping, the design of neighbouring buildings, the quality of the proposed detailing and materials, and the impact on visual amenity. Supporting paragraph 3.16 states that boundary features, such as walls and fences, should be provided to a high standard;;

- Policy B3 states that planning permission will not be granted for the inappropriate alteration or replacement of boundary features. Supporting paragraph 3.38 states that conservation areas are particularly sensitive to the loss of traditional boundary enclosures, and that boundary enclosures can be have a positive effect for crime prevention;
- Policy B7 states that the Council will only grant consent for development in a conservation area that preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area;

Planning Guidance

- 2.9 'Camden Planning Guidance' was published in 2006, and represents a material consideration in the determination of this planning application. Paragraph 23.34 states that where walls, gates and gateposts are to be replaced, care should be taken to respect the original character, height and materials. Conservation Area Statements provide more detailed guidance.

National Planning Policy

- 2.10 National planning policy set out in PPS1 and PPG15 is considered to be of relevance to the planning issues raised by the application proposals. In

particular, this national policy context seeks to promote sustainable development of a high design standard, and for development in conservation areas to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of those areas.

- 2.11 More specifically, in respect of development in conservation areas, PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) states, at paragraph 4.16, that policies for conservation areas will need to be designed to allow the area to remain alive and prosperous, and to avoid unnecessarily detailed controls over businesses and householders. At paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20, the guidance confirms that the Courts have held that the requirements of Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 will be met where development leaves the character and appearance of the conservation area unharmed.

3. DESIGN

Amount of Development

- 3.1 The development as constructed, the subject of this planning application, comprises a total frontage length of 5.6 metres formed by three brick pillars and three timber gates, two of which form a double-gated entrance. The brick pillars (including capping) range in height from approximately 1.8 to 2.2 metres, and the timber gates range in height from approximately 1.6 to 1.9 metres. The height variations arise as a result of the sloping ground level which falls east to west across the site frontage.

Layout

- 3.2 The brick pillars and timber gates function as a means of enclosure along

part of the front boundary of the application site. The smaller gate aligns with the pathway which leads to the main entrance to the dwelling. The double gates provide access for the collection and delivery of large items. For example, the applicants have a grand piano which was delivered to the property through these gates. The gates do not form a driveway for vehicles, and it should be noted that consent for a crossover has not been granted. The garden area immediately to the rear of the double gates is laid to lawn.

Scale

- 3.3 The height of the brick pillars and timber gates is considered appropriate for the application property's setting, and is entirely compatible with the varied character of the front boundary treatment within the South Hill Park Conservation Area.
- 3.4 A large proportion of properties in South Hill Park Gardens incorporate tall brick pillars along the site frontage, and although these vary in height, the pillars constructed at the application site can be considered to be of a very similar scale to the established character of the area. Examples of typical brick pillars are shown in the photographs at Appendix 1.
- 3.5 The timber gates have been designed and constructed to a high standard. Their external cedar finish accords with advice given by the LPA. The height of the gates is subordinate to the height of the brick pillars, and is consistent with, for example, the approved development at 2 South Hill Park Gardens (2005/0378/P) which comprises a length of 2 metre high timber fencing and a timber gate set between two 2 metre high brick pillars. A photograph of these features is attached at Appendix 2. Other examples of means of enclosure of a similar height are found, within this conservation area, at the residential plots adjacent to the Magdala Tavern and at the

junction of South Hill Park and Parliament Hill. Photographs of these sites are included at Appendix 3.

3.6 It is therefore considered that the height of the brick pillars is entirely compatible with that of similar development in the conservation area. With regard to the timber gates, their height is considered to be supportable in planning terms for the following reasons:-

- The corner location and long frontage of the application property makes this site atypical within the conservation area. It is notable that other corner properties with long frontages (see photographs at Appendices 2 and 3) incorporate relatively high forms of enclosure including full height gates;
- The application site is unusual in the context of this conservation area also because the dwelling is set well back from the frontage. Many properties in this area incorporate semi-basement rooms which require light and outlook over the front boundary of the site. This is not the case at 23 South Hill Park Gardens;
- The application property has a large front garden and a small front rear garden. The applicants consider that the front garden is an important amenity area which requires a reasonable degree of privacy. By contrast, most properties in this conservation area incorporate relatively small, open and publicly viewed front gardens whilst providing their occupiers large and private back gardens; and
- The front boundary of the application site is enclosed by established hedging of approximately 2 metres in height. This

hedging will be retained, and therefore the relatively enclosed character of the front boundary will not change.

Landscaping

- 3.7 The application site has been landscaped to a high standard. The works, the subject of this planning application, are entirely compatible with the high quality landscaping, including the privet hedging to the front boundary, which has now been established.

Appearance

- 3.8 The appearance of the brick pillars, including their general form and their use of bricks of an appropriate shade and texture, is fully compatible with the established character of other similar means of enclosure in this conservation area. The cedar-faced gates are of a pleasing appearance which is compatible with the extension which has been erected opposite the application site. The gates have been constructed in higher quality timber than is the case with the majority of wooden front boundary fences in this conservation area.

Use

- 3.9 The application to retain the brick pillars and timber gates has no implications for the lawful use of the application site as a dwelling.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The brick pillars and timber gates which have been erected at the front of the application site have been designed and constructed to a very high standard. Planning policy, at national and local level, requires that such

works preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, in particular through their appropriate scale and appearance.

4.2 Whilst many properties in this conservation area incorporate relatively low boundary walls set between brick pillars of varying height, this is certainly not considered to be a uniform feature of the area. The walls vary in height, and there are examples of inset railings, timber fences and hedges. The three brick pillars which frame the timber gates at the application site are very similar in scale and appearance with many other such structures in the conservation area. Furthermore, the application site is not typical of the conservation area in terms of its size, location or the position of the dwelling within the plot. For the reasons explained previously, these factors support the retention of the timber gates, as constructed.

4.3 The development, as proposed to be retained, is therefore considered to comply with the development plan and associated planning guidance.

5. ACCESS

5.1 The timber gates and brick pillars facilitate ready and level access to the application property.

6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Photographs of examples of other brick pillars (on highway frontages) within the conservation area

Appendix 2 - Photograph of part of frontage of 2 South Hill Park Gardens

Appendix 3 - Photographs of the frontages of properties adjacent to Magdala Tavern, and at the junction of South Hill Park and Parliament Hill

APPENDIX 1



Examples of brick pillars to front boundaries in South Hill Park CA



23 South Hill Park Gardens, London NW3 2TD

Christopher Wickham Associates

APPENDIX 1 (Continued)



Examples of brick pillars to front boundaries in South Hill Park CA



23 South Hill Park Gardens, London NW3 2TD

Christopher Wickham Associates

APPENDIX 2



Site at 2 South Hill Park Gardens

APPENDIX 3



Sites adjacent to Magdala Tavern, and at junction of South Hill Park & Parliament Hill



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Christopher Wickham Associates