

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 07th December 2009. For further information see

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/planning-applications/development-control-members-briefing/>

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	11/12/2009
		N/A	Consultation Expiry Date:	16/11/2009
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Tania Skelli-Yaoz			(1) 2009/4544/P (2) 2009/4515/L	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
36 - 37 Chester Terrace NW1 4ND			See decision notice	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
		Victoria Fowlis		
Proposal(s)				
(1) Unification of No. 36 and No. 37 to form a single family dwelling and formation of new roof terrace (Class C3).				
(2) Works to join No. 36 and No. 37 to form a single family dwelling, these to include internal alterations to create new openings between the properties and formation of new roof terrace.				
Recommendation(s):		Grant planning permission and listed building consent		
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission Listed Building Consent		

The application site comprises two grade I listed terrace houses dating from c1825, by John Nash, designed for the Commissioners of Woods, Forests and Land Revenues, and built by J Burton. The site lies in the Regent's Park conservation area.

Chester Terrace is a grand palace-style terrace of 37 houses, the longest of Nash's grand stucco terraces that form a backdrop for Regent's Park. The buildings were comprehensively rebuilt behind retained facades in the 1960s after sustaining war damage, and as such there is no historic fabric remaining internally.

The existing houses are two separate single dwelling houses which lie vacant for some time, between 5-9 months. The surrounding area is predominantly characterised as residential. The houses do not benefit from a rear garden or other external amenity area.

Relevant History

36 Chester Terrace:

8870380 LBC granted for alterations of existing kitchen adjacent servery and W.C compartment to form larger kitchen on ground floor on 08/05/2003.

37 Chester Terrace:

2004/4659/L LBC granted for internal alterations at second floor level on 21/12/2004.

Adjoining sites:

16 Chester Terrace: 2009/0670/P & 2009/0676/L PP & LBC granted for the removal of an area of the roof to create a terrace, steps and a balustrade to provide access, and a rooflight to replace three existing and installation of mechanical plant in the vaults under the pavement on 24/03/2009.

21 Chester Terrace: Similar proposal approved 2007.

22 Chester Terrace: 2009/1941/P & 2009/1942/L PP & LBC granted for the formation of a roof terrace at roof level, and installation of a cooling system and chiller plant located in vaults at basement level of residential dwelling (Class C3) on 13/08/2009.

26 Chester Terrace: 2003/2735/P & 2003/2736/L PP & LBC granted for the removal and reconstruction of centre section of roof to form a terrace on 16/12/2003.

29 Chester Terrace: Similar proposal approved 2006.

56 Cumberland Terrace: Various internal and external works approved 2007 and 2008.

Relevant policies

- SD1 Quality of Life
- SD6 Amenity for occupiers and neighbours
- B1 General Design Principles
- B3 Alterations and Extensions
- B6 Listed buildings
- B7 Conservation Areas
- H3 Protecting existing housing
- H7 Lifetime Homes

Camden Planning Guidance 2006

Regents Park Conservation Area Statement

Assessment

Proposal-

Planning permission is sought for the amalgamation of the two properties to form one single-dwelling house. This involves works to the internal and external elevations and layout of the buildings. It is proposed to form lateral links between the two buildings at all levels, and a roof terrace. In connecting the two buildings to form one dwelling-house, it is proposed to remove the stair and 1960s lift within no. 36, remove non-original stairs to attic at no. 37, as well as the creation of a new set of stairs from third floor level to access a new rooftop terrace with balustrade, enclosure and new rooflight.

The application form proposes the installation of an unspecified quantity of air conditioning units into the vaults at basement level of the dwellinghouse however no details of their location, type nor details of measures to minimise noise transfer have been submitted. Notwithstanding an assessment of the ambient noise conditions, no existing nor proposed details of the doors to the vault have been submitted, hence this element of the proposal has not been assessed. It may be that air conditioning units would not require planning permission if they are fully internal.

Design & Conservation-

Much of the special interest of these buildings lies in their value as a part of a planned townscape. It is well documented that many of the Nash-designed terraces around Regent's Park were comprehensively rebuilt behind the retained façade post-war, and as such, the interiors of the buildings are arguably of lesser interest than in other terraced buildings of the same period which retain their historic fabric and construction. The reconstruction was not a scholarly replica or facsimile, but some attempt - whether by accident or by design - was made to reinstate the general layout of the buildings, in the historic two room plan form and in the reinstatement of the principal stair flights in their previous position. The installation of lifts, however, means that the room proportions at principal floor levels are not as they were originally: the front rooms are shorter.

For this reason the Council have often taken a more flexible view regarding works to the interiors of these buildings than on terrace houses which retain their historic fabric and features, but would usually seek to ensure that the general plan form of the principal floor levels – ground and first – is retained, and that any proposed internal alterations do not have an impact on the appearance of the buildings from the outside which would confuse the understanding of the original domestic layout of the buildings or the proportions of the principal rooms in relation to the exterior. This is echoed in a recent Inspector's decision for internal works to no. 56 Cumberland Terrace, which has a similar history, which stated that, *"works within the house should complement and enhance the special character arising from the front elevation. As a result, they should not harm the elements of the dwelling that reflect the historic origins of the building as a London townhouse of some stature."*

Policy B3 of the UDP (2006) states that the Council will not grant planning permission for alterations or extensions that cause harm to the architectural quality of the existing building, whilst policy B6 states that the special interest of the listed building must be protected.

The Regents Park Conservation Area statement also needs to be considered. Policy RP1 states that new development should respect existing architectural features and characteristics.

With the above in mind, the lateral conversion and alterations to the partitioning proposed here are not considered to be unacceptable in principle. Breaches in the party wall line have been confined to the rear portion of the building, behind the spine wall line, so as not to impact on the exterior of the buildings and one's appreciation of these properties as two distinct terraced houses, given the aforementioned significance of the front facade. A jib door opening within the first floor front room is proposed, but this is small in size and positioned away from the window, so I do not consider that this would impact unduly. The principal rooms

remain unaffected in terms of their scale and relationship to the front elevation.

With regard to the roof terrace, similar roof terraces have been granted permission elsewhere in Chester Terrace, wherein the principal areas of interest within the roof profile - namely the front and rear slopes and ridges – are retained and the terrace incorporated within a central recess. This proposal takes the same approach, and the works will have no effect on the external envelope of the building and the views of the building from the Regent's Park. Since the proposal is for a terrace to both roofs they are proposed to be linked by inserting an opening to the party wall. An enclosed internal staircase with door and timber decking is proposed to this level. This will not be visible from the public realm and is also not considered detrimental to the special interest of the listed building.

The proposed new stair access, balustrade and use of the roof as a terrace would not impact on the fabric or plan form at this level and would not be visible from the public realm or neighbouring properties. In this regard the works are not considered to harm the special interest of the listed building or character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The below-pavement vaults are a surviving original feature; these are not proposed to be altered other than to install some plant, which will not affect their special interest. However no details of the plant location, type, fittings nor the treatment of the vault doors have been provided and so this element has been removed from the listed building considerations. An informative has been added to this effect. The excavation and opening up of the vaults at basement level has already been established at the neighbouring properties of 29, 21 and 16 Chester Terrace and hence is considered to be acceptable in this instance also.

In summary, the proposals are considered justifiable in the context of the 1960's interior. The essential special interest now lies in the external elevations of the building itself as part of the whole architectural set piece of the Nash terraces facing Regents Park, and this special interest is not detrimentally affected by the proposals. The proposal is therefore considered in compliance with policies B1, B3, B6 & B7 and is considered acceptable. It is also noted that English Heritage has expressed no objections and directed the Council to determine the application as seen fit, in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of the Council's specialist conservation advice.

Land Use-

Policy H3 aim to protect existing housing. It states that it will resist development that results in the net loss of two or more residential units. While it is acknowledged that each of the existing subject dwellings is large and provides comfortable accommodation for a large family, the proposal complies with the above policy by resulting in the loss of a single unit. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable.

While it is anticipated that the newly refurbished unit could comply with Lifetime Homes standards for inclusive housing this has not been demonstrated as part of the application. It is recommended to condition this in accordance with policy H7.

Amenity-

The proposed use of the roof as a terrace area is considered to be acceptable and will not adversely impact on neighbouring properties with regards to overlooking or loss of sunlight or daylight. The proposed terrace will be inset into the roof and cover both properties with a modest link as mentioned above. It will be reached via a new stair access from third floor level. The terrace will not enable views into habitable rooms in the adjoining properties due to the fact that the proposed terrace will be inset into the roof and will be surrounded by a parapet wall and roofslope. It is therefore considered that it will not interfere with the privacy of neighbouring properties or result in an increase in noise levels. The proposal is therefore consistent with Policy SD6.

Conclusion

The proposed works are considered to be acceptable and sympathetic to their surroundings and not detrimental to the special character of the listed building or the surrounding conservation area. The proposals are broadly acceptable and in line with the relevant policies of the UDP (2006), Camden Planning Guidance and the Regents Park Conservation Area Statement.

Recommendation: Grant planning permission and grant listed building consent.