

59 Fitzjohn's Avenue NW3 6PH

Design and Access Statement In Connection With Proposed Single Storey Rear Extension:

1.0 The Existing Building History.

The semi detached property dates from c.1880 and falls within the Fitzjohn's / Netherhall Conservation Area. The accommodation is laid out over five storeys with parking to the front and a garden to the rear and because the top floor occupies the roof space dormer windows and gable ends are a roof feature. The building envelope is red London Stock brick with decorative brick banding, white painted cornice work and brick corbel details to the chimney stacks, eaves and front elevation. All these details are mostly intact with the exception of the flank wall where modifications to the original window openings have caused breaks in the brick banding.

During the 1960's the property was converted into 5 x 3 bedroom flats (one per floor level) each approximately 120 sq.m. and at that time other substantial changes were also made to the property including:

- Repositioning the common staircase and hall.
- Closing off the original front elevation entrance and providing a new common entrance on the side elevation.
- Extending the front bay window from the first floor level to the third floor.
- Extending the rear elevation bay window from the ground floor level to the second floor.
- Creating a rear elevation roof terrace.
- Reducing the height of the flank wall chimney stacks.
- Revisions to flank wall window openings.
- Rendering the brickwork from lower ground to ground floor level.
- Constructing a garage at lower ground floor level.
- Landscaping the front garden to maximise parking and constructing a ramp to the garage and bridge over to the new side entrance.

In addition to the above and at a later date a glass and stainless steel canopy has been added over the entrance door.

As a result of these works, and in particular the bay window extensions, the original symmetry of nos. 57/59 is now lost.

In 2008 an appeal was granted for a side extension lift shaft which it is proposed to carry out in conjunction with the works described herein.

2.0 Purpose of the development.

The accommodation is generally well configured and proportioned with the exception of the lower ground floor where the living room and kitchen respectively are smaller than the other floors and do not offer the facility of similar accommodation on the other floors.

The development aims to address this issue by reconfiguring and extending and the lower ground floor accommodation.

3.0 Design Development.

3.1 Initial Design.

Initial designs considered a three storey extension of the rectangular bay window and a full width lower ground floor extension with conversion of the garage to habitable accommodation. Small terraces were also included at ground and first floor level.

This scheme was submitted to Camden for an informal opinion which considered it to be detrimental to the appearance of the building and the conservation area. In particular it was felt that the extensions overwhelmed the existing building and the composition bore little relationship to the existing form. There was also concern about overlooking from the terraces although more positively it was not thought that the depth of the three storey extension would have a significant effect on day lighting or shading to either neighbour.

3.2 Withdrawn Application.

An application was made in July 2009 that addressed the concerns stated in the pre-application advice. However, following further design development that application was withdrawn.

3.3 This Application.

This application further reduces the extent of the development at the rear of the building. The existing tripartite bay is not extended and other extensions along the rear elevation have been omitted. The existing garden store is demolished as in previous applications and the new extension erected to the same depth of the store and 1.6m longer.

4.0 Scale.

The rear elevation presents five storeys rising over 14m to the eaves and nearly 18m to the top of the gable. By comparison the scale of the rear extension is modest, the highest point being 3.3m above lower ground floor level and adding just 0.5m² gross to the existing ground floor plan of 153m² and 8m³ to the existing volume

5.0 Impact on Cherry Tree

There is a cherry tree close to the proposed extension which is of great sentimental value to the owner and every effort will be made to protect and retain it during the construction period. This should be possible as the proposed extension will not encroach on the rootball any further than the existing garden store construction.

A report is included with the application stating the protection method and also suggesting a species and position for a replacement tree should it not be possible to retain it.

6.0 Appearance.

6.1 Rear Extension.

The appearance of the original building is "of its age" with prominent brick banding and corbelling details, although the 60's modifications to the bay windows dominate the front and rear elevations and destroy the symmetry with no.57. The rear elevation has painted render to the lower ground floor storey height.

The proposed external finishes and timber window and door specifications are common to the existing building and whilst the crown roof is finished in built up felt it is proposed to finish it with stone chippings at this level to give a more attractive appearance.

7.0 Context within Local Neighbourhood.

In the 1870's and 80's the Victorian architecture embraced a variety of styles and influences and these are all evident in the Conservation Area and within the immediate neighbourhood of no 59 Fitzjohn's Avenue. Originally detached single family dwellings on large plots nos. 55 & 61 Fitzjohn's Avenue have, over the years, been extended and converted into flats. Nevertheless a strong architectural character encompassing irregular building forms particularly at no. 61 is much in evidence and in this context the extension will not seem out of place.

8.0 Impact on Neighbouring Buildings.

The extension will have no impact on the neighbouring buildings.

9.0 Inclusive Access.

The extension will have no impact on the existing inclusive access conditions at lower ground floor or elsewhere in the building.

Existing Rear Elevation

