

**PLANNING APPLICATION
FOR WORKS TO THE GARDENS AT 12-14 PARK VILLAGE EAST:
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

BACKGROUND TO THE APPLICATION

This application relates to a previous application (2006/1549/P) regarding alterations to the garden of numbers 12-14 Park Village East. That application was retrospective and for works comprising the repaving of the existing terraces, the removal of the boundary wall and fence between the two properties and its partial replacement with a new stone wall and an iron railing with a timber top.

The application was submitted by Caroe and Partners, architects but was refused on the grounds that the works were harmful to the setting of the listed buildings.

The refusal notice stated that:

“The free-standing stone wall on the boundary between numbers 12 and 14 and the timber balustrade to the railings, by reason of their height, bulk, location and appearance are incongruous and alien features which detract from the setting of the listed buildings contrary to policy B6 of the London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan, 2006.”

This notice was, however, supplemented with the following informative:

“You are advised that the new terracing and the boundary fence between number 10 and 12 are considered acceptable.”

In the above refusal notice the Council drew a clear distinction between the various elements of the proposal and set out which elements were acceptable and which were not. Similarly, in the report to committee the Planning Officer stated that the paving and terraces were not so harmful to the setting of the listed building as to warrant refusal and enforcement action.

The applicant then appealed against this decision. In its written submission to the Planning Inspector the Council was again precise about the elements of the proposal which it considered to be harmful to the setting of the listed building, namely the timber handrail and the stone wall.

The Inspector dismissed the appeal in relation to the terrace re-paving, the new wall and the handrail. However, whilst the inspector gave detailed reasons for his rejection of the appeal on the new wall and handrail, he gave no reasons for his disagreeing with the Council's acceptance of the terrace repaving.

The purpose of the current application is to put forward a revised scheme that the applicant considers is acceptable in planning and design terms.

ISSUES ADDRESSED IN THE NEW APPLICATION

The Stone Boundary Wall

The Inspector and the Local Planning Authority officers found against this aspect of the design. The inspector was particularly critical of the polished Purbeck stone in the wall, which he found “intrusive and discordant”.

Although in the intervening year since the inspector’s visit the planting has grown up and the wall is virtually hidden from the view of the adjoining properties (see Photographs I-2), this wall will be removed and replaced with additional planting.

The Varnished Timber Hand Rail to the Railings

Again, the Inspector and the Local Authority found that this aspect of the design was detrimental to the setting of the historic buildings.

It has now been replaced with a black painted handrail (see Photograph number 4).

The Stone Terracing

The Purbeck Stone paving replaced concrete paving slabs. It is of a similar colour and texture to those paving slabs, the only difference being that these slabs had been down for some time and had weathered over the years. As a natural material, the weathering characteristics of the stone are much superior to those of concrete and this weathering process will, over time, have the effect of softening the previous perceived harshness of the paving. As can be seen in photographs 5 and 6, this process has already begun and indeed has been further enhanced by the additional planting.

CONCLUSION

In removing the polished Purbeck stone wall and replacing the varnished hand rail with a painted black handrail the issues raised by the Planning officers and in the Planning Inspector’s report will have been addressed. The attached photographs, show that the additional planting now in place has considerably softened the overall effect of the alterations to the garden. The stone terracing has always been an element of the works which the Council found acceptable. The appeal Inspector gave no reasons for disagreeing with that position. The applicant considers that the terracing continues to be acceptable and that the application should be permitted.