

Design & Access Statement

Project: 126 Fordwych Road London NW2 3PB
Client: Martin & Rose McGovern
Date: December 2007

1. Project Overview

The property is a 2 storey detached house located on the East side of Fordwych Road, within the Fortune Green ward. The site is predominantly flat, and the present house is set back approximately 5 metres from the highway. The site is not believed to be within a conservation area and is not listed.

The property is believed to date from the early 20th century and built as a single family dwelling: it lies within a line of similar properties and the street facing façades are relatively original. No 126 has been converted into 4 self contained flats with 2 x 2 bedroom units and 2 x 1 bedroom units, one of each on each floor. There is off street parking on the front garden for 3 cars, and highway parking is controlled with residents permits.

This application is concerned with conversion of the existing attic space into a new 1 bedroom dwelling unit.

2. The Existing Building

The existing building materials are red brick walls with decorative brickwork around the window openings and slate covered pitched roofs. Original sash windows have been replaced with modern aluminium frames, but otherwise the the façade is original. There is a gap of approximately 900mm between each property for access to the rear, and this is typical of the pattern along the street. In the case of this property this is used for access to the rear ground floor flat.

The original entrance hallway and staircase have been retained in the conversion to flats, and the existing footprint of the main house has also be largely retained, this includes a 2 storey rear protrusion which is set at a lower level than the rest of the house – again this is the pattern of neighbouring properties. There are some windows on the North West facing façade which were likely to have been added during the conversion, although these are not visible from the highway. There is one roof light to the north-west facing (side)elevation.

The existing attic space is not inhabited. The roof and attic appear to be in original condition and similar in construction and external appearance with the neighbouring properties.

A single storey extension has been added to the rear, the date unknown, this protrudes 3.6 metres beyond the rear of the protrusion on the North west side. This aligns with a similar extension to the adjoining properties. The rear building line at the rear of all the neighbouring properties has been built out generally by similar distance with a mix of single and two storey additions: exceptionally the rear of number 132 Fordwych Road has been extended further than the general line and is 2 storey.

The ground floor of the house is reasonably accessible to those with disabilities or wheelchair user, with a low step at the principal entrance and wide doors. The 1 bedroom flat on the ground floor is level although corridors are narrow. In the 2 bedroom ground floor flat, the spaces are are generous but there are steps within the property to negotiate. The upper floor can only reached by staircase.

There is a large rear garden of approx 340 sq. metres which is used only by the rear ground floor flat

3. The Proposal

This proposal is to convert the existing attic within the existing structure and to add a rear facing dormer approximately 2/3rds of the width of the rear facing hipped end. The conversion shall allow the creation of a new 1 bedroom flat, and can be achieved without disrupting the layouts of the existing 4 units.

The new dormer is proposed with a slate roof covering and slate hung checks and rear elevation, to match the existing slate covered roof, within the dormer there shall be a white painted window frame. It is not proposed that the existing roof line is altered or extended, and the dormer will not be visible from the highway as it will be obscured by the existing building. Internally, the available height within the existing roof volume is adequate to accommodate a full ceiling height for conversion, although space at the perimeters of the space will be for storage, with attic accommodation retained along side the eaves.

It is also proposed that 2 additional roof lights are added to each of the side facing pitches, these are proposed to be conservation style roof lights which are entirely within the volume of the existing roof. These will be almost entirely concealed from the highway by the existing chimneys and by virtue of the fact that the neighbouring properties are so close that oblique views are extremely acute.

Refuse from the additional unit will be disposed of in the same way as the existing flats on the ground and first floors, this will be stored within the flat for twice weekly collections. There is adequate space on the front yard area for the storage of recyclable waste.

4. Access

It is not proposed that the new dwelling is wheelchair accessible, although the unit will allow good access for the ambulant disabled.

Access to the new unit shall be from the principal entrance from Fordwych Road, the existing staircase from the ground floor is retained and a new dogleg staircase built over it for access to the attic storey. Once inside the new attic level flat, the floor is level.

Gordon Curtis Architects, November 2007