

Design statement
Access statement
Environmental statement, 1a Howitt Road

Revision A 30 August 2007



Design statement:

Proposal

The owners of the ground floor of this building wish to enlarge the existing 11m² basement to 68m², with an excavated external area at the rear of 15.5m². The external area extends into the garden at the rear, which is part of the ground floor flat demise.

Justification

The visual change to the existing building will be minimal: from the front, the only change will be the inclusion of the grillage over the new lightwell. It is proposed that as part of the works, some of the redundant pipework (see photo sheet) will be tidied up and generally this area - which will remain the access to the shared bin store - will be smartened up. At the rear, the works are not intrusive and will not change sight lines or create any overlooking issues.

Excavation of the basement will necessitate underpinning the perimeter walls of the building. The structural engineering firm Pringuer-James Consulting Engineers Ltd have been retained to design the works, and were selected on the basis of their experience of this type of development.

Access Statement

This building was constructed in the Edwardian period as separate flats without consideration of level access. Steps at the front make the building a poor candidate for level access even to the ground floor.

It is proposed to replace the existing stairs to the basement, which are steep, with a more ambulant disabled friendly stair with handrails on both sides. It is not considered feasible to install a lift to connect the ground and basement levels.

A level connection between the external area at the rear and the basement level is proposed.

Environmental Statement

Basement excavations have implications on drainage as they are often below the invert level of the drains, and need to be carefully considered with a view to flooding.

In the case of 1 Howitt Road, the invert of the existing combined foul and surface manhole at the front of the building is over 2.9m below ground floor level, allowing gravity drainage within Building Regulation recommended falls for both the soil pipes and surface drainage from the rear. A new manhole will be constructed close to the main one at the front to allow inclusion of a non-return valve, as recommended by Camden Council. The walls will have a cavity drain system, draining to a pumped sump under the basement floor, and it is proposed that an overflow from the rear external area will connect to this as a second line of defence.

The enlargement of the lightwell at the front will go no further towards the front wall (and planted hedge) than the current deep manhole. It will also be a safe distance from the existing tree at the front of the property.

The property is about halfway up Haverstock Hill, so benefits from good falls on the existing drainage and no danger of river flooding.

The new basement will have the required level of insulation; however we would like to open discussions with the building control officer as to optimising the amount in the basement floor so as to take advantage of thermal mass and thereby reducing heating costs.