PLANNING REPORT
25 Adamson Road, London. NW3 3HT-

Application no: 2006/5472

Edgley Design- 21 Dec 2006

Design statement

Use

Mr Dyble is the owner of the flat on the ground and first floor (entrance level) and owner of the garden to the rear. At present this is a three bedroom flat entered on the upper level with kitchen and living area and 3 bedrooms, one ensuite and a bathroom downstairs.

Mr Dyble has lived at the address for some time with his wife and children, and would like to extend the property to allow him to remain in the flat while adapting it to the needs of an expanding family.

Amount

Our proposal is to build a small studio extension in the garden to allow the property to remain viable as a family home. The studio would be used as a residence for a nanny, and as such would have a separate kitchen and bathroom. The garden at the moment rises up at the rear of the house and by excavating down below the existing garden surface level and then landscaping on top we minimise the impact the development has on the adjacent properties.

From a social point of view, the proposal creates a larger residential unit more suitable for a family, in accordance with Camden's policy H1 to 'secure the fullest possible residential use of vacant and underused sites and buildings', and policy 2.61 that encourages the creation of large, flexible family dwellings that have garden access.

Layout

The layout is as open as possible to make maximum use of a small space. The bedroom can be divided off from the living area to create some privacy (and a separate protected hallway has been provided to ensure safe fire escape in this configuration).

The entrance to the unit has been placed to the alleyway side of the plot, that allows easy access from both the basement level and ground level of the existing flat (via an existing rear stair) while giving a resident nanny some degree of private entry without disturbing the occupants.

In accordance with Camden policy SD6 'Amenity for occupiers and neighbours' the scheme has been carefully designed to prevent any overlooking either to the rear of 25 Adamson Road or to neighbouring buildings. For this reason the extension has no windows facing the

existing flat, which would result in a loss of privacy to the existing basement level bedroom. A glass lined courtyard has been sunk into the rear of the plan to bring light and air into the extension, and this will direct any views out away from neighbouring buildings. The courtyard has a raised sculptural block at the rear which prevents any overlooking from the neighbours to the rear.

As we are not substantially raising the level of the garden, there will be no impact on adjoining light levels. The extension will have a green roof, which will make it virtually invisible from neighbouring properties.

We propose a concrete box type structure which will act as both retaining structure to the sides and will support the green roof over. The acoustic mass of this structure will also increase the sound insulation of the proposal to prevent disturbance to neighbours.

Scale

Space for the studio is very limited on site, due in part to the presence of three trees near the rear end of the garden, so our aim has been simply to create the largest possible habitable space within the confines of the site, while allowing for a courtyard to bring light and air into the space. The internal area of the studio is approximately 52.5 sq m, which while small is sufficient for the intended use of the unit.

While the site constraints limit the available size of the plan, the ceiling heights are generous at 2.5m in the living areas, to create a sense of space in a small studio.

The courtyard is also an important element in creating a sense of space in what is effectively a basement unit.

Landscaping and appearance

As the proposal is sunken, the landscaping defines the appearance of the building- see the attached renderings.

We have created three separate zones in the design, beginning from the house end:

- A sunken patio to the rear of the existing bedroom (this area is as existing), which creates a private exterior space for the main bedroom to the existing flat.

-A hard zone of decking, at a mid level between the patio and the new garden to the rear. This zone incorporates the circulation leading up to the existing first floor deck access, and also creates an area which is good for garden tables and chairs. As the buildup is less than the grass roof, it also reduces the shading to the lower ground of the existing flat.

-a green garden to the rear, which replaces the existing garden. This might have a series of sculptural elements to divide off a 'secret garden' to the rear. The strip along the rear wall of

the site is the most suitable area for deep planting as this is beyond the extent of the concrete structure below.

Consultations

Our client has discussed the proposals widely with the neighbouring leaseholders and freeholders. The freehold to the block at 25 to 31 Adamson Road is owned jointly by the leaseholders, and these leaseholders have met and agreed to the proposals. Other neighbouring owners have also expressed consent to the proposals.

The scheme has been designed to be at least 3m from any building, which means that there will be no excavation issues in relation to these buildings- the only structures affected by party wall issues are the garden walls to each side, which will be rebuilt.

The scheme has been set back from the trees at the rear of the site to prevent any damage to the trees, and this also reduces the impact on the opposing garden.

Access Statement

We have lowered the internal floor level to conceal the structure beneath the garden, which means the finished floor level will be lower than ground level at the rear of the house thereby excluding the possibility of level access. The height difference proposed is 1300mm. To make this accessible by ramp would require a ramp of nearly 30m (assuming 1:20 for a ramp over 10m) which can not be accommodated within the site, so we have provided for a stepped approach to the front door.

The site is accessed by existing steps at the front of the main building. With this in mind we propose the new extension make provision throughout for ambulant disabled people and assisted disabled access since wheelchair access is already impossible from the street. The stepped access proposed meets the building regulations requirement Part M 6.17.

The alley at the side of the house would provide access to the fire services and a means of escape for residents in the event of a fire. The alley is a minimum of 900mm wide along its length and, except for a timber gate, is unobstructed for the 23m between the proposed development and the street. In addition to the main entrance the courtyard will also provide a means of escape to the rear of the garden. The bedroom is accessible via the living area and the entrance hall providing a fire protected means of escape in the event of fire.

I feel that the proposed scheme is the best compromise available, which allows for ambulant disabled access and assisted disabled access. Once inside the dwelling the open layout of the ground floor would be amenable for a disabled person. The only alternative is to raise the height of the building to give a level access, which would have a considerable planning impact on the neighbouring buildings.

Lifetime Homes standards

1-2: There is no on site car parking

3: See above

4: The threshold will be lit with both background and emergency lighting

5: The main stairs provide easy access to the side alleyway, and are designed to meet the regulations for a stepped access. There is no lift access.

6: All doorways are 750mm clear opening, with corridors of 900mm.

7: The living areas provide ample room for wheelchair manoeuvres.

8: The living room is at entrance level

9: single storey only

10: We have a wheelchair accessible WC at entrance level

11: Bathroom walls will be fully reinforced.

12: A future stair lift could be installed to the accessible stair.

13: Concrete ceilings would allow for a future hoist installation

14: As 10 above

15: Living room glazing is full height

16: Switches and sockets will be mounted as per these guidelines.

Sustainability Statement

The proposal offers a high level of sustainability. From an environmental point of view, the proposal increases the density of the site without reducing the amenity of the rear garden- in effect this is a brownfield development, without the garden looking 'urbanised' as it might do with a traditional ground floor extension.

The building will also be designed to a high environmental specification, with a green roof to retain the existing garden area, and reduced water run off from the site. We will also have a highly insulated structure with minimal glass area. The proposal will be heated by under floor heating within the screed. Controlled natural ventilation will help the building be comfortable all year round without the need for wasteful air conditioning.

We will also be exploring the possibilities of a ground source heat pump and solar hot water heating, although these are subject to technical evaluations.

In the neighbouring gardens there are large mature trees the roots of which will extend into the site at the rear of the garden. We have consulted an arboriculturist and our plans reflect his advice in terms of the location of the development relative to the trees. A report on the impact of the development on the trees and the methodology for the protection of the trees during construction is included with this document.

Conclusion

Both our client and ourselves are keen to produce a scheme of the highest aesthetic and environmental quality possible, while minimising the visibility of the finished product.

We believe the proposal will create a high quality addition to the existing flat that will make the dwelling more suitable for a large family, without any significant impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties and with no significant environmental impact, and that the scheme will thus be a positive addition to the area.