Claudio Novello Architects

41 Cromwell Avenue
Highgate
London N6 5HN
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 8341 2947
Fax: +44 (0)20 8340 5029
Mobile: +44 (0)7891 466 321
claudionovello@yahoo.co.uk

Design and access statement

Project: 43A Belsize Park Gardens
Application Ref: 2006/4061

Proposal description:
Replacement of the fenestration in bedroom and living room at rear garden level with room high timber fenestration of a different design.

Description of property:
The property 43 Belsize Park Gardens is a four-storey semi-detached building, rendered in white stucco with classical elements like a portico at the main entrance and cornices above the windows. The garden elevation is in brick with simple brick arches, but with two dominant two-storey bays.

The street level is one storey higher than the garden level. The entrance of the garden flat is from the side path on garden level and is accessed through steps from the street (see drwg. No11.30). This situation has to be accepted but we will introduce doors towards the garden with a minimum of threshold to facilitate disabled access from the house to the garden.

Problems to solve:
The existing living room of the ground floor flat is very deep (9m) and lacks therefore of natural light. The same problem occurs in the bedroom next to it. This situation (of light) is also worsened through the balcony of the bay which shades the fenestration (see drwg. No 11.24).
The garden can be accessed through the centre doors at the bay, but the side windows with the balustrade enclose the inside space and disconnect it from the garden.
The existing situation of an optical division between the first floor architecture, based on slender pillars with room high fenestration and the solid wall with punctured openings of the ground floor, is not satisfactory.
The existing timber windows and doors on the ground floor are not the original one and do not match the quality of doors of the first floor in detail and proportion.

Proposal:
We propose to remove the existing fenestration, to demolish the balustrades and to introduce new timber windows and doors which match the original in quality and detailing. Even if the existing pillars are larger than the first floor pillars, they are on the same vertical axis and therefore introduce an effect of a two storey bay in which the ground floor has the same pattern as the first floor.

We intended originally to introduce curved doors and windows as the original doors on the first floor but realised that because of the current building regulations, the cost would be disproportionate for this conversion. Therefore we simplified the requirements to straight doors.
The advantage of introducing double glazing and rebates at the doors and thereby improving the thermal quality is an issue of building control but it is mentioned here also.