

We submitted a pre-application package of this project's main works to the Conservation Area and Urban Design Team at London Borough of Camden in April this year. This document should be read along with the attached response from Mr Grant Leggett, Contract Planning Officer (Appendix 1).

Overview

Regent's Park Terrace is within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. The street is privately owned, with a share held by each of the residents. Number 18 is a Grade-II listed, mid-Nineteenth Century terrace house of five storeys, including the lower ground floor. In common with most of its neighbours, the house includes a half-width closet-wing addition to the rear (photo on the cover page of this statement).

The houses in the terrace enjoy particularly deep rear gardens with mature trees and shrubbery and high surrounding walls. Our scheme aims to link this amenity more closely to the internal living spaces of no 18.

In support of that aim, this application requests consent for re-planning of the basement, for a half-landing extension over the existing closet wing, and for a new light-weight extension to the rear of the house at basement level to partially fill in the gap between the closet wing and the party wall.

Since 1997, when they purchased the property, which was formerly divided into two dwellings, the applicants have gradually restored the entire house above the basement to its original use as a gracious family house. They have retained the original two-room-per-floor plan, preserved the impressive staircase and restored the beautiful original timber and plaster mouldings.

The modifications proposed within this application are intended to reinforce the building's use as a home for a modern family with small children by developing the basement as the centre of informal family living, with a close relationship to the rear garden.

External Fabric

The rear elevation of the entire terrace shows a remarkable consistency in terms of materials, windows, closet-wing extensions and construction details generally. Many of the houses have been extended or otherwise modified at the rear, but the consistent use of similar stock brick; white-painted, divided-light sash windows of similar proportion; and other repetitive features has produced an overall composition that is generally uniform and harmonious. The modifications proposed in this application aim to maintain this harmony.

To allow for ~~them this re-planning and the two extensions~~, we propose minor, "tidying-up" works at the two lower levels of the rear elevation. These include:

- Removing the existing timber conservatory which is in poor repair and whose design relates poorly to the original building.
- Removing the cast iron spiral stair that relates awkwardly to the french door that opens onto it at ground-floor level and to the paved area of garden where it lands, and replacing it with a straight steel stair alongside the garden wall.
- ~~Lowering the sill of an existing window at ground-floor level and~~ Re-opening a closed-up doorway to enable ~~them~~ it to be used as a doors out to the terrace over the new basement extension.

- Lowering the sill of a rear window at basement level to enable it to be used as a door out to the garden.

New Rear Extensions

The design of both proposed extensions conforms with English Heritage's advice on extending historic properties in that it aims "to minimise the impact on the building while helping the owner to adapt the property to suit reasonable needs." (*London Terrace Houses 1660-1860: A Guide to Alterations and Extensions* (1996), referred to in *Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006*)

There have been substantial extensions and re-modelling works carried out in the terrace. We understand that an application for works to number 18 will stand on its own merits. Nevertheless, the existing neighbouring houses are a useful indicator of policy application in similar situations. The proposed extension over the closet wing would fit **seamlessly into the composition of the rear elevation of the 22-house terrace and conform to the pattern set by seven other houses (one-third of the terrace); and the new basement-level extension would not, in the words of Annex C of Planning Policy Guidance 15, "dominate the existing building in either scale, material or situation."** ~~would be barely visible from any other nearby properties conform with~~

1. Closet-Wing Extension

At the rear of the house, a closet wing, three storeys tall and more than one-half the width of the property, has been added to the original block of the building. This wing contains a utility room in the basement, a study at ground-floor level, and sanitary accommodation above. We are seeking consent to add one level over this wing to accommodate a well-organised ~~and well-placed~~ utility or laundry room in a **convenient location adjacent to the bedrooms.** ~~and to replace the inadequate one in the basement.~~

A similar closet-wing extension has been added to each of the houses in the terrace, and, in at least seven other houses, the closet wing is one story taller than in no 18 (These seven, no 5,6,7,13,15,16 and no19 are shown in Photo 6 in Appendix 2). The proposed design for this extension to no 18 follows the pattern set by these seven others, where it steps back at first and second-floor levels and where a painted timber french door with semi-circular fanlight over at first floor opens on to the roof of the projecting ground-floor.

The closet wing at No 7 Regent's Park Terrace is one of the last in the terrace to be extended at this level. The consents for that extension, numbered PEX0200377 and LEX0200378, were granted in December 2002. The extension that we propose for no 18 is nearly identical to this one in terms of fenestration, constructional details and, indeed, function, since no 7's was also intended to accommodate a utility room.

The houses in Regent's Park Terrace were designed with two generous rooms on each floor from the ground to the third floor. Sanitary or similar ancillary accommodation was a later feature, usually added within a closet-wing extension to avoid impairing the proportions of the rooms within the original block.

Our proposed extension to no 18's closet wing is within this tradition of siting ancillary accommodation outside the main rooms to preserve the integrity of the building's original plan and proportions. And, as such, it is within the guidelines set by Planning Policy Guidance 15 which contemplate "some

degree of adaptation" and "some degree of sensitive alteration or extension" to enable a historic building to continue to fulfil its original use.

The extension's design is intended to fit seamlessly into the composition of the rear elevation of the terrace. Again, please refer to Photo 6 in Appendix 2 for a view of this.

2. Basement Extension

Although large, the house as currently planned offers little in the way of connection between spaces at basement and ground floor and between the main entrance and the beautiful rear garden; the closet-wing extension to the rear has no meaningful relation to the rear garden space, and the existing basement conservatory serves more as a barrier than as a link between the basement and garden.

Our scheme aims to overcome these deficiencies by extending to the rear within the gap between this wing and the neighbouring party wall to create an airy room with a generous opening to the garden at basement level. The glazed roof to this extension would visually link the two floors, as well as create a terrace off the two rear ground-floor rooms from which to view the garden.

As a general statement of design intent **(and in accordance with English Heritage's guidelines on rear extensions)**, we would propose to retain the existing visual hierarchy of the main house with subordinate closet-wing extension at the rear. We would achieve this through the careful design of the in-fill extension to produce a transparent, light-filled structure that leaves the original formal hierarchy intact. This new extension, **formed from three bi-folding glazed painted-timber door leaves with glazed roof over**, would be set well back from the rear wall of the closet wing. **The set-back rear wall of the extension, as well as the transparency of this wall and the roof, will enable this wing to continue to be "read" as a separate block.**

The design of the infill extension conforms with English Heritage's advice (in its publication *London Terrace Houses 1660-1860: A Guide to Alterations and Extensions* (1996) referred to in Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006) in that it aims "to minimise the impact on the building while helping the owner to adapt the property to suit reasonable needs."

Basement

At this level, we propose to retain what remains of the original plan, including the original rear wall alongside the closet wing and the side and rear walls to this wing, as well. We propose ~~to enlarge slightly the doorway in the original rear wall (between the kitchen and new glazed extension) and~~ to create a new opening in the side wall of the closet wing to allow daylight into this space from the new extension. **The head of this opening would align with those of the existing doorway into this room and the window at the end of the closet wing so that this side wall continues to "read" as a continuous structural and architectural element and the new opening achieves a pleasing relationship with the existing ones.**

We also propose to lower the sill of the window at the end of the closet wing to allow for the fitting of a new glazed, painted timber door **giving further access to the garden.**

At this level we also propose to insert new steel beams within the depth of the ground-floor joists in the middle of the plan to allow the two awkwardly-placed steel columns in the middle of the plan to be removed. **Before undertaking this work,**

the applicants will provide to the Council a structural engineer's report explaining how this is to be done to ensure that the building's existing fabric is protected.

Finally, we propose to re-open the flue and reinstate the fireplace in the front of the basement to allow it to become the focal point of the dining area at that end of the space.

Ground Floor

At ground-floor level, the glazed roof of the new basement extension will form a terrace overlooking the rear garden. ~~The two rooms to the rear of the ground floor would benefit from doors out to this terrace;~~ We propose to re-open the closed-up doorway in the flank wall of the closet wing at this level and to lower the sill of an existing window to create a door onto this terrace. ~~these doors.~~

Second Floor

At the half landing below the second floor, we propose to access the new laundry room to be accommodated within the extended closet wing. Functionally, this location adjacent to the house's bedrooms is considerably more convenient than the current location, four floors below, at the rear of the basement. And removing it from its basement site allows that valuable site to be used as a living space linked to the house's generous garden, further strengthening the links between inside and outside.

The applicants are confident that both of these reasons for relocating the utility room justify the proposed closet-wing extension, which, in accordance with PPG15, is a small degree of adaptation to accommodate the building's continuing use as a family home.

Internal access to the new utility room can be provided easily by extending the tread of one of the winders in the stair. This modification need have no permanent effect on the stair if, as we propose, it is achieved by simply overcladding the upper of the two treads adjacent to the existing window that we propose to convert to a doorway into the new room.