

Design and access statement :

Proposed insertion of windows to the rear elevation of 3 Bisham Gardens, London N6 6DJ

Description of the property

3 Bisham Gardens lies on the north side of Bisham Gardens, a street developed c 1880 connecting Highgate Hill and Swains Lane.



1 : Street elevation, 3 Bisham Gardens

The house is situated towards the Highgate High Street end of the road. The house, its neighbours and the houses on the south side of the street have four storeys, one of which is a basement. Many of these basements have been converted to form self contained basements. In the case of number 3 the basement has its own separate entrance accessed via steps from the street and with natural light from the street frontage only. The basement, number 3a, is held on a lease the freehold for which belongs to number 3

The houses to the eastern end and in the middle section of Bisham Gardens were all built to a uniform style and continue to display a consistent, uniform appearance on the street side, though not necessarily to the rear. Most of the houses are terraced houses. On the ground floor a single room and an entrance hall fronts the street. On the north side of the street the houses have rear extensions. On the south side of the street the houses have a flat rear – their proximity to the boundary of Waterlow Park restricted space for a rear extension.

Due to the irregular shape of the land available for development, the depth of the plots of both numbers 1 and 3 is very much shallower than the depth of the plots of the other houses on the north side of the street.

As a result the developers were forced to populate these plots with a pair of semi detached houses, each of which were just one room deep and with no rear extension. To compensate these two houses are double fronted. From the street the difference in the internal arrangements of these two houses is very well concealed due to the use of consistent build materials and style.



2 : a small rear extension accommodates a staircase

The reason for the lack of depth of these two plots is the construction, on the plot to which they abut at the rear, of a very large brick structure accessed via a yard leading off Highgate High Street. This structure is built of brick. It is three storeys tall and has no windows. See figure 3.



3 : The three storey brick structure that constrains the outlook from the rear of 3 Bisham Gardens

Due no doubt to the physical appearance of this brick structure the developers designed numbers one and three in such a way that all six non basement rooms has a single south facing window (fronting the street) and the only rear facing windows are those that give natural light to the staircase (figure 2). This has resulted in a relatively poor level of natural lighting, in part due to the tallness of the houses on either side of the street and the narrow distance between the houses.

During the post war period Camden has approved the insertion of French Windows to connect the right hand ground floor room of number 3 with its rear patio (figure 4). This has made the room much lighter. Approval has also been given for the insertion of an opening of the left hand ground floor room of number 1 connecting it to a small conservatory.



4 : French windows have been incorporated in order to introduce more light to the ground floor living room

The intention of the applicant therefore is to introduce more light into three of the four upper storey rooms by the insertion of a window in the otherwise blank wall of the right hand room (as seen from the street) on the first storey and the insertion of dormer windows within the mansard roof that forms the rear wall of the two upper storeys.



5 : Blank wall above French Windows

Design principles

The intention of the application is to replicate the original design of the windows on the upper storeys of the houses on the opposite (ie southern) side of Bisham Gardens, taking regard both of those that face the street and those at the rear which overlook Waterlow Park.

The scope of the development is restricted to the insertion of these new windows. The application does not involve adding to the overall physical dimensions of the property.

Intended use of the development

The application does not involve any alteration to the use of the current property which will remain a residential dwelling suited to the needs of a single household.

Description of the layout

The application does not involve any alteration to the layout the development. Due to the very limited depth of the plot – the distance between the rear elevation and the brick wall in the adjoining plot is thirteen feet at its maximum – the proposed alterations will not cause overlooking from the upper rooms either onto the structure to the rear of the property or to adjacent properties.

The scale of the development

The application does not involve any alteration to the scale of the property.

Use of materials

The proposed window to the rear of the first floor room will take the form of a wooden sash window, inserted within the current uninterrupted rear elevation of brown stock bricks.

The frames of the dormers to the two rooms on the second floor will also take the form of wooden sashes. The sides will be in metal flashing. As explained about materials will be consistent with those used on the original windows of the top floor of the houses opposite.

Local context

Unlike many alterations, which risk introducing new design elements into an established street scene, the purpose of this application is introduce elements to the original structure which, for reasons which are not entirely clear, were left out of the original design for this and the neighbouring property, number one, presumably on account of the shallower depth of the plot.

Access

Access to the rear of number 3 can be achieved only by taking building materials through the house.