

Design & heritage statement

Site	25 Oakhill Avenue, Hampstead
Proposal	Rear extension, loft conversion and associated internal alterations
Issue date	21.04.2014

1.0 Overview

2.0 Significance of the heritage asset

- 2.1 25 Oakhill Avenue is a 3 storey, semi detached house designed by Charles Quennell, and built in 1909. The house was listed as a pair with number 27 Oakhill Avenue in 1999, at Grade 2. The listing statement reads as follows:

“Pair of semi-detached houses. 1909. By CHB Quennell; built by WJ King. Red brick with rusticated brick quoins. Tiled double gabled roofs with upswept outer eaves to main facade; hipped to rear. Symmetrically designed pair. 2 storeys and attics. 2 windows each. Entrances in outer bays with large deep round-arched hoods; No.25 on built up supports; No.27 on shaped brackets. Both with round-arched doorways and square-headed doors; No.25 with part-glazed panelled door; No.27, C20 panelled; both with sidelights and overlights. 3-light flush framed segmental-arched transom and mullion windows above. All windows with small leaded panes. Central bays have 5-light canted bowed bays of transom and mullion windows through the ground and 1st floor; 1st floor with tile-hung aprons. Gables with brick modillion eaves and small shallow round-arch in apexes; each with a 4-light segmental-arched casement window. INTERIORS: not inspected.”

- 2.2 Oakhill Avenue was first laid out in 1907 as Barby Avenue, being renamed Oakhill Avenue in 1912. Numbers 25-27 are therefore among the earliest houses built in the road, together with numbers 21-23, a similar pair of houses by the same architect and builder. Charles Quennell designed numerous houses within the Redington and Froggnal conservation area, and the conservation area statement notes that the area has been dubbed ‘Quennell-Land’ by Pevsner and others.
- 2.3 The Oakhill Avenue houses are typical of Quennell’s work, adopting a restrained arts and crafts style in soft red brick with clay plain tile roofs and tile hanging to the elevations. As the listing statement notes, number 25 is characterised in particular by the generous asymmetrical front gable paired with number 27, the bowed bay window at ground and first floor, the deep arched hood to the front door and the brick detailing including modillions, arches, courses and a distinctive quoin treatment to the left hand corner of the front elevation.
- 2.4 The side elevation facing number 23 forms a truncated gable to the main transverse pitched roof, with a characteristic valley and swept eaves detail towards the front of the house. A generous mullion and transom window opens to the main stairwell between first and second floor. Otherwise the elevation is utilitarian in nature with a number of smaller windows and exposed services pipework.

- 2.5 The rear elevation to the garden consists of a projecting 'outrigger' wing to the right hand side with rooms at landing level, set approximately 3 metres ahead of the main rear elevation. First and second floor each have two 3-light flush framed windows with a mix of arched and flat tops. At ground floor an arched mullion and transom French doorway with four lights opens from the rear reception room to the garden.
- 2.6 The house has been extended to the rear in two phases, the first being a simple, single storey extension to the original outrigger. This element is finished with modern red brick external walls and a clay plain tile roof, with a hipped end facing the garden. The date of this extension is not known.
- 2.7 A second extension was added in 2004, taking the form of a modern conservatory. This single storey element is finished with structural glazing with aluminium fascia and guttering details. The conservatory sits to one side of the previous extension but is not connected to the original house, leaving a somewhat awkward courtyard-like space outside the original rear living room.
- 2.8 Internally the house has been much adapted, having previously been subdivided as two flats. This involved the insertion of new bathrooms within the original living rooms at ground floor level, and additional en-suite bathrooms have also previously been added to bedrooms on the upper floors. Many original internal features including doors and architraves, skirtings, cornices and fire surrounds have been lost. However, some characteristic original features do remain partly intact, including architraves, skirtings, some cornicing and wall panelling, and part of the distinctive balustrade and newels to the main staircase.



Fig 1: View of front elevation



Fig 1: View of rear elevation



Fig 3: View of existing rear extensions



Fig 4: View of existing conservatory

3.0 Proposed extension at ground floor level

- 3.1 The most significant element of the project is a rear extension at ground floor level, creating a new kitchen as living area opening into the garden. This will involve demolition of the two previously constructed extensions. The previous extensions are not considered to have any significant heritage value, and their removal is not considered to be in any way damaging to the fabric or setting of the listed property.
- 3.2 Parts of the existing walls to the original rear outrigger and rear living room at ground floor will be opened up in order to connect with the new living space. The existing timber French door set from the ground floor rear living room will be removed. This element is not considered to be of any significant value, and no other original features or fittings will be affected.
- 3.3 The new extension will be formed as a simple white rendered element, with a fully glazed rear elevation overlooking the garden. In creating such an addition we have made reference to the English Heritage publications “Building in Context – New Development in Historic Areas” and “Capital Solutions – Modern Conservation in London”, which explain that *“In a diverse context a contemporary building may be less visually intrusive than one making a failed attempt to follow historic precedents.”* and *“The historic environment can be the spur and inspiration for some of the best modern design.”* In this context the new extension is seen as a simple, elegant and well detailed intervention which links the original house more successfully with the garden, creates a space providing many of the new functions of contemporary living whilst allowing the original parts of the house to be carefully refurbished and re-used as a more traditional set of living spaces.

- 3.4 The extension will have white through coloured render walls, with a simple shadow detail at the junction with the existing fabric to delineate old and new. The structure will have a simple flat roof with a sedum green roof treatment, and with 'Flushglaze' type flat structural glass self-cleaning rooflights to bring light into the heart of the living spaces.
- 3.5 The extension will include a lower ground floor area set below the existing garden level, together with a media room excavated below the existing rear living room at ground floor. A basement impact assessment has been provided for these elements of excavation. It is not anticipated that this work will have a significant impact on any historic feature.

4.0 Roof extension

- 4.1 A new loft bedroom is included in the proposal. This will be formed within the existing loft storage space, with a new dormer window added to the rear roof slope over the main house. The new dormer will be finished with lead cheeks and linings, with new white painted timber windows to match the existing windows elsewhere in the house.

5.0 Internal adaptations

- 5.1 A range of internal adaptations are proposed, primarily resulting from the reversion of the house from two separate flats into a single property, and also resulting from the new extensions described above.
- 5.2 At ground floor level an existing modern kitchen within the rear outrigger will be removed, and replaced with a small study area and cloakroom. Within the two living rooms the existing bathrooms will be removed, and cornicing and ceilings made good to match the original detail. Most original doors at ground floor have been removed, and where doors are replaced or added these will be detailed to match the original panelled doors present elsewhere in the house.
- 5.3 The main staircase is a distinctive feature, with simple period balustrades and newels. The staircase has been partly divided and boxed in, and it is proposed to reverse this work so that the original open staircase is reinstated as far as possible, with details and balustrading to match the original design.
- 5.4 At first floor level an existing kitchen will be converted to a bathroom, and the existing study will be converted to a new dressing and bathroom. No original features will be affected.
- 5.5 At second floor level a recently added bathroom will be removed and reconstructed, making space for a staircase to the new loft bedroom. As elsewhere, all new doors will match the original style and detail, ironmongery will be carefully selected and other details including built-in joinery will be sensitively designed and finished.



5: Interiors at ground floor



Fig 6: Staircase at ground and upper floor

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposals form part of a package of works which will include a full refurbishment of the property, including reinstatement of previously lost features and the renewal and conservation of original elements such as the timber windows and staircase. As part of this work the proposed ground level extension provides an important new living space, enabling spaces in the original house to be carefully restored to their original use.
- 6.2 Whilst the extension forms a substantial element at ground level, it sits largely within the footprint of the existing rear extensions and is no higher than the ridge level of the existing pitched extension. Numbers 23 and 27 Oakhill Avenue both have existing rear extensions across one or two storeys, and the proposed extension will sit at a level in between these two.
- 6.3 In terms of access the new works will make the property more functional and accessible, and will be designed to incorporate all the requirements of the Building Regulations Part M.