

Design and Access Statement
**9 Ellerdale Road,
Hampstead NW3**

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INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been written to accompany the planning application for 9 Ellerdale Road, NW3, a single residential dwelling located on the corner of Ellerdale Road and Prince Arthur Road.

The proposed works relates to extending the existing basement of the dwelling, enlarging the area of habitable accommodation through increasing the floor to ceiling height of the existing store and extending to the south and west to provide an open plan living space and making better use of the space at this level. Some minor amendments to the fenestration of the existing building are also proposed to enhance the internal accommodation and the appearance of the building.

This application follows the granting of consent for works to the roof of the property and provision of a conservatory to replace the previous single storey rear extension, which were approved in August 2013.

The proposal within this application has been developed following the pre-planning application advice from Camden Planning Department and discussions during the previous planning application in August 2013. The advice received both a pre-application and the previous application stage has been reviewed in detail and has been taken into account in redesigning the scheme and presenting the current proposals within this application.

The presented scheme has had regard to recent basement applications within this location, including that constructed on the adjacent property at 18 Prince Arthur Road. A full Basement Impact Assessment, incorporating a Ground Investigation, Construction Method Statement, Existing and Proposed Structure drawings, sequence of construction drawing, and tree survey and assessment, should be read together with this Design and Access Statement, has been taken into account in developing the design proposals and to ensure that the current scheme presented within this application is feasible.

SITE SUMMARY AND CONTEXT

9 Ellerdale Road was built in the late 19th century as a family home. It sits on the corner of Ellerdale Road and Prince Arthur Road close to Hampstead Village. The property sits within the Fitzjohns and Netherhall Conservation Area and is noted as a positive contributor. The house itself sits fairly high above Ellerdale Road, such that the existing garage beside the property is below the level of the existing basement. There is no existing connection between the garage and house.

The house is part of a semi-detached pair although 9 Ellerdale has some additional architectural features like the corner tower. The site is roughly triangular forming an acute angle between Ellerdale Road and Prince Arthur Road. The house sits parallel with its site boundary to Prince Arthur Road, although the house's entrance faces Ellerdale Road making the relationship between house and road nonparallel. This relationship means that the rear elevation is also visible from Ellerdale Road.

The site has extensive boundary treatment on both Ellerdale Road and Prince Arthur Road. A large retaining wall surrounds the site, with a trellace/landscaping located above. As such the ground level of the property has very limited visibility within the streetscene and from the wider surroundings, with these boundary treatments providing significant screen to the front and side gardens of the property. There are also a number of large street trees which surround the site on Ellerdale Road and Prince Arthur Road which screen the property from the street and surrounding area.



View to the site from Ellerdale Road



View from the corner of Ellerdale and Prince Arthur Road



View to the site from Prince Arthur Road

PROPOSAL

The existing basement of the property consists of two elements. The first is a full storey of accommodation which provides an existing kitchen area, the second is a store area with a lower head height. Both are currently below the footprint of the existing property. The application proposes the conversion of the existing basement store to provide a full height space, and its extension to enable the provision of an open plan living area with appropriate natural sunlight and daylight penetration.

SCHEME EVOLUTION: PRE AND POST PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

The scheme has been developed and evolved gradually over a period of 18 months. Formal pre-application advice was sought in January 2013 with Camden Council to gain clarity and confidence about various elements and aspects of the design. Further advice on the scheme proposals was received as part of the consideration of the previous application in August 2013. Whilst the basement element was withdrawn from that scheme, advice on the contents of the BIA and the scheme design was received which has been further considered and taken account of in the scheme proposals now presented within this application.

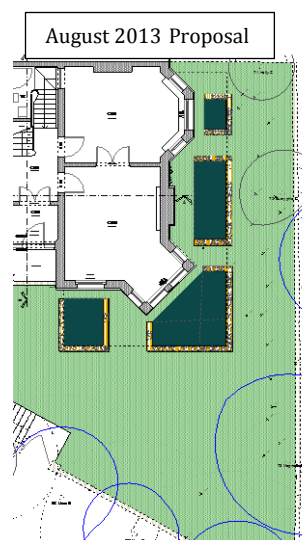
How the proposal responds and overcomes the council's comments on the pre-app and previous application scheme

The scheme has developed following detailed review of the Council's pre-application advice and has further been reviewed and revised as a result of the discussions undertaken as part of the application process in August 2013.

The comments and advice from the pre-application advice have been taken into consideration and the scheme has been redesigned to appropriately respond to these point whilst ensuring a suitable level and standard of accommodation.

The original scheme presented at pre-application stage in January 2013 proposed a large area of continuous glazing that extended around the front and side of the dwelling and came right up to the existing elevations of the house. Concerns were raised about the extent of the external manifestations, the need to achieve a soil depth of planting above of 500mm and the need for a Basement Impact Assessment.

A revised scheme was prepared and provided in August 2013. This proposal scaled back from the original pre-application proposal and provided a different, less modern and less intrusive design approach. The proposed external manifestations proposed a more traditional and reduced approach, with careful detailing to design and integrate these elements into the proposed replacement landscaping scheme. The proposal enabled a soil depth of 500mm above the basement to be provided within the existing levels of the site and provided a significant uplift of soft planting overall and opportunities for deep planting, with the removal of the hard paving in this location.



In response to the revised proposals the Council considered the lightwells were unacceptable in terms of their impact to the appearance of the property and the surrounding area. Particularly concerns were expressed in relation to potential light spill against the building at night and their scale in this prominent location. A query was also raised in relation to the level of detail within the BIA.

On the basis the scheme has been developed and reduced in scale further and further information provided to clarify and address the matters raised previously.



As detailed above the ground floor of this property is not visible from the street, and the lightwells will not be visible from the street or surrounding conservation area. Further consideration of this is set out below, as well as within the Heritage Report accompanying the application.

The proposed basement accommodation now extends modestly beyond the side elevation whilst accommodating the root protection zones of all existing trees and shrubs. The area of glazing now proposed has been reduced further in scale and a more regular layout and configuration provided to ensure that is appropriately integrated into the planting proposed and does not dominate the existing building. Whilst they will only be seen from within the site, the glazing has been laid out to respond to the different elements of articulation of the building. They are set

away from the building to ensure any light at night time will not harmfully light up the building. The planting around the lightwells will be enhanced and the ground levels maintained, with an enhanced level of overall planting, and potential for deep planting in excess of 500mm, created through the removal of the existing hardsurfacing in this location.

The Basement Impact Assessment has been comprehensively reviewed and updated. Building on the previous work that was undertaken the submitted, Construction Management Plan and other documents should be read in conjunction with this Design and Access Statement, plans and other submission documents to provide a full review of the scheme details.

DESIGN ASSESSMENT

The existing basement of the property extends across much of the envelope of the existing dwelling. However, part of this (to the southern end of the property) has restricted head room and is used principally for storage. The proposal seeks to integrate this part of the basement into the main living accommodation through lowering the floor level of this part and reconfiguring the layout of these areas. To ensure an appropriate living area can be provided within this area the basement is proposed to be extended to the south and west to provide an open plan living area. This also enables to the provision of appropriate lightwells to be able to gain natural sun and daylight into this area.

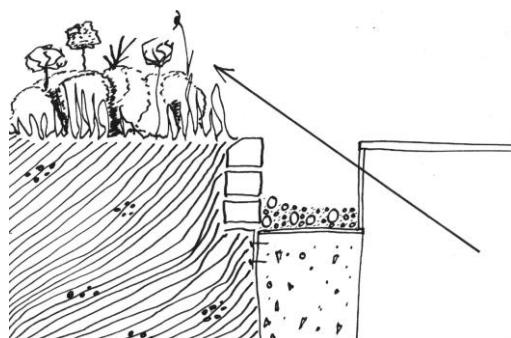
The original pre-application advice meeting on site in January 2013 confirmed that basic lightwells formed by digging out in front of the building would not be an appropriate solution. Instead during the design process a number of alternatives have been tested, including: light scoops, lightwells with non-vertical retaining walls and amphitheatre style lightwells with stepped retaining structures and associated landscaping.

One of the specific challenges of converting the existing basement and therefore finding a non-harmful approach to gaining light and views is the relationship between the existing ground floor level and the surrounding external ground level. The ground floor stands approximately half a storey out of the external ground level.

For this reason the application proposal has been developed to maintain the existing relationship between the house and the external ground level, to ensure there is no change to the levels within the site. In addition, to enhance the relationship between the house and garden, and improve the overall landscaping within the site, the scheme removes much of the paving to the front of the property and replaces this with soft landscaping to improve the overall setting and the natural planted landscaping around the building, increasing the area for potential deep planning and establishing additional space for soft landscaping.

Interspersed within this new landscaping, the application incorporates new walk-on glazed sections, in keeping with that approved to the front of 18 Prince Arthur Road adjacent, which will be flush with the existing external ground level.

The detailed design of these elements has been carefully considered in line with CPG4 'Basements and Lightwells', which states that where basement lightwells are more easily concealed by landscaping and boundary treatments, and a substantial garden area can be retained, new lightwells that are sensitively designed may be acceptable. Each lightwell has been framed on each side by a trough of pebbles that will lie beneath the overall plane of the ground. The principle will not be dissimilar to that of a small scale Ha-ha (200mm deep and wide) and hidden from view. The effect from the basement will be that occupiers can enjoy sunlight and daylight penetration, and views of foliage, planting and surrounding trees, whilst externally these elements – which will not be visible from the street – are designed to be, and will appear as, part of the overall landscaping of the grounds within the curtilage of the property.



Glazed Ha-ha / pebble trough

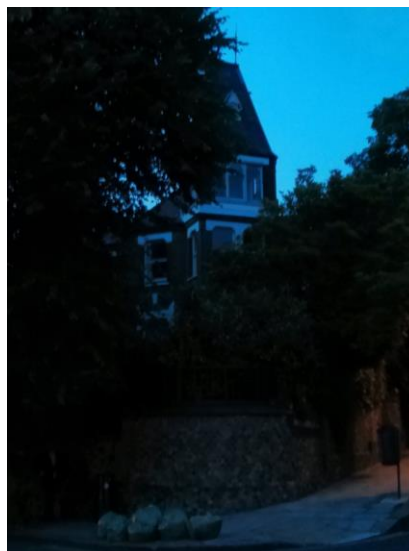
The proposal includes the provision of four glazed elements at ground level. These elements have been further reduced in scale from the previous proposals and have been aligned in accordance with the articulation of the main building.

These elements are provided flush to the ground, and are incorporated into the new landscaping proposed to the front and side of the property. They will be separated from the flank wall of the property by grassed lawn areas and are designed with a small, shallow trough filled with pebbles to maximize the light input to the basement and ensure that they appear as a landscaping feature within the garden, rather than as a manifestation of a basement below. The separation of the lightwells to the elevations will

ensure that they are not read as part of the property. As reduced in size and as positioned they are appropriately separated from one another and will not dominate the garden, or the dwelling. They will be viewed, from within the site, as elements of the landscaping, that together with the improved planting in this area will appear as a complimentary part of the landscape scheme for the property. They will provide a non-intrusive element that will not protrude about ground level, will not adjoin the house and will not require the excavation of the garden level in this location.

These elements will assist in naturally lighting the converted basement while eliminating the need for a harmful intrusive impact of other design alternatives, such as pyramidal rooflights, glass box rooflights, light scoops or lightwells, which would expose and extend the building's elevations, or require a change in the ground level of the site.

The proposals will not result in any harmful lightspill at night. The glazed elements are set back from the elevation of the building. The lower ground area of the building is obscured from views from the surrounding streets by the landscaping and boundary treatments. The proposals will have no additional impact in terms of light emission or fall onto the building than that created by street lights, external lighting existing on the dwelling or that emitting from the existing windows within the elevations of the house. If required these could be fitted with horizontal blinds to further mitigate any minor element of light emitted. The photo below shows the property at night and demonstrates how the existing boundary treatment and landscaping screens the ground and lower level of the building and will prevent any additional light spill from the basement being visible from within the surrounding streets.



The proposals have been designed in line with the policies and guidelines contained within the Core Strategy, Development Policies and Supplementary Planning Documents, including Policy CS14, DP24, DP25 and CPG14. They have also taken account of the heritage considerations of the site, as detailed in full in the accompanying Heritage Statement.

LANDSCAPING

This Victorian garden has elements of the tradition archetype, including a small walled garden, perennial borders and formal clipped box hedges. However, the traditional centerpiece 'the lawn' is not present and with it the anticipated formality. As such, the garden has a curious informality: it is essentially a product of the site's form and the residual space between house and boundary. The architectural product of the property defining this prominent corner site is that the garden is seen as an immediate appendage and setting 'material' rather than embodying distinctive genius loci.

The garden is screened by a high boundary wall and trellis, with planting along the

boundaries, as well as street trees adjacent. The overall result is to screen views into the site at the lower levels, whilst the topography means that any views achieved of the property are of the first floor and above. As the garden level is set above that of the street views of the garden, and down into it are not achievable from the surroundings streets.

The various trees and ornamental shrubs on the site and street trees surrounding the property are described in the accompanying report authored by Dr Martin Dobson.

There are large areas of existing paving with inappropriate modern engineering brick edging in front of the house, it is proposed that these areas are removed and the area set aside for additional perennial and annual planting. This will assist in creating an additional landscaped garden centric focus and the potential for additional deep planting in appropriate parts of the garden, additionally this new planting will be visible through the Ha-ha vertical glazing slots creating interesting views from the converted basement increasing the feeling of connection with the garden.

Overall the amount of soft landscaping will be increased as a result of the proposals, improving the setting of the property. Additional areas of deep planting will also be provided in the areas towards the boundary of the site through the removal of existing inappropriate hard landscaping. The areas nearest the dwelling to the front and side, above the new basement, will appropriately be laid to lawn, with the new glazed elements incorporated and set down into the landscaping – flush with the ground – and providing a shallow trough area filled with pebbles. The proposal will therefore improve the landscaping within the site, will ensure the proposals sit comfortably as part of the overall landscaping scheme and appearance of the garden and will have an acceptable relationship with the street and dwelling.

ACCESS

The primary access to the property will remain as existing, via the main front door and side door leading from the terrace above the garage. Vehicular access to the garage is unaltered by the proposals.