

# Design and Access Statement

23a Maresfield Gardens

FOR MR GUY IVESHA

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement is prepared to accompany a full planning application for proposed minor alterations to 23a Maresfield Gardens NW3, submitted by NLP. 23a is also known as 'Flat 1' being the garden flat of this substantial house in which there occur flats above.
- 1.2 ESA architecture/design has been approached by the client and new owner of the property Mr Guy Ivesha, to provide designs to alter the property to best suit his family's needs. The alterations proposed are predominantly of an internal nature and therefore not requiring planning consent; however some improvements do change the external elevations and it is for these that planning consent is sought.
- 1.3 The application is accompanied by the requisite set of existing and proposed drawings, also prepared by ESA architecture/design, and to which this statement refers. Reference should also be made to NLP's covering letter which will cover the planning history of the site and the relevant planning policy.

## **2.0 GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPT**

### 2.1 Essential Design Parameters:

- 2.1.1 23 Maresfield Gardens sits within Camden's 'Fitzjohns/Netherhall' conservation area. The area was substantially built in the late 1870's to 1880's, and the large scale individual houses are noted for their varied roofscapes and separation to the boundaries. It is important for us as designers to recognise and respect the main features of the house and the garden flat, and equally to respond to the client's brief with high quality design and materials.
- 2.1.2 Sustainability and energy efficiency are of paramount importance, and ordinarily we would make this a strong design parameter when associated with new works and extensions. In this instance however and being refurbishment works the scope for improvements is limited. The new glazed openings and improvements to internal servicing will certainly be specified as the most efficient of their kind and will give a resultant reduction in EPC rating and carbon footprint for the property.

### 2.2 Design Approach and Concept

There are three areas for design which will be considered per elevation below; those being the garden flat entrance from the front street elevation of the property; the improvements to the south entrance elevation and the West-facing garden elevation.

Whilst the street facing elevation of the house retains its full original integrity, the garden flat has undergone historic alterations which now are faced in a painted render finish to the rear. This gives the impression from the rear of the property of there being a neutral and essentially separate base above which the rest of the house rises in its original form (apart from a timber extension to the raised ground floor flat). The current white-rendered base of the garden flat is punctured with window openings which, whilst utilising sash windows, share nothing with the original house. With much consideration, we believe our alterations with a clean and contemporary approach will give increased legibility and hence respect to the form of the main house above. We understand that a high quality design with careful detailing will be necessary in order to emphasise the distinction between the contemporary base and the original house form, and we are committed to provide just this.

### 2.2.1 Garden Flat Entrance from Maresfield Gardens.

The front elevation of the house features a generous external stair from the front courtyard up to the raised ground floor entrance, which now serves the flats above. The subservient garden flat entrance commences with a gate within a (non-original) red brick wall set well back from the main stair against the southern boundary. Our architectural approach here is to remove the curved canopy structure and create a subtle but contemporary designed door and canopy in the same position. Providing our client with visual privacy from this point is key, and sets up an entrance experience from this point onwards which will turn a 'side passage' into a well-designed private space which will in turn benefit the quality of the internal spaces.

### 2.2.2 South Elevation and Repositioned Entrance.

From the above, the side passage will be refurbished with new materials in order to enhance this external space; there will be no neighbourly impact on these proposals as boundaries are being maintained and there are no overlooking windows from neighbouring properties. The material change to the South Elevation is the proposal to relocate the entrance door to the garden flat a few metres to the left, as shown on plan and elevation, and to provide a contemporary portico designed-in with the new door's framing, for weather-protection at that threshold. This replaces two existing after-market curved canopies above two current door openings. Whilst the door relocation assists in providing a more usable internal layout, it also has the benefit of rationalising two openings down to a single entrance, and in needing to straighten a run of rainwater pipework externally, which will benefit the elevation. As shown on drawing 050\_08, the existing entrance door is proposed to be replaced by a window.

### 2.2.3 Rear, West-Facing Elevation.

The existing rear elevation features a projecting splayed bay with disproportional sash windows to its splayed flanks and aluminium patio doors. The openings are not appropriately recessed and hence the current aesthetic gives no positive contribution to the high quality of design expected of the conservation area.

Our client respects the planning history which has resisted further encroachment on the garden space, and is keen to improve the design of the rear elevation without extending further. Instead we propose to simplify the design by replacing the splayed bay with a new more contemporary framed opening in a single plane, serving the living room. Whilst this simplifies the geometry, we wish to ensure in detail design that we provide sufficient depth to articulate a hierarchy of firstly opening, then framing, to the recessed glazing system within. The secondary framing system is proposed in quality oak joinery of substantial sections, allowing the tertiary glazing set within to be of a contemporary minimal-frame system. This design move will provide the living space with high levels of natural light whilst maintaining a single Westerly outlook to the garden which is more considerate to the neighbouring boundaries.

The adjacent kitchen window, currently a high-level double-sash of awkward proportions, will also be replaced with a high performance, deeply set casement window. Our client cares about good design and we are aware that soft landscape improvements will also be made outside of this application to further integrate the garden with the new works, and we are confident that this will achieve an exceptionally high standard of project on completion.

### **3.0 AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED**

- 3.1 The application is for alterations rather than extensions, however there is a small gain in floor area associated with the re-modelling of the bay, and this adds 2.25 sqm.

### **4.0 LANDSCAPE**

- 4.1 At entrance level from Maresfield Gardens, there currently occurs only hard paving, and our client is interested in reinstating soft landscape to this area. A design intent is shown on the proposed plans, and professional advice will be sought for plant species and varieties. Landscape proposals are also being considered for the side entranceway and rear garden, but do not form part of the application and are predominantly soft landscape options which will have no detrimental impact on neighbouring properties and will only go to improve both the visual and ecological amenity. As part of these landscape considerations, our client also wishes to relocate the existing garden shed to the bottom of the garden (as indicated on plans), and we would be grateful if this could be covered within the application.

### **5.0 ACCESS**

- 5.1 Access to and from the application site
- 5.1.1 23 Maresfield Gardens occurs in a residential street with residents' on-street parking. It is a short walk from Finchley Road where numerous bus routes are available to all other parts of central London. Finchley Road underground station is close-by, with Metropolitan and Jubilee line services. Finchley Road and Frognal station is also in the vicinity which gives access to overground rail services. In short, the site is very well served for public transport.
- 5.2 Access within the development
- 5.2.1 23a, or Flat 1, Maresfield Gardens occurs as the garden flat, and since the ground floor flat above is substantially raised, the garden flat has level access from the front paved courtyard, itself gently sloping up from the back of the public footway. The thresholds to existing doorways are separated from external paving via cills; with the repositioning of openings our proposals will improve the level differences in order to facilitate flush access.

We hope this document appropriately supports the planning application; should Camden's officers wish to discuss any of the above then please do not hesitate to contact the author as below.

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