



Design & Access Statement (incorporating Heritage Statement) / Planning Statement

2 Maresfield Gardens, NW3

“Addition of one storey at second floor level with replacement roof level accommodation above, alterations to Coach House façade and partial enclosure of lightwell, and alteration to front light well (all further works to partially completed works carried out under permission 2010/2772/P), and use of the resulting building as 6 residential units.”

Application for Full Planning Permission

AZ Urban Studio / Planning & Development Consultants
in collaboration with **William Smalley RIBA**
April 2013



Urban context - no.2 and its immediate neighbouring buildings

1. Introduction

This statement is provided in support of a full planning application for development described as:

‘Addition of one storey at second floor level with replacement roof level accommodation above, alterations to Coach House façade and partial enclosure of lightwell, and alteration to front light well (all further works to partially completed works carried out under permission 2010/2772/P), and use of the resulting building as 6 residential units?’.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the other planning application documents which are:

- Completed planning application form and certificates
- Planning application drawings prepared by William Smalley RIBA
- BREEAM Refurbishment Pre-Assessment Report by NRG

The applicants are new owners of the site, and wish to take forward their plans for the partially completed building in a timely manner, to deliver a range of high quality residential accommodation, and secure the appropriate refurbishment and extension of this attractive building.

For the first time in recent history the building is in single ownership, which brings the opportunity to address the refurbishment in a holistic manner, and address the upper floors which were previously in third party ownership and excluded from applications.

The following sections of this statement set out:

- The recent planning history of the site
- An assessment of the site and context, including the role of the building within the designated Conservation Area
- Planning policy context
- Description and assessment of the proposed development
- Conclusion



The rear of no.2 in December 2011, with basement excavated and steel frame in place



Current status of the site - showing the most complete area of work at the rear

2. Planning history

No.2 Maresfield Gardens has an extensive planning history from the last six years, which can be summarised as:

2008/2288/P – Change of use from 5 to 6 flats, including erection of a basement extension with lightwell to the front and a rear internal courtyard, erection of single-storey ground floor extension on the front elevation, erection of a lower ground and ground floor rear extension (Granted 12.03.09 subject to conditions and S106 agreement). Subsequent approval of details required by conditions obtained.

2010/2772/P – Amendment to planning permission granted on 12th March 2009 (ref 2008/2288/P) including revision of internal layouts to provide vertically arranged duplex apartments, extension at lower ground floor level, addition of rear extension to coach house at lower ground and upper ground floor levels, changes to front fenestration on coach house and erection of a timber enclosure in rear garden. (Granted 26.08.10 subject to conditions and S106 agreement). The officer's report for this application notes on page 1 that the earlier permission 2008/2288/P has not been commenced.

2011/2206/P – Amendments including change of use to 4 self-contained flats, amalgamation of the two internal courtyards into one, of planning permission granted 12/03/09 (2008/2288/P) as amended on 25/08/10 for change of use from 5 to 6 flats, basement extension with lightwell to front and rear and a rear internal courtyard, erection of single-storey ground floor extension on front elevation, erection of lower ground and ground floor rear extension, rear extension to coach house at lower ground and upper ground floor levels, changes to front fenestration on coach house and erection of a timber enclosure in the rear garden. (Granted 12.07.11 subject to one condition). The officer's report for this application notes on page 2 that the earlier permission 2008/2288/P is under construction.

2011/4584/P – Amendments to planning permission granted 12/03/09 (2008/2288/P) ... Namely to revise the internal layout and reduce the number of flats from proposed 4 to 3. (Refused 04.11.11)

2012/6011/P – Non-material amendments to planning permission granted 12/07/11 (2011/2206/P) ... Namely reconfiguration of the first floor and increase in number of units from 4 to 5. (Refused 08.02.13)

The current status of the site

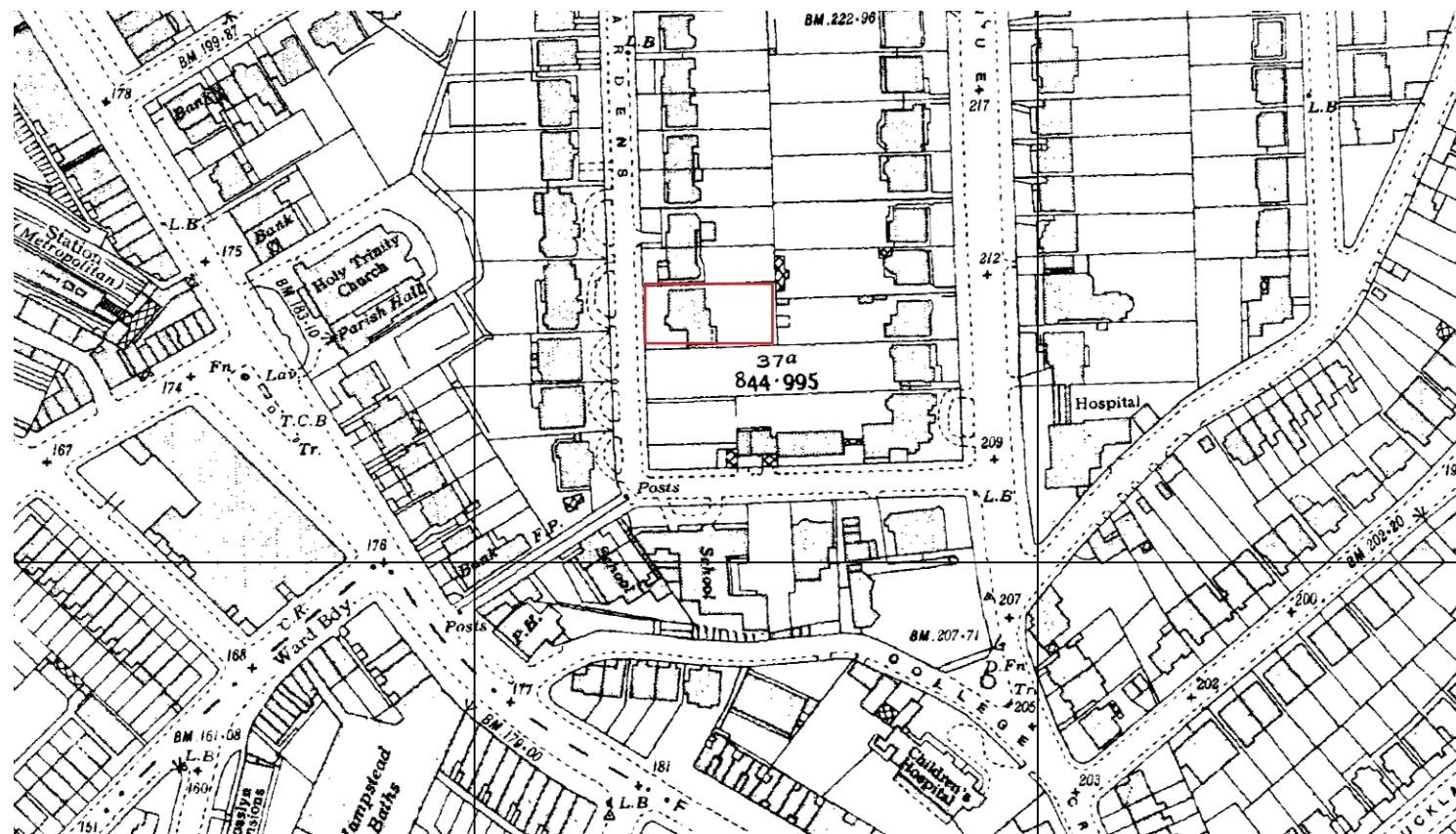
The main works to the external envelope of the building at basement, ground and first floor have been carried out in what is effectively a 'shell' form. The second floor accommodation within the roof is less complete, as the whole roof has been removed leaving only part of the timber roof structure, which requires replacement.

We know from the officer's report upon application 2011/2206/P that the first permission 2008/2288/P was implemented. Further, it can be seen from the basement arrangement built out that the second permission 2010/2772/P with the vertically arranged duplex flats has also been implemented. We can find no evidence of the third permission 2011/2206/P having been implemented, as it has an altered plan arrangement that is not present in the works completed on the site. It is therefore our reasoned understanding that the permission 2010/2772/P is the latest permission that has been implemented, with works having been halted sometime in the past following completion of the main structural and extension works up to second floor level.

The applicants, having taking ownership of the site, immediately erected a protective temporary roof to prevent further ingress of water into the partially completed building.



Maresfield Gardens - imposing grand buildings, displaying variety around a common architectural language



OS plan 1934-1935 showing the open gardens to the south of no.2 Maresfield Gardens

3. Assessment: The site and context

Location

The application site is located on the east side of the lower part of Maresfield Gardens, within the Fitzjohn's and Netherhall Conservation Area. Whilst the street is generally residential in character, the site is the last residential property on the east side before the change to institutional uses to the south, including the immediately adjacent St Thomas More Church (1960s modern design) and the South Hampstead High School further south.

The Fitzjohns and Netherall Conservation Area

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) (the 'NPPF') at paragraph 128 outlines how an applicant should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Further, it states that the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. The following section of this report sets out such a description of significance.

Maresfield Gardens is located within the Fitzjohns and Netherall Conservation Area (a designated heritage asset), the character and appearance of which is set out in the Council's Fitzjohns and Netherall Conservation Area Statement (2001) (the 'CAS').

The essence of that character is captured in the first paragraph at p.10 of the CAS which describes how:

'Long views along the Avenues combine with substantially scaled properties and generous grounds to create an imposing district.'

It continues, setting out how:

'Roofs are an important and conspicuous element, a development of mid-late Victorian architecture that dominates the profile of the skyline. The majority of properties are detached or semi-detached with few terraces.'

Further detailed analysis of the particular character

of Maresfield Gardens is provided at pages 17-18 of the CAS, highlighting the 'rich choice of styles and types of buildings giving different sections subtle changes in character'. It is noted that upon the east side of the street the four two-storey detached houses in the central part of the street create a 'less intense frontage', and that nos.4-14 are semi-detached in purple brick with an interesting front gable detail.

A walk along Maresfield Gardens indeed confirms that the styles and types of buildings do vary, with buildings tending to closely relate to at least one neighbouring property, if not more. We therefore find nos 5,7 and 9 relating to each other as broad, detached houses; Mourne House – a four storey 1970s block of flats directly opposite the site providing a modern response in brick to the Victorian houses adjacent; nos 4-14 a series of paired semi-detached houses.

At page 31 of the CAS nos. 2-16 (even) are identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Today, those elements of character highlighted more than a decade ago in the CAS largely remain.

No. 2 Maresfield Gardens and the immediate context

No.2 Maresfield Gardens was built c.1870 as a large detached house on a broad plot, and was until the 1960s (when the adjacent Church was built) the first building on the east side of the street, the first two houses on Fitzjohn's Avenue to the east having then benefited from generous gardens extending all the way to Maresfield Gardens. Built in the purple brick that is widely found in the area, no.2 differs significantly from the adjacent group of original semi-detached buildings to the north. It is not only detached, but broader in the main part of the building, and then made further so by virtue of a recessed coach house attached to the south side. No.2 did not have an original lower ground floor as nos.4-14 do (although a recently added basement level is of course now present), and for that reason it sits well below the height of the adjacent no.4.

In terms of façade structure and fenestration, no.2 follows the model found in the grand villas of Fitzjohn's Avenue, with a projecting square bay 2-openings in width giving vertical emphasis, and a further width of 3 window openings within the broader main part of the façade, also hosting the canopied front entrance. Finally, at roof level, the twin ridges of the roof at no.2 run perpendicular to the street, terminated at the front by a gable above the bay, and a hipped gable with dormer to the wider part of the building. The eaves and ridge heights are lower than the adjacent no.4.

It is noteworthy that the rear of the building has been altered quite significantly under the previously granted planning permissions, providing large openings at ground floor and terraced garden arrangement with large lightwells serving basement accommodation below. At the roof level, the property has suffered from historic inappropriate alterations to the window forms at the rear with associated poorly matched brickwork, resulting in a poor appearance that is highly visible from other properties in the block. Due to the separate ownership historically of the top floor, the issue has not been able to be addressed in the previous planning approvals for the site.

To the south, the St Thomas More Church is a bold and sizeable building, with a mass that is emphasised by the uninterrupted solid brick curved street elevation. Whilst the curved form of the building is uncharacteristic of the street and wider area, the large open car park to the front that leaves it exposed is even more so. The Church is not noted in the CAS as a positive contributor.

Given the location of the unusual and mildly incongruous St Thomas More Church, it is arguably the case that no.2 Maresfield Gardens has an unusually important role to play within the townscape, both as the first building upon the east side that introduces and sets the character of the CA upon Maresfield Gardens looking north, and as the termination of a coherent streetscene when looking south, screening views of the negative Church building. The original role that no.2 once played in the townscape has been somewhat 'drowned out' by the later addition of the bulky and incongruous Church building.

Contribution of no.2 to the significance of the Conservation Area

In summary, and as confirmed by the Council's 2001 CAS, the character and appearance of this part of the CA is rooted in the imposing scale of detached and semi-detached houses set in generous plots upon tree-lined avenues, with street facades and roofscape displaying a varied but coherent architectural language, with fine detailing.

No.2 Maresfield Gardens – as existing prior to the commencement of works, and as it would appear were the works completed as approved – contributes well to that character and appearance through a combination of its siting, broad presence to the street, materials, and gabled roof profile, together with the presence of a number of mature trees within the front garden area enclosed by a brick boundary wall. It has a particular role to play in the townscape as a starting point and termination – a 'bookend' - for the residential character upon the east side of the street.

It is unfortunate that the works to carry out the previous permissions were halted due to the financial circumstances of the previous owners, and the building paused in its current 'shell' condition with roof removed. Clearly the current condition is harmful to the CA and agreeing an acceptable way forward to complete the development, and delivering it, should be a priority for all.



View to no.2 from the south across the Church frontage



Street elevation as previously existing (prior to demolition works at no.2)