



Example of one of the more flamboyant detached buildings within the street



Mourne House, opposite the application site - 4 storey 1970s red brick flats



Maresfield Gardens - variety in roofscape form and detail, within a generally consistent scale



Maresfield Gardens - example of a twin bay facade on lower ground +3 floor house



Fitzjohn's Avenue - paired villas with similar facade structure to the no.2 Maresfield Gardens



Current view of no.2 Maresfield Gardens from the street

4. Planning policy context

Statutory provisions

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that when making any determination under the Planning Acts, that determination should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation) Act 1990 also requires that the local planning authority, in exercising their planning functions within conservation areas, pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

National planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework was published in March 2012 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It is a material consideration in planning decisions. Relevant provisions of the NPPF for this proposal are the focus upon delivering housing (chapter 6) the requirement for good design that reinforces local distinctiveness (chapter 7) and guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment (chapter 12).

Paragraph 129 of the NPPF states that Local Planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and take that assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

The NPPF further states, at paragraph 131, that in determining planning applications local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 137 states that local planning authorities should treat favourably proposals that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset.

The development plan

The development plan for the area comprises the London Plan 2011, and the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework including the Core Strategy DPD 2010, and the Development Policies DPD 2010-2025. Policies contained in the Core Strategy and Development Policies relating to the built environment are relevant to the application, as explored further below.

Core Strategy Policy CS5 Managing the impact of growth and development sets out how the Council will manage the impact of growth and development in Camden. CS6 Providing quality homes, sets out how the Council will aim to ensure the maximum supply of high quality homes. CS13 Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards sets out policy for reducing the effects of and adapting to climate change. CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage sets out the Council's overarching policy on securing a quality built environment.

Development Management Policy DP3 Contributions to the supply of affordable housing expects all residential developments with a capacity for 10 or more additional dwellings to make a contribution to the supply of affordable housing.

Policy DP6 Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing requires that all housing should meet lifetime homes standards and 10% should either meet wheelchair housing standards or be easily adapted to meet them.

Policy DP18 Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking sets policy for limiting parking provision in new development, and Policy DP19 Managing the impact of parking sets out detailed considerations relating to the provision of parking.

Policy DP22 Promoting sustainable design and construction requires development to incorporate sustainable design and construction measures.

Policy DP24 Securing high quality design requires all

developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design.

Policy DP25 of the Development Policies DPD confirms that the Council will (a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas and (b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area.

Policy DP26 of the Development Policies DPD states that permission will only be granted for development that does not cause harm to amenity, and outlines a number of factors to be considered.

Policy DP27 Basements and lightwells sets out the assessment information the Council will require in such cases, and states that the Council will only permit basement and other underground development that does not cause harm to the built and natural environment and local amenity and does not result in flooding or ground instability.

Other guidance

Camden Planning Guidance (2011) is adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance, and comprises a series of eight documents providing further guidance on matters set out in development plan policy. CPG1: Design, CPG2: Housing, CPG3: Sustainability, CPG4: Basements and Lightwells and CPG7: Transport are directly relevant to the proposed development.

The Fitzjohns and Netherall Conservation Area Statement (2001) sets out the special interest of the conservation area (see section 3 above), and provides guidance on the Council's approach to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

The proposed development has been formulated with careful consideration of the aforementioned policy and guidance provisions. In the following section of the report exploring and explaining the Design of the proposed development reference is made where necessary to the relevant policies and guidance, setting out how they are met.

5. Description and assessment of the proposed development

Introduction

As set out in the introduction to this statement, the applicants wish to move forward from the partially completed development upon the site and finish the development in an amended and improved way to that previously approved. The amendments relate to:

- addition of a further full storey to the main part of the building at second floor level, with the third floor (roof level) rebuilt above
- alterations to Coach House front elevation
- alteration to front lightwell

Use / Amount

The building as existing prior to commencement of the current building works consisted of 5 residential units. The planning permission implemented (but not yet completed) comprises 6 residential units.

The proposed additional floor provides an increase of 167m² of residential floorspace above that already approved and partially constructed (1,050m²). That additional floorspace allows reconfiguration of the layout of the building, resulting in better quality and sized accommodation, and importantly allowing all flats to be dual aspect (east and west). The resulting accommodation will comprise 2 x 3 bed units and 4 x 2 bed units, all meeting and exceeding the London Plan Housing SPG minimum sizes.

Policy DP5 seeks a range of homes of different sizes, and sets out how the Council will have regard to the dwelling size priorities table, together with site specific and viability considerations. The dwelling size priorities table, in relation to market housing as proposed, identifies 2 bed units as ‘very high’ priority and 3 bed units as ‘medium’ priority, with an overall aim of at least 40% 2 bed units.

The proposed development provides 67% 2 bed units and 33% 3 bed units, and will therefore comply with policy DP5 and assist greatly in meeting the very high demand for 2 bed units in the borough, as well as

providing for the medium demand of 3 bed units. As with the previous permission, the resulting residential units will all meet lifetime homes standards.

Amenity space is provided in the form as approved under the extant permission, with private rear garden space for the two 3 bed units and one of the 2 bed units. The second floor 2 bed unit has direct access to a generous roof terrace above the Coach House, as previously approved. We consider that the amenity space provision meets the guidance set out in CPG1 Housing section 4.

Policy DM3 requires that developments capable of providing 10 or more dwellings contribute to the provision of affordable housing. The supporting text to that policy at paragraph 3.8 identifies that 1,000m² gross floorspace is used by the Council as a guide to assess capacity.

The present application involves the addition of 167m² of floorspace to a partially completed development, which could be completed as approved and is an important material consideration. We do not believe that the addition of 167m² to the existing approved development of 6 units can reasonably be regarded as having the capacity to provide a further 4 units resulting in an overall capacity of 10 units.

Demolition

The building as existing has no roof covering, and the timber roof structure is in a poor condition requiring replacement, having been left exposed to the elements by the previous owner. What remains of the roof structure therefore requires removal and replacement.

The gable ends are also proposed to be removed, together with removal and replacement (at extended height) of the chimneys. The rear gables have been the subject of particularly poor quality works in the past, and suffer from a poor appearance with extensive later brickwork poorly matched, ill-considered window

types, and highly visible concrete lintels. As noted earlier in this statement, the top floor was in separate ownership at the time of the previous applications, and therefore the partially completed permission does not address it. The projecting front gable has already been demolished / collapsed from ground floor upwards.

The extent of demolition required to carry out the proposed works is minimal in the context of the existing state of the building, and offers the opportunity for positive resolution of past harmful alterations to the building at the rear.

We consider that the proposed demolition falls well short of substantial demolition and is both necessary and desirable for the reasons set out above, and therefore complies with Policy DP25.



Poorly proportioned windows, extensive non-original poorly matched brickwork and concrete lintels

Scale and appearance

The proposal to add a full floor of accommodation is a carefully considered design response, and has been informed by a thorough assessment of:

- the architectural style and period of the building, and its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area
- the relationship of the building with its immediate neighbours in the streetscape
- the wider role of the building within the townscape of Maresfield Gardens

The design and appearance of the 'inserted' storey directly mirrors that of the first floor below in terms of height, fenestration, materials and details. In doing so, the building reflects the villa typology commonly found throughout the immediate area, whereby accommodation is provided with three full above-ground floors and then further in a roof level. (Many such buildings in the area also have a lower-ground floor, resulting in a more prominent upper-ground floor - this is not the case at no.2).

The characteristic facade structure and hierarchy of the architectural style (and area) - with diminishing proportion as the eye moves upwards through the facade - is clearly achieved. A formal facade analysis (see images) of other buildings within the street and area confirms that the proposals will result in an appearance that comfortably reflects the established architectural form and principles of buildings in the area.

The extended part of the building will be constructed using hand-made colour matched bricks, that can be further colour tinted and aged in situ to provide an exact match to the existing parts of the building. Red rubbed brick will be used for window arch details and other detailing to match the existing building, with moldings used to create terracotta detailing elements as found in various parts of the façade.

The resulting building will have an eaves height and one of the two ridelines higher than those elements at no.4 to the north by approx 1.75m. Not only is this variation entirely compatible with the rhythm and variety between neighbouring properties that

characterises the area, moreover, it enables the building at no.2 to perform its role as both a starting point and termination for the street to an enhanced degree.

Policy DP24 Securing high quality design sets out a series of design criteria that alterations and extensions are expected to consider, including:

- a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings
- b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed

Further detailed guidance on the application of those criteria is provided in CPG1: Design, where section 4 Extensions, alterations and conservatories is of some relevance, and section 5 Roofs, terraces and balconies is of direct relevance.

Under section 4 of CPG1, good practice principles for extensions and alterations are set out, noting that 'alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings', specifically in terms of windows, doors, materials and scale. As set out above, the architectural style, proportions and details of the host and neighbouring buildings have been carefully considered in formulating the proposals.

Section 5 of CPG1, addressing roofscape in more detail, begins by setting out two categories of roof extension, and three main considerations. The proposal falls within the first category, being an alteration to the overall roof form. The main considerations are identified as:

- the scale and visual prominence
- the effect on the established townscape and architectural style
- the effect on neighbouring properties

Expanding further, para 5.7 identifies where additional storeys and roof alterations are likely to be acceptable, being where

- there is an established form of roof addition or



Proposed context elevation, showing relationship with no.4 and the Church (shown with and without trees for clarity)



Diagrammatic analysis of the scale and appearance of the proposed facade within the context of other buildings in the street



Example of typical interface between detached buildings - 17 & 19 Maresfield Gardens

alteration to a terrace or group of similar buildings and where continuing the pattern of development would help to re-unite a group of buildings and townscape;

- alterations are architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and retain the overall integrity of the roof form;
- there are a variety of additions or alterations to roofs which create an established pattern and where further development of a similar form would not cause additional harm

In the case of no.2 and the present proposals, the first point above is not directly relevant as the building is not part of a terrace or group – indeed the opposite applies, it is a stand-alone building adjacent to a group of 4 paired buildings. The second point is applicable and achieved, as the extension enables the building to match the form and appearance of other similar buildings of the same age and character within the same CA, and the overall integrity of the roof form is entirely retained, at a higher level than existing. Turning to the third and final point, whilst there are various additions and alterations to roofs along the street, there is no established pattern of rigid uniformity as originally built (except within the groups of buildings as identified in CAS), but rather a loose uniformity set out around coherence of general scale, materiality and prominence of the (varied) roof form – what the Council’s CAS correctly identifies as a rich choice of styles and types of buildings. The established pattern is variety within a set of clear stylistic and typological norms, and the proposed roof building as extended would sit comfortably within that established appearance and contribute well to it.

None of the circumstances set out in para 5.8 of CPG1 indicating where roof alterations or additions are likely to be unacceptable apply to the building.

In terms of the amenity of neighbouring properties, the position of the building in a north-south aligned series of plots with generous gardens ensures that there will be no adverse impact upon any rooms of adjacent properties. Properties to the rear upon Fitzjohn’s Avenue are some 57 metres away, and there is also established mature tree planting between them and the application building.

Alterations to Coach House facade

The Coach House elevation as approved has a poor arrangement, with three narrow window openings set high within the first floor, and only a single window and door at ground level, none of which align satisfactorily with those found above.

The proposed alterations replace this arrangement with two larger windows at first floor, and a timber door and side panel set centrally below a broad red brick lintel, flanked by two smaller windows at ground floor. The timber door, and close flanking windows appear appropriately utilitarian to ensure that this secondary part of the building remains subservient in appearance to the larger, host building.

A small area of the existing lightwell to the front of Coach House is proposed to be enclosed, with an opaque glass panel forming the top surface, creating usable internal space below. As that part of the lightwell enclosed served no window as existing and approved, there is no loss of amenity to the basement as a result of its partial enclosure.

In summarising the assessment of the proposed additional storey and alterations to the Coach House facade, we have demonstrated that the relevant policy and further guidance set out by the Council is fully met. The building as proposed will appear mildly different to as existing in that a new floor is ‘inserted’, but that difference and the resulting appearance falls squarely within the comparable form, scale and appearance of other buildings in the street and CA that are of the same architectural style and from the same period. The characteristic gabled roof is retained and will continue to contribute well to the roovescape of the street. Further, due to the size and position of the plot as the beginning / end of the east side of the street, the building as extended will perform its originally intended role in setting and terminating the residential character of the street to an enhanced degree, enhancing its role within the CA, and in doing so also enhancing and better revealing the significance of the CA.



Proposed street elevation - detail

Landscape and Access

The external landscape works and access arrangements to the building remain as approved. The previous permission for 6 units upon the site was granted subject to a s106 agreement which removed the rights of one unit to obtain a residents parking permit. The applicant acknowledges that this would be required for the present application, and will enter into an appropriate deed of variation with the Council.

A minor change to one lightwell, located at the base of the projecting front elevation bay, is proposed. As approved, the lightwell does not follow the form of the projecting bay, resulting in poor situation where only 0.8m exists between window and the wall of the lightwell. By extending the lightwell forward 1m it will follow the profile of the projecting bay, enhancing the appearance of the front of the building at ground level and providing better daylight and a less oppressive outlook for the basement room.

With regard to the guidance set out in CPG4 (paras 2.65- 2.70), we consider that the lightwell as extended will better relate to and reflect the form of the building, and the large size of the front garden ensures that it will not be perceptible from the street in any case. Policy DP27 and CPG4 clearly state that supporting information commensurate with the scale, location and complexity of the scheme should be provided. In this case, the additional area and volume of soil to be removed to form the larger lightwell is minimal, it is located in the centre of the plot away from neighbouring properties, and its impact on any engineering concerns is considered extremely minimal. For these reasons we believe that no further technical supporting information is necessary.

Sustainability

A BREEAM Refurbishment pre-assessment report by NRG is included as part of this application and confirms that the whole development when completed will achieve 'Very Good' status, meeting the requirement of policy DP22 and the further guidance set out in CPG3.

6. Conclusion

The current status of the building at no.2 Maresfield Gardens is an unfortunate result of economic conditions over the last five years, and the new owners are keen to move forward rapidly and complete a development that can positively contribute once more to the area.

The proposals put forward in this planning application have been informed by a thorough assessment of the immediate and wider context, and the role that no.2 plays within the streetscene. Through analysis of the proposed development we have explored how the proposed alterations and additions are not only compatible with the architectural style and character of the building, but will positively enhance the role that it plays within the Conservation Area.

The proposals also crucially result in enhanced quality residential accommodation with enhanced environmental performance, which will contribute well to meeting the housing needs of the area, specifically in terms of the provision of two bed and three bed units.

The proposals accord with adopted development plan policy, represent high quality development, and will enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and for those reasons we respectfully request that planning permission be granted.