

# DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

REAR COURTYARD INFILL &  
REPLACEMENT KITCHEN WINDOW

FLAT 1 (BASEMENT)  
62 GLOUCESTER AVENUE  
NW1 8JD



NOVEMBER 2014

## The Proposal

The application proposes

1. the enclosing of a small courtyard (measuring 2.4m x 1.2m) via a small area of roof located in a position that is out of sight from all public views and from all views from nearby windows.
2. replacement of the existing kitchen window and under-panel with full height glazed window

The courtyard is partly shown on the cover sheet of this report, and was only visible to the photographer by leaning over the roof parapet of the main house above. The courtyard was created about thirty years ago under a previous planning application. At the time the courtyard's open space was necessitated by the London Building Acts which required that windows of habitable rooms should have at least 1.2m of external space in front of them (for ventilation and daylight). This is no longer required under the Building Regulations - so the current application proposes to increase the daylight and ventilation of the existing study bedroom via a very large remote controlled high-performance double-glazed roof-light instead of the existing heavily framed single glazed window.

The proposal will also

A Improve maintenance access

1. to the existing roof and roof-light (via the proposed roof-light)
2. to the upper floor windows and the existing rear wall over the proposed roof (by serving as a ladder support platform between the existing and proposed roof-lights). Currently the rear windows and wall can only be accessed by abseil.
3. by permitting ladders etc to be carried to the rear garden via the opening section of the proposed replacement kitchen window

B Greatly reduce heat-loss via the courtyard and kitchen window. So it will therefore reduce carbon emissions.

C Remove the noise (during heavy rain) from the existing rainwater spout into the courtyard.

D Facilitate the landlord's removal of the unsightly water storage tanks on the main house roof by creating extra space needed for temporary facilities to enable the refurbishing of the kitchen and bathroom, including replacement boiler (nb the existing heating system uses the roof tanks for expansion).

## Character of the Dwelling & the Area

The property 62 Gloucester Avenue is within the Primrose Hill Conservation area and is a double-fronted Victorian terraced house subdivided into eight flats, four each side of the common front door to the street. Flat one (the application site) is at basement level and has its own front door to the street (via its front area) and also has its own rear garden as well as the small courtyard in question.

The front of the property is faced in white painted render up to first floor level with traditional yellow London stock bricks above and elegant sash windows. The rear and rear side walls of the property are London stock brickwork and incorporate a variety of window styles. The applicant (about thirty years) obtained planning permission for a rear extension comprising bedroom (below a zinc pyramid roof) and small dining room (below a large double glazed roof-light). The extension roof drains into the courtyard via a zinc rainwater spout. The zinc work is of high quality and was carried out by the company who installed the covering to the dome of the mosque in

Regents Park. For the last twenty years however the courtyard has been temporarily protected from the weather by a tied-on sheet of translucent corrugated plastic (spanning 1.2m between the extension and the main house) though this is not visible to anyone. The proposal seeks to replace the temporary plastic sheet with a proper insulated zinc roof and roof-light in keeping with the existing zinc roof.

### Development Plan Policy

It should be noted that the proposed roof creates

- (i) no detriment to the amenities of neighbours, and
- (ii) the character and appearance of the street scene or locality in the vicinity of the extension is not adversely affected

It should be noted that the proposed roof and replacement kitchen window will not result in:

- (i) an overbearing appearance for neighbours because the neighbours will be unable to see the proposed features. If they could see the proposed features, the proposed roof will appear much less messy than the existing arrangement and so is a design improvement (visually).
- (ii) any loss of daylight to the garden or to the principal windows of habitable rooms or kitchens of neighbouring properties
- (iii) a reduction in privacy for neighbours

### Impact on the Character of the Dwelling

The proposed roof will blend into the existing roof covering (using traditional materials to match the existing zinc roof). The proposed guttering will be of zinc to match the existing roof covering and the proposed roof-light will be of glass in an aluminium frame and similar in scale to the existing aluminium framed clear pvc roof-light.

It should be noted that the courtyard (being enclosed by four-storey high walls on three sides and a single storey high wall on the fourth side) is much too dark to support plant life and therefore has no landscape amenity.

### Impact upon Neighbouring properties

There is no impact whatsoever on No 60 Gloucester Avenue (next door) because the proposed roof and the proposed kitchen window replacement are completely out of sight and remote from No 60's windows. The proposed roof and kitchen window replacement are also out of site from the neighbours above, living in 62 Gloucester Avenue and all other neighbours and the public. The proposal, however, improves the amenity for the flat in 62 Gloucester Avenue immediately above the proposed roof by removing the occasional noise from the existing rainwater spout (which is well below the sill level of their single glazed sash window - so generally well out of sight visually). The only other impact on neighbouring flats above is the improvement of maintenance access to their rear windows for the landlord's contractors. It should be noted that the neighbouring leaseholders own the freehold company (and are the landlord as is the applicant) and have a direct interest in ensuring (via the freehold company) that the proposed zinc gutter of the proposed roof is designed to provide ladder support to access their windows.

## Conclusions

The proposed roof and replacement kitchen window will improve the lighting and ventilation of the flat in question and reduce carbon emissions by reducing heat-loss. It also provides an opportunity to improve maintenance access to the whole property (including the neighbouring flats over) which is currently problematic because of increasingly stringent h&s consciousness.

The roof drainage system of the proposed roof will remove the noise of the current drainage system during storms. The proposed roof also improves the appearance of the rear of the property – though this improvement has neutral visual impact as the area is completely out of sight.

Given the above, together with information supplied with this application, I therefore recommend this proposal to you. These very small but completely unobtrusive proposals will benefit the applicant and neighbours without any disadvantages.