

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS & CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

SITE AT 29 ST PAUL'S MEWS, LONDON NW1 9TZ

HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING APPLICATION BY
MS THERESE HESKETH

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT
(INCORPORATING HERITAGE ASSET IMPACT ASSESSMENT)

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement, incorporating a Heritage Impact Assessment, forms part of the householder planning application by Ms Therese Hesketh for the *'construction of rear dormer window, insertion of roof lights to front and rear elevations, and installation of new doors in place of existing doors and fixed panels on ground floor rear elevation'* at 29 St Paul's Mews, London NW1 9TZ.
- 1.2 This Statement should be read in conjunction with the existing and proposed application drawing set prepared by Manor Property Development.

2. CONTEXT

Physical & Social Context

- 2.1 The application site, which is situated within the Camden Square Conservation Area, is located on the south side of St Paul's Mews. The conservation area boundary runs along the rear of the property curtilages in St Paul's Mews. The site is occupied by a three storey terraced dwelling that forms part of modern double curved terrace of properties. The application site is located towards the eastern end of the terrace.
- 2.2 St Paul's Mews is a private and gated development which is accessed from St Paul's Crescent to the west, and which is located to the rear of properties on Agar Grove to the north. Land to the south of the properties in St Paul's Mews forms part of an extensive residential estate which lies outside the conservation area, and which is currently subject to partial redevelopment. The redevelopment scheme will include new residential blocks along York Way, to the east of the application site. The existing residential properties to the rear of the application site front onto Maiden Lane.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.3 There is no specific planning history for the application site although the St Paul's

Mews development, which was granted planning permission in 1987, is subject to a planning condition which removes permitted development rights for alterations and extensions.

- 2.4 Planning permission was granted at appeal on 3rd September 2013 (APP/X5210/D/13/2201721) for a 'third storey loft conversion including front and rear dormers' at 4 St Paul's Mews. The main issue raised at appeal concerned the construction of the front dormer window which was deemed acceptable by the Inspector because it would be largely hidden from view behind the property's tall front parapet wall. No objection was raised to the rear dormer window. The approved development has been implemented.

The Proposals

- 2.5 The applicant proposes the conversion of the existing loft space, and the associated construction of a rear dormer window and the insertion of two roof lights on the front roof slope and two roof lights on the rear roof slope. The dormer window would feature four casement windows, and would otherwise be covered in lead. All roof lights would be of the 'conservation' type. In addition to these works, internal changes at ground floor level give rise to the need for new folding doors to be installed on the rear elevation in place of two existing doors and two fixed panels.

Planning Policy Context – National Planning Policy

- 2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Planning decisions should ensure that developments function well, establish a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site, respond to local character while not preventing appropriate innovation, create safe and accessible environments, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription of detail but should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and

access for new development in relation to the local area. LPAs should not impose architectural styles or tastes.

- 2.7 The NPPF states that, in determining applications, LPAs should require an applicant to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. 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. In determining applications, LPAs should take account of (i) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, (ii) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability, and (iii) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. When considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Planning Policy Context - The statutory development plan

- 2.8 The statutory development plan comprises the London Plan of July 2011, the Camden Core Strategy which was adopted in November 2010, and the Camden Development Policies DPD which was also adopted in November 2010. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Core Strategy

- 2.9 The following policies of the adopted Core Strategy, as summarised, are considered to be relevant to the issues raised by this planning application:-
- Policy CS1 seeks to direct growth in Camden to the most suitable locations. Development should make full use of its site whilst respecting context and taking into account the quality of design;
 - Policy CS5 states that the Council will manage the impact of growth and development in Camden including the need to protect and

enhance heritage assets;

- Policy CS6 states that the Council will aim to make full use of Camden's capacity for housing which will be regarded as the priority land-use; and
- Policy CS14 states that the Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by requiring development to be of the highest standard of design.

Camden Development Policies DPD

2.10 The following policies of the Camden Development Policies DPD, as summarised, are considered to be relevant to the issues raised by this planning application:-

- Policy DP2 seeks to make full use of Camden's housing capacity;
- Policy DP24 requires all developments, including alterations and extensions, to be of the highest standard of design having regard to character, setting, context, the quality of materials, landscaping and accessibility;
- Policy DP25 states that, in order to maintain the character of conservation areas, the Council will only permit development that preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area; and
- Policy DP26 states that the Council will protect the quality of life for occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity.

Planning Policy Context - Camden Planning Guidance

2.11 Camden Planning Guidance (Design) (CPG1) was adopted in 2014. The guidance states that the Council is committed to excellence in design, and schemes should consider the context of the development and its surrounding area, the design and

use of the building itself, and the materials used. Good design should positively enhance the character, history and nature of existing buildings on the site and in the surrounding area. Alterations should take account of the character and design of the property and its surroundings. It may be appropriate for some new work to be distinguishable from the existing building but in other cases, closely matching design details and materials will be more appropriate. New windows and doors should match the originals as closely as possible, and external materials which match the original will usually be the most appropriate.

- 2.12 Paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8 of CPG1 lay down a series of general principles relating to roof alterations and extensions. The guidance states that alterations are likely to be acceptable in three different circumstances including where alterations are architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and retain the overall integrity of the roof form. An addition is likely to be unacceptable where in complete terraces with a roof line which is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions. Paragraph 5.11 states that roof dormers should be sensitive changes which maintain the overall structure of the existing roof form. Such proposals will be generally considered acceptable where (in summary) (a) the pitch of the existing roof is sufficient to allow adequate habitable space; (b) dormers do not cut through the roof ridge or edge of the hip but are sufficiently far below the ridge or hip; (c) dormers do not interrupt an unbroken roofscape; (d) dormers are separate small projections which relate to the façade below; (e) dormers are located below the parapet line (where applicable); and (f) complimentary materials are used.
- 2.13 Paragraphs 5.21 and 5.22 of CPG1 advise that roof lights should be flush with the roof slope, and should not cause clutter or damage the appearance of prominent roof slopes. Where acceptable, they should be proportioned to be significantly subordinate both in size and number. Some properties, particularly listed buildings and properties in conservation areas, may be so sensitive to change that even the installation of roof lights may not be acceptable.

Planning Policy Context – Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy (CSCAAMS)

- 2.14 The CSCAAMS, which was adopted in March 2011, explains that Camden Square was formally laid out between 1840 and 1960, and that subsequent phases

included post-war redevelopment of areas subject to wartime bomb damage. The area is characterised, inter alia, by mews development, some of which was subject to incremental expansion over many decades. By contrast, St Paul's Mews was built as a single composition between 1987 and 1991. The CSCAAMS describes the mews as being '*laid out as a double curve.... the composition is similar to a parade of shops. The townhouses are linked by a ground floor plinth consisting of panelled garages and entrances, with two storeys of accommodation above in brick*'.

- 2.15 Paragraph 7.8 of the CSCAAMS states that proposals for alterations to roofs within the conservation area will be considered on their own merit but particular care is needed to ensure sensitive and unobtrusive design to visible roof slopes or where roofs are prominent in long distance views. Conservation roof lights may be considered acceptable if fitted flush with the roof and significantly subordinate to the roof itself. Dormer windows may be allowed to the rear roof slope.

3. PLANNING & DESIGN ASSESSMENT

Amount of Development

- 3.1 The application is for the conversion of loft space, and would not create additional floor space. The proposed rear dormer window would have a floor area of 7.25 square metres.

Layout & Amenity

- 3.2 At roof level, the proposal would provide new windows to the front and rear of the building. Given the separation distances with the properties in Agar Grove (to the north) and Maiden Lane (to the south), the proposal would not give rise to any material loss of privacy for neighbouring occupiers. Furthermore, the relationship to these adjacent buildings is already established by existing first floor fenestration in the application property. Given its modest bulk, the proposed rear dormer would also have no material impact on daylight penetration to accommodation in Maiden Lane.

Landscaping

- 3.3 The proposal would have no impact on landscaping features within or near the application site.

Use

- 3.4 The proposal would facilitate the formation of additional residential floorspace within an existing dwelling, and would therefore beneficially contribute to the efficient use of the site for this priority land-use.

4. HERITAGE ASSET IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The special interest of the heritage assets

- 4.1 The application property is situated within the Camden Square Conservation Area. The relevant heritage assets, for the purposes of this assessment, are therefore this part of the conservation area, and the subject property itself. Although of late twentieth century origin, the St Paul's Mews development can be regarded as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The subtle curved form of the terrace allied to its broadly uniform appearance are attractive features of the development.
- 4.2 St Paul's Mews is located on the southern boundary of the conservation area, and in this regard its northern elevation, which faces the rear of properties in Agar Grove, can be considered to be of greater importance than its southern elevation. The latter, which faces the high density estate development in Maiden Lane, is not visible in long views into the conservation area, and any limited short views will be further restricted in due course by the approved new 5-7 storey residential blocks on York Way. The rear of the application property is therefore not generally viewed from the public realm, and in effect, is not seen at all from within the conservation area.
- 4.3 A rear dormer window of very similar size and detailed design was recently approved (at appeal) and constructed at 4 St Paul's Mews. Although the rear

elevation of the terrace is largely undeveloped in terms of dormer windows, no objection was raised by the appeal Inspector to the insertion of a rear dormer at number 4. Furthermore, whilst the approved front dormer at number 4 was found to be acceptable due to the presence of a high front parapet wall (which exists only on the first few properties in the terrace), no such atypical 'masking' feature is found on the rear elevation of that property. The approved rear dormer to number 4 St Paul's Mews therefore sets a relevant 'in-principle' precedent for further rear dormer proposals on this terrace subject to considerations of detailed design. The proposal at number 4 was assessed in the context of 'Camden Design Guidance' (the version of CPG1 as adopted at that time), and the rear dormer would have been found to be compliant in terms of the second bullet point of paragraph 5.7 (circumstances where roof alterations are likely to be acceptable), namely that the alteration would be '*...architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and [would] retain the overall integrity of the roof form*'. It should also be noted that paragraph 7.8 of the CSCAAMS confirms that roof alterations to properties within the Camden Square Conservation Area will be considered on their merits with particular attention being paid to ensure sensitive and unobtrusive design to '*visible roof slopes or where roofs are prominent in long distance views*'. It confirms that rear dormer windows may be allowed. In this case, the rear roof slope and roof line are not visible from within the conservation area, and the property is not exposed to long distance views. For all these reasons, the principle of a rear dormer window is considered to be supportable in heritage terms.

4.4 Turning to the detailed design of the proposed rear dormer, this is considered to be acceptable, in terms of the detailed criteria set out at paragraph 5.11 of CPG1, for the reasons set out below:-

- a) The existing roof is of sufficient height to serve the habitable space, and there is no requirement to raise the ridge line;
- b) The proposed dormer would not cut through the roof ridge or the sloped edge of a hipped roof. The dormer will be set below the ridge line. Although it is not possible to achieve a 500mm gap between the roof of the dormer and the ridge level, this is not considered to be of overriding importance in this case given the very limited visibility of

the rear elevation of the property. The proposal is not for a full-length dormer;

- c) The factors set out at paragraph 4.3 above are considered to support the formation of the proposed rear dormer;
- d) The design of the dormer relates to the façade below in terms of its symmetrical position above the main column of windows on the lower floor, and in terms of its overall width. The size of the openings within the dormer is clearly subordinate to the full-height fenestration, including doors behind a Juliette balcony, of the lower floors. The width of the dormer 'cheeks' and the height of the fascia have been minimised;
- e) The building does not have a parapet, and this criterion is therefore not applicable; and
- f) The use of lead covering to the dormer, and timber framed windows, would compliment the property and terrace.

4.5 The proposed roof lights would be flush fitting, and of the 'conservation' type. Only two are proposed on each roof slope, and they would be set well below the ridge line and well above the eaves line. The proposed roof lights on the front roof slope would be well spaced, and be symmetrically located on the elevation. The proposed rear roof lights would be aligned above existing features on the elevation below, and be well spaced in relation to the dormer window and the expanse of retained roof slope. The proposed roof lights would therefore be subordinate features which would preserve the character and appearance of the property.

4.6 The proposed change to the ground floor rear elevation is very minor in nature, and involves the replacement of existing full height panels and doors with new folding doors to the rear garden. The new doors would preserve the appearance of the character and appearance of the property.

4.7 The proposed rear dormer window, roof lights and ground floor door are therefore

considered to be well-designed and sympathetic features which would preserve the character and appearance of the application property and this part of the Camden Square Conservation Area.

5. ACCESS

- 5.1 The site occupies an accessible location close to local facilities and to public transport. The proposals involve no changes to the existing access arrangements to the property.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The proposals have been sensitively designed to facilitate the modernisation and expansion of the application property in a manner that respects its appearance and character, and that of the wider conservation area, and ensures no loss of amenity for neighbouring residents. The main changes are confined to the rear elevation which faces out of the conservation area, and these alterations would not be widely viewed from the public realm. The principle of a rear dormer extension to a property in St Paul's Mews has been established by a recent appeal decision, and the detailed design of the dormer and other proposed changes are consistent with the objectives of planning guidance.
- 6.2 The proposals would preserve the character and appearance of the application property and this part of the Camden Square Conservation Area, and are considered to be compliant with the development plan, the NPPF and relevant local planning guidance.
- 6.3 The applicant looks forward to early dialogue with the case officer, and to the favourable determination of this householder planning application.

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