

**46 INVERNESS STREET, LONDON NW1 7HB
REDEVELOPMENT AS A SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING**

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

December 2014

SUMMARY

This application involves a self-build house and is being made by the owners of an adjacent house, where they have lived for more than 30 years, who want to scale down but wish to continue living in the area, where they spent a large part of their lives. It is not a for-profit development project.

The proposal constitutes an opportunity to replace an existing obsolete structure, which detracts from the general appearance of the area, with an economically viable building, which would not only positively contribute to the street scape but also provide Camden with a nationally relevant experimental low energy house.

This report demonstrates that the proposed dwelling house would not cause harm to the amenity of the surrounding properties. The design, materials, scale, proportions and bulk of the building are appropriate for the site and are sensitively designed so as to not cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the wider area.

It is thus the owner's contention that, in accordance with the aims of Camden Council's Development Plan, the proposal would:

- 1) bring into viable use a vacant and derelict site
- 2) offer a high quality building with good proportions and elegance
- 3) provide an additional residential unit within the Borough
- 4) avoid causing harm to the character or appearance of the area
- 5) not result in any demonstrable impact upon the safe functioning of the highway
- 6) not cause harm to the amenities of surrounding properties

The current proposal takes into account advice received by the applicants from Camden in 2010, 2012 and 2013 and despite the significant site constraints offers a design that is in compliance with Camden CPG2 *...high quality housing that provides secure, well lit accommodation that has well designed layouts and rooms.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE SITE - URBAN CONSIDERATIONS

The site is located on the north side of the western extremity of Inverness Street. It abuts No 44 Inverness Street and No 24 Gloucester Crescent, both listed buildings, in effect acting as a pivotal point between Inverness Street and Gloucester Crescent, which form a 'T' junction in this location. The site is located at the east extremity of Primrose Hill Conservation Area, so designated on 1 October 1971.

The north façade of Inverness Street consists of a terrace of three Victorian houses that are listed, to the right of which is a new, overwhelming, long facade of a housing block built in yellow brick, which is clearly out of scale with the rest of the terrace, and which takes more than half of the space between Gloucester Crescent and Arlington Road . The existing single storey derelict structure at present occupying the site subject of this application forms an unfortunate and awkward western 'book end' to the terrace.

The south side of Inverness Street is varied in style, height and massing.

The site is located close to the shopping, cultural and catering amenities of Camden Town, which is very varied in terms of building size, use and style.

1.2 PAST AND PRESENT USE OF THE SITE / LAND USE

No 46 is a disused single story structure last used in 2009 as a small shop and previously for many years as a small restaurant. Since then, for several years, it has been unused and derelict. The current owners had no interest from any parties as far as commercial use is concerned.

The applicants purchased No 46 in 2009, after it was repossessed by the previous owner's building society. They did this defensively, because No 46 had been a source of persistent problems for them and their neighbours. After reflection and discussions, they came to the conclusion that the best solution, from all points of view, was to seek change of use from commercial to residential use and rebuilding No 46 as a house with a basement, ground and first floor, totalling approximately 104 m² into which they could scale down.

In a letter dated 31 January 2013 Camden advised that the loss of a commercial unit would be justifiable in this location.

1.3 PROPOSAL'S IMPACT ON LOCAL STREETScape CHARACTER

The proposal is located between two listed buildings, one four storeys high, the other three, both giving onto the site with blank beige grey rendered walls. The appearance of the corners of the buildings flanking the site where their brick frontages meet the rendered flank walls is very unfortunate suggesting paper thin brick 'skins'.

The location calls for a building of quality and merit. The existing building is low and devoid of any grace or elegance. It can be said that it escapes the responsibility that comes with its pivotal location. The feel and appearance of the existing building and its façade would be more suited to a mews or such like back-of-house location, not to the main frontage of a street in a conservation area.

In a letter dated 31 January 2013 Camden stated "the property is not identified as a positive contributor to the conservation area".

While in a letter dated 31 January 2013 Camden listed *Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement* – Clauses PH18 and PH19 as applicable, they are in fact not relevant in the context of this application as no roof extension of any sort is being proposed.

In 1992 a planning application seeking a permit to enlarge the then restaurant by way of adding an additional floor was refused. On a subsequent appeal in February 1993 (which was dismissed for reasons of the proposed enlarged restaurant (use) being harmful to the character and the amenities of nearby residents) in respect of adding the additional floor for the restaurant, the planning inspector ruled "In comparison with the size of the buildings that adjoin it the proposed extended building would not appear bulky(...)" thus establishing a principle of a two storey structure being acceptable in this location.

1.4 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS – AMENITIES

1.4.1 OVERSHADOWING AND DAYLIGHT IMPACT

The potential impact in terms of light on the adjacent properties, mainly on the rear façade and the rear space to No 24 Gloucester Crescent, has been analysed by Malcolm Hollis LLP and is covered in the enclosed Daylight and Sunlight Report. The volumetric shape of the proposed building was informed by these light studies with the result that target values pursuant to the BRE guide are satisfied both as far as No 24 Gloucester Road is concerned as well as the internal environment in the proposed building.

1.4.2 CONSTRUCTION IMPACT

The applicants live next door to the proposed new house and will certainly make sure that the project is carried out quickly and efficiently so their own peace and that of their neighbours would not be unduly compromised.

1.4.3 OUTLOOK FROM EXISTING PROPERTIES

The outlook from the adjacent houses, especially those across the street in Inverness Street, would be significantly improved as the obsolete structure with old rusting equipment on its roof would be removed and a new façade of some elegance created.

Rearward outlook from No 24 Gloucester Crescent will also be improved once the old messy rear façade of the existing structure has been removed and replaced with clean lines of the new house.

1.4.4 OVERLOOKING

There will be no change of conditions if compared to the existing.

1.5 EXISTING TREES

This proposal does not involve any tree work.

In earlier discussions with the owners Camden expressed concern that a two storey house in this location would “clearly result in the loss of the views through to the rear gardens and the greenery in the gardens beyond (...) all important views of greenery that soften the otherwise urban grain of the streetscape”.

In terms of the need to ‘soften the urban grain’ - this location is blessed with a great number of mature trees along Gloucester Crescent. A map showing the location and size of these trees is enclosed with this application.

In terms of ‘loss of views through to the rear gardens’ there is only a very narrow field of view through which the nearest tree at the back of houses at Gloucester Crescent can be seen, and from that angle many of the large trees on Gloucester Crescent are also well visible. Moreover the tree that can be seen through the gap is already only partially visible and, as it is set back, and even after the two storey building has been erected the top of its crown will be visible above the new house if viewed from across the street.

1.6 ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND AMENITIES + PRIVATE TRANSPORT – PARKING PERMITS

The proposal does not involve any changes that would reflect on transport or vehicular access to, or from, the site. The applicants, who also own No 44 Inverness Street, will discuss with Camden the matter of resident parking permits and the possibility of No 46 and No 44 sharing the resident’s parking permit, one car each house.

1.6.1 BICYCLE STORAGE

Owing to the constraints of the site, bicycles will be stored inside the house, which is the case with most, if not all, private individual houses in the street, and indeed in London.

1.7 INDIVIDUAL AND SHARED AMENITY SPACE

There will be no change of conditions if compared to the existing conditions as far as the adjacent properties are concerned. The proposed house by the nature of its setting will not have any private amenity space. However, it is located in the vicinity of the expansive greenery of Regent's Park and its surroundings. In a letter dated 31 January 2013 Camden advised that while CPG2 Clauses 4.29 and 4.30 would normally apply in this location, not providing private amenity space is likely to be acceptable given the constraints of the site and the proximity of the park.

1.8 PROPOSED DENSITY

There will be no change of conditions if compared to the existing.

1.9 BUILDING DESIGN

2.1 GENERAL CONCEPT

The guiding principle for massing was to create elevational proportions matching those of the existing Victorian terrace of three houses next to the proposed house, as shown on drawing No 214/GA/105.

2.2 ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

The design effort was aimed at creating a 21st century house that would match the quality of the mid-19th century listed buildings in the street. The paramount issue was to create a house of its time, but of a design that would sit comfortably with its older neighbours. A contemporary, restrained house with clean lines and no fuss.

Addressing the potential issue that the proposed house could appear as a link between the two listed terraces it has been so designed that it does not mimic any of the adjacent buildings and cannot be read as being related to them as a link.

It should be noted that in some ways the Latitude House at Oval Road, and 264 Westbourne Park Road in Notting Hill were among local pointers in terms of aesthetics.

As a result of the site constraints all fenestration faces due south east.

2.3 EXTERNAL MATERIALS AND FINISHES

The applicant wishes to reserve the matter of external materials. Considering the fact that this is a very small site these will be subject to detailed design and value engineering. In general terms two options have been analysed – white/light walls with dark timber frames and panels, or dark walls, also with dark timber frames and panels, both options shown on the application drawings.

2.4 USER COMFORT

In parallel with seeking an elevational expression that would fit the location, and making sure that the neighbours' right to light is not infringed, the proposed design was also aimed at creating comfortable living conditions for the owners.

2.4.1 LIFETIME HOMES

Owing to the site constraints only the following Lifetime Homes Criteria will be able to be satisfied : 8 + 11 + 15. The house will thus not be suitable for a person in a wheelchair.

2.4.2 ROOM SIZES

Living / Kitchen - 35m ²	Bedroom 2 - 10m ²
Bedroom 1 - 8.2m ²	Bedroom 3 - 11.79m ²

3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The owners' ambition is for their new house to play a significant role in the development of low carbon technology. In fact they would like to offer their new house as an experimental project. At the very least the proposed house will be detailed and equipped to achieve Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

In compliance with the relevant directions the owners present a sustainability strategy for the proposed development.

The project aims to provide householders with "a healthy living experience", making it easier for them to be "green" employing the principle of "Reduce, Recycle, Re-use" throughout the design.

The project would explore all or some of the following environmentally relevant ideas :

3.1 REDUCTION OF ENERGY IN USE :

Among other measures an Air Source Heat Pump of a radical new design (developed by the applicant / owner of the proposed house), which achieves a Seasonal Performance Factor of 4.7 in providing hot water and heating, will be installed. As a result no gas connection to the house will be required. Based on the current electricity cost of 13 p/kWh and gas at 3.82 p/kWh, not including standing annual charges (each at £80), the owner estimates that the annual cost of heating space and water by the heat pump will be as low as £250, compared to some £560 if gas were used. This is based on continuous occupation and average weather. The Heat Pump will thus cut the energy running costs by 55 %, compared to gas heating.

The low annual energy cost currently estimated at £250 for heating and hot water is related to current insulation values, but the key features of this patented heat pump and its importance for the future are:

- the annual running cost less than half that of efficient gas fired heating
- associated CO2 emissions, compared to gas fired heating, are cut by two thirds now and maybe up to some 80% in ten years, as electricity generation is likely to become increasingly based on renewables

The applicant, who designed and patented the proposed heat pump, believes that his Air Source Heat Pump stands to become a part of the economic solution to global warming caused by heating, which in the UK accounts for 27% of CO2 emissions. The production cost of the pump will fall rapidly with increasing volumes of production. In addition the advanced engineering of the pump significantly reduces noise and so allows incorporation of the heat pump into buildings without visual manifestation. The Air Source Heat Pump in the current proposal for No 46 will be situated in the basement utility room and not audible elsewhere in the house. The air inlet and outlets will be situated at roof level and not be visible from neighbouring windows or the street. External noise levels will not exceed NR30.

Super insulation will be considered subject to overall wall thickness, in light of the very constraint size of the site

Maximum daylight to all spaces (the principal façade of the new house would face due south-east)

Natural ventilation to all spaces (openable windows + trickle vents)

3.2 WATER MANAGEMENT :

- water saving fittings
- use of grey and rain water subject to viability

3.3 WASTE

Owing to the nature of the site it will not be possible to accommodate refuse storage on the premises. In a letter dated

31 January 2013 Camden advised that internal waste storage would be sufficient with the waste then being placed on the street for collection each week.

3.4 HEALTH AND WELLBEING :

- daylight to all spaces
- ample sun light to living space and upper bedrooms
- natural light to both bathrooms

3.5 BUILDING MATERIALS :

- low emission finishes and ban on pollutants in on-site construction
- timber joinery and use of timber where practical
- water based paints
- no CFCs/HCFCs, limited Nox emissions

4. SELECTED NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GUIDANCE CONSIDERED

Preparing the proposed design we have taken into account and complied with the following guidelines and policies :

The London Plan – Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London July 2011

Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement

Local Development Framework Core Strategy

- CS 1 (Distribution of growth);
- CS 4 (Areas of more limited change);
- CS 5 (Managing the impact of growth and development);
- CS 6 (Providing quality homes);
- CS 7 (Promoting Camden's centres and shops);
- CS 11 (Promoting sustainable and efficient travel);
- CS 14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage);
- CS 18 (Dealing with our waste and encouraging recycling).

Local Development Framework Development Policies

- DP 2 (Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing);
- DP 5 (Homes of different sizes)
- DP 6 (Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing)
- DP 10 (Helping and promoting small and independent shops)
- DP 16 (The transport implications of development)
- DP 17 (Walking, cycling and public transport)
- DP 18 (Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking);
- DP 22 (Promoting sustainable design and construction)
- DP 24 (Securing high quality design)
- DP 25 (Conserving Camden's heritage)
- DP 26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours)
- DP 27 (Basements and lightwells)
- DP 27 (Shopfronts)

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)

- CPG1 (Design)
- CPG2 (Housing)
- CPG4 (Basements and lightwells)
- CPG6 (Amenity)
- CPG7 (Transport)
- CPG8 (Planning obligations)

The London Borough of Camden's UDP - Policy SD6

5. CONTEXT AND REFERENCE IMAGES



5.1 North West Corner of Inverness Street and Gloucester Crescent



5.2 Eastward view onto the north side of Inverness Street from Gloucester Crescent



5.3 Eastward view onto the north side of Inverness Street, from south-west end of Inverness Street, first floor



5.4 Westward view onto the north side of Inverness Street, from southeast end of Inverness Street



5.5 Westward view of north side of Inverness Street showing skewed alignment of corner house in Gloucester Cr.



5.6 Close up view of No 46 Inverness Street, as existing



5.7 View of No 46 from first floor at No 43 Inverness Street, summer



5.8 View of No 46 from first floor at No 43 Inverness Street, winter



5.9 Close-up view of roof to No 46 Inverness Street



5.10 Existing roof to No 46 Inverness Street



5.11 Rear view of No 46 Inverness Street over the rear garden of No 24 Gloucester Crescent



5.12 View of south-west end of Inverness Street



5.13 Northern extremity of Latitude House in Regent's Park Terrace



5.14 264 Westbourne Park Road, W11, Colville Conservation Area, completed in 2011, an award winning reference



5.15 264 Westbourne Park Road, W11, Colville Conservation Area, completed in 2011, an award winning reference



5.16 264 Westbourne Park Road, W11, Colville Conservation Area, completed in 2011, an award winning reference

This report was prepared by **CEZARY M BEDNARSKI MSc Dip Arch RIBA FRSA SARP**

I am a member of the RIBA and of the RIBA Panel of Competition Assessors, a Fellow and past Advisory Council Member of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA); an architectural consultant to UNESCO, a Fellow and a past Member of Fellows Committee of the 21st Century Trust / Salzburg Global Seminar, a member of the London Borough of Brent Design Review Panel and the London Borough of Islington Conservation and Design Panel. Between 2007 and 2011 I was an architectural and urban advisor to the mayor of Warsaw, and in 2009 World Architecture Festival World's Best House Award jury member. I was the Chief Consultant in Architecture, Urban Planning, Landscaping and Urban Aesthetics to Zwierzyniec Town Council (a historic garden town in SE Poland). I frequently work in sensitive urban locations and have worked as the architect member of an international consortium for an EU funded project involving Via Appia in Rome. For UNESCO I dealt with cases of contemporary structures and urban environments proposed in internationally sensitive historic contexts in Cairo and Luxor in Egypt.

I have been working in London since 1981, frequently in the historic contexts/conservation areas, including that of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

I was the outright winner in 20 UK and international architectural and urban design competitions, one of them involving a new structure adjacent to a 2000-year-old Roman arena in Nimes, France. I won a number of commendations and awards, including the Manser Medal 2001 for the best one-off house (in a Barnes conservation area) designed by an architect and built in the UK between 1998 and 2001. In 2006 I won CITYSCAPE / ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW global award for community projects in emerging world (from over 250 submissions).