PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990
10 NASSINGTON ROAD, LONDON NW3 2UD:

Proposed loft conversion; partial demolition and reconstruction of rear extension & miscellaneous minor alterations

March 2015

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
Preliminary Note:
This statement has been prepared with close reference to the NPPF, Camden's Local Development Framework, relevant policies from the London Plan, Camden's Core Strategy (CS13 & 14) & Development Policies (DP22, 23, 24, 25 & 26); Conservation area statement: South Hill Park; and Camden's Planning Guidance documents, namely CPG1 Design, CPG 3 Sustainability and CPG 6 Amenity.

1. THE SITE AND BUILDING

1.1. The semi-detached house belongs to a group, nos. 4-26 (even), which makes a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area. It has been and will remain in residential use as a single family dwelling. It is located in the *South Hill Park Conservation Area*, in sub-area 2:

> *The area formed part of South End Farm, which was cut off by the Railway's failure to fulfil its obligation to make new access roads across the lines... Nassington Road [was] laid out in 1878-90, houses being build between 1879 and 1892* [Conservation Area Statement, South Hill Park, *History*, *pg 7*]

1.2. The **site area** inside the property ownership boundaries of no.10 is 320m$^{2.}$ The **building footprint** is approximately 100m2, which gives a 30.5% **site coverage ratio**; it would remain unchanged and substantially as it was in 1948 following the implementation of the present proposals.

1.3. The existing house has benefited from several improvements: repair and alteration projects have been carried out in recent decades. These works consist primarily of internal re-modelling and renewal of fabric and fittings, including re-roofing and brickwork repairs. Research on the house's **planning history** in Camden's archives has failed to reveal any application to Camden for either planning or conservation area consent.

1.4. Although in relatively good order the house shows evidence of deterioration of its original fabric, both inside and outside, notwithstanding the works carried out in recent years. The new owner plans to carry out a major overhaul of the fabric inside and outside, and some structural alteration of interior rooms, and the complete renewal of the mechanical and electrical services.

1.5. In addition, it is proposed that the existing roof space is converted into a habitable room, with a new dormer window at the rear, for which there are several immediate neighbour precedents at nos. 6, 8, 12 and 14.

1.6. The (almost original) ground floor rear extension shows evidence of historic damp penetration problems from both above (a flat roof) and below (a solid floor). The proposals show it reconstructed on its existing low level walls, partly to address these problems partly to make it work better with the re-arranged internal rooms.

1.7. The proposal would normally be permitted development. Permitted development rights have been removed in the South Hill Park Conservation Area through an 'Article 4 direction' which means the proposed works – the loft conversion and the partial demolition and reconstruction of the rear extension in particular - require planning permission and/or conservation area consent. This position has been confirmed in a pre-application consultation with the duty planner at Camden's planning department.

2. AMOUNT

2.1. The proposed changes to the house's bulk and external appearance are minor:

- the addition of a dormer window to the existing loft space within the profile of the existing roof, which adds $4m^3$;
- the addition of a solar panel(s) for hot water heating, positioned on the existing high level flat roof ;
- the partial reconstruction of the original rear extension, including the replacement of the existing solid floor and parapet and the addition of a new corner window to minimise overlooking by neighbouring houses to the northwest and provide long north-easterly views.

2.2. The design proposes the conversion of the existing, large loft space into habitable accommodation and the introduction of a **new dormer window** to the new room and to the side (west elevation) an enlarged, **opening roof light** over the existing staircase. The existing stairs will be extended upwards to serve the new top level.

2.3. The **converted loft** will add approximately $33m^2$ of habitable **Gross Internal Area** to the 19th C house with a Gross External Floor Area of $260m^2$, excluding the cellar. A small shower/wc room on the converted loft level will add versatility to the house. The balance of the floor area at roof level will be boarded out for storage. Because the house's loft space is large, the increase in volume due to turning it into a naturally lit and ventilated habitable space is small, the new dormer window adding less than 4 cubic metres to the existing (this compares to a permitted development volume allowance of 50 cubic metres additional roof space for semi-detached houses).

2.4. The **alterations to the existing rear extension** primarily caused by the need to address fabric repair issues will enable a constant ceiling height above the proposed kitchen/dining area to be raised, which will be created by opening up and connecting the existing back rooms on the ground floor of the house.

2.5. **Miscellaneous minor alterations** consist of:

- **Roof**: Replacing the existing artificial slates on the roof with natural slate; replacing the flat roof covering with lead roof; addition of a solar panel(s);
- **Water disposal**: re-arrangement of rainwater and foul external pipework and rainwater goods, and a change of material from plastic to metal, where appropriate and where replacement is required;
- **Windows**: Repairs and improvements to the thermal performance and draughtproofing of the windows and doors, including replacement of single glass in existing sashes with new 'thin sealed units';
- **Walls**: cut out and replace infilling using sand:cement in external brickwork with new clay facing bricks to match the adjacent original;
- **Cellar**: Clearing out/levelling the floor in the area under the front room, and introducing damp proofing measures (new unreinforced concrete screed on dpm) to improve the storage capabilities of this below ground room. These works do not require/will <u>not</u> involve either the underpinning of walls or other 'engineering' works.

2.6. The **neighbours have been consulted** and informed of the intent to carry out works. The proposed design has not at the time of writing this statement been discussed in detail with the immediate neighbours at nos. 8 and 12, given the very minor impact of the proposed dormer window on the external bulk of the existing house, and the negligible impact of the proposals on the visual privacy, overlooking, overshadowing, outlook, daylight and sunlight exposure of neighbouring properties **[DP 26]**.

3. PROPOSED LAYOUT

3.1. The proposed **loft room** is arranged as one open plan room, with a small en-suite WC/Shower room. The geometry of the space and the alignment of the new partitions respond to the layout of load bearing structure below, to create a large, well proportioned space related to the existing staircase and to the rooms on the lower floors. It is arranged to maximise the benefits and penetration of daylight, the effect of natural ventilation, and views of the garden and of the sky **[CS 14]**.

3.2. On **the lower floors** the design aims to optimise the long-term usefulness and attractiveness of both the new spaces created by the re-arrangement of internal partitions and the judicious introduction of new openings and connections to create where appropriate larger, more functional, flexible, spaces. An important objective of these works is to improve the longevity of the dwelling house as a whole, adapting it with relative economy of means to changed circumstances and ways of modern living, neither increasing its footprint nor reducing the area of the front and back gardens **[CS 14].**

4. SCALE

4.1. The **roof conversion** neither increases the gross external area of the house nor reduces the total area of land around the original house. The proposed dormer window adds slightly less than 4m³ to the **existing gross volume** of 992m^3 (above ground).

4.2. The **partial reconstruction of the rear extension** - motivated in part by the need to resolve some historic structural and damp problems and mostly to enable a consistent internal ceiling height - will not increase the site footprint of the original 1880's house. The new solid brickwork walls will be re-built off the existing walls and foundations.

4.3. The increased ceiling height of the rear extension, to bring it in line with the ceiling height in the main body of the house adds 8 m³ gross to its bulk. The overall height measured externally will not increase above the existing height, to maintain the attractive 'step-up' appearance at the rear. This has been achieved by omitting the parapet, introducing in its place a balustrade in the form of a trellis/planting wires.

4.4. The combined net **increase in volume** of the proposal is12m^3, less than 1.2% of the 992m^3 gross external volume (above ground level) of the original house. The eaves height of the proposed reconstructed walls ensures the overall height of the rear extension remains below four metres, measured from the existing ground floor level. It will be rebuilt on the existing, original solid brick walls and extends beyond the rear of the house by approximately three metres.

4.5. Outside the Conservation Area, the proposed development would be deemed to constitute 'Permitted Development' under the T&C Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as subsequently amended.

5. LANDSCAPING

5.1. The existing low level (at first floor) flat roof terraces, parapets and copings require overhauling. The intention is to re-roof these areas with an 'inverted roof', using brick pavers with open joints filled with top soil for planning, e.g. alpines and suitable herbs. This will offer the benefits of a sedum roof, while also making it accessible for more regular traffic. A trellis/grow wire arrangement taken up to 900mm above the paved area will provide a green balustrade and make the area safe for regular use **[CS13 &14]**;

5.2. The proposal does not alter the two planted borders which will remain unchanged on completion, on each side of the garden alongside the existing timber boundary fences.

6. APPEARANCE

6.1. The proposal aims to respect yet improve the composition of the rear of the house. It responds, subtly, to the existing arrangement of windows and the rear bay projection and aims to make the rear of the house more harmonious, while retaining the unassuming simplicity of the original. The removal of a redundant 'flying' soil vent pipe at the rear, and the general tidying up of the external pipework should also contribute to a more harmonious external appearance **[CS 14]**.

6.2. The materials used for repairs and replacement are traditional: brick for walls, lead cladding for the dormer, glass and painted timber for windows and doors, lead and natural slate for the high level roof **[CS 14]**.

7. SUSTAINABILITY

7.1. An important aim of the proposal is to improve the overall thermal performance of the existing house, to reduce fuel consumption and to make it resilient to climate change **[Policy CS13 and DP22]**:

- Carefully considered **solar gain** will mitigate fossil fuel consuming heating of the main habitable rooms in the house;
- **Natural ventilation** will enable natural cooling, by means of opening windows in all habitable rooms and bathrooms and a controllable opening rooflight over the staircase, to enable stack effect ventilation to the whole house in hot weather;
- The proposed **solar panel**(s) on the high level flat roof will use solar energy to pre-heat the main domestic hot water cylinder;
- **Storm water run-off** into the drainage system will be minimised by permeable paving to the terraced area and rainwater harvesting for garden watering, using the down pipes linked to a water storage tank/butt.

7.2. The life-time of the building will be extended by the proposed development by ensuring it is adapted to changing circumstances, and that it continues to provide a contribution to a high quality place and the conservation of our heritage **[CS 14]**. The proposals are designed to meet the sustainable design standards set out in Camden's sustainable design and construction measures: the proposed development has taken an integrated approach to design from its inception, addressing the issues of energy, water, materials, pollution, waste, bio-diversity amenity and environmental quality.

7.3. The proposed development responds to local character and context. It recognises and addresses the potential risk of damage to both the existing and neighbouring structures, and incorporates soundly based engineering advice. **CPG Design 2014.**

7.4. The proposal includes for the provision of four bicycle storage bays in the side alley, under cover (there is an existing canopy roof, which will be renewed/replaced) and the storage of re-cycling and rubbish bins.

8. ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

8.1. The main front door, with a single step threshold, is reached from the porch, up three external steps from the front path. Because of the incline of the street, there is a minor level chance across the threshold on the boundary to the public footpath

8.2. The proposal will help bring the original house closer to the Lifetime Homes Standard. It retains the existing downstairs WC, and introduces a level access shower on the first floor, to make single storey living on this level more feasible. **CPG 6: Providing Quality homes**

8.3. The present proposals neither affect nor change existing access issues and means of escape. The introduction of measures such as sprinklers required by Building Regulations to enable the use of the proposed loft room as a habitable space will contribute to make the house safer in the event of a fire.

9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

9.1. The proposed works will not be visible from any outside public viewpoint (the solar panels are well set back, behind the cut-off line of views from the street) and will have beneficial visual impact on the property. They constitute a low impact, sustainable intervention which respects the historic environment of the South Hill Park Conservation Area.

9.2. Equivalent, much higher impact proposals for loft conversions and rear extensions have been deemed by Camden Council to be acceptable in design, use and amenity terms. The present proposal acknowledges and has sensitively taken into account in its design the new relevant planning policies which have been introduced in the South Hill Park Conservation Area since consent was granted for the neighbouring, much bulkier developments.

9.3. The design of the spaces and the engineering services, plant and equipment aims to reduce energy use and emissions that contribute to climate change during the lifecycle of the development, and will ensure the re-use and recycling of water.

9.4. The life-time of the building will be extended by the proposed development, by ensuring it is adapted to changing circumstances. The proposals are designed to meet the sustainable design standards set out by Camden in its Local Development Framework for promoting sustainability and tackling climate change and for improving and protecting the environment and quality of life. The proposed development responds to local character and context and has taken an integrated approach to design from its inception, addressing the issues of energy, water, materials, pollution, waste, bio-diversity, amenity and environmental quality.

9.5. It is respectfully submitted that planning permission can be granted and we look forward to your favourable consideration of the proposals.