

Devonshire House School  
69 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London, NW3 6PD

Design and Access Statement

Prepared by Crawford and Gray Architects Ltd

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## 1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to explain the proposed extension and alteration works to the Devonshire House Preparation School at no. 69 Fitzjohn's Avenue. The statement is to be read in conjunction with the application for Planning Permission and the associated drawings.

This statement takes into consideration Camden planning guidance and in particular:

- Core Strategy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage development)
- Development Policy DP24 (Securing high quality design)
- Development Policy DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage).
- Development Policy DP26 (Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours)
- Development Policy DP27 and supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance 2013 (CPG4 Basements)
- Camden Planning Guidance (CPG1 Design)

as well as:

- Design and Access Statement CABE, 2006
- Building in Context, English Heritage/CABE, 2002
- Understanding Place, English Heritage, 2011



**Image 1:** Aerial View



## 2. Executive summary

The Devonshire House School is situated in the heart of Hampstead. The application site is located on Fitzjohn's Avenue at no.69, a large 19th Century building currently in use as an independent preparatory school.

The development proposals include:

- internal space re-planning at ground and basement level
- removal of the rear single storey extension and replacement with a single storey extension and open loggia
- extension to the existing basement, opening up below the rear terrace elevation onto garden level
- increase the existing lightwells

The proposed development seeks to:

- improve some of the existing school facilities
- improve the connectivity circulation with the basement level and the rear garden
- enhance the character of the building
- improve the energy performance of the building



**Image 2:** Location Plan



### 3. Design Assessment

#### 3.1 Site location and existing building.

No. 69 Fitzjohn's Avenue is part of Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area (Sub area 1), situated on the southern edge of Hampstead between Rosslyn Hill and Finchley Road.

Connecting Hampstead village with Swiss Cottage, Fitzjohn's Avenue is the main through road at the centre of the conservation area. It was developed in of the nineteenth century as a wide road planted with trees and with large houses well set back from the pavement. A number of these houses were adapted in schools from the 1890s.

No. 69 Fitzjohn's Avenue is located close to Arkwright Road, part of a group of large houses with generous gardens developed in 1870s-1880s for private individuals as a one-off buildings in a variety of styles, including Queen Ann, Domestic Revival and Arts and Craft. In the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (February 2001) (CAAMS) Fitzjohn's Avenue is indicated as a most prominent street and in particular no.69 is identified as a building which makes a 'positive contribution' to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

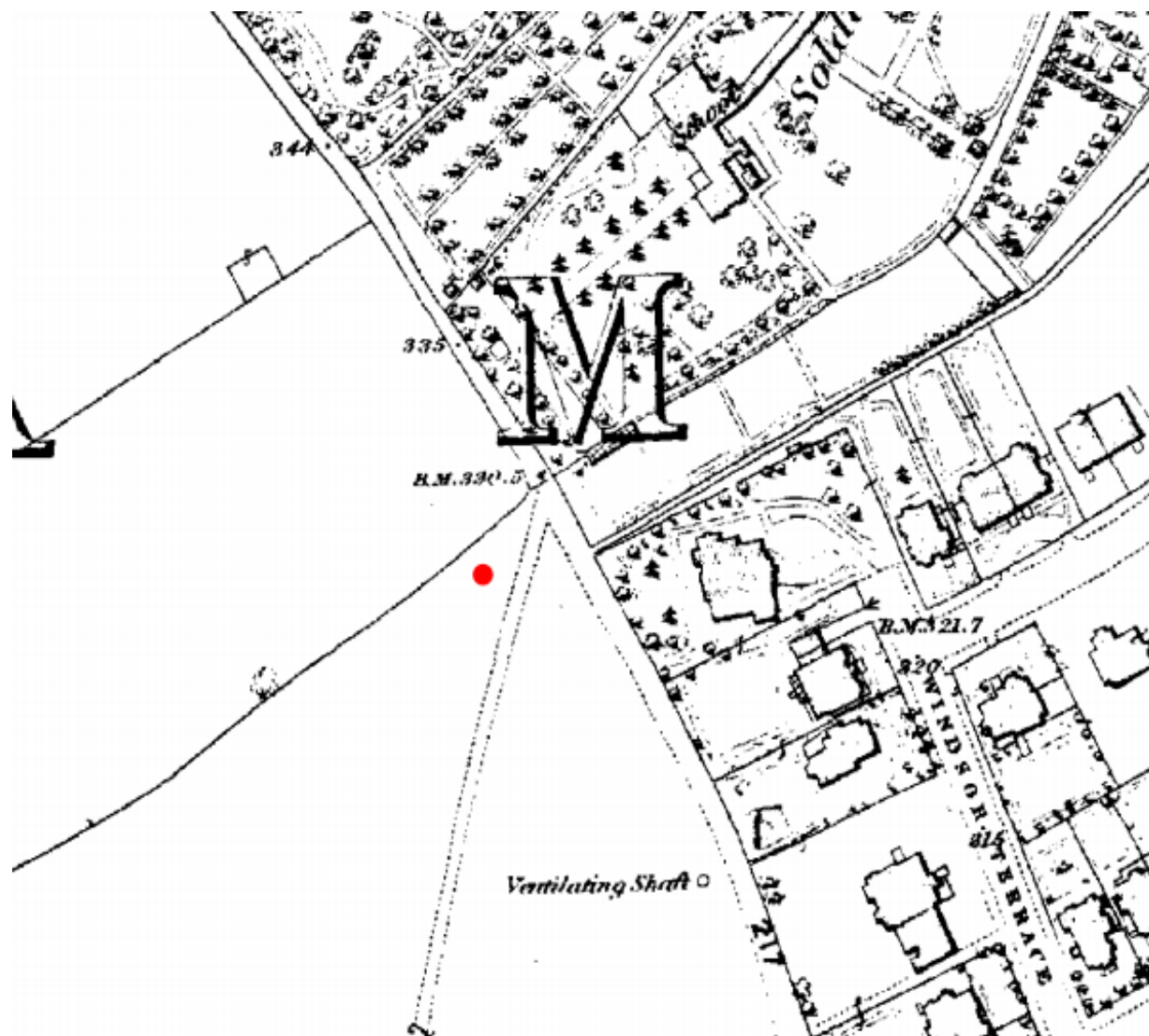
As indicated in the Survey of London, the building was built in polychrome *Rundbogenstil* for Charles Kemp Wild in 1877. It comprises ground, first and second floor plus roof and basement level and early extensions to the South and North sides.



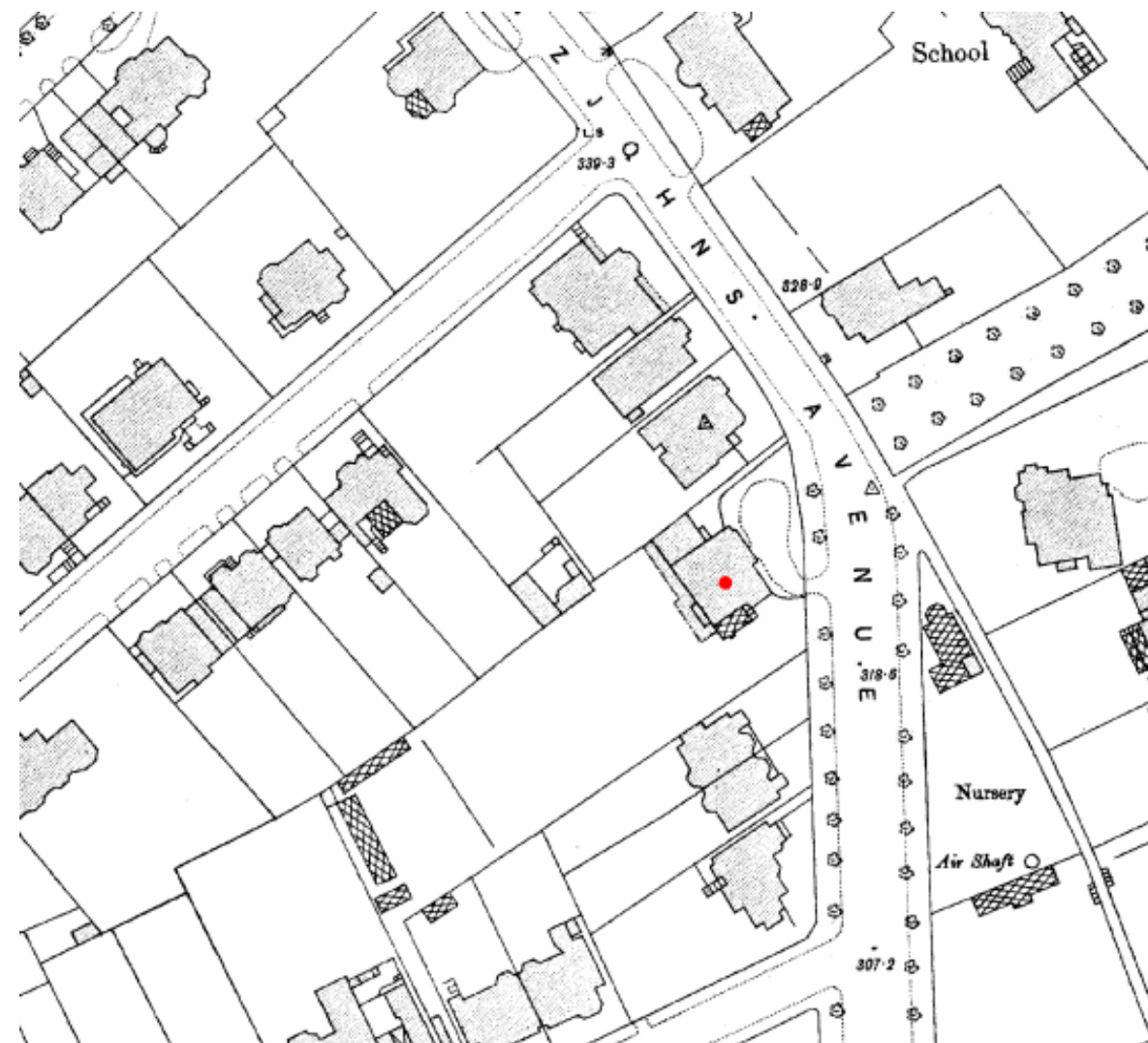
**Image 3:** view of no.69 from Fitzjohn's Avenue

Whilst the front of the building and the front driveway has been retained close to its original state, the rear of the building has been previously extended by an unattractive structure, coming to the end of its maintainable life.





**Image 4:** Historical Map – OS County Series, 1871-1879. Showing the site before the construction of this section of Fitzjohn's avenue



**Image 5:** Historical Map – OS Town Plan, 1895. Showing the site after the construction of 69 Fitzjohn's Avenue and a recent extension on the South-East side





**Image 6:** view of no.69 from the rear garden

The interior use of the building has been developed over time and it currently lacks a fully efficient layout with adequate catering and teaching supporting facilities. The school lunches are served in a teaching room on the ground floor, which is also used for tuition, music and other school matters, whilst the kitchen is a cramped space at basement level.

The basement suffers from a poor connection to the main access at ground floor level/ the rest of the school and would benefit from better levels of natural light and ventilation.





**Image 7:** interior view of the veranda



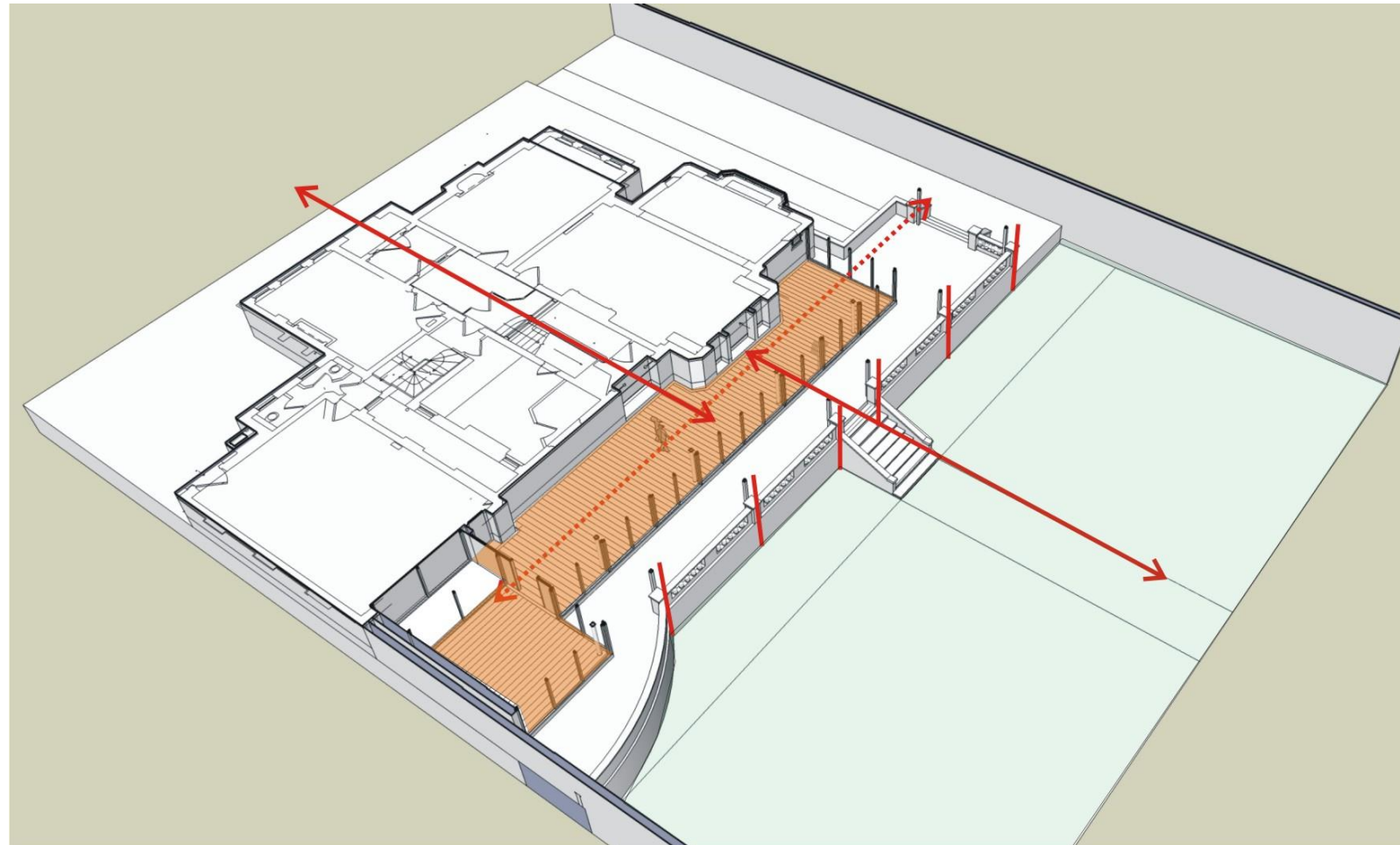
**Image 8:** interior view of the veranda

### 3.2 Amount and Use of proposed Development

Devonshire House is a mature school looking to enhance the provision and facilities for the children and to improve the buildings, including their architecture and features, wherever possible.

At 69 Fitzjohn's Avenue the school is looking to improve the building and its use by:

- a) The extension of the existing basement under the existing raised terrace and to the south of the existing washrooms (involving a basement excavation of approximately 168sqm).
- b) Creating a new light well to the south of the building measuring approximately 6.9m by 1.83m (1.26m in front of the proposed bay window). The lightwell would join to an existing lightwell on the southern elevation.
- c) Creating a new light well to the north of the building measuring approximately 3.9m by 3.2m and small new lightwell to the front of the building covered by a grille at floor level.
- d) The replacement of the non-original full width pitched roof rear extensions with a new glazed flat roofed extension. The existing extension projects approximately 2.22m from the rear elevation with a staff room projecting 6.07m from the rear elevation.



**Image 9:** Circulation Diagram



The proposed replacement extension would project 3.9m from the existing rear elevation increasing to 5.83m to incorporate a staff room.

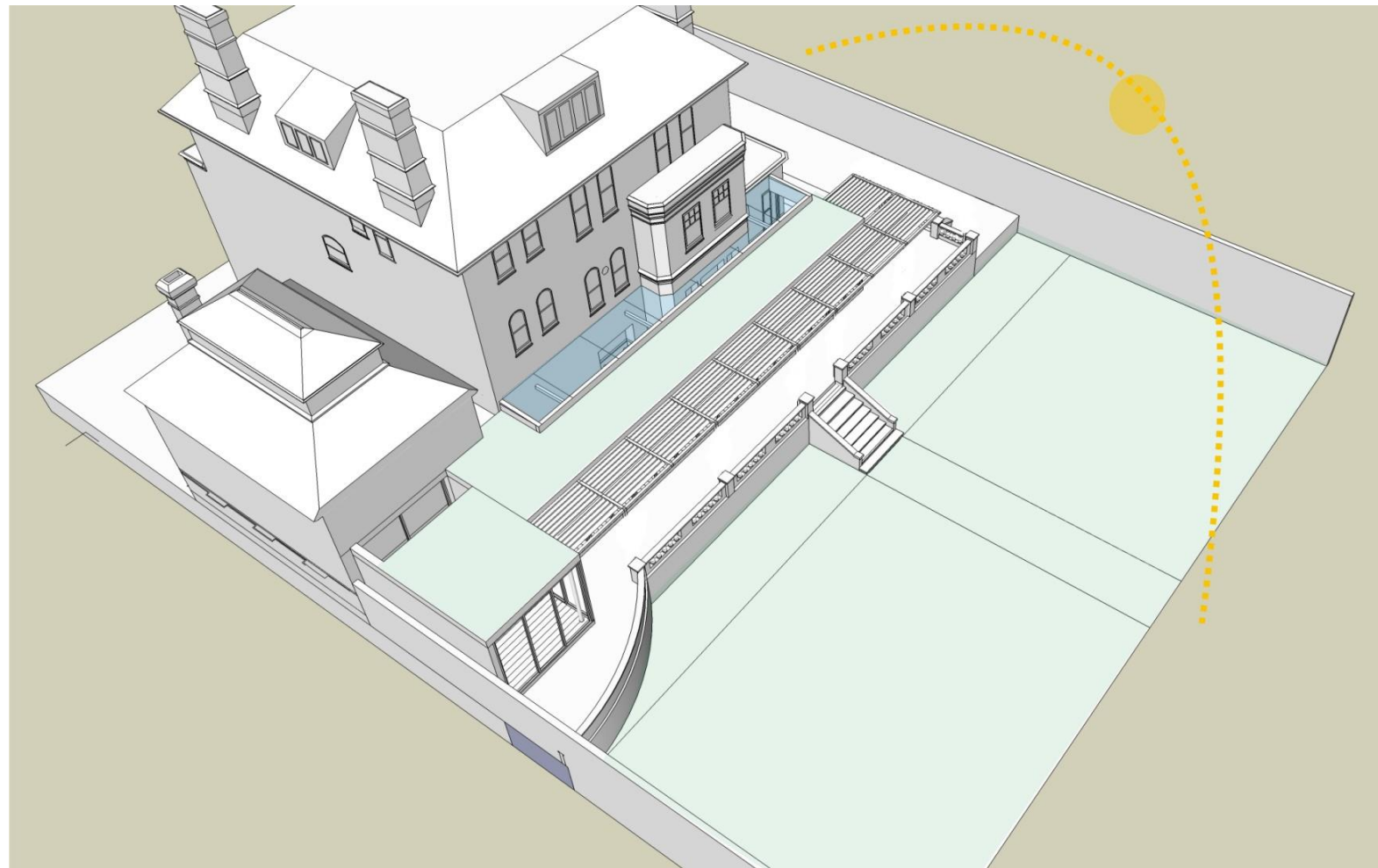
### 3.3 Design and Layout

The internal space re-planning at ground and basement level seeks to rationalise the layout and improve circulation. The existing staircase is to be extended down to basement level and a main lobby space is to be created at that level.

The existing basement is to be extended under the main building and the rear terrace to create a proper Dining Hall facing the rear garden.

Access to and from the kitchens will be direct to the Dining Hall, improving catering, enhancing Health and Safety, and rationalising access for both the students and the staff involved. A further space under the terrace is to replace teaching space for one class currently at roof level, which is too cramped and can be best used as a SEN (Children with special educational needs) space.

The below-ground Dining Hall and single teaching space would be visible only to the school's own gardens and little different in prospect even there: it will be below the existing terrace level.



**Image 10:** Solar Path diagram

The lightwells to the sides of the main building are to be increased to improve light and access for children and staff.

Other ancillary works are also included in the scheme at basement level: for example the re-building of a sub-standard basement area and the relocation of boiler services within this, so that modern equipment can be installed and the overall energy efficiency of the building improved.

At ground floor level, the existing rear single storey extension is to be replaced replacing it with a lighter single storey extension and open loggia to enhance the building and improve light and access for the pupils.

The contemporary design of this element is to be juxtaposed to the historic building along the lines of many successful interventions, including the restoration of the Camden Art Centre in Arkwright Road, which is a grade II listed building and an important local reference.

### **3.2 Height, Volume, mass and Appearance**

The scale, height and width and appearance of the proposed extension has been discussed at pre-application enquire stage with Camden Planning Department (2014/6727/PRE)

With regard rear extension works at ground floor level it was assessed that:

*The replacement extension would have a sympathetic appearance and is considered an improvement on the existing configuration which is untidy and fragmented especially at roof level with varying heights and pitches of roofs.*

*The glazed extension would allow the existing building to be easily read and would have a lightweight appearance. The proposed glazed staff room would have an improved relationship with the host property, in comparison to the existing timber structure, as it would appear as a continuation of the proposed ground floor glazed extension.*

*The depth of the extension is 1.7m greater than the existing 2.2m extension and its size may be considered subordinate to the host property.*

With regard extension works at basement level it was assessed that:

*The basement extension would not be disproportionately large and its external manifestation below the existing terrace would not harm the relationship of the host property with the garden.*

*The proposed extension of the lower ground floor level to the south of the existing toilets and the excavation of an associated lightwell would be in keeping with the existing basement elevation and lightwell on the southern elevation (facing towards No.67).*

However, it was suggested to give further thought to the design of the basement windows of the rear elevation and these have been revised to relate better to the windows at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level.





**Image 11:** view of the proposal from the garden



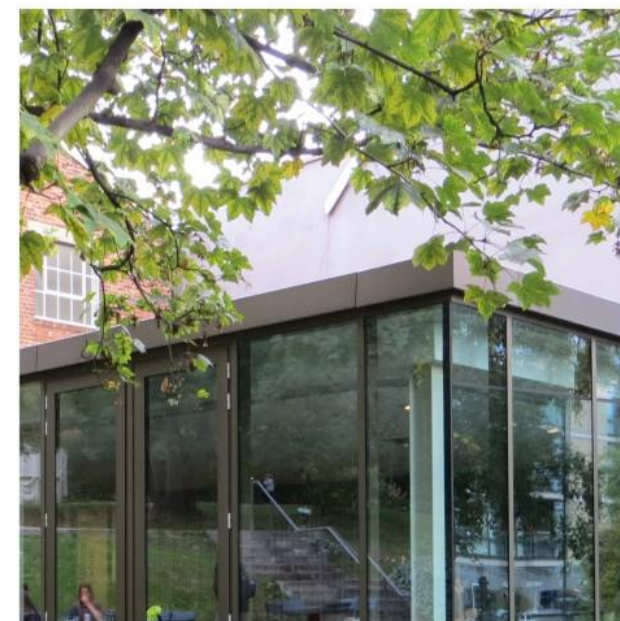
**Image 12:** view of the proposal from the garden





**Image 13:** view of the proposal from the ground floor extension





**Image 14:** photographs of the Camden Arts Centre



#### **4. Landscaping**

Consideration has been given to the existence of trees on and adjacent to the site and a tree survey and arboricultural impact assessment have been prepared to demonstrate that the development will not have any adverse impact.

The overall landscaping of the garden and the outdoor areas is to be maintained/ reinstated at the completion of the works.

#### **5. Sustainability Strategy**

A number of measures have been taken to improve the environmental sustainability of the building by:

- a) retro-fit measures
- b) design of the extension to ensure efficient use of energy
- c) consider use of sustainable technologies to achieve a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from on-site

#### **6. Access**

It is proposed to retain the existing accesses at ground floor level and improve access to the basement level both internally – by extending the main staircase - and externally – by enlarging the existing lightwells and forming a nice access to the rear garden).

#### **7. Conclusions**

The proposal will improve significantly the School facilities without any detrimental effect on the building, the street scene, neighbouring properties, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The building will benefit from better flow and circulation, more energy efficiency and a better environment for children and the school staff.