

# Extension of Whitestone House, London NW3

## Whitestone Lane – Hampstead Conservation Area

### Design and Access Statement April 2015

#### The Site

The site is at the end of Whitestone Lane, within the Hampstead Conservation Area. Its southern elevation faces Whitestone Lane and the site includes a pedestrian right of way through to Hampstead Heath. The house cannot be seen from Whitestone Pond and Heath Street to the west as it lies entirely behind the house called Gangmoor to which it is attached. The rear and northern elevations are only seen from the Heath near the Vale of Health with the upper storeys of the house visible and the lower storeys concealed behind the existing boundary wall.

#### Use

The existing use is as a single family residential house. There will be no change in use.

#### Planning History

**2014/1783/P** – Granted - Erection of four-storey extensions to front and side facades. Installation of three dormer windows to front roof slope.

**2013/06147/P** – Refused - Replacement glass and metal balustrade at ground floor level on east elevation of existing dwelling (Class C3)

**2012/6423/P** – Withdrawn - Replacement glass balustrade at ground floor level on east elevation of existing dwelling (Class C3)

**2005/5458/P** – Granted - Amendment to planning permission dated 31/10/03 (2003/0150/P) for various extensions and alterations, in respect of retention of a raised roof light on the rear roof slope of the single family dwelling house, two flues on the rear roof slope, and minor alterations to the ground floor fenestration on the Heath side elevation.

**2004/0557/P** – Granted - Alterations to the basement floor pool layout to extend beneath Whitestone Lane as a variation to planning permission ref 2003/0150/P granted on 31st October 2003 for a 4 storey extension



(including basement level) to the existing single family dwelling house.

**2003/0150/P** – Granted - The erection of rear and side extension at basement level and a rear extension at ground, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and roof levels to provide habitable floor space for a single dwelling house incorporating excavation of rear terraces, new parking areas and associated landscaping and boundary fencing.

**PWX02022823** – 2002 - Granted – certificate of lawfulness for proposed development for erection at basement and ground floor levels.

## Proposal

The extension of the existing basement to include parking for cars. The above-ground extensions included here again are all as those approved recently under consent Ref. 2014/1783/P with the exception of a small single storey building in the present parking courtyard to enclose a car lift.

Level	Existing area m <sup>2</sup>	Previously approved m <sup>2</sup>	This application m <sup>2</sup>
3 <sup>rd</sup> floor	43	66	66
2 <sup>nd</sup> floor	76	114	114
1 <sup>st</sup> floor	91	121	121
Ground floor	125	161	161
'Garage' (lift entrance)	0	0	24
Lower ground floor	236	272	272
Proposed basement	0	0	356
Totals	571	733	1,114

## Design

Whitestone house was originally a narrow 19<sup>th</sup> Century three storey house with a central stairwell. The architect Clough Williams-Ellis greatly extended it in the 1930s adding semi-circular wings and an octagonal tower.

Jonathan Freegard Architects obtained planning consent in 2003 for an extension to this house (Ref. 2003/0150/P) that rebuilt the façade a few metres forward of its original line but retained all these main elements and much of its original appearance and form, with most of the additions at that time below ground.

Without changing the recently approved above-ground additions under planning consent Ref. 2014/1783/P the applicant wishes to address the problems of parking by the installation of underground parking in an extended basement as exists beneath the adjacent flats at Belmoor. In this case it would be served by an automatic stacking system via a lift accessed from the existing parking courtyard. Cars will be driven in forwards, mechanically stacked, and delivered on demand, facing forwards, back to the courtyard at street level.

At present there are two tight spaces in the courtyard, with another 7 parking spaces arranged lengthwise along the part of Whitestone Lane that lies within the property boundary. The underground parking will have provision for 10 cars so represents a net addition of just one car.

Whitestone Lane is a pedestrian right of way and it is proposed to remove all cars from it and place bollards across the approach thus making it a more pleasant place for pedestrians.

The previously approved extension included rebuilding and shifting forward the main rear and northern facades, adding additional windows and dormers, some modest additions below ground floor level, and lining up the floor levels of the octagonal tower with the main floors of Whitestone House, whilst keeping the picturesque grouping of the main house, semi-circular wings and octagonal tower.

From Whitestone Lane the house extends forwards (east) by 2m, as the approved scheme, but remains well set back from any sight lines of Bellmoor apartments across the lane and will not impact views or light. The basement addition which is the subject of this application is entirely invisible.

The main views of the site in the recently approved scheme and which are included again in this application are, however, from the Vale of Health. These before and after views make it



**Same view showing recently approved extension. The new parking entrance is concealed behind the fence.**



**Existing view from the Heath (Vale of Health)**



**Proposed view from Heath as recently approved**

clear that the impact is minimal.

The current ground floor level cast stone balustrade which is below line of sight will be replaced with a traditional steel balustrade with vertical rails painted black. The current stair/landing and balustrade that sits along the boundary wall will also be removed with new stairs built further from the boundary, all quite hidden from view.

The only additional above-ground extension in this application is a single-storey 'garage' within the entrance courtyard that covers the lift platform. This is attached to the side of the house and will be clad in the same white render with rustication bands found on the existing building. It is set behind the solid timber-boarded gates and fence at the back of the existing courtyard away from Whitestone Lane and, being only slightly higher than the fence, will not be visible from the public domain. This courtyard is already well screened from the flats at Belmoor by the mature trees along the boundary and this small single-storey addition will be likewise hidden.

The extended lower ground level and proposed basement level, as already approved, is designed to match the existing house but with large modern glazed openings. These openings remain the same and again would not be visible from the public domain as they are concealed by the existing boundary walls.

The current proposal adds a basement storey below the existing but as the house sits on a high promontory this is still well above the adjacent level of the Heath and so poses no drainage issues. The new basement is kept back from the boundary with 'The Cottage' and 'Gangmoor' to the west in order to minimise risk and disturbance to those properties. Separate hydrological, geological and structural reports are attached to this application along with a Construction Management Plan showing how the building process will be carefully managed. The architects for this application have recently (2014) carried out a similar sized basement addition beneath two adjacent houses at 40 & 42 Hampstead Grove, just across Heath Street from this site, and using the same firm of structural engineers. The basement excavation was done quickly and with minimal disruption to the neighbours.

### **Pre-application Advice**

Pre application advice was sought for the previous application from the Camden Council with drawings submitted on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October 2013 and advice received on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2013. The comments on the proposed scheme and our responses are as follows: -

*'The pre-application enquiry proposes extensions to the rear and side façade. It is considered acceptable subject to careful detailing and appropriate materials. The proposed extensions would retain symmetry of the existing building as well as keep its horizontal proportions.'*

The rear elevation was extended a further 0.5m from the proposal submitted for pre-application advice in the final approved submission but retained the symmetry and proportions of the existing building. There are no changes to the dimensions in this application.

As this application replicates the previous above-ground proposals that have been approved and we are familiar with the guidelines and issues associated with basement excavation we have not sought additional advice for this proposal.

### **The Conservation Area**

Whitestone House is part of the Whitestone Pond sub-area of the Hampstead Conservation Area and is listed as making a positive contribution to the conservation area. The adjacent Gangmoor is a 3 storey, early 18<sup>th</sup> century grade II listed building. The Conservation Area Statement describes the Lane and Gangmoor as follows: -

Whitestone Lane - A short lane running towards the Heath that has the listed early 18<sup>th</sup> century detached house Gang Moor set back from Whitestone Pond. It is screened by a wall, shrubs and trees. Unsightly garage doors open directly from the lane.

The proposal for Whitestone House will preserve the architectural interest of the conservation area. It will follow the existing building details with matching fenestration, copings, architraves etc. New dormers will be clad in lead or a pre-patinated zinc very similar in colour to the existing slate roof. The lower ground and basement levels receiving a more modern treatment will not be visible from any part of the public realm.

### **Access statement**

The site is within 5 minutes' walking distance of bus stops on Heath Street and 7 minutes from Hampstead underground station, however most journeys will inevitably be by private car. Vehicle access is through the existing boundary gates opening directly off Whitestone Lane and this will remain unchanged. The proposal provides level access to the main floor and adequate space for unloading of a wheelchair. The main floor provides access to WC facilities and has adequate space for adaption to single storey living or the installation of a lift or stair-lift should this ever be required. The underground parking will provide an invisible storage for vehicles removing them off the access road and from the public right of way over the privately owned section of Whitestone Lane.

### **Impact Statement: visual, privacy and amenity considerations**

The house will retain its substantial garden, as well as the existing terraces. All windows/terraces are located sufficiently far away to prevent over looking issues or are already existing and screened. As in the case of the approved application, the above-ground extensions will not affect any externally facing habitable windows. A daylight study was previously conducted for the light well shared by Whitestone House, Gangmoor & The Cottage. The sloping roof to the east of the light well would be made into a flat roof with the parapet wall rising by 510mm, the octagonal tower to the north will rise by 640mm, the main house roof remains 1.4m setback from the light well and both will retain their hip roofs sloping down towards the light well. The report found that the proposed raising



of parapet and eaves would have no appreciable impact on the ground and first floor windows facing the light well, they already have extremely low values of daylighting to the extent that artificial lighting is required when these rooms are in use, and the proposed development would not alter this situation. The modification would impact to some degree on daylight to the second floor bedroom window of The Cottage, but the reduction is within the BRE guidelines for acceptable development. This was accepted with the previous application.

## **Trees**

An arboricultural report is included with the application. All new excavation work is being carried out on the far side of existing lines of piles and retaining walls that are being left in place where near the line of trees on Whitestone Lane and no new construction work will take place nearer than the existing structures. All the main trees are located along this southern boundary with a few isolated ones at the far end of the garden (east). The arboricultural report includes a method statement for protecting the trees during construction. Because a crane will be used there will be almost no vehicular traffic on site that might cause the root zones to be compacted.

## **Sustainability**

As the external walls will be rebuilt to a much higher standard of thermal performance and the opportunity taken to have a whole building ventilation system installed with heat reclamation, the building will perform much better environmentally than the existing one that has solid walls. The area of hard landscaping is not being extended as the enlarged footprint is over the areas of terrace that are already paved. A sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) will nevertheless be provided to ensure that excessive rainwater will not run into the mains and the system will rely heavily on attenuation tanks with soakaways which will make use of the site's high elevation above the surrounding Heath and the porous nature of the ground.

## **Basement impact**

A separate Basement Impact Assessment, with Geotechnical and Hydrological Reports, is included with this application. It can be seen from the wider sections through the site that the bottom of the proposed new basement is well above the general ground level of the surrounding Heath and that it is widely separated from other nearby buildings so that there is no risk of it forming a continuous barrier against groundwater flow.

## **Construction Management Plan**

A separate Construction Management plan is included with the application. With the actual increase in excavation over what has been removed for the existing basement being relatively small and the fast method of construction to be employed (using a brick-clad steel frame instead of the more extensive use of concrete and other 'wet trades') to reduce the duration of the disturbance, the number of vehicle movements during construction is greatly reduced. A draft structural scheme is included with this application to show the arrangement of the steel frame and basement structure with contiguous piles, how stability of the ground and adjacent buildings will be maintained during

construction, and how the basement is pulled back at the boundary to avoid construction near the adjacent Listed building of Gangmoor.

### **Summary**

In summary the above ground extensions maintain the style and main features of the 1930s William-Ellis house and have minimal impact on neighbours and views. The underground extension will be invisible, will leave Whitestone Lane free of cars and will not be harmful to either the Conservation Area nor the surrounding properties.