

**PROPOSED EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE AND PROPOSED NEW HOUSE ON DRIVEWAY, AT 57 CAMDEN MEWS, LONDON NW1 9BY**

**DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

**Site Location and Description:**

57 Camden Mews is a two storey house with front and rear gardens and driveway providing off street parking to the side of the house.

The property was built in 1970 in facing brickwork with timber infill panels, later replaced by UPVC panels and double glazed windows to match. The house has a flat roof and is detached, although the north/east flank wall is built on the site boundary and abuts no 59 Camden Mews, this adjoining house was constructed 15 years later in 1985. The south/west boundary wall is constructed in facing bricks and abuts the adjoining Tesco and petrol station car park. The rear site boundary to the back garden of no. 208 Camden Road is a 2.5 metre high timber fence.

The existing property is within the Camden Square Conservation Area and is considered a 'neutral building' along with the adjoining properties including no's 59 and 61, by the Camden Square Townscape Appraisal. The existing house is in poor condition and adds no value to either Camden Mews or the Conservation Area. The proposed extensions and development of a new house on the site provides an opportunity to create a high quality development that will add a positive contribution to Camden Mews and the Camden Square Conservation Area.

Camden Mews is one of the longest cobbled Mews in London and provides an eclectic mix of contemporary houses along its length from York Way to the north and Rochester Square to the south. The houses are generally a mix of two and three storey properties predominantly built tight up against the narrow pavement creating a sense of enclosure to the street as one passes along its length. However, the Mews changes character halfway along its length; at the site of this application, where the intimate, enclosed nature of the street falls away. Abingdon Close flats and houses directly opposite 57 Camden Mews is a public housing development built in the '60's and is set back from the street with open spaces between the three and four storey buildings with a public link/footpath through to Camden Square Gardens. A three storey flank wall to no 86 Abingdon Close sits tight against the pavement opposite the site (see photographs). The Mews also opens up to the south side of the site with the Tesco and petrol station car park, a vast open space that connects back to Camden Road. The design proposals for the site is generated as a direct response to this change in character of Camden Mews and the open spaces of the immediate site context.

**Design Proposals:**

The design proposals are as follows:

A) To extend the existing house out to the front boundary to align with the existing predominant building line on the street and add a third floor to be set back from the street façade to match the scale and proportions of the neighbouring buildings and streetscape of Camden Mews.

B) To construct a new single family house on the driveway alongside the existing house with split floor levels, to comprise 2 or 3 bedrooms on the upper floors with a south/west facing roof terrace and open plan kitchen, dining and living at lower ground floor level.

There will be no off street parking provided, on the basis that there is no 'parking stress' on this part of the Mews due to the open spaces opposite no. 57 and the car park boundary railings to the side of the site with no housing and therefore little demand for parking.

### **Access & Layout**

The entrances to the existing and proposed houses will have level thresholds for easy access with wide entrance doors.

The internal changes to the existing house provides a wider, naturally lit staircase and more generous internal accommodation comprising four bedrooms and open plan living spaces on the ground floor with level threshold access onto the rear garden. In the summer months, the sliding glass doors at the rear, open up to the garden to form a seamless transition between internal and external spaces, connecting the garden and extending the living space into the garden.

The new house will be built on the 3.2 metre wide driveway alongside the existing house. The house will extend the full length of the site with a front entrance courtyard and will be constructed over split levels for easy access to the rooms from half landing levels. The lower ground floor will accommodate the open plan kitchen and dining area below a large retractable roof light providing natural light and ventilation, with upward views to the 'hanging garden' screen above.

The split floor levels allows a roof terrace to be 'recessed' and contained within the overall volume of the house, to provide a south/west facing external amenity overlooking the wide open spaces of the adjoining car park and beyond.

### **Scale and Appearance:**

The scale and appearance of the development is informed by the local context around this part of the Mews; the open spaces and scale of Abingdon Close flats opposite; the petrol station/Tesco car park at the side of the site; and the scale of no 208 Camden Road flats at the back of the site. Refer to the site plan, the photographs and the proposed sections through the site to fully appreciate the scale of this immediate context.

The proposal is to increase the density of the site and build a high quality full width development to match the scale of neighbouring properties along the Mews. The development will have two storeys built out to the line of the street, with a third floor set back from the street to match the prevalent street pattern. Due to the open spaces opposite the site, and the adjoining car park to the side, there is no loss of amenity, overlooking, or loss of outlook from the surrounding houses and flats.

The proposed new house (no 55) will act as a 'bookend' against the open space of the adjoining car park. The narrow house will be fully glazed to the front and rear elevations with the addition of horizontal planting troughs containing mixed herbs and evergreen planting to provide screening and privacy as required, as well as filtering the polluted air from the adjoining petrol station when the glazed screens are open for cross ventilation during the summer months. The roof terrace will be screened at the rear to prevent overlooking to no 208 Camden Road, but will overlook the Tesco car park and will inadvertently 'police' the unsocial behaviour and 'drug dealing' that takes place there on a regular basis 'after hours' near the site boundary of 57 Camden Mews, where there is currently no policing or overlooking from surrounding buildings to discourage this unlawful activity.

The existing extended house (no 57) will have a double height space immediately behind the street façade with a large high level glazed window to provide views out across the double height space to the open gardens opposite with extended vista through to Camden Square. The slatted timber and perforated metal screens at ground floor level offers privacy against the narrow Mews frontage and recalls the historical use of metal shutters to the vehicle repair garages of the recent past, some of which still remain on Camden Mews. The black brickwork to the flank walls of the new house replicates the brickwork to the railway ventilation shaft on the adjoining car park.

We believe the proposed extension of 57 Camden Mews with the addition of a new single family house on the driveway will enhance the varied, contemporary mix of the Mews and will be a positive addition to the Camden Square Conservation Area.

**John Kerr Associates Ltd**