

4 THE GROVE, LONDON N6 6JU

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent Application
2nd December 2015



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1 INTRODUCTION

No. 4 The Grove is a grade II* listed terraced house dating from 1688, set in grade II listed grounds, aspects of which date back to 1600. The new owner wishes to carry out alterations to the four storey 7-bedroom property to reverse aspects of the 'restoration' work that was carried out during the 1970s, and adapt the accommodation to suit their large family.

This report does not duplicate information provided by The Stephen Gray Consultancy, whose assessments identify the significance of the property and describe the impact of the proposals on the historic property.

A site visit to the house on 6th November 2015 was attended by Camden's Senior Heritage and Conservation Officer, Nick Baxter, and Matthew Cooper, Historic England Assistant Inspector of Historic Buildings. Matthew Cooper subsequently provided a pre-application advice letter dated 18th November 2015 addressing heritage considerations; a copy is appended to this document .

2 THE PROPERTY

2.0 History

A detailed analysis of the history of the house is provided within The Stephen Gray Consultancy Heritage Assessment Part I, but a summary description here provides an introduction to enable an analysis of compliance with general planning policy.

The house was built in 1688 as part of a speculative development comprising three pairs of semi-detached houses at 1-6 The Grove, Highgate N6. The Main House remains relatively unaltered in its five-cell plan form, with two high status principal floors sandwiched between more simple accommodation within the service floors at attic and basement level. The external appearance of the house is essentially in tact with steeply pitched clay tile roofs over brickwork walls, save for an oversized rear dormer window added during the early C20. Internally original panelling and doors appear to have survived the centuries, as well as the wide robust staircase with ornate twisted balusters and handrail. And whilst shutters remain to the window cases to the two principal floors, it is only possible to trace one sash of an original window on the second half landing. The deal boarded floors have been damaged in the installation of modern services, but are substantially in place and repairable. Much of the historic plaster has been replaced with modern plasterboard and we know that an ornate pargetted ceiling within the Hall has been lost since 1936. There appears to be one original bolection chimney piece, currently located on the second floor, but an interesting history can be traced through the other chimney pieces which would have been installed by new owners in their efforts to update and make a personal mark on the house over the years.

A timber framed and boarded Side Extension, rising almost the full height of the house to its north flank was probably added in the late C18 or early C19 to provide the occupants with washrooms served by running water and drainage pipework, some of which remains. It will continue to serve the new owner well in providing routes for replacement services, just as it was intended. The single storey Lean-to which seems to prop the north east corner of the Side Extension was probably constructed during the C19. It has housed boilers for many decades, and will continue to do so.

As deduced in the Heritage Assessment, during the 1920s an Extension was built to the north west of the Main House. It originally only provided accommodation at Upper Ground and First floor levels, linked to the Main House at first half landing level, with an undercroft remaining at Lower Ground Level as an extension to the Yard. It appears that this open area was enclosed during the 1970s and the staircases reconfigured to provide a separate annex dwelling, albeit still with an internal connection to the Main House, as it is found today.

During the 1970s a programme of 'restoration' works were carried out in the house which included the stripping of the paint from deal panelling, exposing of structural timbers, insertion of rustic brick arches with fake timber lintols, and the application of 'penny' sand/ cement repointing of the front and flank facades.

Within this application for Listed Building Consent the property is described as four parts: Main house; Side Extension; Lean-to and Extension.

2.1 Context & Setting

As detailed within the Heritage Assessment, The Grove falls within Sub-Area 1: Highgate Village, described as the historic 'core' of the Highgate Conservation Area.

The house still remains part of the original group of six, although the immediate neighbouring properties have been radically, and in the case of no. 5, entirely, reconstructed, leaving no. 4 the most well preserved.

The house is oriented east-west, with a generous front garden, enclosed by railings, and very long terraced gardens to the rear, providing views across Hampstead Heath. The house fronts The Grove, which is open to one-way traffic and is used primarily as a short cut for cars avoiding the congestion at the junctions of Highgate High Street and Hampstead Lane to the north. An unmetalled area lined with London Planes between the road and boundary provides informally managed parking to the Grove residents. The house faces on to covered reservoirs to the east providing a leafy outlook.

3 THE PROPOSALS

3.0 Outline

The proposals are detailed fully in the Schedule of Works, and associated drawings, but can be summarised for the purpose of this document as follows:

Exterior

Removal of wide dormer to rear roof and reinstatement of original tiled pitch with two dormers with double-hung sliding sash windows to match existing adjacent;

Sample of repointing, to be assessed for consideration for repointing to full front and flank elevations;

Insertion/replacement of airbricks and ventilation registers;

Rationalisation and replacement of upvc drain pipes on flank elevation;

Roof repairs and renewal of leadwork to parapet gutters, valley gutter, dormer cheeks etc;

Replacement of felt roof finishes to lean-to extension with lead wood-roll sheeting;

Relocation of incoming mains gas, water and electrics involving trenches in front garden and reinstatement of paving;

Installation of replacement building services to Lean-to.

Interior general

Formation of service riser routes/ ducts to Side Extension;

Repair and refinishing of floorboards;

Stripping out of modern joinery and fittings.

Lower ground floor

Drained cavity tanking to lower ground floor involving replacement ground floor slab;

Elimination of arched openings to Kitchen;

Infilling of opening between Kitchen and understair space;

Formation of partition within Lean-to.

Upper ground floor

Reinstatement of doorway from Landing to Living Room.

First Floor

Formation of new door opening from first floor north-west room of Main House into Extension;

Removal of upper stair flights in Extension and infilling of stair well at first floor level;

Alteration to door opening to partition wall in Extension;

Re-fitting Guest Ensuite Bathroom and creation of Family Bathroom within existing Bedroom 6;

Second floor

Demolition of partition wall within south west room to reinstate original connecting door between rear rooms;

Reinstatement of form of north east room by demolition of partition walls forming existing bathroom and kitchenette.

3.1 Planning history

Camden have not responded to requests for access to the archived planning file on the property and so planning history is limited to that uploaded to the

Planning Explorer. Of the nine approvals granted since 1988, eight have been in connection with tree works. Permission LE9800685R1 however was granted in January 1999 for the enlargement of one basement window and formation of an opening in the spine wall between the rear rooms at basement level; whilst the work to the window appears to have been carried out, the opening was not formed.

Pre-application comment has not been formally requested from Camden. However, as noted above, a site visit was carried out on 6th November 2015 by Nick Baxter, Senior Heritage and Conservation Officer, with Matthew Cooper from Historic England. Similar plans to those submitted were provided for review at the house. Within Matthew Cooper's letter of response he requests the following information in connection with the current amended proposals, all of which are addressed within the Schedule of Works and drawings;

- *method statement for the cleaning of the floorboards;*
- *repointing specification;*
- *drawings of the detail of the new floor structure within the basement: if the floor level will change, how will this relate to door surrounds, skirting boards, door leaves etc.;*
- *Technical detail of the 'comms room'. Where historic timbers appear to survive, these should be protected and kept free from fixings, notchings etc.;*

He also states that he is *'not convinced that altering the panelling at the [upper] ground floor to reinstate two doors is beneficial or necessary. The evidence for openings in this location is somewhat uncertain, though the 1936 survey drawings do show a single door leaf within the panelling when seen in section. I would recommend against unnecessarily reconstructing the panelling.'*

As set out in the Heritage Assessment the doorway is apparent both on the 1936 survey drawings and visible within a photograph the same time. Furthermore the existing panelling at the location of the previous door is formed in plywood, and not butted boards. It is proposed to carry out endoscope investigations via the current light switch plate to verify the presence of the original framing structure to the opening prior to carrying out this work or reinstatement.

Matthew also states that *'the creation of a link between the first floor (existing) bathroom and the cottage is also a harmful impact, but given the changes that have already occurred within this room this area is perhaps better placed than any other area to accommodate some alteration'*.

It should be noted that a further Listed Building Consent application is proposed to be submitted addressing Historic England's pre-application comment in connection with the following works:

- Re-pointing of front and rear elevation brickwork following execution and approval of sample(s);
- Repair/ restoration of wrought iron area guardings;
- Replacement of 2 no. modern lower ground floor rear (west) windows;
- New chimney pieces, hearths, grates etc.; replacement of some existing hearth stones;
- Fitted joinery integral to fabric;

Paint sampling and painted decorations.

3.2 Policy considerations

The following policies were considered when formulating the proposals:

NATIONAL/ LONDON PLAN

London Plan March 2015

NPPF 2012

Planning Policy Statement 5 (Planning and the historic environment)

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

LOCAL

Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2007

3.3 Use and amenity

The house will remain in single family occupancy. Whilst the connection from the Main House to the Extension is to be removed, the Annex Flat is to remain in use by the household, for members of staff or guests. The amenity is not affected by the proposals.

3.4 Layout, Privacy and Light

The accommodation that results from the alterations to the property is suitable in terms of scale and organisation to satisfy the requirement of Camden's Core Strategy and the London Plan, without affecting the privacy for both the users of the altered dwelling and neighbouring occupants.

3.5 Refuse

The refuse bins are to be stored within the front garden which offers ample space to the northern boundary, out of the sight of the windows to the front of the house. The Tool Store and Plant Room provide additional space for storing recycled materials if required.

4 TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

4.0 Parking

The on-street parking provision is not affected by the proposals.

4.1 Cycle storage

Space for 6 cycles and cycling accessories is to be provided within the refurbished Tool Store within the Lean-to and is easily reached via the existing wide external steps to the main entrance gate to the property.

4.2 Access

The existing level access from the road to the front door of the dwelling is retained. The single step access into the dwelling will not be improved as any alteration would cause unacceptable harm to the building's heritage significance; furthermore the step of approximately 70mm is not a substantial obstacle to access.

Within the house, the Principal or Entrance floor is on a single level and is provided with a wc. The historic stairs will not be altered to improve access to upper floors, but are of a reasonable gradient of 36° and risers do not exceed 180mm. Newly fitted out bathrooms will provide improved access for assisted use. Exits to the gardens to the rear will not be affected.

5 SUSTAINABILITY

5.0 Fabric

Where possible upgrading of thermal elements within a building are encouraged. However the grade II * listing of the house precludes any alterations to the existing fabric where such work would cause harm to the special interest of the asset. In this case it will not be possible to upgrade walls where historic brickwork, panelling or plaster exists or where such work would affect the plan form of the property. However it is proposed to install drained cavity tanking to the masonry walls at Lower Ground floor level as such work results in a neutral impact on the significance of the property, and will improve the thermal performance of the building. Furthermore insulation is to be introduced to all Loft areas as well as the new solid floor within the Main House, neither of which present a risk to significance.

Alterations to external joinery (windows and doors) that may also contribute to the thermal performance of the house will be included within a second Listed Building Consent application.

5.1 Services

A new heating and hot water installation is to be installed, to include high efficiency boilers, insulated hot water storage and underfloor heating within the Lower Ground Floor areas, all of which will contribute significantly to a reduction in fuel consumption. Heating will be controlled over three separate zones, will be remotely operable and involve the latest intelligent technology to minimise waste.

5.2 Electrical installation

The age and quality of the house does not offer itself to complex LED lighting solutions; installations will be simple and traditional, and where there is no conflict with the character of the dwelling, light fittings will be low energy. Electrical heating to Bathrooms will be controlled on thermostatic programmers with intelligent capabilities.

5.3 Water

The capacity of sanitary fittings will comply with current building regulations and water butts will be maintained for garden use in association with garden buildings located on the lower terraces.

5.4 Renewables

Due to the sensitivity of the historic house, and its relatively poor thermal performance, renewable energy installations are not appropriate.

5.5 Quality and workmanship

The quality and status of the original build has, 350 years after its construction, resulted in a high value property. This now allows the owner to invest in appropriately high quality services from consultants and contractors, to carry out alterations, repairs and ongoing maintenance that will enable their own long term enjoyment but also the continued survival of this remarkable house.

6 SUMMARY

It has been shown that through careful consideration of the conservation and repair of this significant property it is quite possible to satisfy the needs of a large family today, without unreasonable conflict with broader planning policies.

7 APPENDIX



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Ms Lisa Shell
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Our ref: PA00402695

19 November 2015

Dear Ms Shell

Pre-application Advice

4 THE GROVE, HIGHGATE, LONDON

It was a pleasure to meet you and Tim on site on Friday 6th November. Thank you for providing me with copies of the plans and for the opportunity to visit the house.

Significance

4 The Grove is Grade II* listed and falls within the Highgate Village Conservation Area. The garden is separately listed Grade II as containing the walls, terraces, steps and other structures of the (no longer extant) seventeenth-century Dorchester House.

The house received the special attention of the Survey of London in recognition of the exceptional survival of its original interiors, as well as its largely intact external envelope. The plan form, staircase, wainscoting and other joinery are of particular note for the extent of their survival.

There are elements of change that have occurred within the building since its construction by William Blake in c.1688. These have been well set out in the heritage assessment you have provided (Your Ref. 242-2015-11-01). Some of these have significance in their own right; for example, the weather-boarded north extension. While the original layer of seventeenth-century fabric is of the highest significance, this should not prejudice consideration of the value of later historical strata.

Impact and Policy

Much of the work you proposed will be positive, especially where original features are reinstated such as at the rear dormers or the return of fireplaces to principal rooms. There are some areas, however, where greater detail is required before the impact can be properly understood.



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It is important that you note the main articles of legislation and policy that will impact on the handling of your application. These are Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF).

Historic England's Position

I am happy with the way you have approached the refurbishment of the house, which appears to take into account the great significance of the building and to work in sympathy with it. Some outstanding matters remain before the works can progress smoothly to full application stage, these are set out below.

I appreciate that at this stage there are elements of detail that have not yet been possible to determine. However, it will be necessary to know what you propose where new design is necessary, particularly for the new fireplaces and their relationship to existing panelling. For the kitchen fireplace some opening-up work will be necessary in order to determine whether there is any significant fabric *in situ*. It would appear that this area has been remodelled so it can be hoped that there is room for some flexibility.

There are some technical points where more information is required, if necessary it may be possible to resolve some of these through conditions. These include:

- the method statement for the cleaning of the floorboards;
- a condition survey of the exterior ironwork if this is to be addressed;
- repointing specification;
- drawings of the detail of the new floor structure within the basement: if the floor level will change, how will this relate to door surrounds, skirting boards, door leaves etc.?
- Technical detail of the 'comms room'. Where historic timbers appear to survive, these should be protected and kept free from fixings, notchings etc.;
- a paint survey ideally sampling the older areas of weatherboarding for sources of historic paint schemes found on the exterior, this information to be used to inform proposed repainting.

The question of paint schemes internally is an interesting one. The deal panelling is very likely to have been painted before it was chemically stripped in the post-1970 period of ownership. Pine was painted to disguise its inferior quality compared to finer timber such as oak, and as a means of both preserving the wood and providing opportunities for further decoration. The unpainted state of much the panelling in the house today creates a very different impression than would have been the case for



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most of its history; and potentially an opportunity to re-introduce a paint scheme. If paint samples are taken as recommended above, you may wish to gain specialist advice on the methods and colours that would respond to the significance of the house.

Areas of ambiguity remain regarding Bathroom 2 on the first floor. I would be grateful if you could investigate further the likely origin of the wall that is proposed for relocation. If this has any age to it, it may be desirable to re-arrange the bathroom configuration rather than disturb the historic fabric.

I am not convinced that altering the panelling at the ground floor to reinstate two doors is beneficial or necessary. The evidence for openings in this location is somewhat uncertain, though the 1936 survey drawings do show a single door leaf within the panelling when seen in section. I would recommend against unnecessarily reconstructing the panelling.

The creation of a link between the first floor (existing) bathroom and the cottage is also a harmful impact, but given the changes that have already occurred within this room this area is perhaps better placed than any other area to accommodate some alteration.

Next Steps

If you would like to discuss any of the matters raised above, please feel free to contact me via email or phone.

Otherwise, I am encouraged by the direction taken and am hopeful that the result will be a beneficial project to a very rare and interesting building. Once you have had an opportunity to assemble the relevant information requested above, I would be happy to look through it and provide some (hopefully) concluding comments to the pre-application stage.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cooper".

Matthew Cooper
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4 THE GROVE, HIGHGATE, LONDON
Pre-application Advice

Information Provided

Draft Heritage Assessment (unfinished)

Heritage Assessment general illustrations

Drawings: plan and elevation, existing and proposed