

# *the* DRAWING ROOM

*\* architecture, design & GOOD IDEAS*

## STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PLANNING APPLICATION

Application by Mr & Mrs O'Brien

**Proposal:** Demolition of side and rear extensions, erection of front, side, rear and garden room extensions to create an enlarged flat on lower ground, ground and first floor and new staircase enclosure to upper floor flats.

**Site at:** 38 Regents Park Road, London, NW1 7SX

RevA 22.01.16

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Support Statement, incorporating a Heritage Statement, has been produced to accompany applications for Conservation Area Consent and Planning Permission for the demolition of existing side and rear extensions to 38 Regents Park Road and the erection of front, side and rear extensions to create a five bedroom flat over three floors and a replacement staircase to the upper floor flats, with additional subterranean garden accommodation to the rear.

1.2 The Statement is in six sections and comprises:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Site & Surrounding Area
- 3.0 Planning History
- 4.0 Proposals
- 5.0 Heritage Statement
- 6.0 Planning Considerations

1.3 The applications are also accompanied by:

- Design & Access Statement from the DRAWING ROOM (architects)  
*Revised to include all relevant Conservation Officer comments during the previous applications.*
- Structural Report by Elliott Wood  
*Revised to include updated statement in accordance with CPG4 (July 2015)*
- Desk Study & Ground Investigation by Geotechnical & Environmental Associates  
*Unchanged from the previous submission*
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement by Barrell Tree Consultancy  
*Unchanged from the previous submission as the Consultants have confirmed relevant BS/policy and the state of the existing specimens is unchanged.*

## 2.0 SITE & SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 38 Regents Park Road was built as a linked semi-detached property on the northern side of the road, adjacent to Regents Park, from which it is separated by houses on the southern side.
- 2.2 Like many of the properties in the area it was designed and built in the Italianate Villa style and is six storeys high, incorporating a lower ground floor and accommodation in the roof space. It has a raised ground floor and is set back from the road, with direct access to its lower ground floor from within its forecourt, which provides one-off street parking space and bin storage facilities.
- 2.3 It has bay windows to its lower ground floor, ground floor and first floor and the front of the house is decorated in painted stucco plasterwork, with two windows per floor. There are ornate railings to the projecting bay windows and a stepped entrance up to the front door of the house, delineated by the original single storey entrance wing, slightly set back behind the main facade.
- 2.4 This entrance wing is conjoined with the adjacent property, 36 Regents Park Road. Like many houses in the street, including 38 Regents Park Road, this conjoined property has obtained planning permission for and built a side extension at first and second floor levels above the entrance wing. Designed in a style to reflect the main house, it conjoins the 1970's glazed first and second floor extension to 38 Regents Park Road which presents a distinctive, if out of character and jarring frontage to the street.
- 2.5 The rear of 38 Regents Park Road is brick-clad and has a modern flat-roofed extension to it. The planning history of these and the side extension to the property are detailed in the following section. Due to the difference in levels between the street and the rear garden, the lower ground floor is at garden level at the rear of the property.
- 2.6 As evidenced in the following section on the planning history of the property, it is currently split into four flats:  
**Flat A:** Lower ground floor accessed from sunken courtyard  
**Flat B:** Ground and first floor accessed from communal entrance lobby  
**Flat D:** Second floor, accessed from communal stairs  
**Flat E:** Third floor/roof space, accessed from communal stairs
- 2.7 Regents Park Road is within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area, designated in October 1971 and extended in June 1985. The road lies in a part of the Conservation Area characterized by a low density of development and a significant number of mature street trees or in private gardens. The nearby edge to Regents Park further to the north-west reinforces the green character of the Conservation Area.

### 3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Reference to the Council's on-line register of planning applications for 38 Regents Park Road shows a number made and approved since the early 1970s.
- 3.2 One of the earliest applications (ref: CTP/J10/15/8/8538) granted planning permission in May 1970 for the conversion of the property to four self-contained flats and the erection of extensions at the side and at roof level. This permission, on being implemented, resulted in the curved glazed side extension at first and second floors that is readily apparent when viewed from Regents Park Road, together with the rounded dormer at roof level and solarium structure on the roof.
- 3.3 Prior to this planning permission (under ref: CTP/J1 0/15/8/7645) was granted in November 1969 for a single storey lower ground floor extension to the property and the formation of an on-plot parking space, accessed from Regents Park Road. A single storey rear extension to the ground floor flat, on the footprint of the lower ground floor rear extension, was granted planning permission in December 1979 under ref: CTP/J10/15/8/29364(R).
- 3.4 In 1985 planning permission, under ref: PU8501022 was granted for another rear extension at ground floor level in connection with the conversion of the lower and ground and first floor flats into one flat.
- 3.5 Subsequent to the above applications, planning permission was granted in February 2007, under ref: 2006/0302/P, for replacement windows to the existing front dormer and a replacement solarium structure on the roof.
- 3.6 The latest applications, under ref: 2013/1624/P and 2013/1041/P, for which this current application seeks to replicate (in order to extend the timeframe for construction) were approved in October 2013 following consultation with the Conservation/Planning Team:
  - Application 2013/1624/P was in reference to the subterranean garden room only, which was revised during consultation to include a 0.5m planted buffer to the boundary, which this current application replicates as previously approved.
  - Application 2013/1041/P was in reference to the alterations/extension to the main house, and was also revised during consultation to include traditional detailing to the fenestration at lower ground floor (guest room) and a reduced scale rear extension (omitting the master bedroom ensuite) – again this current application replicates all these revised elements as previously approved.

## 4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Comprehensive details of the proposals (all as previously approved in applications ref: 2013/1624/P and 2013/1041/P) are contained within the Design & Access Statement by the DRAWING ROOM architects, but the following paragraphs summarise the main elements, resulting from the applicants wishing to combine Flats A & B into one flat over three floors (lower ground, ground and first floor) and demolishing and rebuilding recent side and rear extensions.
- 4.2 The principal proposal therefore involves the demolition of the glazed side extension (built in the early 1970s) at first and second floor levels and the two storey rear extensions, both added to the property between the late 1960s and mid-1980s. The side extension would be replaced by a more conventional style of building, mirroring in height, fenestration and architectural detailing that of the side extension to 36 Regents Park Road.
- 4.3 The existing rear extensions would be replaced by a full width flat roof single storey extension at lower ground floor level with a ground and first floor extensions on its south-eastern side, adjacent to 36 Regents Park Road.
- 4.4 A single storey front extension at lower ground floor level, with a (retained) on-plot car parking space above, to provide a guest bedroom, with en suite facilities linked by a glazed canopy to the main house is also proposed.
- 4.5 A replacement staircase to the existing sunken courtyard to the lower ground floor would be provided. The courtyard's bay window would be reconfigured to provide a new main entrance into the enlarged flat. A secondary entrance into the unit is to be retained at ground floor level from within the new communal entrance lobby/staircase.
- 4.6 To provide the necessary floor to ceiling heights in the lower ground floor area and to run through level to the rear garden area, it is proposed to excavate circa 0.6m of the lower ground floor and part of the existing rear garden.
- 4.7 The extensions and conversions will provide a four-bedroom dwelling with guest bedroom at lower ground floor level connected to an open plan entrance/living/dining/kitchen area, a living room, family room and studio/library at ground floor with the bedrooms and en suite and family bathrooms at first floor level.
- 4.8 The plans also incorporate a subterranean garden room to the rear of the boundary to the property (as approved in application 2013/1624/P), this additional living space will be largely hidden from view, making best use of a split level garden to create a sunken space whilst retaining the existing sun terrace at its existing level above.

## 5.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

- 5.1 38 Regents Park Road is not listed but is within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. It is identified in the Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement as one of a group (Nos. 38-70) that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 5.2 This Conservation Area Statement identifies current issues that impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, including rear and side extensions, excavation and/or extension of basement areas, elevational alterations and loss of details.
- 5.3 It is considered that the previously approved alterations and extensions add little to the character and appearance of the building, particularly when viewed from Regents Park Road, and in many respects detract from the appearance of the buildings and the general street scene – as was agreed during the previous application discussions with Conservation Officers.
- 5.4 The proposal to demolish and replace the two storey glazed side extension at first and second floor level and replace it with an extension that matches in fenestration details, materials and appearance that of the adjoining property is considered one that substantially improves and enhances the building and the Conservation Area.
- 5.5 The excavation of the existing front courtyard to provide a guest bedroom and then retain a parking space on top would not impact on views of the property as it would not be seen from street level. Lowering of the sills to windows of an existing bay at lower ground floor level to provide new entrance doors introduces proportionate fenestration details that match those to the upper ground floor and first floor.
- 5.6 The proposal to the rear elevation to remove previous 1960/1980 extensions that add nothing to the character or appearance of the building and remove window openings at upper ground floor and first floor that are out of keeping and proportion to the existing property, reinstating them in style and proportion to that traditionally found on such a building are considered appropriate.
- 5.7 The part glazing of the proposed new rear extension and upper ground floor levels enable the reinstated openings with traditional detailing to be seen from the rear garden and, together with the lower glazed single storey extension, provides a high quality, contemporary, addition to the rear of the building.

## **6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The Development Plan for Camden consists of the London Plan 2011; the Camden Core Strategy 2010-2015; Camden Development Policies 2010-2015; saved policies of the Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006 and related Supplementary Planning Guidance, including those on Design, Basements & Lightwells & Planning Obligations (this guidance, namely CPG4 has been updated since the previous approval of 2013/1624/P and 2013/1041/P – and is accounted for in the revised SE documentation). For those parts of Camden within Conservation Areas, Conservation Area Statements provide guidance on development proposals.
- 6.2 The London Plan takes a strategic overview and provides an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework approach to development in London to 2031, but is not considered relevant in the context of the proposals for the property.
- 6.3 The Core Strategy sets out the key elements of the Council's planning vision and strategy for the Borough. Policy CS14 seeks to promote high quality places and conservation of the Borough's heritage by requiring development schemes to improve the quality of buildings, landscaping and the street environment. This policy is reinforced by those in adopted Camden Development Policies.
- 6.4 These policies seek to contribute towards delivering the Core Strategy by setting out detailed planning policies that the Council uses in determining applications for planning permission. Development Policy 24 (DP24) seeks to ensure high quality design in any alterations and extensions to existing buildings. Policy DP25 ensures that Conservation Area Statements and Appraisals are taken into account when assessing applications within Conservation Areas and states that only development that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area will be permitted. Policy DP26 seeks to manage the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours. Policy DP27 is concerned with basements and light wells and requires, amongst other matters, evidence that basement developments do not harm the built and natural environment or local amenity.
- 6.5 Further detailed advice on basements and light wells is given in a Supplementary Planning Guidance on the subject.
- 6.6 Overall guidance on design matters is also provided in a Supplementary Guidance Document on Design and relates to Core Strategy CS14 and DP24, referred to above. The Conservation Area Statement for Primrose Hill details the topography and character of the area, its main building types and sets out guidelines for development, including such matters as materials, demolition, roof terraces, rear extensions and basement lightwells.
- 6.7 As argued in the Heritage Statement, it is considered that the proposal to demolish and replace the two storey glazed side extension with one that matches in all respects that of the adjoining house at 36 Regents Park Road, improves and enhances not only the appearance of the building when viewed from street level but also this section of the Primrose Hill Conservation Area. As such, it complies with the relevant Development Plan policies on design and the Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement.
- 6.8 The rear extensions, at lower ground, ground and first floors, are in contrast more contemporary and replace the poorly designed late 20th Century additions to the building, whose fenestration and detailing are at odds with that of the original property.

- 6.9 The proposed extensions remain subservient to the original house and through the use of glass enables the original features of the stock brick terrace to be viewed and the reinstated brick detailing to the window openings. It is argued that the original three storey rear extension (to include lower ground floor), granted planning permission in stages over a period between 1969 and 1985, do not contribute to the character of the property. Policies in the Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement (PHCAS) advise that extensions will not be acceptable where they would spoil a uniformed rear of an unspoiled terrace. Given that there is an existing two storey extension to this property, a flat roof extension at roof level, and the conjoined property, 36 Regents Park Road has a substantial four storey rear extension (to include lower ground floor) that was granted planning permission in October 1981 (ref: 32120), it cannot be argued that the rear of both properties are unspoiled. As Policy PH.27 states, the acceptability of larger extensions depends on the particular site and circumstances and it is, therefore, considered that the replacement two storey rear extension and the extension to the lower ground floor improve the appearance of the rear of the building and would not harm the character of the Conservation Area. The extensions are not visible from the public realm and the lower ground floor kitchen/dining extension is very similar to an extension granted planning permission in March 2007 at 50 Regents Park Road (ref: 2006/5083P).
- 6.10 To support the extension of the lower ground floor to the front of the property and the lowering of the existing lower ground floor level within it, the application is accompanied by a Desk Study and Ground Investigation Report by Geotechnical & Environmental Associates (GEA), which also forms part of a Screening Assessment for a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA), as required by Development Plan policies and Camden Planning Guidance CPG4: Basements & Lightwells, and necessary to accompany any applications proposing new basement developments.
- 6.11 This and the related Structural Report by Elliott Wood show that the proposed basement work is unlikely to have any significant effect on groundwater levels and there is a very low risk of there being a Significant contaminant linkage. The first scoping stage of the BIA shows that the proposal does not comply on two counts:
- The basement excavation is within 5 metres of a public highway;
  - London clay is the shallowest strata at the site.
- It is concluded, however, that the site is approximately 3m from a public highway and with the basement at the front being 2.8m deep, there will be no impact on the stability of the highway. As the site is level, the basement works will not impact on any issues of slope stability. The conclusions drawn by Elliott Wood in its Structural Report is that in its professional opinion the basement will not impact on the local ground, surface water or groundwater conditions and this conclusion can be evidenced by the GEA report, and without the need for any further BIA to be carried out.
- 6.12 Also in support of the application is an Arboricultural Impact Appraisal and Method Statement by Barrell Tree Consultancy. In summary the proposed development will (as previously approved) result in the loss of one tree in the front garden, but it is considered to be of a low category because of its small size and its loss will have no adverse impact on amenity. As argued in the Design & Access Statement, its removal will improve the view of the frontage of the property, rather than masking it and help reflect the general rhythm of the street, where larger front garden trees and shrubs are located in boundaries between properties and help present open views to the entrance frontages of the properties.



- 6.13 The Appraisal shows that existing boundary walls to the front of the property, including that of the stairwell to the entrance to the lower ground floor, protects the Construction Exclusion Zone for trees in the adjacent properties (36 & 40 Regents Park Road) but recommends, in its Arboricultural Method Statement, appropriate protective measures for the tree in the front garden during construction work.
- 6.14 In preparing the application, the applicants have discussed the proposals with the owners of the two other flats within 38 Regents Park Road and the owner of the conjoined property at 36 Regents Park Road. They have all been very supportive of the proposals and their comments are included as Appendix 1 to this Statement. The requisite Notices have been served on these owners, and no objections were received during the previous applications.

# APPENDIX 1

(Letters of support from immediate neighbours)

*Flat C  
38 Regents Park Road  
NW1 7SX*

*Dear Shay,*

*Many thanks for providing the plans for the proposed changes to the communal stairway of 38 Regents Park Road.*

*It's encouraging to know that you share the same interest as me in maintaining the house to a high standard. I see the proposed changes as a material improvement to our building; it will be good to see 38RPR restored to its former glory.*

*Additionally, I believe restoring 38 RPR to its original building lines brings a strong sense of uniformity to the street, which in line with the architectural period. This can only be a great positive for number 38 and Regents Street Road as a whole.*

*As the owner of Flat C in 38 RPR I'm fully supportive of the changes. Thanks again for your proactive move to get this done.*

*Warm regards,*

*Joe  
Joseph leckie*

*Flat E  
38 Regents Park Road  
NW1 7SX*

*Dear Shay*

*I was utterly stunned when I saw the photo and proposed plans for number 38.*

*Having lived in the house for over 5 years now I always felt the front of our house seemed a bit dated and out of sync with the rest of the street. While there is no doubt many things we could do to improve the facade your recent proposal, in my view, takes the cake. Very excited about moving forward on what you've suggested and you have my full support.*

*All the best  
Steve*

*Professor Michael A Crawford  
36 Regent's Park Road  
London NW1 7SX*

*8th January 2013,*

*Dear Mr Shay O'Brien.*

*Thank you for the architect's impression of the work you wish to do to demolish the out dated glass front to the staircase of no 38 and replace it with a harmonisation of structure with no 36. May I say that my wife and I heartily agree with this proposal and look forward to the enhancement of our two properties that it will achieve.*

*Best wishes  
Michael Crawford.*