

Planning Statement

January 2016

Introduction

1. This Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for a basement extension within the footprint of Flat 1, 29 Comayne Gardens, with a rear lightwell. There is an existing partial basement to Flat 1, and the current proposals would be to create additional space for Flat 1, ie it is not for a new dwelling. The application is also accompanied by a Design & Access Statement and a Basement Impact Assessment.
2. The property was originally built as a large semi-detached house but, as with other properties in the road, has for many years been sub-divided into flats. Flat 1 is contained on the ground floor and existing basement, Flat 2 on the first floor and Flat 3 on the second floor. Photographs of the property and neighbouring buildings are attached to this Statement.
3. The property is not listed, but lies within the South Hampstead Conservation Area. There have been modifications to the building and to many others in the vicinity. This includes the adjoining property of No. 31 that has been heavily modified to the rear. Also of note are the following cases:
 - 29 Compayne Gardens: permission was granted at the application property in December 2015 for a single storey rear extension, following demolition of the existing rear extension, and replacement windows (ref. 2015/5760/P).
 - 51 Compayne Gardens: permission granted for enlarged basement and rear lightwell at Flat 1, with lightwells to side elevations. Granted January 2014 (ref. 2012/4576/P).
 - 65 Compayne Gardens: permission granted in 2014 for conversion and enlargement of basement areas to flats (ref. 2014/2285/P)
 - 47 Compayne Gardens: permission granted in 2004 for enlargement of basement area to Flat 2 with new lightwell, and two storey rear extension incorporating access bridge to garden (ref. 2004/3733/P).
 - 41 Compayne Gardens: permission granted in 2004 for excavation at rear basement level, with lowered rear ground level, and side lightwell (ref. 2004/1392/P).
 - 86 Carnfield Gardens: permission granted in April 2014 for extension at basement and new lightwells, for Flat 1 (ref. 2014/2282/P)

- 50 Canfield Gardens: permission granted in June 2012 for excavation of basement and rear lightwells for Flat 1 (ref. 2012/2812/P).
 - 71 Canfield Gardens: conversion of flats to a dwelling and a basement flat, with extension to existing basement and new lightwells, granted September 2008 (ref. 2008/4166/P).
 - 80 Canfield Gardens: extension of basement to rear for Flat 1, granted March 2012 (ref. 2012/5616/P).
 - 86 Cranfield Gardens: excavation of basement with lightwells, and alterations to rear and side, for Flat 1 granted in April 2014 (ref. 2014/2282/P).
4. These changes are similar to that proposed in the current drawings, in that they saw extensions to the existing basement area and alterations to the rear of properties. They also concern properties lying within the same Conservation Area. The current proposals at No. 29 have been drawn up in the context of the character of the Area and the host property. The works were the subject of a wider pre-application submission in May 2015 (ref. 2015/2990/PRE). The submission has taken into account the response from this submission, and this formal submission is appraised against relevant planning policies below.

Planning policy appraisal

5. The Camden Core Strategy 2010-25 sets out a requirement for good quality design and townscape in Policy CS14. The proposed works would satisfy the criteria of this policy as follows:
- a. The proposed extension would be of a high standard of design. The changes at basement level would respect the building above, the wider area that has seen changes, and the recently permitted extension to the property.
 - b. There would be no harmful effect on the heritage asset of the conservation area. The works would not be seen from public view, and the limited extent of the proposed extension would not lead to undue encroachment into the garden area.
 - c. For similar reasons to the above, a high quality landscaped area would be retained.
 - d. Access for this private dwelling would satisfy relevant requirements.
 - e. There would be no imposition on any recognized views.
6. The Camden Development Policies Document 2010-25 provides further guidance in seeking high quality design in Policy DP24, as follows:
- a. The extension has considered the character and context of the property and neighbouring buildings, which sees alterations and similar extensions in many examples.
 - b. The character and proportions of the original property would not be harmed by the proposed works, which would represent changes only to the rear basement area.
 - c. High quality materials would be used in the proposed works, to be secured through condition.

- d. There would be no change to the street elevation of the property.
 - e. There would be no impact to, or from, servicing.
 - f. The changes to the rear would enable sufficient space for landscaping to be retained for the property.
 - g. Sufficient amenity space would be provided for future occupants.
 - h. The works would accord with relevant requirements for accessibility.
7. The Council provides further criteria to be satisfied for works within conservation areas, as set out in Policy DP25 of the Plan. The proposals satisfy these as follows:
- a. Consideration has been paid to the conservation area objectives (as noted later).
 - b. The works would not be visible from public views and have no effect on the Conservation Area, and so preserve the character and appearance of that Area.
 - c. There would not be substantial demolition of a building in the Area.
 - d. The works do not involve a site outside a conservation area.
 - e. There would be minimal encroachment into the garden of the property, so no harm to trees or garden space.
8. Policy DP27 of the Plan sets out particular requirements for basements and lightwells. The application is accompanied by a required Basement Impact Assessment, which demonstrates there would not be any adverse effect on structural stability, drainage or run-off. With regards to flooding, the site would remain unaltered from the Environment Agency's national background level of risk of 'Very Low'. Hence, the requirement of the Policy that resists habitable rooms in floodable areas would be satisfied: the proposed works are to create an extension to the existing Flat 1, ie not a new self-contained dwelling. The basement would also satisfy the other criteria of Policy DP27 due to the small-scale nature of the proposal and absence of any effect on neighbouring amenity arising from the design of the finished basement, ie any overlooking/privacy/overbearing effect. As noted earlier, it should be remembered that there is currently a basement to the property with full staircase access.
9. The Council have an adopted Basements and Lightwells Supplementary Planning Document 2015. This provides more detailed guidance on the design and construction considerations of basements, which is addressed in greater detail in the BIA. With regards to the design of the proposed basement addition, it is notable that the SPG sees lightwells associated with basements to be most appropriately provided to the side or rear of the property (paragraph 2.23). This is proposed in the application, though primarily through the grading of the land rather than securing by railings (a course of action encouraged by paragraph 2.26).
10. The South Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2011 appraises the character of the Area and sets out guidelines for future development. It identified No. 29 as being within a group of buildings that are 'positive contributors' to the Area. The Strategy identifies basement development in the Area as being a pressure (paragraph 12.2) and refers to appraisal work undertaken in 2008/9 to make recommendations to halt erosion of the Area (paragraph 12.3). In relation to basements

this work did not lead to a halt on basements, as paragraph 12.14 explains the approach to take and matters to avoid: *'some of these [basements] are overly large, spilling into and resulting in a loss of verdant front and rear gardens, detracting from the serene, leafy character of the rear gardens in the CA. New Basement Development and Extensions to Existing Basement Accommodation (February 2009) and Camden Planning Guidance provide guidance on basement development'*.

11. Of course, as noted earlier in this Statement, the Council have indeed allowed basement extensions since the publication of the CA Strategy in 2011, which confirms that basements are still permissible, provided the requirements of planning policy and guidance are satisfied. There is in fact further guidance in the CA Statement that relates to basement works, and the proposals satisfy these as follows:

- The size of the basement is modest in size as it does not extend beyond the footprint of the original building (paragraph 13.29). There would not be any impact on trees, water environment or visual amenity.
- The basement would not take up the full garden (paragraph 13.30).
- There would be no harm to biodiversity function of the garden (13.31).
- There would not be any front lightwell (13.32). To the rear there would be grading of the ground level to provide a suitable relationship of the property to the garden area.
- Structural and construction issues would be addressed through the BIA and suitable planning conditions (13.33).

Summary

12. The proposed basement extension to the property has been informed following a careful consideration of the character of the surrounding area. There have been changes to houses along the road and within the Conservation Area that are similar to that proposed now. These have been allowed within the context of the current policy framework and guidance relating to the Conservation Area.

13. There is an existing basement at the property and the works would see this extended beneath the footprint of the building. There would not be any change to the front of the building, and so no effect upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. To the rear the changes would see regrading of part of the garden, consistent with the Council's guidance on basements in conservation areas, and retention of the great majority of the garden area for continued landscape purposes.

14. The works would enable the renovation of the property and better internal space for the flat. The proposals accord with the requirements of the development plan and supplementary planning guidance. It is therefore trusted that permission can be granted for the scheme.

Photographs of property and surroundings



Front elevation of property, which would remain unaltered to the elevations. There would also be no change to the garden.



Existing basement to property, with full staircase access



Rear view of property (top) and the garden to the property, which would remain unaltered by the proposed works



View of adjoining properties, showing extensive changes to the area