

Planning and Heritage Statement

Proposed new dwelling, 17 Boscastle Road, London, NW5

Prepared by Stratagem Planning Consultants

For Mr and Mrs Gladstone

February 2016

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicants, Tim and Caroline Gladstone, in support of their application to demolish the garages to the rear of their current home and to construct a one bedroom single storey dwelling.
- 1.2 This document should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement produced by vPPR Architects.
- 1.3 Stratagem Planning Consultants have been appointed by the clients to work with vPPR in preparation of this application.
- 1.4 Stratagem principal, Dr Mark Matheson, M.A. (Planning and Sustainability), MRTPI, is a Chartered Town Planner with extensive experience of development management gained through working at three London local planning authorities.

2 Site Description

- 2.1 The site is located in Dartmouth Park on the west side of Boscastle Road.
- 2.2 The existing property comprises a semi detached single family dwelling house over ground and two upper floors. A small ground floor extension has been built to the rear of the house.
- 2.3 There is a small front garden and a very long rear garden. At the end of the garden is a building comprising two garages and a garden store. The garages are accessed from Grove Terrace Mews to the rear.
- 2.4 The Mews is lined by garages serving the neighbouring houses. There is also an existing detached house within the backland area which is accessed from the mews.
- 2.5 The property is located within the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area and is not listed. The closest listed buildings are the terrace of houses fronting Grove Terrace which is in part listed Grade II* and in part Grade II. The site is not located within an archaeological priority zone.
- 2.6 The site is within a Controlled Parking Zone. It has a PTAL rating of 3.
- 2.7 The surrounding neighbourhood is characterised by similar properties.

3 Planning History

- 3.1 There is no record of planning applications associated with 17 Boscastle Road on Camden's website.
- 3.2 The only applications relating to the neighbouring properties relate to alterations, extensions and works to trees.

4 The Scheme

- 4.1 It is proposed to demolish the existing garages and garden store and to construct a one storey, single bedroom dwelling. The new dwelling would be composed of two connected wings, one containing a living, dining and kitchen space, the other an entrance lobby, bedroom and bathroom. There would be two outside spaces each enclosed by perimeter walls. The house would be constructed with high-quality brick which would be used for the walls and, innovatively, for the roof. Access would be from Grove Terrace Mews.
- 4.2 The scheme is presented in detail in the Design and Access Statement.

5 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 There is a suite of planning policy documents against which the application is required to be assessed. At national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; published March 2012) sets out the key strategic policies against which development management decisions must be made. At regional level the policies in the London Plan (adopted July 2011, with most recent alterations March 2015) and supporting guidance documentation are material considerations, while at local level the key documents are the Core Strategy (adopted November 2010), the Camden Development Policies document (adopted November 2010) together with relevant Camden Planning Guidance documents and the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy. Although the site falls within the Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Forum area no Neighbourhood Plan has yet been adopted.

6 Land Use and Principle of the Development

- 6.1 The property falls under a C3 (dwellinghouses) use class. As the proposed development is also within the same use class no change of use is proposed.
- 6.2 The applicants, Tim and Caroline Gladstone, have lived at 17 Boscastle Road since May 1961, a total of 55 years. They are now elderly and Mr Gladstone suffers from dementia and attendant problems with mobility.

Their current home has no ground floor bedroom or bathroom and Mr Gladstone is struggling to use the stairs. It is understood that he may very soon require the use of a wheelchair.

- 6.3 Mrs Gladstone is heavily dependent upon assistance in caring for her husband from a network of close family and friends located within the immediate neighbourhood including her sister who lives close by.
- 6.4 It is against this background that Mrs Gladstone has taken the initiative to explore the possibility of creating a small home on one level for herself and her husband in the community within which they have lived for the larger part of their lives so that they may continue to benefit from the support network so essential to their wellbeing.
- 6.5 Mrs Gladstone seeks to create a home which is adapted for the particular circumstances of her and her husband, incorporating level access, wide wheelchair-accessible doors, and other features to allow Mr Gladstone to retain as much independence as possible. The housing stock in this part of London does not easily lend itself to creating homes that meet these standards.
- 6.6 Given the severe and long-standing shortage of housing in London, which has now developed into a severe housing crisis, subject to certain conditions, planning policy at all levels seeks to promote and support housing development.
- 6.7 **Paragraph 49 of the NPPF** states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.8 **Policy 3.4 of the London Plan 'Optimising Housing Potential'** seeks to achieve the most efficient use of land developed for housing, taking into account the character of the context, and character of the proposed site, design principles, and public transport capacity.
- 6.9 The Gladstones' current home has six bedrooms and is greatly underutilised. By vacating the house they would be making it available to a family and thereby allow a much more efficient utilisation of the space.
- 6.10 The existing house has a very large garden. A previous owner acquired additional land to extend the original garden to almost double its length in 1897. This proposal would return the garden of 17 Boscastle Road to its original dimensions, equivalent in length to the neighbouring houses to the north (Nos. 19-33) but significantly wider. A garden of this reduced length is therefore as characteristic of this neighbourhood as the existing longer garden.
- 6.11 The garden which would remain for the existing house would be 143 square metres while the outdoor space associated with the new house would be 61 square metres. Camden planning guidance does not

specify a quantum of outdoor amenity space required for a residential unit. The London plan requires that a one-two person dwelling should have five square metres of outdoor amenity space with one additional square metre provided for each additional person. The proposed outdoor amenity space for both the existing and proposed dwellings would easily meet this standard.

- 6.12 The proposed development is therefore in compliance with LDF policies CS6 (Providing quality homes) and DP2 (Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing) which both seek to maximise the creation of much-needed additional housing units within the Borough.

7 Design and Heritage

- 7.1 As noted above, the site falls within the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area, within Sub area 2, Dartmouth West. Construction of Grove Terrace was begun in the 1790s while 15 and 17 Boscastle Road was completed in 1874. It is understood that this semi detached pair were the last houses to be constructed in the street on account of the site having formed the builders' yard during the building of Boscastle Road. This accounts for these two houses having plot widths substantially greater than other houses on the street. The historic map below, dating from some time between 1869 and 1874, shows Boscastle Road, then known as Grove Road, during construction. The detached early nineteenth century house later replaced by the existing modern house can be seen within the backland area.

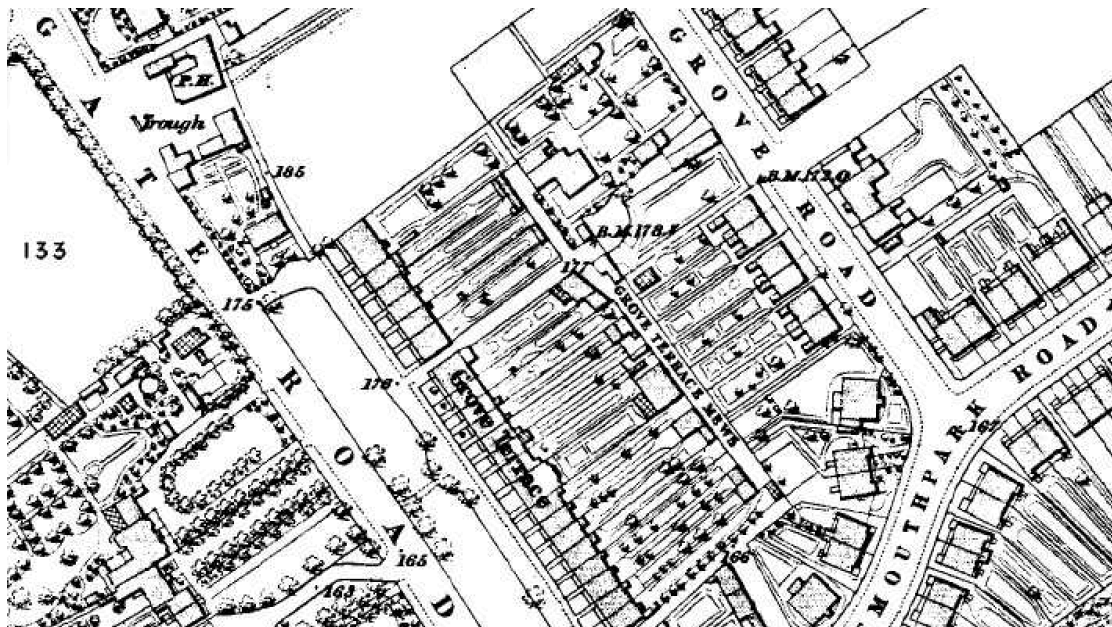


Fig. 1. The immediate neighbourhood circa 1869-1874.

- 7.2 The applicants' property forms part of a traditional "perimeter block" characterised by semi-detached and terraced houses surrounding a

backland area forming gardens with a mews lane lined with garages. To the immediate south of Mr and Mrs Gladstone's garages is a garage building to the rear of 15 Boscastle Road while to the north the mews steps back to garages to the rear of 19 and 21 Boscastle Road.

- 7.3 Unlike some mews in other parts of London, it is formed of buildings which are architecturally undistinguished, of utilitarian appearance, and for the most part appear to be of twentieth century construction. There is little if any evidence of historic character to the mews.
- 7.4 The architects' design has been informed by a careful analysis of the existing built environment. The design of the proposed house responds to the particular characteristics of the site by forming a "link" between the long terrace of garages continuing down the lane to the south and the garages set back to the rear of Nos. 19 and 21. As such the design is in accordance with the prevailing pattern of development.
- 7.5 The scale of the proposed building, being one storey only, is consistent with the height of the neighbouring garage buildings. By breaking up the massing of the proposed house into two blocks this also allows the proposed house to respect the scale and massing of the surrounding buildings.
- 7.6 It should be stressed that a significant part of the footprint of the proposed house is occupied by an existing building. The area of the footprint of the existing garages is 46 sq m while the proposed house would have a footprint of 82 sq m. This would result in a very modest increase in footprint of the built area of 36 sq m.
- 7.7 **Policy 7.6 Architecture** of the London Plan states that developments "should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context" and should "comprise details and materials that complement, not necessarily replicate, the local architectural character". It is proposed that the house be constructed in a high-quality brick. The specific choice of brick would of course be a matter to be dealt with through an appropriate condition. Brick is the predominant building material both of the neighbouring garages and the associated houses. As a natural material it would over time acquire an attractive patina of age blending harmoniously with neighbouring properties.
- 7.8 A defining quality of this backland area is the mature vegetation reflecting the age of the houses. Although given the height and massing of the proposed dwelling it would not particularly impact on views from neighbouring houses, this vegetation would significantly reduce any visual impact of the development. From many vantage points no views would be possible.
- 7.9 As is evident from the applicants' garden, Mrs Gladstone is a very keen gardener and it is her intention to introduce abundant vegetation to the

two “courtyard” areas to provide a verdant outlook from the house and to further soften its appearance.

- 7.10 The applicants’ garage is located directly at the end of the entrance lane to the mews and as such is the only part of the mews visible from Grove Terrace, albeit only glimpsed at the end of the lane. For this property to be redeveloped with a high quality building would offer much-needed subtle architectural interest to the mews enhancing both it and by extension the conservation area.
- 7.11 There are a number of reasons why opportunities for this type of development are extremely limited in this part of London. An examination of aerial photographs or maps of the neighbourhood reveals that this perimeter block is unique in being significantly larger than any other in the neighbourhood and being served by a mews lane. This is likely to be on account of this being a pattern of development not characteristic of mid-late 19th Century town planning. The mews likely only exists within this block as it would originally have served Grove Terrace, the earliest part of which dates from the 1790s. The absence of any mews buildings to the rear of the houses on Boscastle Road in the above historic map is consistent with this interpretation. As this part of London was for the most part developed later than Grove Terrace, there are few, if any other mews lanes. Moreover, only some of the houses within this perimeter block back on to the mews. Many do not. Of those that do, many have gardens which are very narrow, this being true of the houses fronting Grove Terrace. These do not afford the same development potential as the applicants’ property which in common with No. 15 next door is an exceptionally wide plot. Some properties that “turn the corner” where Boscastle Road meets Dartmouth Park Road have triangular plots with a very short connection onto the mews. Accordingly this development has very limited potential to set a precedent for similar developments within this part of London.
- 7.12 The proposal in no way challenges the prevailing pattern or massing of development but instead reinforces this while replacing the existing utilitarian building with a building which adds architectural interest to the mews and in so doing would enhance the Conservation Area.
- 7.13 As noted, Grove Terrace is listed, partly Grade II* and partly Grade II. On account of the dense mature vegetation, views between the site and Grove Terrace are extremely limited as illustrated by the photograph below (Fig.2). The replacement of the existing 20th Century utilitarian garage building with a well-crafted and understated building of similar mass and reflecting the prevailing pattern of development will enhance the setting of these heritage assets.



Fig. 2. View towards Grove Terrace from 17 Boscastle Road.

7.14 There is very little by way of high quality contemporary architecture within the conservation area. **Paragraph 63 of the NPPF** states that “in determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area”. In a similar vein, **Paragraph 131 of the NPPF** states that “in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of new developments making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness”. Mrs Gladstone is committed to creating not just a home but also a piece of architecture of the highest quality. This is reflected in her careful choice of architect as well as her stated commitment to building the house with very high quality materials and the highest standards of craftsmanship.

7.15 **Policy 3.5 ‘Quality and design of housing developments’ of the London Plan** states that housing developments should be of the highest quality internally, externally, and in relation to their context. The proposed development would unquestionably meet this requirement. In the same way the development would meet the requirements of **Policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage)** as well as Policies **DP24 (Securing high quality design)** and **DP25 (Conserving Camden's Heritage)** of Camden’s Development Policies.

Permitted development

- 7.16 Part 1 Class E of the GPDO (*buildings etc. incidental to the enjoyment of a dwellinghouse*) has provision for the construction of detached buildings within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse. In the case of the subject property it would be lawful to construct a building covering 50% of the curtilage of the property excluding the dwellinghouse but including the garages. This would allow the construction of a building of 147 square metres, significantly larger than the 82 sq m building proposed. It is further noted that while a building lawful under this part of the GPDO must be detached from the dwellinghouse it could be located immediately adjacent to it as established by appeal decision reference APP/Q5300/X/10/2125856.
- 7.17 The purpose of permitted development within the planning system is to remove the requirement for planning permission for types of development which are considered to be uncontentious. Accordingly, while the use of a building within the garden of 17 Boscastle Road as a separate dwelling requires planning permission, the acceptability of a building having the footprint of that proposed has been established by permitted development. Under PD there would be a height restriction in this case of 2.5 metres. The proposed dwelling would be marginally higher than this and in this respect the proposed height would not be in accordance with Class E without modification.

8 Amenity

- 8.1 **Paragraph 17 of the NPPF** requires that developments should “always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”. In the same way, **Policies CS5 and DP26** aim to ensure that development does not lead to any unacceptable impacts on neighbouring occupiers.
- 8.2 The design of the proposed development has been informed by a detailed analysis of surrounding properties in order to ensure that the amenity of neighbouring occupiers is safeguarded. Any impact is significantly reduced by the fact that the proposed dwelling is not immediately adjacent to any residential buildings.
- 8.3 In developing the scheme the architects have ensured that the massing has been arranged in order that the development meets the requirements set out in the BRE guidance ***Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight (2002)***. Sunlight studies for different times of day and times of year are presented on Page 10 of the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 8.4 There are two immediate neighbours, Nos. 15 and 19 Boscastle Road. The impact on each of these properties will be considered in turn.

15 Boscastle Road

- 8.5 The first 8.5 metres of the boundary of the site of the proposed house closest to the neighbours' house would be formed by a wall of 1.8 metres. Under permitted development the applicants could lawfully construct a boundary wall of 2 metres or, as noted above, a building on the boundary with a height of 2.5 metres. The new house would in fact be set well back from this boundary. The boundary for the 4 metres beyond this would be formed by the new house at a height of 2.7 metres rising at a gentle gradient towards the back of the site. Beyond this the boundary is obscured by the existing garage to the rear of the garden of No. 15.
- 8.6 The visual impact of the new house from No. 15 would be significantly reduced by the existing vegetation in this neighbouring garden as well as by the mature apple tree in the applicants' garden which would be retained.
- 8.7 No. 15 lies to the south east of the application site. This, the low height of the house, and the fact that it is for the most part set well back from the boundary with only a 1.8 metre wall adjacent to the neighbours' property would ensure that any shadowing effect of the new house on this neighbouring garden would be minimal. On account of the distance from the neighbours' house there would be no impact on daylight and sunlight enjoyed by the house itself.
- 8.8 The impact on the outlook from No. 15 would be similar to the existing condition at No. 17 where the garage to the rear of No. 19 is immediately adjacent to the boundary between Nos. 17 and 19. The Gladstones have observed that the presence of this garage building immediately adjacent to their garden has in no way diminished the amenity which they have derived from their house or garden.
- 8.9 In terms of privacy, at 1.8 metres the boundary walls of the courtyard adjacent to the bedroom in the new house will be of ample height to ensure that there will be no overlooking of the garden of No. 15.

17 Boscastle Road

- 8.10 The amenity of future occupiers of 17 Boscastle Road would be safeguarded by the thoughtful design of the new house.
- 8.11 In terms of outlook, the remaining garden would be of a substantial size, equivalent to those of the houses to the immediate north. More than half of the boundary of the new house would be a wall of 1.8 metres, which again is lower than that allowed under permitted development.

8.12 In a similar way to No. 15, the positioning of the new buildings, as well as their low height and the 1.8 metre boundary treatment would ensure that any shadowing of the garden would be minimal.

8.13 Privacy will be maintained by the boundary wall around the courtyard.

19 Boscastle Road

8.14 There is no direct boundary between the application site and this property. Oblique views of the corner of the new house would be possible but would have minimal impact on the amenity of occupiers of this property.

8.15 The new house would be only marginally higher than the existing garage to the rear of No. 19 and would similarly have minimal impact in terms of overshadowing.

8.16 There will be no impact on this property in terms of privacy.

Impact on other neighbouring properties

8.17 Any impact on the outlook from the detached house in the backland area will be reduced by the fall in ground level from north to south.

8.18 Through replacing the two existing garages with a house this would reduce traffic in the mews thereby reducing noise and pollution for neighbouring occupiers.

8.19 It is proposed to have one small window looking down the mews entrance lane. This would provide natural surveillance to the lane, improving security and a sense of security amongst neighbours.

8.20 Careful consideration will be given to managing the impact on neighbours during the construction of the new dwelling. While no building work is without a certain level of impact on neighbours it should be stressed that this development is for one small house the build period for which is unlikely to be significantly longer than for many domestic extensions.

Amenity of occupants of new house

8.21 Although a small house, the design has been very carefully considered and as a consequence the amenity enjoyed by Mr and Mrs Gladstone would be extremely high. The house would benefit from abundant natural light as well as extremely high levels of thermal and acoustic insulation.

- 8.22 Accessibility would of course inform every aspect of the design and the house would accordingly meet all the criteria of Part M of the Building Regulations as well as Lifetime Homes standards. It would thereby be in compliance with **Policy DP6 (Lifetime Homes and wheelchair housing)**.

9.0 Highways and transportation

- 9.1 The site has a PTAL rating of 3 reflecting the fact that it is relatively well-served by public transport. The site is located within a Controlled Parking Zone. Accordingly it is proposed that the house will be car-free with the occupiers ineligible to apply for a conventional parking permit. At the present time Mrs Gladstone has a blue badge for her car on account of Mr Gladstone's limited mobility. In the future should she still be driving but not have a blue badge it is her intention to join a car club.
- 9.2 Cycle parking would be provided in accordance with the requirements of the **London Plan Housing SPG**.

10 Sustainability

- 10.1 vPPR Architects place sustainability at the heart of their design approach, reflecting the emphasis on sustainability within the planning system.
- 10.2 As noted above, having a PTAL value of 3 the location of the proposed development allows sustainable modes of transport to be readily accessed.
- 10.3 The materials used would as far as possible be obtained from sustainable sources and would be durable, minimising the need for replacement and repair.
- 10.4 The building envelope would be highly insulated thereby minimising the energy consumption of the building.
- 10.5 Provision has been made for cycle storage and for storage and sorting of waste for recycling.

11 Conclusion

- 11.1 This Planning Statement has set out the ways in which the principle and design of the proposed development has been informed by reference to relevant planning policy and a careful analysis of the existing built context.

- 11.2 **Paragraph 14 of the NPPF** places sustainability at the heart of the planning system. The proposed house would be built to meet the highest standards of environmental sustainability but, of equal significance, in allowing Mrs Gladstone to continue to care for her husband close to the support network of family and friends within the community in which they have lived for 55 years, the development would also be highly *socially sustainable*. The importance and value of this cannot be overstated.
- 11.3 In accordance with **Paragraph 63 of the NPPF**, as well as with policies in the London Plan, Core Strategy and relevant Camden SPDs, the scheme has been designed in order to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. The creation of this small carefully designed and well-crafted building will enhance the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area and will optimise the viable use of the site.
- 11.4 vPPR Architects are a multi-award winning emergent practice who are in the vanguard of developing sensitive solutions to the utilisation of urban infill sites. Many commentators are of the view that such sites are key to addressing the housing crisis while minimising the loss of greenfield land. It is of the greatest importance that planning authorities support rather than thwart initiatives to create high quality exemplars of what can be achieved within existing urban contexts in order to encourage this type of development.
- 11.5 The applicants and their neighbours enjoy an exceptional level of amenity that understandably they are passionate about protecting. However, the development management system exists to ensure that development does not result in the amenity of neighbouring occupiers falling below an acceptable standard, not to protect neighbours from any impact, however small, whether real or perceived. There is no question that neighbours would still enjoy an extremely high level of amenity following construction of the proposed dwelling. Any impacts are well within levels which would be considered acceptable in development management decision making.
- 11.6 We fully recognise that neighbours do not welcome change and are sympathetic to this. However, the benefits to Mr and Mrs Gladstone would be very significant and must be balanced against neighbours' determination to resist any change to the familiar status quo.
- 11.7 **Paragraph 12 of the NPPF** states that "Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved" while **Paragraph 14** states that there should be a "presumption in favour of sustainable development" which local planning authorities should apply in determining development proposals. It is respectfully requested that permission be granted without delay.