

# 4 THE GROVE, LONDON N6 6JU

## DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent Application  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2016

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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 structural repair and restoration work to the four storey 8-bedroom property to recover its special quality and ensure the survival of the historic fabric. They also wish to carry out sensitive alterations to the house ensure that it serves the long term needs of a large family of today, and so limits the desire to make further and potentially inappropriate minor alterations.

This report does not duplicate information provided by The Stephen Gray Consultancy, whose Heritage Statements submitted as part of this application identify the significance of the property and describe the impact of the proposals on the historic property.

## 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 intact with steeply pitched clay tile roofs over brickwork walls. 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 Outline Schedule of Works, and associated drawings, but can be summarised for the purpose of this document as follows:

##### Exterior

Refurbishment of windows and doors

Replacement of late C20 windows at lower ground floor level to the rear with new sash, and glazed doors; creation of rear areas with stepped access from glazed doors into garden

Restoration of wrought iron railings to front and rear

Repair of stone cappings and rear stone staircase

Repointing to front and flank

##### Garden

Demolition and infilling of pond; extension of brick paving

New iron railing to garden retaining wall

##### Interior general

Rehang doors to hand

New gib and paneled doors in new openings

New fireplaces; alterations to existing

Installation of thermal and acoustic linings to Annex

##### Structural alterations, repairs and improvements

Repairs to roof structure, second floor and rear masonry wall

Underpinning to SE detail to concrete block internal partition wall to enable construction of new floors slabs approved under 2015/6817/L

Supplement joists between bressummers to support east-west spine wall

Reconstruct blockwork partition walls to First floor bathroom in lightweight stud

Raise ceiling to Ensuite Bathroom (first floor Annex)

##### Internal restoration/ reinstatement

Reinstatement of pargetted plaster ceiling to Entrance Hall

Recovery of mouldings where concealed

Replacement of concrete tiles with handmade clay to main roof

##### New ensuite shower rooms

Form new ensuite shower rooms at second floor

#### 3.1 Planning history

Of the ten approvals granted since 1988, eight have been in connection with tree works. Permission LE9800685R1 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. Approvals 2015/6817/L and 2015/6771/P were granted on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 in connection with the following works:

##### Throughout

Strip out, demolitions and investigations, to include opening up of original fireplaces;

Repair and refinish of timber board floors;

Strip, repair and reline plaster finishes;

New heating and hot water installations;

Electrical, security and data installations etc.

Overhaul and alterations to rainwater and foul drainage systems.

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New mains service installations

Lower ground floor

Replacement of lower ground floor ground slab;  
Installation of drained cavity tanking within Main House;  
Adjustment to openings at lower ground floor to eliminate arches within Kitchen;  
Relocation of post within Kitchen

Upper ground floor

Reinstatement of historic door opening at upper ground floor;  
Partition wall to separate Main House and Extension/ Annex at half landing;

First floor

Structural opening to form doorway between Main House and Extension/ Annex;  
Removal of staircase within Extension; new section of floor structure;  
Relocation of door opening to Extension;

Second floor/ roofs

Replacement of dormer to rear with 2 no. dormers;  
Roof repairs;  
Replacement of felt roof finishes with lead to Lean-to;

Exterior

Preparation of repointing sample;  
Insertion of cast iron air bricks;

Pre-application comment has not been requested from Camden, although details of the urgent structural repairs have been provided to Nick Baxter, Senior Heritage and Conservation Officer and Matthew Cooper from Historic England.

### 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. 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 available 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. New and newly fitted bathrooms will provide improved access for assisted use. The addition of glazed doors and areas to both the Play room and Family room will improve the access to the rear gardens, easing summer garden dining, given the easy connection to the kitchen/dining room which will form the social hub of the house.



## **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 insulated lining within the Annex at Lower Ground level, and the alterations to the Annex roof will improve its thermal performance significantly.

Existing external joinery is to be restored and eased to improve its thermal performance and provision of natural ventilation.

### **5.1 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.