

Site Character and Context: Existing Building



Both properties have acquired a range of side extensions. Those to No.3 are of early 21st century date, painted white and set back from the front elevation in the tight gap with the adjoining terrace. The existing side extension to No.1 is, however, very different in form, appearance and relationship to the parent property. It dates from the mid- 20th century and accommodates a garage at lower ground floor level with ancillary accommodation above, housing a separate flat at lower level.

To facilitate access to the garage extension it was necessary to lower the ground levels associated with the side/front garden, which is now a concrete slab. Through these changes in level, the extension is effectively two storeys in height, and whilst set back from the front elevation of the building, extends to the property boundary and incorporates part of the garden wall associated with the terraced properties fronting Gloucester Road. The existing side extensions to both properties and the change in ground levels to No.1 have unbalanced the original symmetrical composition. The current extension sits awkwardly and its clunky design form detracts from the site and more importantly 'the pair' of houses.

The front gardens are defined by an historic brick boundary wall to Fitzroy Road and separated by a return of similar height and character. This wall defines the extent of the front gardens (now largely altered) and is consistent with the character of the parent property and wider conservation area and is considered to contribute positively to its character or appearance. The modern gates, however, are of a non-descript design and are not considered to contribute positively to the character or appearance of the conservation area. The lightwell and basement vaults to the front of the house are a characteristic feature although the current stair and accompanying railings detract from the original appearance of the house.

Site Visibility and Views

We have carefully considered the way in which the proposal is viewed from within the Conservation Area and have consequently singled out a primary viewpoint. It is important to note that due to the set back nature of the site, the view of the building from the public realm is most prominent from this vantage point –

View A – Looking south from Fitzroy Road, this view highlights the enclosed nature of the site, the existing building is viewed at an angle from the street. The sloped nature of the current side extension is a discordant feature within the Conservation Area. Crucially, the Utopia Village development is clearly visible from the street (a notable irregularity within the Conservation Area).



3.0 Proposals

Design Summary

The proposal carefully considers the impact of refurbishing and extending the existing building within the context of the Conservation Area. The evolution of the proposed form and introduction of fenestration has been carefully considered, addressing views from Fitzroy Road as well as those from neighbouring dwellings.

Design Vision

The proposal aims to preserve the defining characteristics of the conservation area, creating an extension that is a contemporary interpretation of and draws on the 19th Century villa typology. The rhythm of the proposed elevation to the street carefully follows and enhances that of the existing building. The expressed verticality and depth of reveals within the extension pay respect to and embellish the Georgian precedent on which the existing Victorian building was originally based.

Design Aspirations

These overriding principles have guided the design of the proposed scheme

The relationship of the proposed building to the site has been carefully considered, improving a critical sense of separation and minimizing any increase in building footprint. The scheme seeks to respect the existing built form while also stepping away from the site boundary. The proposal references the former 19th Century plan and reinforces the original villa composition, this approach is further reaffirmed by infilling the considerably sloped driveway.

The massing approach is derived from the existing building and closely informed by context. In a similar fashion, the neighbouring house has evolved independently over time while still maintaining a general sense of scale and unity.

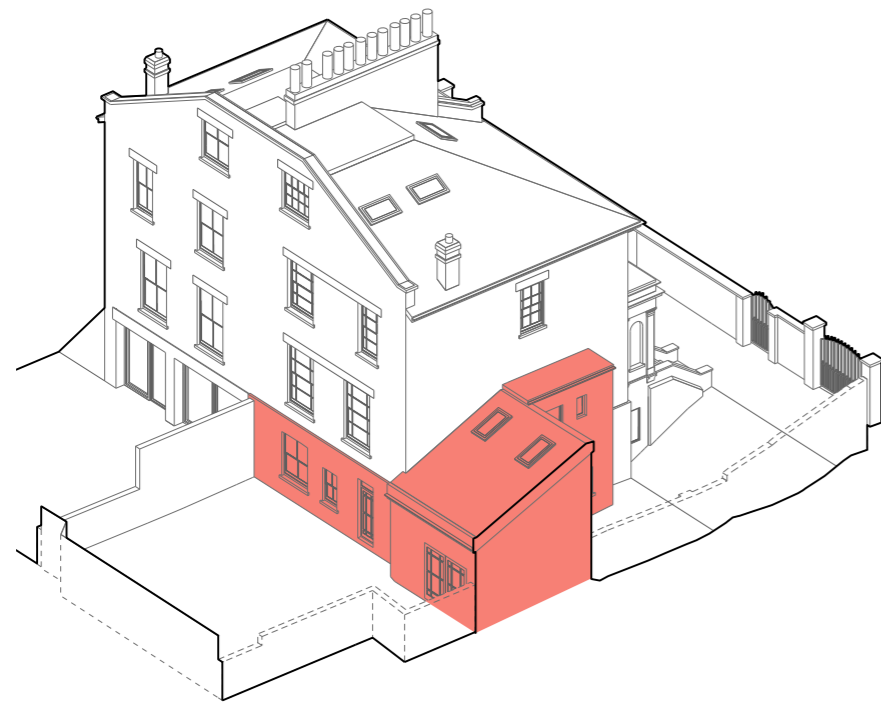
Adopting the formal composition of the existing building ensures that the proposed extension sits comfortably within the constraints of the existing site. It is proposed that the extension follows existing site topography, stepping down to the rear of the property thereby reducing the additional visual presence and the impact of the scheme's overall massing.

The landscaping strategy is integral to the overall design vision, engaging with the proposed development and enabling the extension to sit effortlessly within its context.

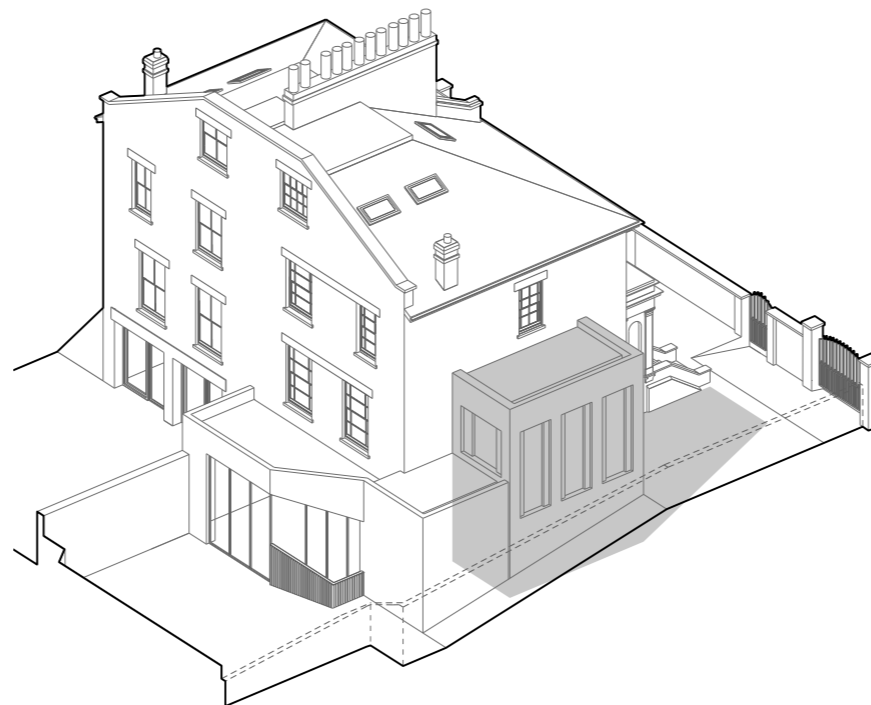


Massing Strategy

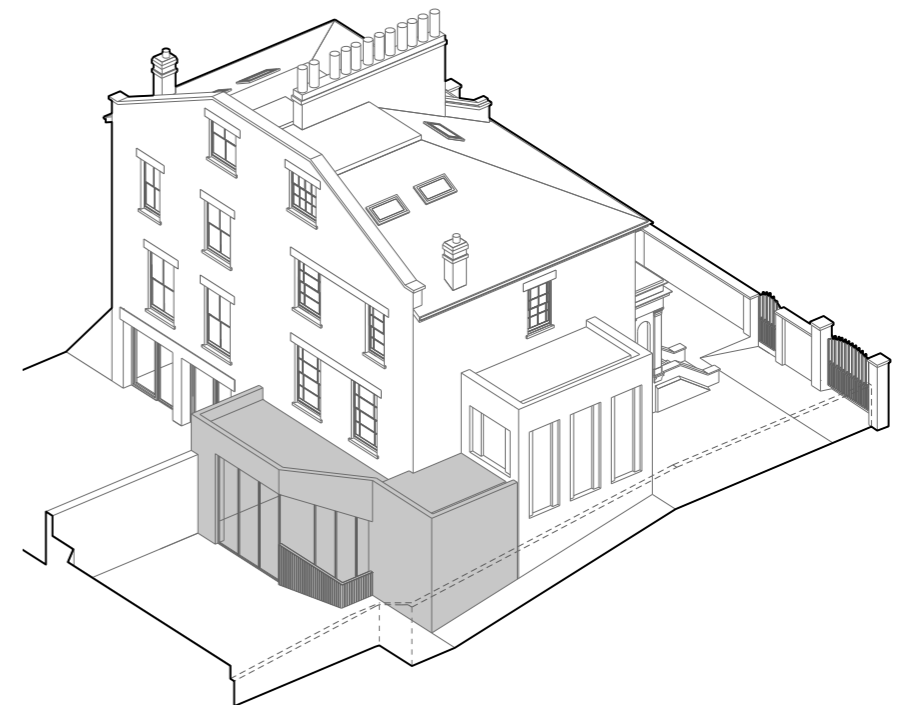
The following diagrams demonstrate how contextual analysis has informed the design and provided a framework, or parameter set, within which the proposed extension has been conceived. This includes factors such as established building line, height, massing, footprint, fenestration pattern and the relationship of built form to open space. The siting of the single storey element stepped back from the frontage and away from the boundary wall, in accordance with the original footprint of the house, was also regarded as an essential element of the design and it has shaped the building's form.



Existing side extensions and facade at lower ground floor to be demolished



Proposed volume to house stair and infill current included driveway.



Proposed lower ground floor extension to the rear of the house, steps down to maintain elegant proportions and respect the corner of the existing house. The height of the exposed corner of the existing house is maintained

Massing Strategy: Relationship to Context

The proposal reflects our desire to extend and refurbish the existing house as a building of the highest quality, aiming to enhance, and not just preserve, the quality and character of the area. Consequently, the context of the building has played a fundamental role in shaping the design and provided the starting point for the scheme in the form of a heritage appraisal. The following sequence of diagrams demonstrates how this context has closely informed the development of the scheme, arriving at a subtle and contextually appropriate design solution.

The proposal sits seamlessly within its surroundings, rather than mimicking Neo-Georgian architecture or resorting to pastiche. The proposed extension is restrained in its architectural treatment, and subtle as a contemporary addition. The proposed single storey element to the side of the house reflects the massing and scale of the existing porch to the front elevation. To the rear of the house the massing then steps down in line with the landscape, wrapping the lower ground storey and a rear garden light well.

The resulting form respects the existing asymmetric composition of the semi detached pair of villas and the design follows from a careful contextual analysis. The extension has an unforced simplicity, while it remains modest in scale and proportion. The stepped form, closely follows site topography and sympathetically drops below the level of existing ground floor windows at the back of the house. The proposed brickwork recesses subtly animate the envelope of the extension and complement the pilastered porches and detailing of the existing house and neighbouring terraces.

The side extension houses the proposed stair, freeing up floor space within the existing footprint. This arrangement offers greater flexibility for the internal reconfiguration of the house, enabling a completely open plan lower ground floor living space that opens directly onto the garden. The stair volume is top lit which crucially avoids the introduction of windows along the northern boundary and prevents possible overlooking issues.

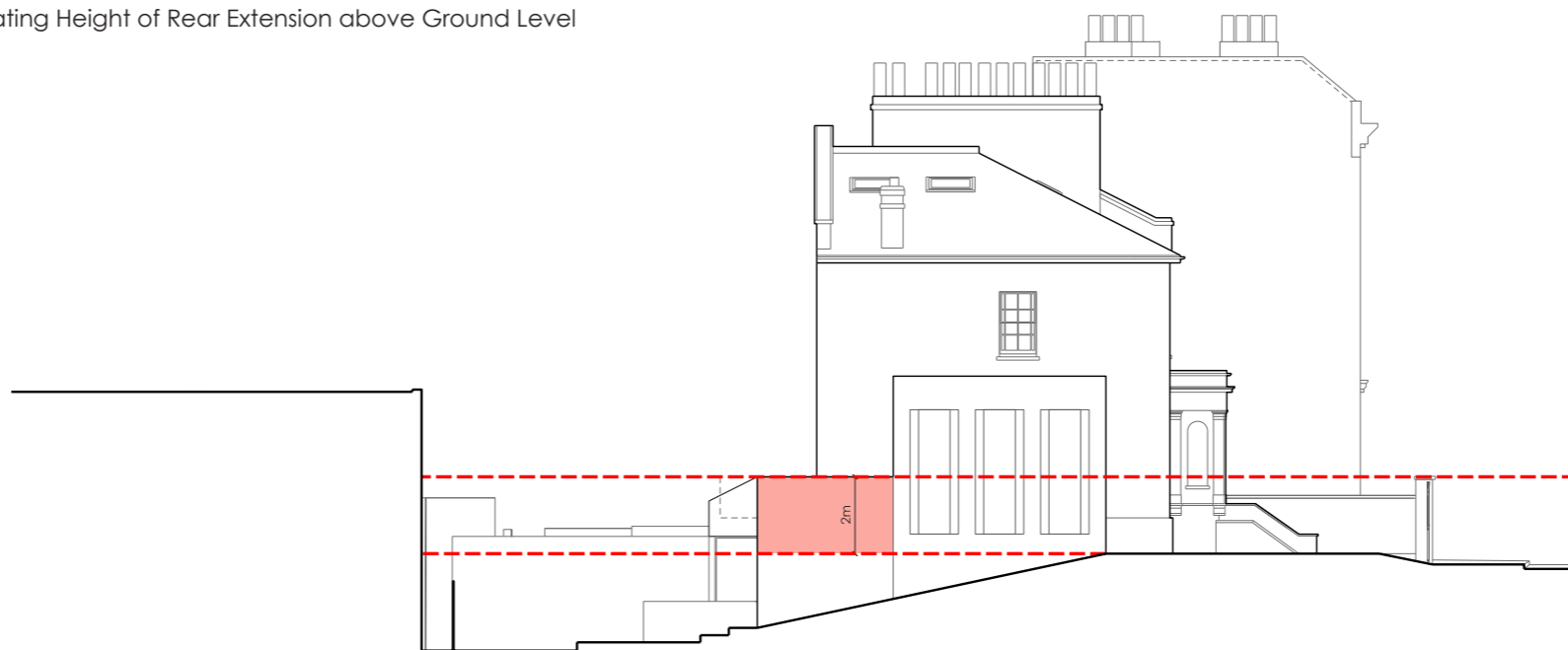


Massing Strategy: Relationship to Context

Diagram Overlaying Existing Side Extension

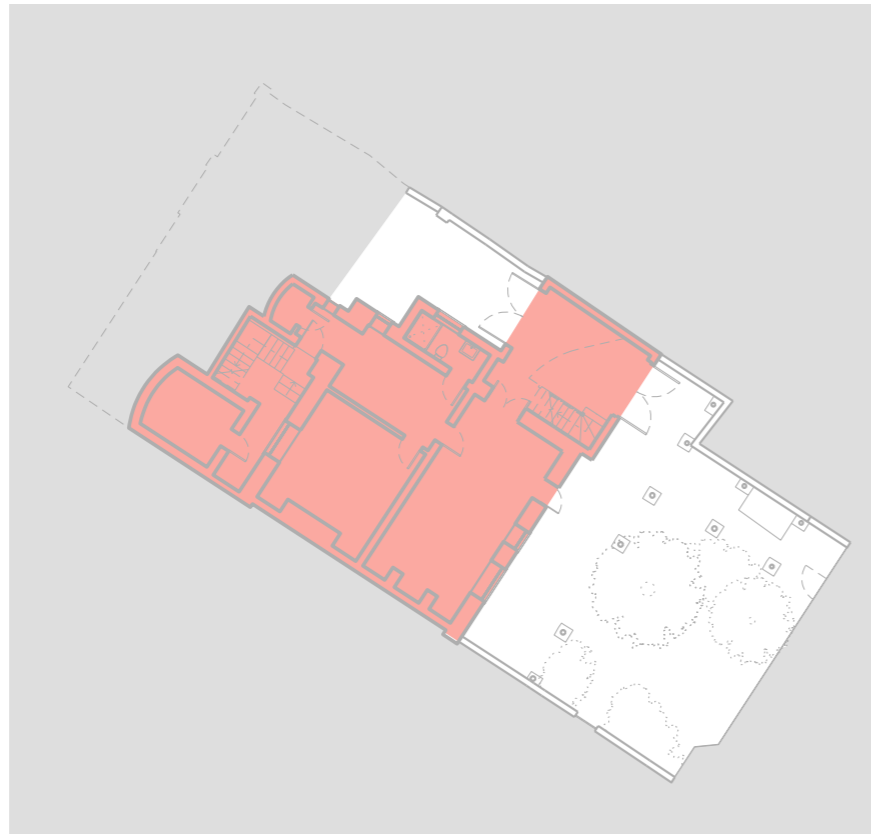


Diagram Indicating Height of Rear Extension above Ground Level



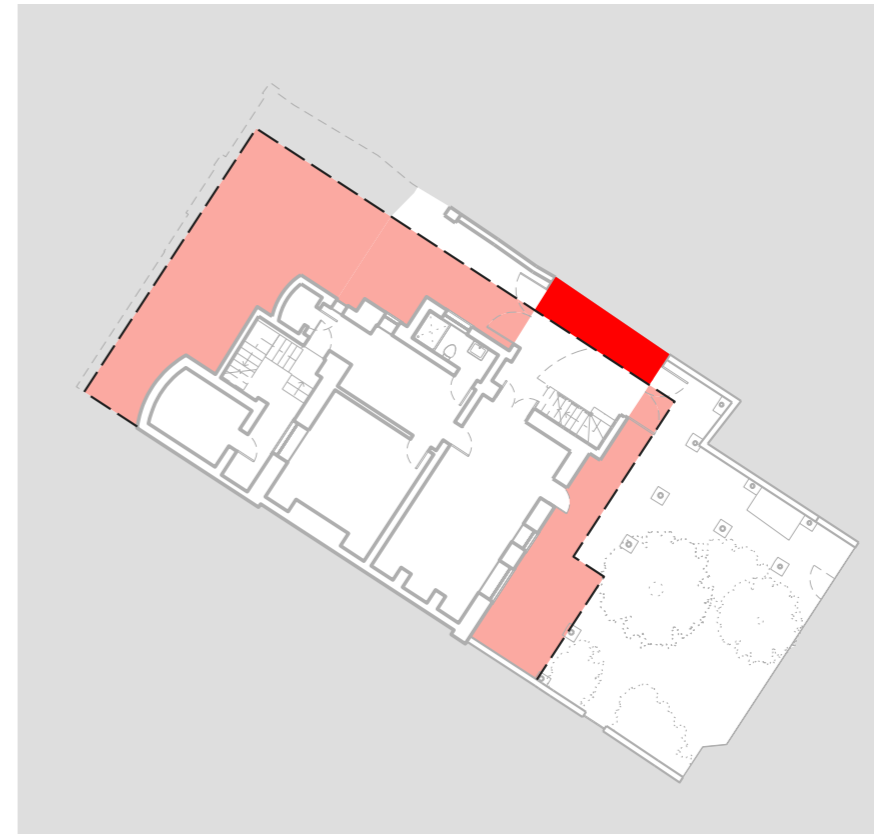
Massing Strategy: Relationship to Context

Existing Building Extent: Lower Ground Floor



Existing: The existing house has substantial floor area at lower ground floor as indicated by the shaded area. The building footprint extends into the front garden to the west of the site and considerably at the corner of the existing house, up to the perimeter at the northern boundary.

Proposed Building Extent: Lower Ground Floor



Proposed: At lower ground level the building footprint is partially extended at the front and rear of the house, the dotted line indicates the proposed extent of the refurbishment and the shaded area illustrates the additional extent of footprint required at lower ground level. The area in red indicates the reduction in footprint at the boundary.

Building Line: Existing



Existing: The existing house maintains a building line as defined by the stepped back east elevation of the side extension to the north of the house.

Building Line: Proposed



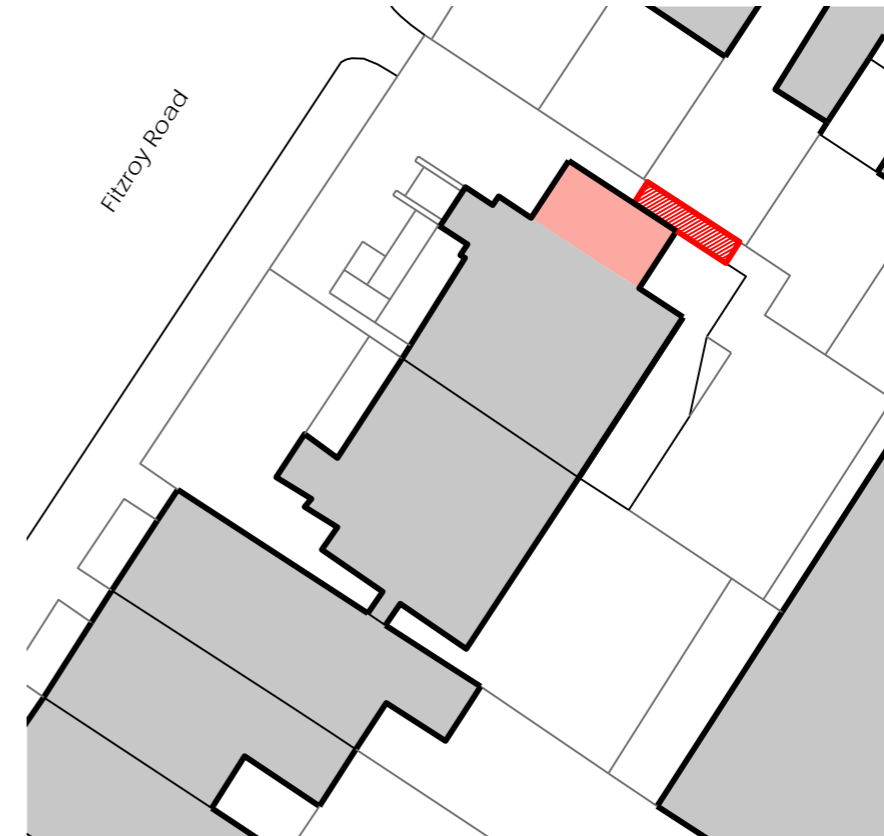
Proposed: The proposed extension to the north of the house follows the building line established by the existing set back, ensuring the subservient relationship between the main body of the house and the additional volume is maintained.

Existing Building Footprint: Raised Ground Floor



Existing: The existing house has suffered various alterations over the years with side extensions enhancing the asymmetric composition of the pair. Critically, the current garage extension extends to the corner of the existing house.

Proposed Building Footprint: Raised Ground Floor



Proposed: The extension to the north of the house follows the building line and holds the proposed stair. This element steps back from the corner of the rear of the house at raised ground floor level, freeing up the original volume.