

PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR EXTENSION AT 30 ORNAN ROAD

PLANNING AND DESIGN STATEMENT

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1.0 Introduction – Summary

- 1.1 Planning permission was granted by the London Borough of Camden some years ago at this two storey flat-roofed terrace of 3-houses, for all properties (26-30 Ornan Road) to extend at first floor together and in similar designs, with a requirement that they all built simultaneously (in the S106). This permission was not implemented and lapsed many years ago.
- 1.2 Subsequently, the middle property (28) applied for and was refused permission for a full-width brick extension on its own. The reason was that the design would not preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area but have a negative effect and that it would also be detrimental to the appearance of the host building. An appeal lodged was also dismissed supporting these reasons.
- 1.3 We have studied carefully this history and these previous decisions and related planning and design issues in the light of the conservation area and its appraisals, also. We have looked at Camden's design policies and development management practice before developing this particular scheme which we hope you will find that it is of architectural merit to the extent that it transforms the recognised (both by Camden and Planning Inspector) view that the terrace as is, makes no more than a "neutral" contribution to the conservation area and change this to "positive", whilst also allowing the next door houses to extend in similar appropriate ways in future should they wished to.
- 1.4 We have essentially designed a minimalist "light", largely glazed and set-in from all sides extension to sit within and behind the roof's sizeable parapet, in tune with the many innovative several nearby constructions which the Council has supported, where minimalist modern extensions, but also complete developments (such as whole houses) of innovative design have been approved by Camden, which rightly fames itself as a proponent of good modern design.
- 1.5 We would please request and welcome you to engage with us directly, should you have any recommendations to improve or alter aspects of the proposal in a pro-active way.***

Opposite page: Existing and proposed (from front gardens looking up)





2.0 Proposal : Resolving objections to extensions at first floor in Ornan Road

2.1 Both the proposed extension now for 30 and the refused for 28 are shown and compared on the following page. The appeal for the next door mid-terrace property's full-width extension noted in dismissing it:

*"... policies require extensions to buildings to achieve a high standard of design, preserve heritage assets, including having regard to Conservation Area Statements, and to consider the character and form of the host and neighbouring buildings"...and ... "Whilst the Conservation Area Statement considers the appeal terrace to be less interesting than **two other nearby contemporary buildings**, I am not persuaded that this amounts to support for the appeal proposal. Indeed, the Statement **commends the other buildings for the simplicity of their design**".*

2.2 And..." *The proposal **would add an additional storey across the full width of the appeal property**. I recognise that the extension would be set in from the front and back of the walls of the building and that the detailing and materials would match the host property. However, by virtue of its size and position, the extension would be prominent in the Ornan Road street scene."*

2.3 The council's reason for refusal in full was that:

*"The proposed additional storey, by reason of its **form, bulk and location** in a roofscape largely unimpaired by later additions, would result in harm to the*

character and appearance of the building, the terrace of which it forms part and of this part of the conservation area, contrary to policy CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Core Strategy and policies DP24 (Securing high quality design) and DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework Development Policies.”

2.4 Firstly, there is the first key advantage that, unlike 28, 30 is the end terrace house avoiding the abrupt increase of bulk in the middle of the terrace, and most importantly, is dwarfed by the currently fully exposed flank wall (which only has a landing window and which would still remain largely free). This would create a natural townscape “stepping down” synthesis adding to visual interest with obtrusiveness and making the mixture of simple modern and elegant Elizabethan architecture one finds in the street more rich, without harm. On the contrary, our view is that it would enrich this character and move the contribution of the 3 house terrace from the recognized “neutral” to positive in the conservation area.

2.5 Secondly, the extension unlike 28’s is also substantially and perceptibly set in from both sides too, thus comfortably contained within the roof being subservient to the parent house allowing for “breathing space” all around as well as for the possible extension of the other two houses with proposal that will be judged on their own merits. But, regardless of this, this roof addition can remain pleasantly alone even if the other were not extended.

Schematic view of design





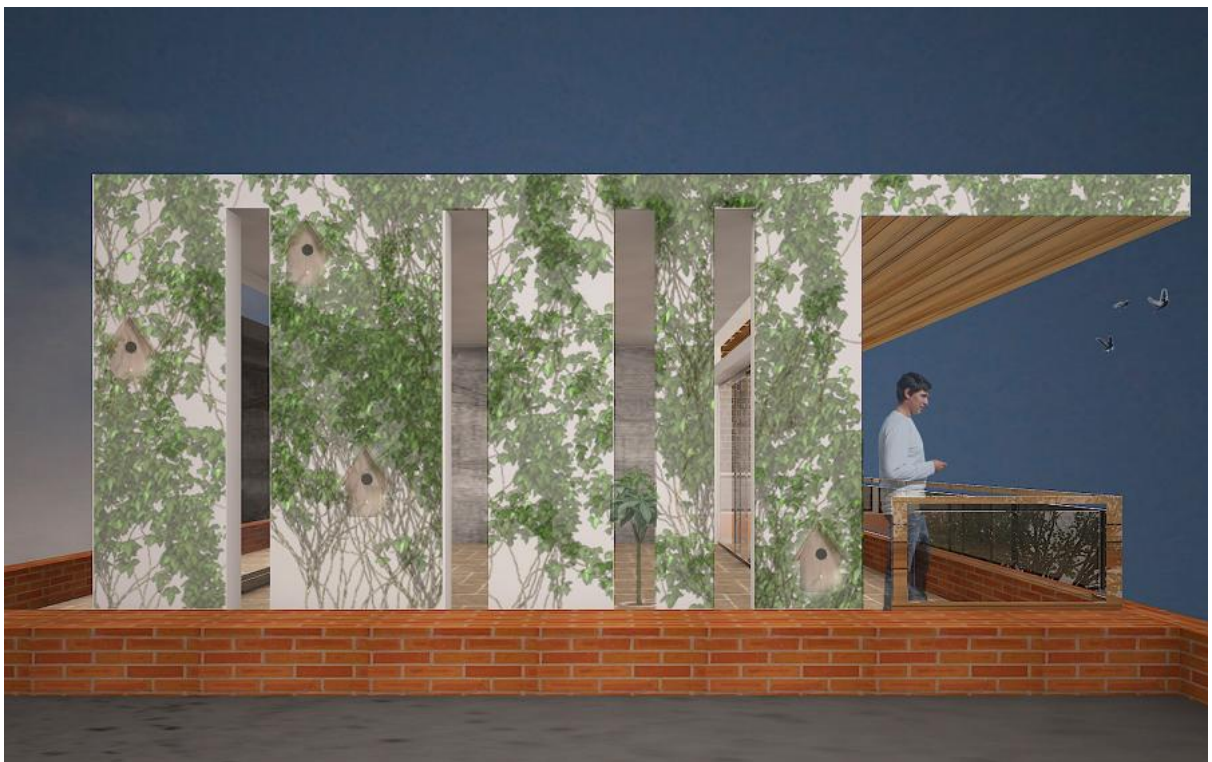
Refused full-width design for middle house, 28

2.6 Thirdly, the approach in design is now indeed simple (as the Conservation Area appraisal commends), light- transparent and contemporary (time has also moved on...), unlike the rather too solid and obtrusive refused extension whose windows at this height do little to make it attractive. Although mainly glazed its frame and material as well as window frames will match the white render the parent house has below both at front and rear (no 30 has been “modernized” with render at ground floor and a light metal canopy – cladding so adding a further modern element at roof level will match and improve its appearance. The metal glass door frames and other elements can match this if desired which also matches the window frames.

2.7 At the exposed side towards 28 vertical window openings have been added which we see as an important design feature to avoid looking at a solid blank wall (be it little visible) from afar and higher up. These create a good feature both inside and outside and plants can be planted in pots on the roof at this point to further ornament appearance both from in and out.



Another example...



Indicative side elevation from 28 and drawing of interior

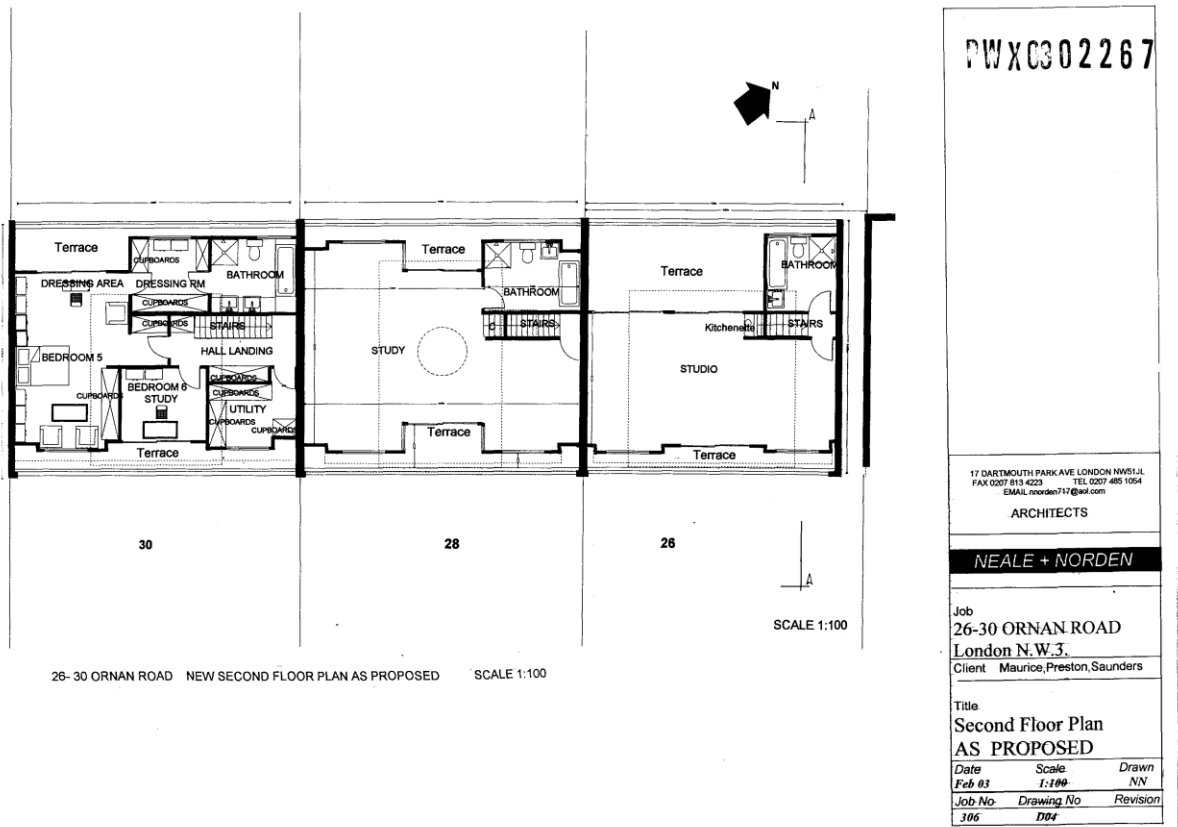


Vases with climbing and other plants and flowers will create a garden feel, sky views...

2.8 At rear, a canopy is proposed to extend above a balcony (the original permission for all three houses had balconies at rear also) both as a design feature to add interest to the profile of the rather dull square boxes the houses now are, but also to protect the balcony and rear glazed elevation and doors opening from rain (that matches the front, and consists of a middle fixed panel with 2 sliding doors either side with vertical beams corresponding to the centre of the spaces between the windows below – a design chosen to also link vertically to the solid verticals between the windows on the house). The deck is proposed to be wooden like the floor and ceiling to create a beautiful feeling and continuity both in and out of the room.

2.9 Finally, although there were terraces approved at all of 26-30 at rear so loss of privacy (that to some degree already exists sideways between) was not a serious issue. However, in order to both protect direct diagonal overlooking from the balcony of either the villa's large garden next door (which is anyway limited as it has an extension close to 30's boundary) and no 28, but also to afford a degree of enclosure to that nice balcony sideways and privacy for the occupiers themselves who can sit out less exposed, we propose at either corner of the terrace to install an organic quality wooden "L" shaped louver-type screen which can take several forms and have just indicated on our plans at a height of 1.7m. Climbing plants and flowers

could further annotate these enclosing and privacy screens. We view this to be like the corner sections of the screens to the terrace below on the opposite page.



Approved scheme for all 26-30 – terraces both front and rear





Indicative view from rear (not showing wooden corner screen)



Aimed "feel" of internal space of extension



2.10 The ability of the chosen design to allow the other two houses to also follow suit in similar fashion (indeed, identical almost might be best to maintain harmony) is the other key we consider makes the scheme acceptable and commendable. A similar much bigger scheme next to a smaller building has indeed been approved in the site of garages at Belsize Close nearby. This possibility is illustrated in an indicative image below:



Possible indicative resulting front elevation on street with all 3 houses extended

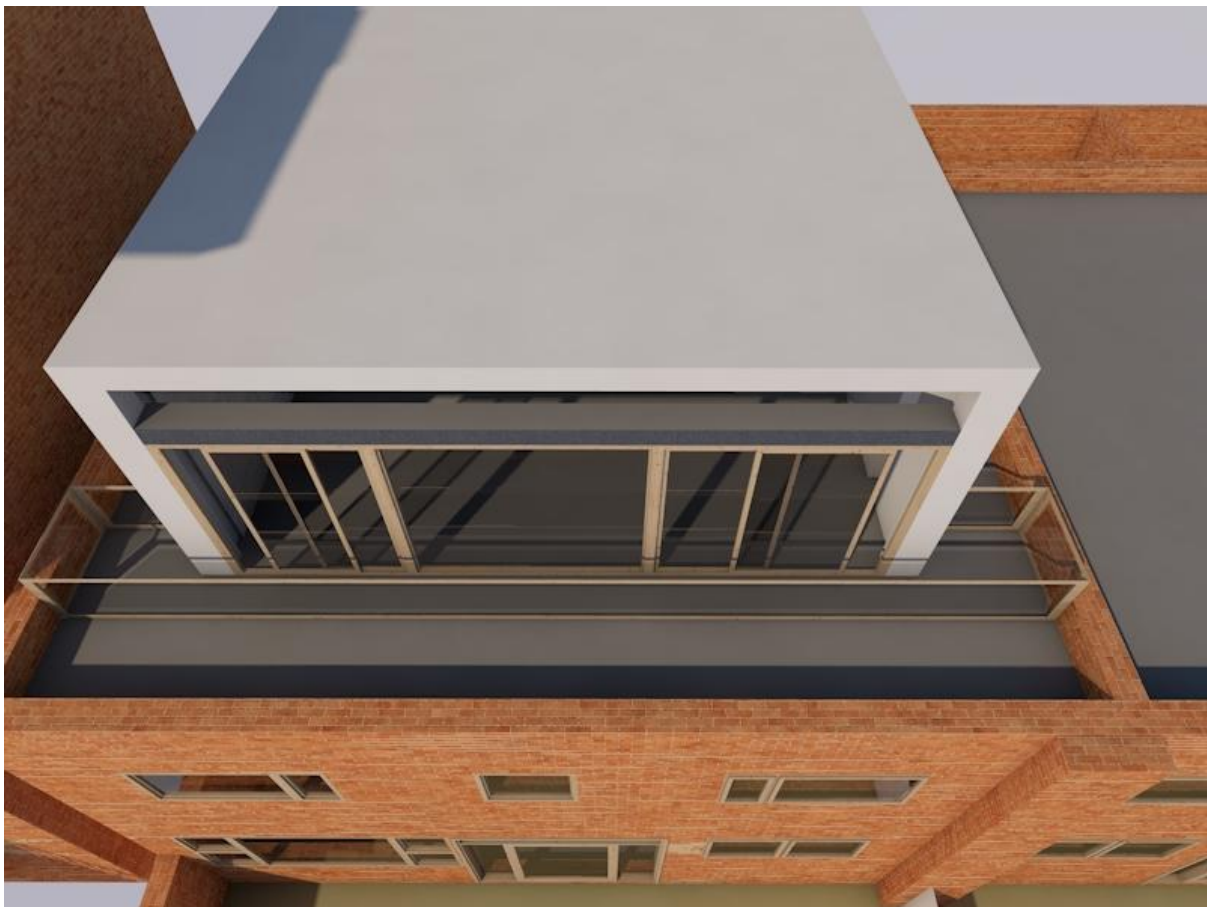
3.0 Relevant Planning Policy in the context of the proposal

3.1 National Policy - NPPF

The role of sustainable development is social and economic as well as environmental. Socially and economically this is obviously an acceptable proposal as it would significantly improve living accommodation and allow for some new economic activity in both building and occupying it. This is made clear in paragraph 7 of the NPPF. Paragraph 14 stresses that LPAs ***must be approving development proposals*** that accord with the development plan without delay; and granting permission ***unless:- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably***

outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or- specific policies in this Framework indicate otherwise

We believe that the benefits of the revised design overcome and outweigh the impacts which previously concerned the Council in the case of the house next door (also 30 having the added benefit of being the end of terrace house, neighboured by a far bigger, grander and more prominent pair of period villas, thus a “stepping down” will result and it would not matter if the other houses did not extend, and that the proposal is supported by the NPPF.





Glenilla Avenue nearby: new contemporary minimalist house approved to replace pretty, symmetrical small by another other side of block, detached home.

3.2 Core Principles under Paragraph 17 ask LPAs to:

"...take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas... and ...encourage the effective use of land...".....in reaching decisions. The character of the spot where the extension is proposed will be made more visually interesting and attractive with this stepping down effect resulting in an ornamented synthesis in townscape terms commensurate with the mixed character that contains both quality older and a mix of unrelated newer buildings. It will brighten up this rather dark spot and refresh it while adding to elegance by careful crisp lines and glass in a solid brick environment. Local views from several directions will benefit from the "bright" extension.

3.3 Section 6 devotes itself to promote the ***"Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes"***. This concept importantly and sustainably also applies to the cumulative effect and objective of improving the existing stock as well as new development so existing buildings should not be stopped from improving and widening that choice and improvement of homes, unless they would ***significantly and demonstrably*** adversely affect recognised areas of concern in plans by doing so.

3.4 The most key section of the NPPF for the purposes of this proposal is Section 7 on good design. Paragraph 57:

"It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes."

LPAs should: *"...establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*

...and ...optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development..."

It is documented and established by all that the ***"sense of place"*** in this particular area is of a mixed character. This would be made stronger and more interesting by annotating and articulating this existing rather blank ("neutral") spot with the attractive extension, in a spot where the domineering and somewhat insular flank of the Edwardian villa, which is imperforate but for one landing window, will still be visible as will its entire flank, as the gap between the buildings is wide.

3.5 This new innovative conclusion **in a contemporary design will remain**

harmonious and “well – bonded” with both the period house and terrace and result in a synthesis that will also act as a more attractive defining conclusion to the end of the terrace than it currently appears. It will thus define the terrace more strongly and elegantly. At the same time this would offer the obvious important general policy objective of creating a more comfortable and attractive place to live and maximize the use of the building.

3.6 The NPPF continues by stating developments should aim to ensure they:

*"respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, **while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;**"*

and

"are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping".

Local character in this area and street is evidently mixed with radical transitions taking place. The revised scheme is now responding appropriately to this character as it enhances and transforms for the better the end of this otherwise “gloomy” terrace to which it will be subservient to in scale but add to its overall architectural value. This solution is specifically designed to produce an innovative, light, simple and elegant crisp addition which would "decorate" sensitively rather than antagonise or compete with the building and terrace, as did the full-width addition at 28 which was understandably resisted. It would add joy to and ornament the despondent and unattractive terrace and decorate it with glass adding visual richness resulting in a better building complex and townscape to look at.

3.7 Both the resulting bulk and mass have been moderated in context in terms of visual impact, while the extension's relatively prominent flank is annotated by the modern crisp narrow glazing strips which would avoid a solid blank side wall and would make it look attractive and interesting from various angles and distances.

The glazing overcomes concerns over undue bulk and mass and will also make the extension appear more subservient and transparent. This is an important reason why we feel that the argument on bulk and mass which applied to 28 is overcome and removed.

3.8 We therefore consider that this specific proposal is indeed supported by the very important objective set out in the NPPF (paragraph 60) which states clearly that:

"Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. " Camden cannot certainly be accused of this.

...and by the statement that (paragraph 63):

"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"

This particular contemporary design solution does not stifle innovation (as 28's proposal did) and the resulting synthesis of design and of the visual appearance of this exposed terrace will be much improved and enriched by such a small but attractive addition for the reasons argued.

3.9 Camden Local Planning Policy

Policy in the Core Strategy 2010 states that:

"The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use

by:

a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;

b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;

c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;

d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible;

e) protecting important views of St Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster from sites inside and outside the borough and protecting important local views."

We believe our design achieves the relevant parts of the above.

3.10 In similar vein the Camden LDF Policy DP24 also referred states that:

"The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

- a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;***
- b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;***
- c) the quality of materials to be used;***
- d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;***
- e) the appropriate location for building services equipment;***
- f) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;***
- g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;***
- h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and***
- i) accessibility."***

3.11 The core Strategy also states that:

"Camden has many special and unique places and historic and modern buildings of the highest quality. As well as preserving this rich heritage, we should also be contributing to it by making sure that we create buildings of equally high quality that will be appreciated by future generations ...Development schemes should improve the quality of buildings, landscaping and the street environment and, through this, improve the experience of the borough for residents and visitors...High quality design also takes account of its surroundings and what is distinctive and valued about the local area."

3.12 Policy DP24 writes:

"The Council is committed to design excellence and a key strategic objective of the borough is to promote high quality, sustainable design. This is not just about the aesthetic appearance of the environment, but also about enabling an

*improved quality of life, equality of opportunity and economic growth. **We will therefore apply Policy DP24 to ensure that all developments throughout the borough, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, are of the highest standard of design.** In accordance with government guidance in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development we will not accept design that is inappropriate to its context or which fails **to take opportunities** to improve the character and quality of an area and the way that it is used by residents and visitors.”*

Camden is a densely built-up borough where most development involves the replacement, extension or conversion of existing buildings. Design should respond creatively to its site and its context. This concerns both smaller-scale alterations and extensions and larger developments, the design and layout of which should take into account the pattern and size of blocks, open spaces, gardens and streets in the surrounding area (the ‘urban grain’).

The Council seeks to encourage outstanding architecture and design, both in contemporary and more traditional styles. Innovative design can greatly enhance the built environment and, unless a scheme is within an area of homogenous architectural style that is important to retain, high quality contemporary design will be welcomed.”

Again, this emphasises Camden’s interest in and support of good quality contemporary architecture and townscape which we like to think are producing with this extension in 30 Ornan Road.

It is this last policy paragraph on the basis of which we consider that the proposal is supported by Camden's own key creative/contemporary design policy objectives as it manages to both stay in character and proportion without adverse effects and link to the existing townscape, while developing a high quality modern extension.

4.0 Conclusion

There is often scope for design and amenity improvement to properties and there certainly is in the case of 30 Ornan Road. The transformation to the streetscape and the more modern characteristics in the Conservation Area will be enhanced by this addition which will adopt the recognised “stepping down” approach the Council has seen as useful and innovative in mixing contemporary with older architecture, while improving radically amenity in the house and the streetscape, and allowing the neighbours to also extend.

As mentioned at the beginning, we look forward to your positive advice and welcome areas for clarification.

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14th June 2016