

Ref: 132.IMAR

Olivier Nelson
Camden Planning.
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street
London WC1H 9JE

86-90 Paul Street
London
EC2A 4NE

T. 020 3305 7476

Number 3,
159 Marine Parade
Brighton
BN2 1EJ

T. 01273 567 777

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michaeldoyle.doyle@gmail.com
www.michael-doyle.com

Dear Olivier Nelson,

45 Maresfield Gardens- Front boundary treatment

A retrospective application for the above development was recently submitted to you.

The application described the as-built scheme. Following earlier comments from your highways colleagues, the as built scheme has been subject to a process of review and assessment. The findings of that review are reported in this letter and in the following enclosed materials:

- Technical Note (Paul Mew Associates).
- Maresfield Gardens Parking and Access Survey.

Design and conservation

The Council requires all development to be of the highest standard of design and to consider character and setting, the quality of materials, the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level and the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping, including boundary treatments (DP24 Securing high quality design). Policy requires that new hard and soft landscaping should be of high quality and should positively respond to local character.

The Council resists developments that create, or add to, an area of car parking that has a harmful visual impact (DP19 Managing the impact of parking). It requires off-street parking to preserve a building's setting and the character of the surrounding area and requires hard landscaping treatments such as boundary treatment to offset adverse visual impacts.

Development Plan Policy DP25- Conserving Camden's Heritage states that the Council will take account of conservation area statements when assessing applications within conservation areas and only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area.

The Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area statement (2001) refers to Maresfield Gardens. It describes an underlying consistency of front gardens behind a physical boundary that relates sensitively to the architecture behind. Where this has been lost the statement concludes the underlying character of street and conservation area has been harmed. Maresfield Gardens has several examples of such harm and of traditional boundary treatments altered inappropriately.



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Nos. 43-49 Maresfield Gardens are described as 1880's houses built with front walls of over-burnt brick and double entrances originally for carriages. The statement describes No.45 as a negative feature of the conservations through the loss of the front boundary.

The statement refers to current issues, particularly alterations to front boundaries which can 'dramatically affect and harm the character of the conservation area'. The statement suggests boundaries should be restored where they have been lost. This is reinforced in the guidelines on front boundaries (F/N31), which state that proposals should respect the original style of boundary and these should be retained and reinstated where they have been lost.

The proposals reinstate the lost boundary treatment in a sympathetic design using traditional materials and details appropriate to the setting of the building behind. This removes the demonstrable harm caused by the open forecourt highlighted in the conservation area statement. The proposals reflect the established traditional layout of driveways in the conservation area with narrow 'in and out' gates with brick piers and a central pedestrian gate with a paved path leading to the front door. The introduction of planters softens the overall appearance.

Parking survey

A photographic survey of all altered garden/forecourt accesses and parking spaces in the immediate area has been carried out. We have also looked into the planning history of specific examples. The survey leads to the following observations and conclusions:

1. Double 'in and out' gateways are a typical historic feature (originally to allow horse drawn carriages to enter and leave properties).
2. There is wide variety in the geometry and materials applied to crossovers.
3. Narrow gateways framed by tall brick piers and walls are a typical feature of both historic and contemporary accesses.
4. There are many examples of narrow gateways, both original historic and contemporary. Some serve multiple parking spaces, rear parking courts and also education/ institutional uses.
5. A number of recent planning permissions closely resemble the form and dimensions of the proposals for No.45. (See figures 41, 44, 61, 67 and 70).
6. Wide multi-car forecourt parking areas with wide crossovers are common, many wider than the dropped kerb in front. These harm the character and appearance of the area.
7. A number of recently implemented proposals closely match features of the proposals for No.45. (See figures 8, 9, 21, 27, 25,36, 41, 42, 44, 53,54, 67, 75, 75, 79, 84, 87, and 88)
8. Wide vehicle entrances without boundary walls/piers that facilitate pavement over-running are a common feature.
9. There is little evidence of the consistent application of parking design standards.

Car parking spaces

The proposals help to realise the aims of policy by restricting parking provision.

The Council seeks to ensure that developments provide the minimum necessary car parking provision (DPI8 Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking) and encourages the removal of surplus car parking spaces (DPI9 Managing the impact of parking).

The previous forecourt included no formal, physical demarcation of parking areas. The layout permitted up to three cars to park on the open forecourt area, unrestricted by front boundary walls, piers or gates.

The proposals formally demarcate two parking spaces and physically prevent any further car parking, allowing space for enhancements such as dedicated footpaths and planters.

Overall conclusions

The proposals reinstate the lost boundary treatment in a sympathetic design using traditional materials and details appropriate to the setting of the building behind. This removed the demonstrable harm caused by the former open forecourt. The proposals reflect the established traditional layout of driveways in the conservation area. The introduction of planters softens the overall appearance.

The proposals formally demarcate two parking spaces and physically prevent any further car parking, allowing space for enhancements such as dedicated footpaths and planters.

Recent planning permissions granted in the area indicate that proposals for No.45 should be supported on the same basis.

The proposed new crossover required to accommodate the proposed northern car parking bay will not result in a loss of parking opportunities along Maresfield Gardens. In accordance with Manual for Streets visibility provided along the street edge should consider the frequency of vehicle movements, the level of pedestrian activity and the width of the footway. The footpath adjacent to the site is wide and lightly traffic by pedestrians, particularly by pedestrians travelling southbound directly adjacent to the site, where vehicle to pedestrian sightlines are limited. The frequency of vehicle movements into and out of the site are expected to be minimal.

The provision of reduced vehicle to pedestrian sightlines at the northern parking opportunity at 45 Maresfield Gardens is considered to be satisfactory, given the wide width of the footway and the low frequency of pedestrian movements along the footpath. In addition any vehicles exiting the site will exit at lower speeds given the reduced visibility, helping to increase pedestrian safety.

A survey of the area has demonstrated that double, narrow, 'in and out' gateways framed by tall brick piers and walls are a typical feature of both historic and contemporary accesses. A number of recent planning permissions closely resemble the form and dimensions of the proposals for No.45 whilst recently implemented proposals closely match features of the proposals for No.45.

Yours sincerely.



Michael Doyle
Partner

Cc

Mr Shai Greenberg

John Nicholls, Camden Planning Enforcement