

## Design & Access Statement

Accompanying Proposals for 40B Hollycroft Avenue, London, NW3

June 2016

### Introduction

40B Hollycroft Avenue occupies part of the ground, first and second floors of a substantial house that has been subdivided to include three other freeholds with separate entrances. The house is located within the Reddington and Froggnal Conservation area but is not listed. The homeowners at 40B would like to update accommodation to better meet the needs of their growing family and address aspects of the building that no longer function adequately.

Proposals include reopening of two windows to the front of the house plus alterations to the rear of the property that will not be visible from the street. Former alterations and additions currently result in an ad hoc appearance to the rear and proposals aim to achieve coherence through a better balance of materials and form between original and new elements.

Proposals include:

1. The replacement of the rear extension, replacing an un-insulated concrete and steel frame and glazed construction with a one that provides thermal conservation and comfort to meet current standards. The proposal is to increase the width of the extension to include a connection to both rear receptions and enclose current dead spaces.
2. Replacement glazing to the secondary rear bay window to improve proportions in relation to original windows at first floor. This bay has been previously re-glazed and currently contributes to the disharmony of the rear elevation.
3. The replacement of the garden studio, which was built in the 1960s and later extended but has fallen into disrepair. The principle of a larger outbuilding was approved in 2007, and discussed in recent pre-application advice, and proposals submitted show a larger garden studio set back into the site to provide more useful garden space.
4. Some internal alterations to the main house are also proposed, which are shown on the submitted plans. This includes reopening and restoring two large original windows to the front elevation.

Consultation through LB Camden's pre-application service was undertaken through March – April 2016. The points raised by planning and conservation officers have been given careful consideration and addressed in developing the design submitted with this full application (detailed below).

### Site, existing house and garden studio

Hollycroft Avenue is typical of the character of the Reddington and Froggnal Conservation area where, from the turn of the 20C onwards, houses of significant quality and varying architectural detail have been developed along tree-lined streets. Some remain single dwellings, but many have been divided and the area is characterised by a significant alteration and extension of properties over the last ten years in particular.

The original house at number 40 was one of the largest houses on Hollycroft Avenue. The applicant's ownership includes half of the former rear garden that extends to the rear (south) and west boundaries. This includes a number of mature shrubs, an ash and two lime trees, which will be retained.

Front of property viewed from Hollycroft Avenue



Currently blocked windows to be restored on ground and first floors.



← 40A & 40C → 40B (entrance over garage owned by others) →

Rear of property

(40b occupies part ground and full width of first and second floors to the rear)



Proposals include replacement of the bay window to improve proportions in relation to original windows at first floor.



T3: Lime Tree

The existing concrete and steel framed and glazed extension lacks insulation and is consequently hot in summer and cold in winter.

## Existing rear garden and garden studio

Existing garden studio, T1 and T2 Ash trees adjacent to the side and rear boundaries.



Existing rear / south facing boundary. New fence erected by adjacent owners following the completion of development at 22 Ferncroft Avenue



The current studio is overgrown with ivy, which does provide a level of screening but has caused considerable damage. Proposed designs reposition the studio to make better use of the garden and natural light, whilst retaining a level of screening and visual amenity by proposing an organic form and green roof.

## Design Approach

### Use / Layout

The overall use of the house and its individual rooms remains the same, providing single-family residential accommodation. Similarly, the replacement garden studio, including a bathroom and kitchenette (as existing), remains ancillary to the main house. At ground floor one ambition has been to make a stronger connection between the front door and garden by introducing a new through route and reconfiguring the stair. The route connects into the proposed wider rear extension that now allows both receptions direct access to the dining and kitchen spaces providing the family with more flexible, social, spaces. The removal of the secondary staircase between first and second floors provides space for a family bathroom (first floor) and a study (second floor).

## Scale and Massing

Although a large proportion of the proposal is to replace previously extended areas of the house and outbuilding, the scheme aims to make adjustments that remain subordinate to the original house that comprises both the applicants' and neighbours' properties. On plan, the larger south facing extension is proposed at the same depth as the existing but utilises current dead spaces across the width and is taller than the existing structure by 230 mm to accommodate better insulation and a sedum roof.

The applicants' brief for the studio has been to replace the current building with one that sits more comfortably within the garden and the organic modelling of proposals in terms of form and orientation is described further below. The natural slope of the site also means the new studio can sit low in the garden (- 600 mm below top of existing retaining wall and - 1.6 mm below internal finished floor in the main house). Proposals push the outbuilding back to return more useable area to the garden and extend the landscaping to meet the building.

## Light

The availability and quality of light within rooms has been a strong consideration during design development. Alterations to the hall and stair, and the moving of the downstairs cloakroom, allow an original window to be restored to the front to provide additional north light to one reception. The rear extension, which faces south, includes rooflights to ensure light is maintained to the rear receptions. One replaces an existing rooflight to the main living space, the other is proposed to light the second reception and is set at a height that clears the existing French window so that the proportion of this opening can be retained. Some rooflights will be detailed as clerestory glazing with solid or back-painted roofs adjacent to trees (due to resin deposits).

The garden studio has been modelled to respond to the way the sun / light travels around the garden. Clerestory windows and roof lights are positioned to capture the morning, south and evening west light, which intentionally result in a roof form that breaks up the mass of the outbuilding. The studio's north-facing glazed elevation is angled to reflect the garden's planted areas and lighten the appearance of the building in comparison to the existing solid structure.

The roof to the existing secondary bay at first floor is currently single glazed, which results in uncomfortable overheating that will be over come by its replacement with a solid roof and new bay window glazing.

## Materiality

Brickwork is proposed for external walls of the rebuilt rear extension to the main house. The original house reads as a red brick but there is a variety of quality and colour within the red-to-brown spectrum. The brick selected for new areas will complement the original and, if feasible, a handmade brick will be used to positively contribute to the quality and character of the rear of the house that has been lost through previous alterations.

The images below show the types of brick discussed with planning officers and we would aim to extend the use of the selected brick to landscaped steps and as an interior facing brick within the studio to blur the boundaries of interior and garden spaces.

A sedum green roof is proposed for the ground floor rear extension to replace the current leaded roof with a more pleasing outlook. Similarly, the organic form of the new garden studio is proposed as a sedum roof to help the studio sit in the garden landscape and replace the current green screen provided by the ivy. Planting will also be trained up the walls of the new studio to further the intention of the studio being part of the garden landscaping.

### Trees and Landscaping

Wassells Arboricultural Services maintain the trees at 40B Hollycroft Avenue and have recently pollarded both lime and ash trees. Wassells surveyed the trees in May 2016 and have liaised with the project architect and structural engineer on foundation designs that will best protect the root protection area. The collective approach at this stage is for mini piles with a grillage beam so that the impact of excavation is minimized and structure raised above ground to allow roots to breath in areas identified by Wassells - specifically the 3 metre zone around the trunk of the lime T2.

Further investigation and monitoring work is proposed during detailed design to finalize the designs, placement of piles with respect to significant roots and the method of construction.

Both arboriculture and structural consultants have prepared reports to accompanying the application:

- Pre-Development Tree Survey and Report, Richard Wassells, Wassells Arboricultural Services, June 2016
- Structural Engineer's Appraisal, Ian Harban Consulting Engineers, June 2016

### Access and parking

Maintained as existing: The front entrance is via a set of external steps and side entrance via the adjacent garage roof and then steps down. Parking is on-street within controlled parking bays.

### Material references discussed during pre-planning consultation



Kolumba, brickwork and sedum roof examples.



## Pre application consultation and design development

Site meeting and liaison with LBC, planning officer Tessa Craig, and written feedback received 16 March 2016:

### 1. Ground Floor replacement extension

Ground level- The proposal would see the existing modern rear extension altered to unify the appearance of the lower ground floor extension. The extension would infill unused space between the existing conservatory structure and the main building and extend slightly wider beyond the existing extension. The extension would remain subordinate in relation to the property. Glazed doors at ground level would be likely to be acceptable due to their limited visibility. A green roof is supported.

> *Proposals remain as reviewed at pre-application stage.*

### 2. First Floor bay window

Extension of bay window- The size and detailed design of the bay window extension would not relate to the existing architectural composition and would be an unsympathetic addition to a building which is a positive contributor to the conservation area. Due to the height of the extension at first floor, the development at this level would be more widely visible. It is recommended the bay window including its traditional style windows should be retained. Replacement of the rear elevation windows on the left hand side is likely to be acceptable.

- Revised proposals to retain the central bay and rebuild the secondary side bay as a larger box bay window were discussed as a more acceptable approach. However, the submitted scheme retains both bays and limits alterations to replacing the secondary bay windows to improve the proportions in relation to both first floor original windows and more contemporary glazing to the replacement ground floor extension.

### 3. Garden Studio:

The property benefits from an existing large outbuilding (hosting a small bathroom and kitchenette) which is sunken in at the rear of the garden (sited on a lower ground level) and covered in ivy. The current outbuilding is approximately 26sqm and the proposed outbuilding would be 21sqm larger (47sqm). It is considered that whilst there may be some scope for a larger outbuilding replacement, the outbuilding should not extend forward beyond the retaining wall and existing structure. The roof profile should be as low as possible and strategic planting should be implemented to help screen the structure (details should be provided at application stage). The current proposal is bulky and not sympathetic to the main building.

- In response, proposals have been revised to reduce the footprint of the proposed replacement studio and its siting revised to improve its relationship to the garden. This includes pulling the leading corner back away from the house, lowering the proposed green roofs and keeping the proposed new studio behind the retaining wall. The proposed area is reduced by 6 sqm (approx. 15%)
- Proposals for a larger studio were granted permission in 2007. The application drawings have not been found in planning records but the decision notice indicates the consented scheme similarly proposed a solution for occupying the underused space at the rear of the garden whilst not damaging the Lime tree.

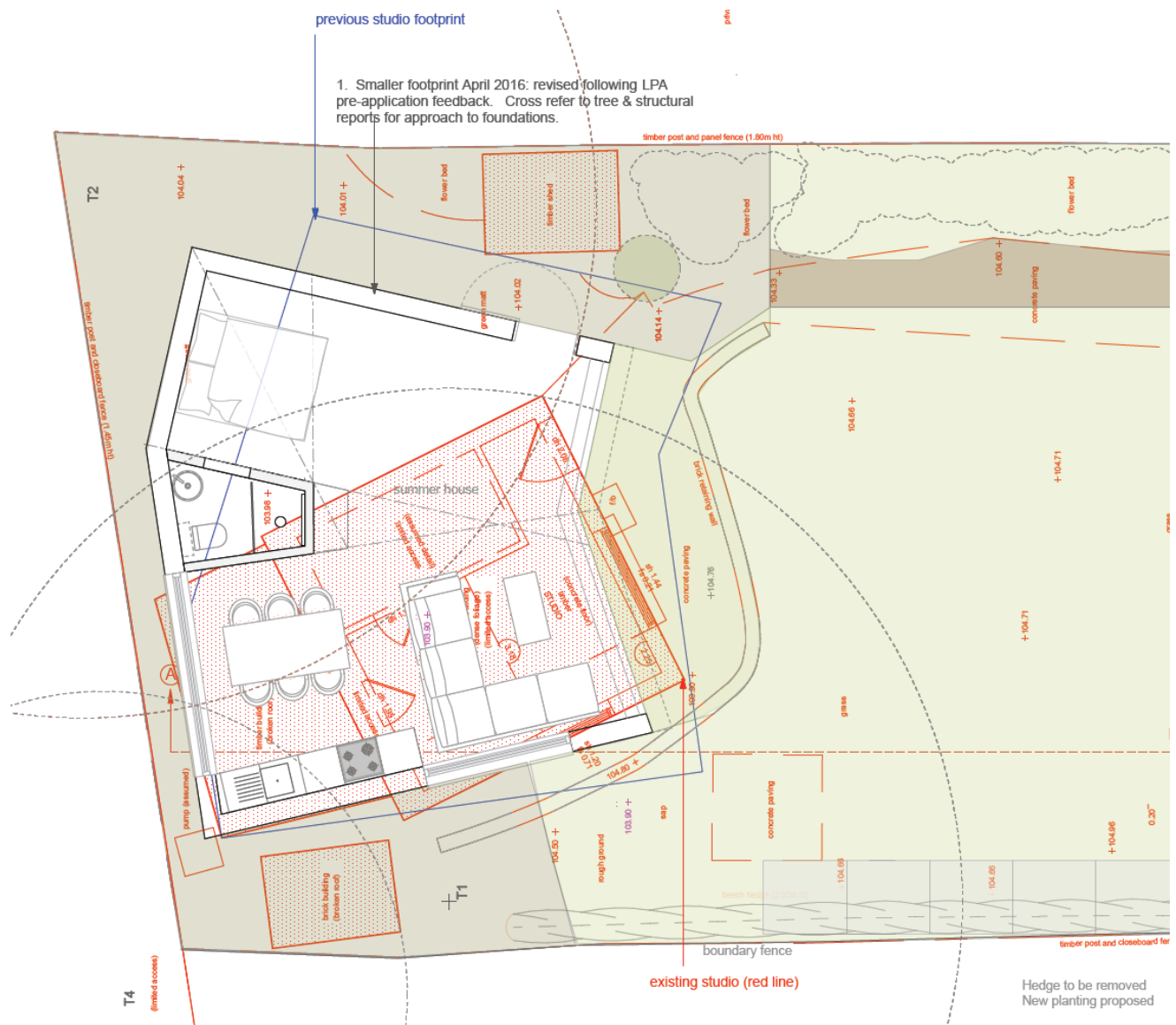
typical garden structure. It will not detract from the generally soft landscaped nature of the garden.

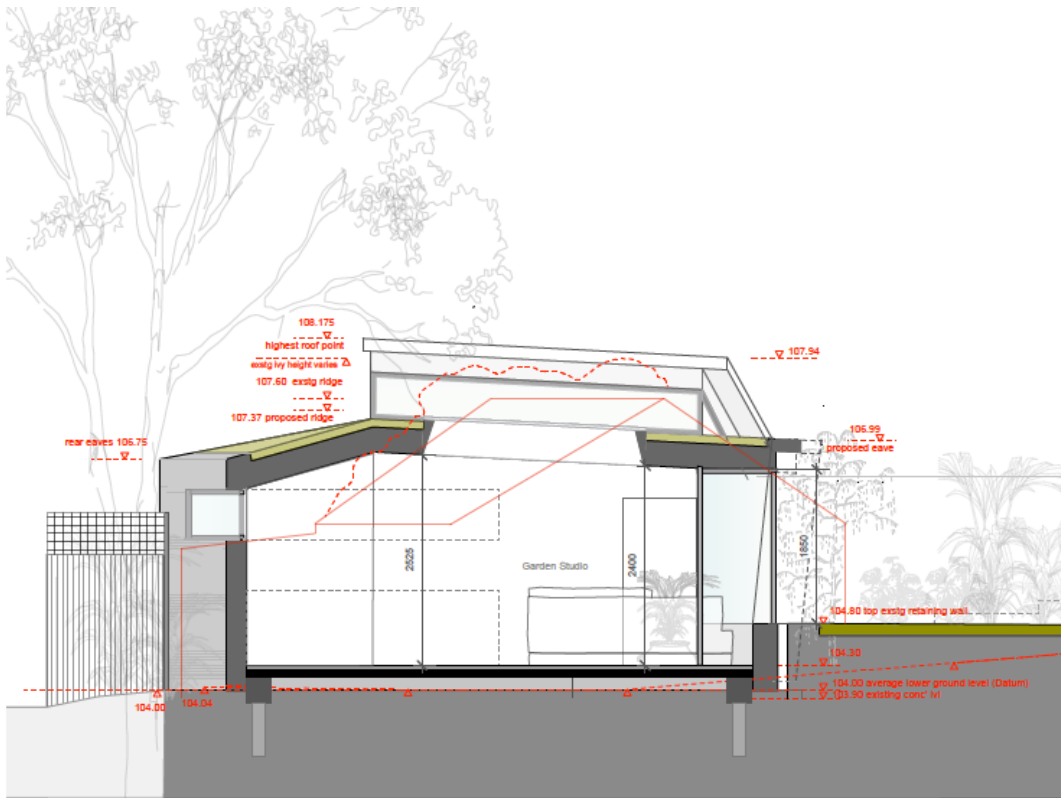
Whilst it is acknowledged that the cumulative impact of buildings within the curtilage of existing dwellings can impact on elements that contribute to the character and appearance of conservation areas, it is considered that this development in this location will not compromise the existing garden setting and will not be harmful to the established character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

The proposed construction does fall within the root protection zone of a Lime tree at the rear of the garden and this tree is considered to contribute to the character of the conservation area. Whilst it has been demonstrated that the proposal is capable of being constructed without damaging this tree, it is recommended that a condition be attached requiring the submission and approval of a method statement for the protection of the tree during the construction process.

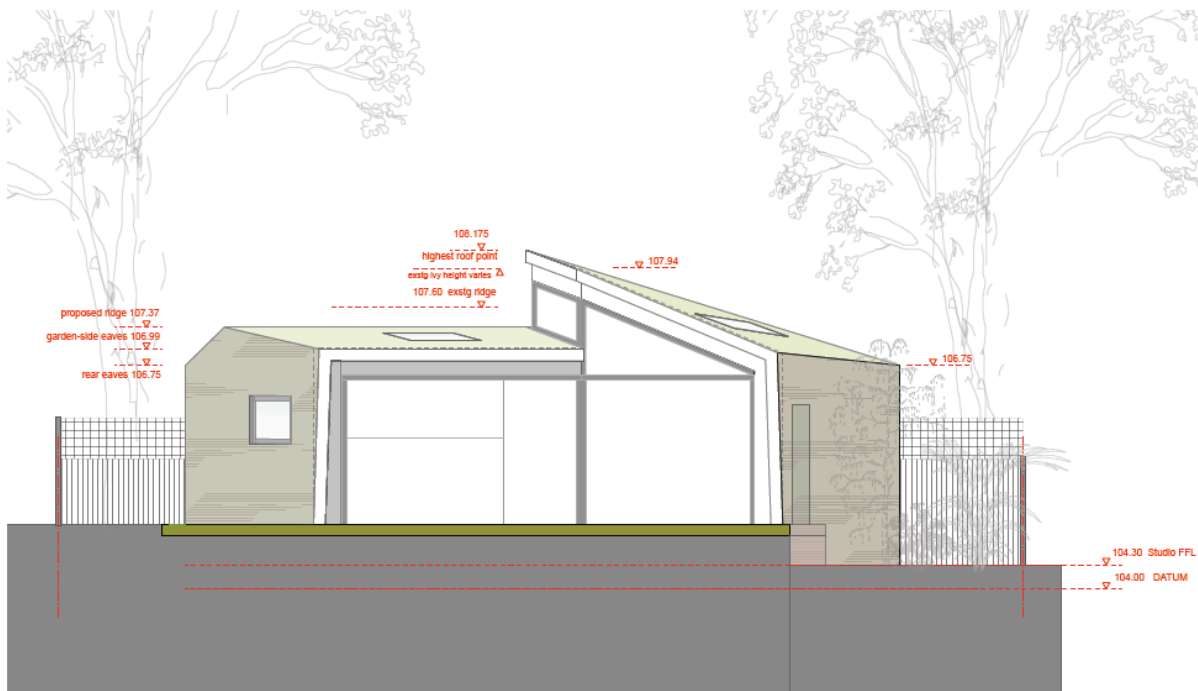
Recommend approval subject to conditions.

The revised plan compares the existing studio footprint (red line), initial proposals discussed with LBC in March 2016 (blue line) and revised, submitted proposals.





Proposed Studio Section (showing existing outbuilding in red line)



Proposed Studio Elevation to Garden