

22 FROGNAL WAY LONDON NW3 6XE :
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSION
TO THE EXISTING HOUSE

CONTENTS

Section 1	:	Site Analysis: Constraints and Opportunities
Section 2	:	Development Objectives
Section 4	:	The Design Solution
Section 5	:	Access Statement
Appendix I	:	Pre-application consultation with LPA
Appendix II	:	Public consultation

1 Site Analysis: Constraints and Opportunities

- 1.01 This project is for alterations and extension to the existing residential property on the site, to improve the existing arrangement of spaces and to create additional accommodation on the site.
- 1.02 The site, with a total footprint of approximately 1,848 sq m, is at the eastern end of Frognal Way, which is a private road with an unmade up surface of hogging, accessed off Frognal.
- 1.03 The site is within the Hampstead Conservation area; this is a large area, and includes buildings from many eras.
- 1.04 The site sits within one of the escarpments that are so characteristic of Hampstead. Although levelled in the central area in the 1970's during the construction of the present house, the site still retains it's gently sloping character, falling from the north to the south, where there are views towards the centre of London.
- 1.05 The escarpment continues upwards to the north, where the rear elevation to Church Row forms a backdrop. The gardens to Church Row back onto the site. Church Row, and Perrins Walk to the east of the site, create a

strong urban grain that changes completely as one descends from Church Row via the pedestrian way, passed the church and onto Frogna Way.

- 1.06 The change in character and scale happens on this pedestrian route that slopes down from Church Row, running down the west of the site, alongside the church and graveyard.
- 1.07 The character of Frogna Way is more low-key than the areas to the north and the east – it is sometimes referred to as semi-rural - and is comprised of individual houses in their own plots. There is a variety of scale and style of houses, although most of them – whether of historicist or Modernist provenance – date from the twentieth century.
- 1.08 The houses along Frogna Way have been constructed from a variety of materials, which adds to its charm and eccentricity: painted render, natural brickwork and stone detailing have all been used along the road, and there is no clear clue from the context as to what is inevitable in terms of external materials for any new development.
- 1.09 The existing building on the site, which during construction involved extensive leveling of the site – with a total gross external floor area of approximately 620 sq m (including undercroft areas) – was designed by architect Philip Pank for Harold Cooper and his wife and was completed in 1977. It is a single storey brick structure with aluminium windows and timber barge-boards below the eaves and has an extensive area of flat roof covered in roofing felt. There is an extensive undercroft area, partially used to house services.
- 1.10 The entrance court to the house, off Frogna Way, includes a garage, as well as metal gates giving access to the garden. The entrance court is predominantly of hard surfaces. Metal vehicular gates have been placed at the entrance to the site from Frogna Way.
- 1.11 Internally, the house is of very mixed idiom, with modern and traditional detailing – including extensive use of cornices, which appear to date from the original construction.
- 1.12 An open-air swimming pool was been installed in the garden at the time of

the original construction; clearly little used for many years, it creates a sense of disruption between the garden and the house.

- 1.13 The plan of the existing building takes the form of a series of 'fingers' radiating out from a central entrance hall, the rotunda.
- 1.14 There are three key trees on the site: a lime tree and Copper Beech on the north side of the garden, within the escarpment slope, and a Weeping Willow in the south-east corner, set into a raised bed clad in brickwork.
- 1.15 The remainder of the site beyond the confines of the house comprises lawns on the north side and the central area, with densely landscaped low woodland on the south escarpment. All these areas of landscaping should be retained and enhanced, and the mature trees fully protected during any redevelopment work.
- 1.16 This part of Frognal Way is dominated by no. 20 – Gracie Fields' house. This is a somewhat eccentric building with a large, steeply sloping roof of green glazed tiles, tall chimneys, ornate curved brick dormers, a curved brick front façade, shutters and ornate painted metal balconies. All the external brickwork is painted white. This house visually terminates the view down Frognal Way from the west.
- 1.17 Frognal Way itself is relatively flat, with just a gentle slope to the west down towards Frognal. The land rises to the north of the road, and falls away dramatically to the south.

2 Development Objectives

- 2.01 In 2007, whilst the present applicant was preparing proposals for the site which involved demolition of the existing building, an application was made to English Heritage by persons unknown to have building listed. At that time, a building by Pank at 18 Millfield Lane in Highgate had just been listed Grade II. No. 22 Frognal Way was turned down by EH for listing but, contrary to the prevailing Conservation Area Policy Statement (CAPS) EH concluded that the house, by virtue of its association with Pank, made a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
- 2.02 An Appeal to demolish the existing house and erect two new family houses was dismissed in October 2008, after a Public Inquiry lasting two days. The Inspector agreed with the view of the LPA submitted to the Inquiry (and also stated by EH at the time they were considering listing the building) that the existing building made a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, not least because of its association with an important local architect, Philip Pank. In addition, the Inspector concluded that the house was of an interesting form, which in itself was worthy of retention.
- 2.03 Our research at the time the original proposals were being drawn up highlighted that the house had been extended in two key areas about five years after it was completed. However, apparently as a result of poor relations between Pank and his client Harold Cooper, a local architectural firm Dinerman Davison Associates designed these alterations. They primarily provided for a broader form for the third, southern 'finger', to add a carer's bedroom and bathroom for Mr Cooper's wheelchair bound wife, and also the formation of an entrance porch adjacent to the original entrance rotunda.
- 2.04 Following the recent planning history, therefore, it has been established that the building is not of sufficient merit for listing, but, by virtue of its association with an important local architect, and its interesting plan form, it makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, and is therefore worthy of retention.

- 2.05 In addition, the Inspector concluded that height of the existing building, and in particular the overall height of the rotunda, was, thereabouts, the height limit he wanted to see on the site, particularly given the location of the site in key views identified within the CA.
- 2.06 The current owner – who purchased the site from Harold Cooper's daughter - asked us to look at working with the existing building, to improve the quality of the accommodation, and improve the relationship between the interiors and the garden, which was considered to be particularly poor in the present building.
- 2.07 In addition, and most importantly, we were asked to look at the entrance area off Frognal Way, where it was felt that the prominence and location of the garage block gave the impression that, from Frognal Way, one was approaching a series of garages, and not a family home.
- 2.08 At the same time, as a brownfield site, it could be brought into more productive use by alterations and extension, in order to expand the present accommodation; maximising the potential of brownfield sites is in keeping with Camden's UDP.
- 2.09 To summarise, it is intended to greatly improve the accommodation on the site, both qualitatively and quantitatively and taking account of the best characteristics of the site, but to do within the constraints of it's location and context.

3 The Design Solution

- 3.01 As mentioned above, the house dates from the late 1970's, and was designed by Philip Pank for Mr and Mrs Harold Cooper.
- 3.02 During our original research into the provenance of the existing house, it came to light from interviews with Pank's widow that Pank was not involved in the construction of the house. From the outset, once planning permission had been granted, Mr Cooper commenced levelling the central area of the site, thereby disregarding Pank's intention of creating basement levels below the main house, with external access from the spaces between the radial 'fingers'. The result is level external spaces between the fingers that the previous owners and occupiers always seemed unsure as to how best to use.
- 3.03 Pank prepared a substantial number of construction drawings, including drawings for the fitting out of the interior, with kitchen, bathroom, utility room and various elements fully drawn, including interior elevations. Although Cooper used the exterior drawings to substantially guide him during the construction of the house, none of the internal fitting out drawings were used. Consequently, none of the interior can be attributed to Pank.
- 3.04 During our research into the house, it appeared that a major influence on Pank when he was designing the house was Frank Lloyd Wright, and in particular his Usonian houses. This is even more evident if one looks at some of the details proposed on the original planning drawings and the construction drawings: some of these elements were left out by Cooper when he constructed the building.
- 3.05 We have looked at better exploiting the south side of the property, where the land is graded more steeply, to effectively allow a two-storey building. The new excavated basement level is just 400mm lower than the present cill level of the access door into the basement from the south side (see Elevation EE on drawing no. 468/103). This provides the opportunity to create two full levels for bedrooms, orientated to the south-west, within the footprint of the southern 'finger'.

- 3.06 This side of the site is away from the main elements of the building and therefore the development of what is already a partially two-storey building on the south side does not detract from the single storey character of the house from the main garden side.
- 3.07 A major benefit of creating a full basement storey on the south side is that a more direct relationship is created between the interior of the house and the south side of the garden. At the moment, there is no direct relationship between the two, with the result that the southern areas of the garden are neglected and overgrown.
- 3.08 There is already a basement under the whole of the existing building – the extent of it is shown on drawing no. 468/03 attached with the planning application – although there is restricted headroom in certain areas at the moment. We have sought to extend the basement and make it fully usable throughout. As mentioned above, there is some evidence that Philip Pank originally intended to have a basement below the house, but it is known that the client went ahead unilaterally with the construction of the house without the basement, without consulting Pank.
- 3.09 Notwithstanding this, since a basement has already been structurally formed during the construction of the original house, extending and deepening it is entirely feasible technically.
- 3.10 Two triangular-shaped lightwells are introduced into the basement, one each between adjacent 'fingers'. This brings light down into the whole of the basement from several aspects, and ensures that the basement spaces throughout will be well lit with natural light.
- 3.11 Although the existing form of the house, with three fingers radiating into the garden from the entrance rotunda, would appear to have been derived from an attempt to fully engage the interiors of the house with the garden, it is curious that the effect of this is that there is no clear and open relationship with the garden from the main living spaces. The central living space has its main garden windows at the end of its long axis; there is a limited view out from the dining room; there is no view of the garden from the kitchen; and

elsewhere the garden is glimpsed through a series of punch openings in brick walls.

- 3.12 To this end, and in order to create a contrasting space for the house, we are proposing a radial glass room, constructed wholly from structural glass, linking the south and central 'fingers', thereby completing the internal circulation between the two areas of the house, via a space that could be described as a conservatory, a Winter Garden, a summer room. Open, transparent and ethereal, this space mediates between the garden and the more solidly enclosed spaces of the original house. Built with a technology not available in Pank's time, it achieves a new interpretation of the Wrightian ideal of the home as being within and off the landscape.
- 3.13 At a width of approximately 5.4m, with external walls at the front and the rear, the form of the glass room is a curved 'finger', linking two of the existing 'fingers', and it therefore engages in a conversation with the original house without detracting from, or undermining in any way, the original house form and its architectural language.
- 3.14 Specialist glass will be used in the design of the new conservatory; the roof glass can be switched to being opaque, and it is intended that this facility will be linked to an external light sensor so that the default mode of the roof glass will be opaque during the hours of darkness.
- 3.15 The existing external swimming pool – which is considered to be a disruptive element within the main lawn area - will be filled in and the area it occupies will be returned to the garden.
- 3.16 Two existing elements at the front of the building give us cause for concern, in the sense that their presence detracts from the appearance of the house. These elements are the porch (which does not originate from the original Pank building) and the garage structure (which does).
- 3.17 The garage, being located the furthest forward in the front area, dominates the approach to the house from the public realm, and, from some approaches, gives the impression that one is approaching a collection of garages, and not a residence. Consequently, we would like to remove

most of the garage structure, leaving a car-port style element, with the continuation of the canopy that runs across the front of the building continuing over the car-port. The car-port would relate well to the front canopy, and reflect well on the Wrightian language that Pank has used throughout the house.

- 3.18 A new underground garage would be created, accessed via a car lift located below the new car-port. When in the raised – or closed – position, the car lift would be level with the entrance court. There are various options for covering car lifts these days, including soft landscaping (sedum, for example), so that the level deck of the lift could contribute to the new soft landscaping proposed for the front entrance court.
- 3.19 By removing most of the garage structure, not only will the front of the site appear more open but the removal of the rear brick wall will allow views through to the south side of the site and the garden beyond. Conversely, from the other – east – side of the rear garage wall, the effect of a cliff-face created by the rear garage brick wall is removed, and views – and light – will be possible towards the west, into the entrance court. Some form of security screen would be required at the rear of the garage, but this could be of a predominantly open weave to allow the light and views both ways.
- 3.20 By removing the sense that the house is dominated by the garage when viewed from the public realm, and by introducing views and light between the front entrance court and the rear garden east and west, we conclude that the substantial demolition of the garage would preserve and enhance the appearance of the house, and therefore the conservation area.
- 3.21 The porch – which was not proposed by Pank, but added several years later by Cooper to designs by Dinerman Davison Associates – creates a strange double entry into the house with the rotunda, and reduces the impact of the rotunda upon entry. In addition, the form of the porch detracts from the form of the rotunda externally. Consequently, we propose removing the porch, and would assert that this would also enhance the appearance of house form the public realm, the conservation area.

- 3.22 Internally, although the space contained within the central 'finger' is intended as the primary arrival space, this room is in fact somewhat banal in form and appearance. We would suggest that the room would be greatly enhanced by the introduction of a lantern light all round at roof level, set within the overall form of the roof. This is a device very characteristic of many Wright houses, and we believe it would enhance the appearance of the house from the garden, as well as greatly improving the main living space by creating a sense of 'arrival' for this pivotal space.
- 3.23 By raising the roof of the central 'finger' a hierarchy is introduced into the roofs, which is essential in our view because of the repetitive nature of the roof forms at the moment. The higher central roof announces the primary 'public' space within the house.
- 3.24 The detailing of the new lantern light matches that found on the perimeter of the building's 'fingers' – hardwood barge boarding profiled to match the existing barge boarding, with a rigid metal capping over.
- 3.25 The present finish to the top of the rotunda wall is considered to be messy and poorly detailed. We propose removing the existing lead capping and the double course of engineering brick-on-ends below. The rotunda will be finished off with a dressed stone course with a rigid dressed metal cap over. The type of stone will match the stone found on the existing window cills throughout the building and the rigid metal cap will match the metal capping used on the perimeter timber barge-boards throughout the building. We feel this new detailing gives a more dignified finish to the most important element of the building, the rotunda.
- 3.26 Internally, at ground floor level, the house has been opened up on the north wing, creating a sequence of linked family spaces, and creating a visual link between the kitchen and the garden for the first time.
- 3.27 The central 'finger' remains as the main living space, with a lantern light added. The south 'finger' becomes a master bedroom suite.
- 3.28 The new lower ground floor contains further bedrooms in the south 'finger', all of which open out onto the lower garden area. The central 'finger'

contains the swimming pool, lit on both sides from new lightwells. The north finger contains a rumpus room, a further bedroom (for guests or for staff) and a home cinema. The new curving basements that link the main 'fingers' contain a gymnasium on the south side and plant and storage areas on the north side.

- 3.29 As regards the effect of the proposals on the existing mature trees on the site, a detailed tree report was prepared for the previous planning application. Subsequently, some trial trenches were dug on site to track the actual course of tree roots underground, to ensure that there was no deleterious effect on the trees from the basements originally proposed. This information was subsequently approved by the Council's arboroculturist. We have used the same parameters that were agreed then in setting out the current proposals, to ensure that there will again be no effect on the root system of the trees on the site.
- 3.30 A revised and up-dated Tree Report is included with this application.
- 3.31 A new external staircase is proposed from the basement level in the new northern light-well up to the garden. The edges of the light-well and the new external staircase will be protected with low brick walls to match the existing brickwork found elsewhere on the house.
- 3.32 Other than the new structural glass conservatory, all new external materials will match in terms of finish and profile the existing fabric of the house.
- 3.33 To summarise, we feel that we have created a scheme for extending and developing the house that works sensitively with, and retains, the character of the existing house, whilst at the same time creating an extended and more sustainable building, with additional spaces, forms and orientations that enhance the experience of the house in relation to its site and its setting.

4 ACCESS

- 4.01 The existing house will be up-graded to fully comply with current access standards, including a level access off Frogna Way, and the staircases will be designed to accommodate the perambulant disabled.
- 4.02 The standards to be incorporated into the work are based upon the Lifetime Homes Standards, and can be summarised as follows, notated as per those standards:

1 Car Parking Width

"Where car parking is adjacent to the home, it should be capable of enlargement to attain 3.3m width"

The overall internal width of the car lift is 5.5m, which allows for disembarkation for a wheelchair user at ground floor, in front of the house.

2 Access From Car Parking

"The distance from the car parking space to the home should be kept to a minimum and should be level or gently sloping"

The distance between the car port and the front door is de minimis. The approach from the parking position to the entrance doors will be level as defined in the current Building Regulations – i.e., at better than 1:20.

3 Approach Gradient

"The approach to all entrances should be level or gently sloping"

As stated above, the approach to the entrance door will be level as defined in the current Building Regulations – i.e., at better than 1:20.

4 External Entrance

"All entrances should be illuminated, have level access over the threshold and have a covered main entrance"

The threshold into the house will be level, with a continuous external drain at the entrance to keep water away from the threshold.

5 Communal Stairs & Lifts

"Communal stairs should provide easy access and, where homes are reached by a lift, it should be fully accessible"

Although this clause is primarily intended to be for properties in multiple occupation, the new stairs within the house will be generous in width – a minimum of 1m wide - to allow for the later installation of a stair lift if required.

6 Doorways & Hallways

"The width of internal doorways and hallways should conform to Part M, except that when the approach is not head on and the hallway width is 900mm, the clear opening width should be 900mm rather than 800mm. There should be a 300mm nib or wall space to the side of the leading edge of the doors on entrance level"

The width of internal doorways and hallways will conform to Part M. In particular, the following will apply: Front door: Clear opening width of 800mm, with a 300 nib to the side of the leading edge. Internal + Back doors: Clear opening width of 750mm / corridor or passageway width 900mm if the approach is head-on or 1200mm when the approach is not head-on, clear opening width 775mm / corridor 1050mm when the approach is not head on, 900mm / 900mm corridor when the approach is not head on.

7 Wheelchair Accessibility

"There should be space for turning a wheelchair in dining areas and living rooms and adequate circulation space for wheelchairs elsewhere"

The main living spaces, incorporating the kitchen, dining area and living room, are suitable for wheelchair users, and will incorporate a turning circle of 1500mm or a turning ellipse of 1700mm x 1400mm.

8 Living Room

"The living room should be at entrance level"

The living room is at entrance level.

9 Entrance Level Bedspace

"In houses of two or more storeys, there should be space on the entrance level that could be used as a convenient bed space"

There is a bedroom suite at entrance level, together with adjacent bathrooms.

10 Entrance Level WC & Shower Drainage

"In houses with three or more bedrooms, and all dwellings on one level, there should be a wheelchair accessible toilet at entrance level with drainage provision enabling a shower to be fitted in the future. In houses with two bedrooms the downstairs toilet should conform at least to Part M"

There is a toilet and shower on the entrance level. These will be fully wheelchair accessible, and will be laid out in accordance with Part M.

11 Bathroom & WC Walls

"Walls in the bathroom and WC should be capable of taking adaptations such as handrails"

All walls within the house will be of dense blocks, and will be able to take any mechanical fixings required as a result of fitting out for wheelchair users.

12 Stair Lift/Through-Floor Lift

"The design should incorporate provision for a future stair lift and a suitably identified space for a through the floor lift from the ground floor to the first floor, for example to a bedroom next to the bathroom"

As stated in paragraph 5 above, the stairs in the new house will be generous in width – a minimum of 1m wide - to allow for the later installation of a stair lift if required. In addition, there is ample scope in a number of locations within the plan to install a vertical lift at a later date.

13 Tracking Hoist Route

"The design and specification should provide a reasonable route for a potential hoist from a main bedroom to the bathroom"

A tracking hoist could easily be fitted between the master bedroom and the master bathroom on the first floor in each house.

14 Bathroom Layout

"The bathroom should be designed for ease of access to the bath, WC and wash basin"

As stated above, the master bathroom will be laid out to allow for full wheelchair access including side access to the wc.

15 Window Specification

"Living room window glazing should begin no higher than 800mm from the floor level and windows should be easy to open/operate"

All windows throughout are full height down to floor level. The design and selection of the window ironmongery will be such that it can be operable for wheelchair users.

16 Controls, Fixtures & Fittings

"Switches, sockets, ventilation and service controls should be at a height usable by all (i.e. between 450mm and 1200mm from the floor)"

The location of all controls will be located between 450mm and 1200mm above floor level.

5 SUSTAINABILITY

5.01 It is proposed that the amended and altered house be designed to a high standard for sustainable design, with the aim of achieving a 3-star rating under the Code for Sustainable Homes.

5.02 The house will be highly insulated, an essential base from which to form a truly sustainable development. The existing external fabric will be insulated internally, and the external new areas will be formed from highly insulated cavity construction.

5.03 In addition, the key elements of a strategy for a sustainable development are:

- a ground source heat pump will be installed; this could be incorporated into any piles required for the construction
- a GSHP is a highly efficient way of heating water for the swimming pool, as well as providing an excess for underfloor heating and hot water
- the main roofs to be 'green' – this assists in reducing rainwater run off as well as increasing available wild-life habitats on the site
- grey water recycling
- soakaways to reduce water run-off into the sewer system
- recycling of materials from the demolition where possible
- a high standard of construction in terms of insulation, fenestration and natural ventilation

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APPENDIX I

Pre-application consultation with LPA

- A1.1 Following the dismissal of the appeal for the demolition of the existing house, Camden Planning Department agreed to pre-application discussions over proposals to adapt and alter the house. Initial guidance was set out in Joanna Ecclestone's email to AP(a) dated 30 October 2008.
- A1.2 Following receipt of this email, AP(a) developed some initial proposals, which were then subsequently submitted to the Planning Department for comment.
- A1.3 A meeting was held on site on 23 March 2009 to discuss the proposals with Hannah Parker, Development Control officer, and Joanna Ecclestone, Manager Conservation and Urban Design Team. The LPA provided their feedback on the proposals in their letter dated 26 March 2009 to AP(a).
- A1.4 Camden's feedback informed the development of the proposals to a larger scale of 1:50, and these were subsequently re-submitted to them for comment. AP(a)'s covering letter of 8 May 2009 enclosing the up-dated and revised drawings.
- A1.5 Following further review of the up-dated drawings, it was agreed with Camden that the scheme was now in a form that, subject to a couple of minor amendments, had officer support and could be submitted for planning permission and that any further minor details still left to be resolved could be dealt with during the application stage.

APPENDIX II

Public Consultation

- A2.1 An opening morning was held on site on Saturday 6 June 2009. Representatives of the Frognal Way Residents' Association and of the Church Row Association attended and were shown draft copies of the planning application drawings and some rendered images of the proposals. They were also shown around the site, including the garden and the existing basement areas.
- A2.2 It was agreed that both organisations would be sent hard copies of the submitted planning application drawings and the Design & Access Statement.
- A2.3 The principle issues raised at the open morning were:
- a) Treatment of the front entrance area off Frognal Way: it was explained that part of the development strategy was to clear out some of the front entrance area (e.g. by removing the porch and the garage) to allow for a greater area of landscaping, which has now been shown on the application drawings.
 - b) Construction traffic: it was agreed with the representatives of the Frognal Way Residents' Association that they would be consulted over construction traffic for the works, and that parking by site operatives in Frognal Way during the works would not be allowed,
 - c) Any noise emanating from the proposed car lift: this was raised on behalf of the owner/occupier of 20 Frognal Way, who could not make the open morning. It was explained that the car lift would be electrically operated and would not cause a noise nuisance. Indeed, these lifts were developed for use in residential areas, and control of noise was a key factor in the development of their design.
- A2.4 The applicant believes that the broad consensus at the open morning was supportive of the proposals, particularly as they affected the public realm, and in particular the removal of the garage block and the porch.
- A2.5 Both the applicant's representative, and the applicant's agent AP(a), will continue with an on-going dialogue with the neighbours as the proposals are developed.

A2.6 Cynthia Passini of The Cottage, Perrins Walk also attended the open morning. Her principle concern was not the proposals themselves – which she seemed to accept would not affect her in any way - but the current size and overhang of the Weeping Willow tree in the south-east corner of the application site. It was suggested to her that the arboroculturist retained by the applicant would come to site and look at the tree, including from Ms Passini's side, and make recommendations for pruning. Subject to the recommendations of the arboroculturist a separate planning application would be made to prune the Weeping Willow.