



## **DESIGN & ACCESS** Statement

**ADDRESS:** FLAT 1,  
14 FERNCROFT AVENUE,  
NW3 7PH

**DATE:** 21/09/16

Cumberland Lodge  
17 Grove Crescent  
Kingston upon Thames  
KT1 2DD

21 September 2016

London Borough of Camden  
2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square  
c/o Town Hall, Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

Dear Sir/Madam,

**DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT SUPPLEMENTARY TO APPLICATION AT:  
FLAT 1, 14 FERNCROFT AVENUE, NW3 7PH**

This document is considered supplementary to the accompanying Application for proposed works to Flat 1, 14 Ferncroft Avenue, NW3 7PH. The purpose of this document is to outline the proposed alterations.

The property is a three bedroom apartment arranged over the ground floor of a converted semi detached house, that we consider was originally constructed in around 1900. The building is arranged over the ground, first and second floors and is Grade II listed by English Heritage. The property is within walking distance of local shops, facilities and Hampstead London Underground Station. Ferncroft Avenue is a residential side street branching to the East of Platt's Lane, and running Southeasterly until it ends at Heath Drive. It sits at the Northern end of the Redington / Froggnal Conservation Area in a sub-area known as 'The Crofts' together with Hollycroft and Rosecroft Avenues. Ferncroft Avenue was developed in the early years of the 20th Century with generously proportioned private dwellings, both detached and semi-detached.

The property (Flat 1) is overall in poor condition and there are a number of issues which require urgent attention. Much of the property is in a state of disrepair, and additions and alterations have been made to the property over the years, some resulting in the removal of original building features (such as skirting boards and fireplaces). The issues pertaining to the property's condition are further documented in the surveys undertaken by our mutual clients. To view these, please see the documents pertaining to the granted Listed Building Consent (2016/0809/L).

## **THE ORIGINAL DESIGN**

The architect of 14 Ferncroft Avenue was Charles Henry Bourne Quennell FRIBA (1872–1935) who was also a designer, illustrator and writer. A book he published in 1906 entitled 'Modern Suburban Homes' significantly influenced suburban development.

Charles was the son of a builder and grew up in a house at Cowley Road on the Holland Town Estate, Kennington, London. He was articled to Newman and Newman, and worked in the offices of J. McK. Brydon and of J. D. Sedding and Henry Wilson. He obtained the National Gold medal for Architecture, and RIBA Medal of Merit and £5 in the Soane Medallion competition in 1895.

In 1896, he began a practice working with his brother William developing houses in the Hampstead Garden Suburb, and later with the Irish developer George Washington Hart. Together Charles and George collaborated on large parts of the Northern section of the Redington / Froggnal Conservation Area. Over a sixteen year period they designed and built around 100 properties.

Charles adopted a variety of styles for his houses, ranging from restrained Arts & Crafts to more formal Neo-Georgian. He used rich red and soft orange brickwork, clay roof tiles, occasional areas of tile hanging and render, gables and dormer windows.

Charles was married to Marjorie Quennell whom he met in 1903 at the Junior Art Worker's Guild. Marjorie (Courtney) Quennell (1884–1972) was a British historian, illustrator and museum curator. They had three children, including Sir Peter Courtney Quennell (1905–1993) who became a well-known writer and was editor of *History Today*.

After World War I the Quennells wrote a series of illustrated children's books, *A History of Everyday Things in England*, 4 volumes (1918–1934). The series ended with *The Good New Days* (1935), where modern industrial and agricultural processes, together with the problems of the future, were considered. A second series was written, *Everyday Life in...* (1921–26) describing living from Prehistoric to Norman times. A third series of *Everyday Things* (1929–32) covered Greece in antiquity. After World War II Marjorie illustrated two more books in the *Everyday Life* series on Biblical times, the texts being written by others. Marjorie was a painter in oils and watercolour, mostly of architectural subjects.

When Quennell died on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1935 his final words to his wife were "There you go – butting in as usual". After Charles died in 1935 Marjorie was appointed Curator of the Geffrye Museum. While there, she installed the series of "period rooms" on which the museum is still based to this day. She remained there until she retired in 1940, upon which she emigrated to the United States.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Redington / Frogna Conservation Area Statement  
Wikipedia

## **PROPOSAL SUMMARY**

The application accompanying this Design & Access Statement is for a rear ground floor 'kitchen' extension and replacement 'link' side extension; removal of some trees in the rear garden (please note that there are no PTO's on any of the trees); removal of existing unsafe coal bunker and associated structures in the garden; new rear terrace and other small works.

The application forms part of our mutual clients' plan to carry out a full renovation and refurbishment of the property (including damp-proofing, new plumbing and electrical wiring, plastering, carpentry, painting and decorating and some structural work as necessary), as well as external works to increase accommodation. The project's design rationale is to preserve and enhance the existing architectural quality of the building, whilst bringing the dwelling and its curtilage up to 21<sup>st</sup> century living standards.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016, Listed Building Consent (2016/0809/L) was granted for "Internal refurbishment including damp-proofing and reconfiguration of partitions." The broader scheme has been developed in collaboration with Camden Council over many months, and this application is a result of that process.

A Pre-application Advice submission was sent to Camden Council on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016, for the care of Alfie Stroud (Senior Planning Officer - Design & Conservation) as he had dealt with the property previously. The proposal concerned "ground floor rear extensions, including alterations to the rear and flank facades, and other works". A site visit was conducted by ourselves (THiiiNK Design) and Alfie Stroud on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 during which the Pre-application Advice submission was discussed (along with our concurrent Listed Building Consent application for internal works).

Following the meeting, we agreed to Alfie's suggestion that we forego the usual written advice in favour of a more informal, collaborative Pre-application process. Over the following months the proposal was amended based on our correspondence with Alfie. Several design revisions were sent to him, and we received comments and feedback in return.

We understand that during this process Alfie consulted regularly with Camden Council's Planning department in order to discuss elements of the proposal, particularly in relation to the footprint and volume of the proposed extensions.

In correspondence dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016, Alfie Stroud agreed in principle to a rear ground floor 'kitchen' extension. He also consented to the depth of the rear ground floor 'kitchen' extension being 2.8 metres (having confirmed this alteration with Camden's Planning department): "I've advised that we are happy with the principle of the kitchen extension, and that the proposed dimensions are likely to be acceptable." This is consistent with our discussions with him over the previous few months.

However, he also reiterated in this email that he felt the Council would not consent to an additional full width rear ground floor 'lounge' extension that obscured the existing bay: "I struggle to imagine an extension around the bay window which could successfully navigate all these constraints".

As a result, this submission is a direct response to the comments of Alfie Stroud, and a culmination of the collaborative Pre-application process undertaken with Camden Council.

## DESIGN

The proposal seeks to sensitively extend the rear of the property, providing much needed additional accommodation whilst preserving and enhancing the existing architectural quality of the building.

The 'kitchen' of the property is contained within the ground floor of the 'closet wing'. This closet wing is considered to be an original feature of the building, and so its fabric is of some historical significance. However, it cannot reasonably be considered to hold the same status as the adjoining 'bay' feature (which is the primary historic element of the rear elevation at ground floor level, and is a focal point of the Grade II listing). Given its subordinate status, the closet wing is most suitable for extension work.

Under existing conditions the kitchen is in a state of disrepair, needing urgent work to make the space inhabitable. Permission for damp-proofing and other vital internal works was secured under the Listed Building Consent (2016/0809/L). Similarly, the 'link' extension (believed to be constructed in the 1960's) is in relatively poor condition and in need of renovation.



*The existing state of the kitchen.*



*The rear elevation, as existing, showing the original bay and 'link' extension (to the left).*

14 Ferncroft as a whole was originally designed by Charles Quennell to be an integrated single semi-detached dwelling. When the building was subdivided into three self contained flats (prior to the Listing being applied), many alterations were made to the original dwelling in order to achieve this. In doing so, the original intended distribution of the house was lost completely.

On the ground floor (containing our mutual clients' flat 1), a communal staircase was introduced upon entering the building to provide access to the flats above. In doing so, the original staircase of the building was removed, and the generous entrance hall subdivided. A new entrance was created into the segregated ground floor, which in turn became Flat 1. Several alterations were then made to reconfigure the distribution to work as a self contained property, including adding and removing partition walls and doorways; altering the function of rooms and erecting the 'link' extension.

The annotated existing plan below details the series of alterations that have taken place up to the present date.

Its important to note that the original building afforded the occupants a considerably more generous kitchen and scullery / larder space. Whilst it is of course true that these spaces served a larger overall property at that time, the kitchen as existing is not conducive to 21<sup>st</sup> century family living. The proposal allows for a much needed laundry / boiler room in addition to an increased kitchen area. This arrangement is reminiscent of the original building's distribution.

Once the building had been converted into self contained flats, the existing ground floor 'link' extension was built in around 1960 to provide necessary circulation between the living room and kitchen. A doorway was opened up as an entry point to the kitchen.

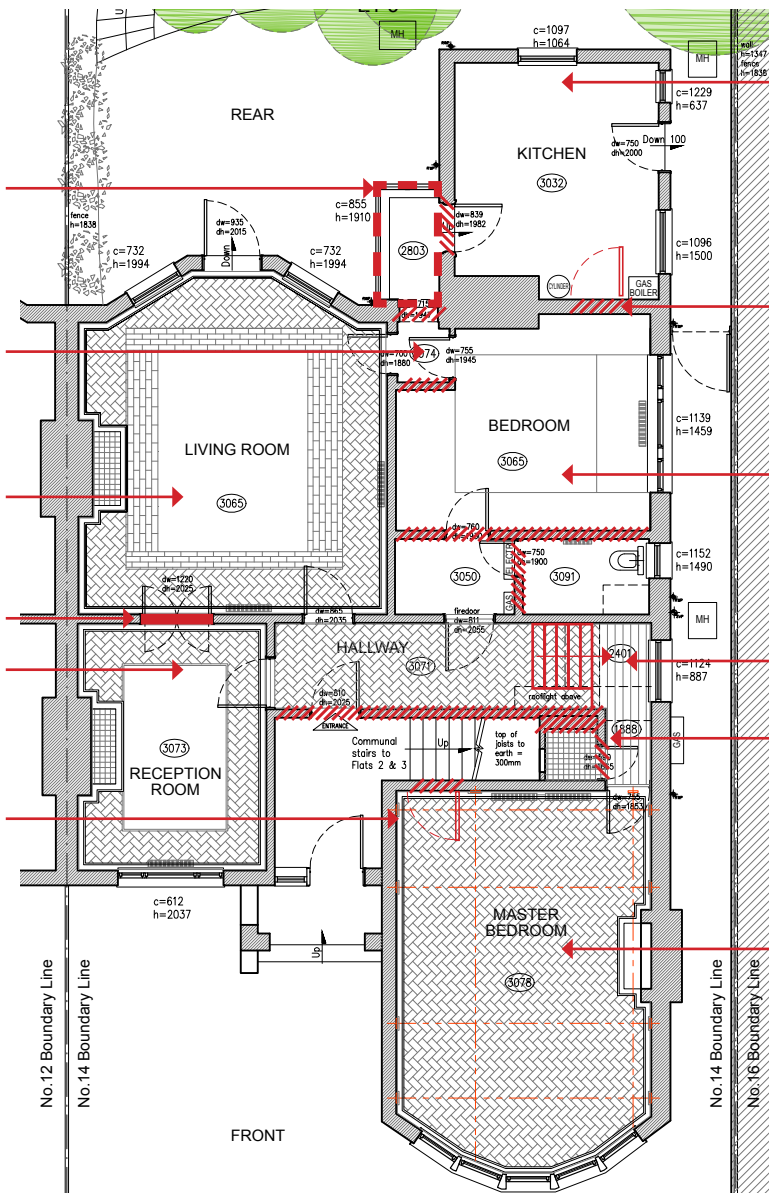
Partition walls and a doorway were added to segregate the new circulation from the adjacent bedroom.

This room would've originally served as a dining room.

This opening was not an original feature of the building.

This room would've originally been a library.

Originally the doorway into the drawing room existed here.



Under the building's original distribution, this room used to function as a scullery and larder. The window in the top right of the room served an internal coal store. The window facing the rear garden is not original.

A doorway used to exist here, connecting the original kitchen to the scullery at the rear of the house. This was blocked up when the building was converted into flats.

Originally this room would've been the kitchen of the dwelling. The section of chimney breast at the top of the room would've served both the kitchen and scullery. The bathroom and associated partitions were added afterwards.

The original staircase accessing the first floor was situated here.

These partition walls and the communal staircase were added in order to convert the building into flats. Originally this space would've been a generous entrance hall.

Initially, this room would've served as a drawing room, with ornate fireplace, cornices, skirtings, centre rose and column details. Once converted, this room became a master bedroom.



Existing rear elevation, showing the kitchen window set within the closet wing.



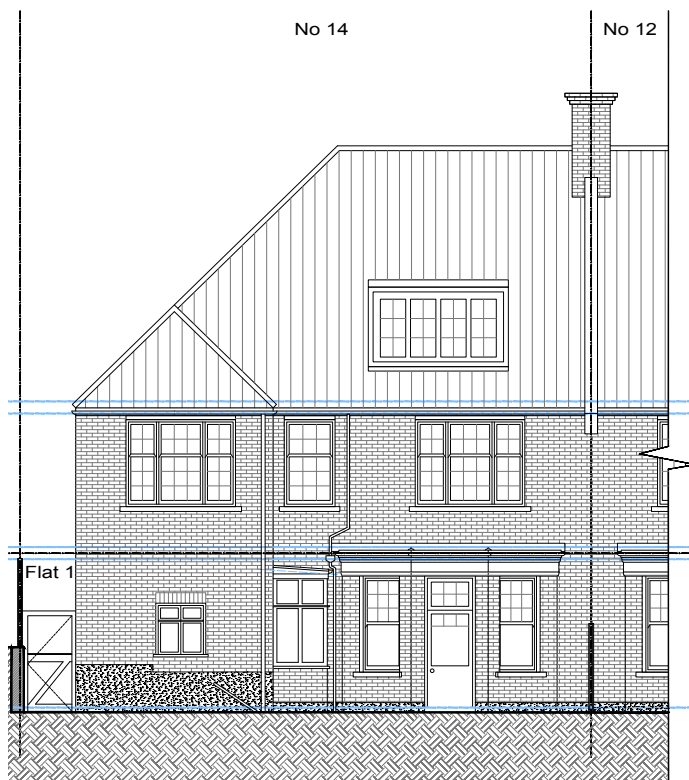
Existing rear 'link' extension, connecting the lounge with the kitchen.



Existing unsafe coal bunker and other associated structures.

The proposed works (in conjunction with the Listed Building Consent) look to fully refurbish and modernise the dwelling. The kitchen area set within the closet wing is to be extended by 2800 mm, greatly increasing the accommodation afforded. A brickwork wall at a height of 900 mm from internal finished floor level wraps the perimeter of the kitchen extension. On top of this, the structure is comprised of timber and glass in the style of an Edwardian conservatory (rectangular in form with a mono-pitched roof).

As seen from the rear elevation, the proportions of the kitchen extension's timber structural elements and openings echo those of the original timber sash first floor window above. This provides a visual relationship between the extension and the original building.



Existing rear elevation.



Proposed rear elevation. Existing elements to be removed shown in green.

As existing, the 1960's 'link' extension serves as a connection passageway between the lounge and kitchen of the property. The proposed replacement maintains the same width as existing, but extends by a further distance of 1760 mm into the rear garden. Under its current guise the 'link' extension functions merely as circulation space between habitable rooms, however the proposed replacement also becomes a vital additional living space, maximising the internal arrangement. The new 'link' extension employs the same timber and glass construction concept as the kitchen extension, thus uniting the two elements to appear as one coherent scheme.

Both proposed extensions have been formulated to appear as a carefully integrated proposal, with gutter heights and details, structural timber sizes and window details the same between the two. The overall height of the replacement 'link' extension is exactly the same as the existing extension, thus remaining subservient to the height of the adjacent rear ground floor original bay feature.

The proposed additions and alterations have been carefully formulated so as to minimise the impact upon the Grade II listed building. The structures are lightweight, both visually and in terms of construction and materials. This not only greatly reduces the impact upon the host property, but also means that the additions are more temporary in nature and can be more readily reversed at a future stage. The grey painted timber reads as a separate entity next to the white painted original windows, allowing the old to be differentiated from the new.

The openings created in the existing walls have been minimised where possible. Following correspondence dated 13th September 2016, Alfie Stroud suggested that we maintained more generous brickwork nibs and downstands. Following these comments the design was further amended and the opening sizes reduced, allowing the original fabric of the building to be appreciated.

Efforts have been made by all parties involved to retain and restore important original elements such as the rear ground floor bay and its timber sash windows. As previously mentioned, we received permission for all of the remedial internal and external works under Listed Building Consent (2016/0809/L).



*3D visualisation showing the proposed ground floor extensions in relation to the adjacent existing bay.*

There is a commitment from us as designers and the applicant to utilise high quality modern, sustainable materials and construction techniques. We see quality of materials, workmanship and details as very important aspects of the refurbishment of this Grade II Listed building. The proposed works provide much needed care to the property whilst enhancing its accommodation and spatial arrangement for our mutual clients and future occupants.

In the rear garden, several of the trees are very close to the property. Not only does this mean that they are taking lots of the natural light from the building as a whole, but the close proximity of the trees brings considerable damp to the building. Removing some of these closest trees will improve the longevity of all the flats.

The existing property also contains a coal bunker and other associated structures within the curtilage. These are situated in close proximity to the closet wing at the rear of the building, and have been assessed as unsafe and in urgent need of removal. Our mutual clients have a young child and such structures would be particularly dangerous in this context.



*Existing coal bunker and other associated structures. Existing rear elevation as seen from the rear garden.*

Our mutual clients have consulted with the other flat owners within 14 Ferncroft Avenue over the proposal, as well as with the owners of the adjoining no. 16. None of these stakeholders have raised any concerns or objections with the proposed scheme. The owners of 16 Ferncroft Avenue said that it wasn't possible to see the property of Flat 1, 14 Ferncroft Avenue from their own.

## **ACCESS**

The property is well serviced locally by transport links and retail facilities. The redesign does not increase the occupancy of the building, maintaining the same number of bedrooms and therefore does not require any additional car parking. The proposal does not alter the shared circulation within the building, and therefore is not seen to adversely impact upon the other self-contained flats. An additional W/C will be provided on the ground floor and level thresholds will be implemented throughout the property.

All building works will comply with current Building Regulations and best practice wherever possible. Both ourselves and our mutual clients are conscious of the site context, and will look to reduce noise and disturbance during the construction process.



## ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

We have made efforts to minimise the building's ecological impact during both construction and occupation. There is a commitment to utilise eco-friendly materials and technologies where feasible, that remain appropriate with the host property and surrounding context. As architects, we value a sustainable approach to design.

The materials to be used in the proposed redevelopment are of the highest 21<sup>st</sup> century standard, along with high quality details and construction. The design, and contemporary building techniques, will improve the thermal performance of the building envelope, resulting in a significantly more energy efficient property. Low energy lighting will be specified where possible.

In construction we encourage the recycling of waste products, along with the use of ecologically sound materials and an awareness of energy consumption during the build process.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information for this Application.

We consider this proposal the culmination of the collaborative Pre-application process conducted over several months with Camden Council, and hope to achieve a positive outcome.

Ana Mercedes Hopkirk & Frank Brown Griffiths

**THiiiNK** Design