

8 BISHAM GARDENS, HIGHGATE, N6

PLANNING STATEMENT



TO ACCOMPANY
THE PLANNING APPLICATION IN RESPECT OF
THE OWNERS' PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THEIR SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING

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PLANNING STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY THE OWNERS' PLANNING APPLICATION IN RESPECT OF THE PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE PROPERTY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We are architects acting for Denis Herbstein and Patricia Walby, the owners and occupiers of n°8 Bisham Gardens. This single-family dwelling is a mid-terrace property located on the south side of Bisham Gardens and is within the Highgate Conservation Area, but is not statutory listed.

- 1.1 We are seeking planning permission on behalf of our clients for proposed external alterations. The external alterations are linked to proposed internal works that aim to upgrade and modernise the existing accommodation and to bring it more in line with our clients' current and future needs. The renovations will enable our clients to benefit from a much-improved internal living environment, although these internal arrangements do not themselves require planning approval.

The project was previously submitted for pre-application advice in April 2016 and in response we received comments from Ms Kristina Smith (LB Camden ref: 2016/2314/PRE). The comments were generally positive and the proposed alterations considered sensitive to the host dwelling, with only the then proposed glass-fronted Juliet balcony and full height glazed doors within the existing second floor dormer considered as unacceptable by the Council. That part of the proposals has now been amended to bring it in line with what we believe to be in principle acceptable to the Council:

Proposed alterations at the front of the property:

- The existing external painted steel steps leading down to the lower ground floor entrance from the street level would be replaced with solid stone-clad steps. These would be slightly narrower (so as to admit more light to the lower ground floor rooms) and be set at a slightly shallower pitch than the current fairly steep steps, which also pose as a health and safety risk especially in wet weather. They would also serve to conceal refuse and recycling storage, to current LB Camden standards, behind ventilated doors beneath them.
- Proposed double-glazing: the owners of the house are strongly committed to upgrading its thermal performance and to reducing the CO2 emissions inherent in its heating by as much as possible - given its location within a conservation area - and would hope to replace some or all of the existing single glazed windows with double-glazed, vertical sliding timber sash equivalents.

Proposed alterations at the rear of the property:

- With respect to the pre-application comments, the second floor rear dormer size and sill height are to remain as existing, but the current asymmetrical subdivision is to be removed and new slender aluminium-framed sliding glazing installed. As shown on photo-sheet 723_PH_06, the neighbouring rear dormers all vary considerably and have their own differing characters, including a Juliet balcony that was approved at 12 Bisham Gardens.
- The addition of four rooflights to the upper slope of the south-facing mansard roof so as to bring daylight into the proposed loft gallery and also down into the central parts of the reconfigured second floor. The pre-application submission included two options for the setting out of five proposed rooflights and of these a symmetrical layout was deemed by the Council to be preferable. In subsequent e-mail correspondence with Kristina Smith, we proposed potentially having eight roof lights: that number was considered by her to be excessive in relation to the size of the roof and its context and in the current application the proposal has been reduced to four.
- The existing rear window opening at lower ground floor level would be modified to retain the same overall width but have its sill lowered to create a glazed door and fixed sidelight, for additional access to the garden from the proposed guest bedroom. As can be seen from the photos on photo-sheet 723_PH_03, the currently existing window there is not original to the dwelling.
- One of the existing rear window openings at upper ground floor level would have its sill lowered to create a minimally framed Juliet balcony set within its reveals to give improved views out across the trees of Waterlow Park from the proposed bedroom on the upper ground floor. In the initial pre-application submission we had proposed the introduction of a Juliet balcony to an enlarged second floor dormer window, but this was deemed by the Council to be inappropriate at roof level with regards to the existing proportions and glass voids of the rear elevation that are visible from Waterlow Park. The upper ground floor level is far less visible and the proposal for a Juliet balcony there would in our view have minimal impact on the hierarchy of openings. This element, which was not part of the Pre-Application enquiry proposals, is discussed in further detail in Para 5.3 below.
- Proposed rear double-glazing: equivalent to that proposed for the front windows as noted above.

1.2 This application for guidance is accompanied by the following documentation -

- **Photo-sheets showing the existing condition and context of the property:**

- 723_PH_01 - Existing Loft Space
- 723_PH_02 - Front of the property
- 723_PH_03 - Rear of the property
- 723_PH_04 - Bird's-eye View of the Front of the Property
- 723_PH_05 - Bird's-eye View of the Rear of the Property
- 723_PH_06 – Dormer Window Variations

- **As Existing Drawings:**

- 723_OS_01 – Site Location Plan
- 723_EX_100 – Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan
- 723_EX_110 – Existing Upper Ground Floor Plan
- 723_EX_120 – Existing First Floor Plan
- 723_EX_130 – Existing Second Floor Plan
- 723_EX_140 – Existing Gallery Plan
- 723_EX_200 – Existing Front Elevation
- 723_EX_210 – Existing Rear Elevation
- 723_EX_300 – Existing Section A-A

- **As Proposed Drawings:**

- 723_PL_100 – Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan
- 723_PL_110 – Proposed Upper Ground Floor Plan
- 723_PL_120 – Proposed First Floor Plan
- 723_PL_130 – Proposed Second Floor Plan
- 723_PL_140 – Proposed Gallery Plan
- 723_PL_210 – Proposed Rear Elevation
- 723_PL_211 – Proposed Rear Elevation Extended Context
- 723_PL_300 – Proposed Section A-A

2.0 CHARACTER & CONDITION OF THE PROPERTY

- 2.1 8 Bisham Gardens is a four-storey Victorian mid-terrace house with three storeys being visible from street level. The front elevation is in red brick with white stone lintels to its front windows and the main entrance door, whilst the rear of the property is clad in a yellow London stock brick. The principal front door access is up steps from street level to the upper ground floor. There is secondary access from the street to the lower ground floor level via steps in the front light well to the left of the main entrance.
- 2.2 The rear of the property faces south-east and opens to a small private garden. As is customary in many Victorian developments, the land to the rear of the house is approximately half a storey lower than that at the front. At this property the rear garden is accessed from the lower ground floor.
- 2.3 The house has not had a significant refurbishment for a considerable length of time and it is proposed to combine the internal re-configuration with repairs and a sensitive upgrading of its fabric and fittings so as to make it significantly more energy efficient while retaining its original character.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY FOR BISHAM GARDENS

3.1 Relevant planning history:

Although in a conservation area, No. 8 Bisham Gardens is not statutory listed.

Previous planning approvals and refusals in the vicinity available for inspection on-line have been studied, and the following applications in particular have been taken into account in the formulation of the current pre-application proposals for 8 Bisham Gardens:

- Application Ref. 2003/2823/P (**approved** on 08/12/2003) for proposed alterations and the subdivision of 8 Bisham Gardens, comprising: *the conversion of the existing single family dwelling to provide a self-contained basement studio unit and 4-bed ground, first and second floor*

maisonette, plus the addition of a rear dormer extension and roof terrace. These approved changes were not implemented.

- Application Ref. 2010/4707/P (**refused** on 08/09/2010) for proposed alterations to the existing self-contained top floor flat at 12C Bisham Gardens, comprising: *the erection of a third floor rear dormer window, roof terrace and glazed balustrade at rear, and a second floor front dormer.*

- Application Ref. 2010/6423/P (**approved** on 02/10/2010) for proposed alterations to the existing self-contained top floor flat at 12C Bisham Gardens, comprising: *the erection of a dormer window to the front elevation and enlargement of the existing rear dormer window with the installation of sliding doors and a Juliette balcony.*

Our clients' current proposals take account of the evolution in the council's policies since the unimplemented approval for their house at n°8 - in respect of those alterations that are now deemed to be acceptable at roof level within the Highgate Conservation Area. Our clients therefore wish for their property to remain as an imaginatively refurbished single-family dwelling, and without a roof terrace. The third of the above-listed applications - the approval granted at 12c Bisham Gardens - initially appeared to us to be of specific relevance in that it involved the creation of a Juliet balcony at second floor level. However the Council in its pre-application feedback has made it clear that in the light of the subsequent evolution of its planning policies that approval can no longer be taken as a relevant precedent.

4.0 RELEVANT POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The proposed developments to this single-family dwelling have been evolved with due consideration for written guidance given by the council and the following extracts from the Camden Planning Guidance Standards CPG1 are felt by us, and by the applicants, to be relevant in this context:

- as regards the thermal upgrading of existing windows Para 4.7 includes the advice that:

..... "Where it is necessary to alter or replace windows that are original or in the style of the originals, they should be replaced like with like wherever possible in order to preserve the character of the property and the surrounding area. New windows should match the originals as closely as possible in terms of type, glazing patterns and proportions (including the shape, size and placement of glazing bars), opening method, materials and finishes, detailing and the overall size of the window opening".....

"In conservation areas original single-glazed windows often contribute to the character and appearance of the area, and should be retained and upgraded. There may however be some instances where double-glazing can be installed in a design that matches the original, for instance sash windows or casements with large individual pane sizes, or in secondary glazing. In such cases, the window frame and glazing bars of the replacement windows should match the existing."

As can be seen from the cover photograph of this Statement, and from the attached aerial views of the front and rear facades of the south side of Bisham Gardens, the street-facing windows along Bisham Gardens are a mixture of sash window configurations: the front gable window typically has no glazing bars or subdivisions; the sash window above the main entrance door is subdivided into a 'six-over-three' configuration; and the lower sashes of the four windows in the front projecting bay are undivided, while their upper sashes have a shallow-arched transom bar, above which they are subdivided into four near-square lights. At the rear of n°8 the existing pattern is of a single vertical glazing bar dividing each sash in half, although on several other nearby properties the sashes are undivided.

Our feeling is that the rear-facing sash windows, and the front gable window could all be replaced with double-glazed timber equivalents and if a glazing bar were deemed by the council to be appropriate then this could be surface applied as a dummy-bar so as to ensure that its slenderness matches that of the original. For the other windows at the front our proposal would be to use Histoglass thin double-glazing, which can incorporate genuine slender glazing bars.

We and our clients would welcome the council's views on these suggestions.

4.2 As regards additional roof lights Para 5.22 states that:

....."Roof lights should be proportioned to be significantly subordinate both in size and number and should be fitted flush with the roof surface. Some properties, particularly listed buildings and those within conservation areas with prominent roof slopes may be so sensitive to changes that even the installation of roof lights may not be acceptable."

For compliance our proposal would be to use Velux rooflights fitted with type EDN flashings, which

enable the rooflight to be set near-flush to the slates and which have been accepted by planning authorities on several projects of ours in conservation areas in north London.

As shown on the attached drawings the four proposed rooflights would be positioned on the upper slope of the rear mansard roof and there are nearby precedents for this elsewhere on the same side of Bisham Gardens, for example at n°14 which has three rooflights. In our view this upper slope cannot be deemed to be prominent or sensitive, partly because of the steep slope of Waterlow Park away from the rear of our clients' house and partly because of the swathe of mature trees that largely conceal the rear upper parts of these houses from being seen to any significant extent from ground level within the park or outside it.

5.0 FURTHER DETAILS RELATING TO THE KEY PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The proposed new rear glazed door and sidelight at lower ground floor level will enhance the composition of the overall fenestration of the rear elevation, even though it is not visible from the public domain.
- 5.2 The proposed new glazing to the existing dormer on the second floor of the dwelling would enhance the character of the property, given that the current glazing of the dormer is inelegantly subdivided across two different rooms. The glazing would be framed using the *Fineline Aluminium 22mm range*, and be powder coated in a graphite grey colour. Written feedback from Ms Kristina Smith (in her e-mail dated 27th July 2016) stated that *"I would advise that given the materials used on surrounding dormers, grey aluminium frames would be acceptable in this instance and would not be detrimental to the appearance of the rear elevation."* The proposed glazing proportions echo those of the existing rear sash windows of the dwelling. Whereas on the consented proposals at 12c Bisham Gardens the 100mm diameter vent pipe at the head of the rear soil stack is shown as running straight through the elevation of the Juliet balcony, at n°8 our clients' vent pipe would to be diverted within the roof space and would emerge in the location shown (where it would comply with Building Regulations given that the adjacent proposed rooflights would not be openable).
- 5.3 The Juliet balcony now proposed two storeys further down (at upper ground floor level) would be wholly within the volume of the existing window and would therefore generate no potential for any loss of privacy to any of the nearby rear gardens. What it would succeed in doing would be to allow the occupants an improved view out across the trees from the new bedroom at that level.
- 5.4 The approach that we have taken on all the proposed new glazing seeks to respond sensitively to the differing existing glazing patterns on both elevations and seems to us to be correct in order to improve the current very poor thermal performance of the house as a whole. Other proposals to address energy wastage include thermally insulating the rear south-facing slope of the roof to current Building Regulations standards and replacing the existing boiler with a condensing boiler of far greater energy efficiency.

6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.1 The proposals seek to enhance the existing front and rear elevations of the property, while giving our clients the updated internal facilities they require in their reorganised family home.

They also seek to maintain the essential character of the house and its wider contribution to the conservation area, as well as bringing the house into the 21st century in terms of becoming as energy-efficient as possible, and also creating safer and more aesthetically pleasing front external steps leading down to the lower ground floor.

We have taken on board the pre-planning feedback that was given by the Council and in this application our clients have made only one new proposal in the form of relocating the previously proposed Juliet balcony two storeys lower down the rear of the dwelling - where it aligns with the immediately adjoining equivalent balconies and would have a minimal effect on the overall balance of wall to void on that elevation.

For these reasons we feel the proposed alterations represent a sensitive response to our clients' wish to create a house more suitable for their current and future needs and we would hope that the Council feels able to support the proposals as now submitted for planning permission.