

## **STUDIO MCLEOD**

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## **PLANNING STATEMENT & DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

Ground Floor Flat, 53 Achilles Road, London, NW6 1DZ

**ERECTION OF REAR AND SIDE GROUND FLOOR EXTENSION, OF GROUND FLOOR FLAT NO.53 ACHILLES ROAD.****Summary**

This document supports a pre-planning application for alterations to the ground floor flat no. 53 Achilles Road, London, NW6 1DZ. It includes a ground floor rear and side extension with green roof and reconfigured internal layout to improve natural light, ventilation and connection to the garden for our client. In accordance with the Camden Policy Guidance on Design (CPG1) we aim to ensure the highest quality architecture and provide an attractive and functional new home while complimenting the character of the existing property.

Our approach to the design is driven by the desire to provide an exemplary connection to the garden with improved circulation, exceptional natural light to create a high-quality home for our client.

**Context**

No. 53 Achilles Road forms part of a Victorian terrace located within walking distance of the West Hampstead Interchange. The street comprises two storey properties, several of which have habitable attic extensions visible from the road with skylights and dormer windows. The rear of the properties have closet wings that extend into the garden, many of which have been extended, one of which extend the full width of the property (listed below).

**Existing**

Currently the ground floor flat of no. 53 Achilles Road is a 2 bedroom, 1 bathroom apartment that is split over 2 floors. The entrance floor consists of an open plan kitchen, living and dining space. The garden level has a bathroom, storage and a bedroom/study that provides the only access to the garden. The basement has a bedroom and includes an en-suite shower room and storage. The rear side return of the property is an underused paved storage area. Since it has no direct afternoon sun and space is limited, no planting has been incorporated into the area.

**Planning History**

The site has no recent development, however, similar proposals to this have been granted over recent years at other addresses. We are using similar massing to previously granted applications while designing the extension to feel like an addition to the garden rather than the house.

**53 Achilles Road Applications:**

Application Reference	Description	Decision	Date Registered
RWX0103269	Extension of top floor flat into roof space, including the provision of dormer in rear roof slope and terrace	<b>Granted</b>	30 May 2001
RWX0103268	Part excavation of basement and associated elevational alterations to form additional bedroom	<b>Granted</b>	22 Mar 2001

**Precedent Neighbourhood Applications:**

Application Reference	Address	Description	Decision	Date Registered
2015/6256/P	39 Achilles Road, London, NW6 1DZ	Erection of a single story rear extension.	<b>Granted</b>	05 Apr 2016
2015/3612/P	37 Achilles Road, London, NW6 1DZ	Erection of a single story rear extension in connection with existing structure.	<b>Granted</b>	05 Aug 2015
2014/0965/P	Ground Floor Flat, 31 Achilles Road, London, NW6 1DZ	Excavation to lower ground floor and erection of a single story rear extension.	<b>Granted</b>	18 Feb 2014
2013/7398/P	33 Achilles Road, London, NW6 1DZ	Erection of single story side and rear extension with rooflights.	<b>Granted</b>	02 Dec 2013
2013/5499/P	55 Achilles Road, London, NW6 1DZ	Erection of a single story rear extension and rear dormer to dwelling.	<b>Granted</b>	12 Sep 2013
2011/5100/P	47 Achilles Road, London, NW6 1DZ	Erection of a single storey rear/side extension to single dwelling house	<b>Granted</b>	26 Nov 2011

**Access**

Access to the site is unaffected. The proposal features redesigned staircases to replace the existing, and an addition of a new stair from the basement to the living spaces to improve circulation. All stairs will be compliant with current building regulations (part K).

**Proposal**

Below is a description of the planning aspects of the proposal, relating to relevant planning policies.

**1. CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage**

Currently the building has an inefficient layout and poor connections to the garden. To provide better access to the garden, the proposal relocates the public spaces to the rear of the property. The volume of the extension has been carefully balanced to provide a good internal space without compromising the external amenity space.

The garden is of great importance to our client. As such we have proposed to connect the internal space with the garden by designing an open plan living area with materials that continue from outside to in. To ensure there will be ample natural light in the internal space, the extension is proposed to be separated from the main building using skylights.

The party walls are proposed to be constructed using London yellow stock brick to match the existing. The rear façade is proposed to be timber clad with climbing plants. The intention of the design is to remove the perception of a façade, instead providing the feeling of a single space from inside and out. By designing the rear façade to match the new garden fence, the building is intended to merge seamlessly with the garden.

To minimise impact on the neighbouring properties, permitted development height restrictions have been adopted as far as possible. The eaves height of the party wall to 51 Achilles Road is a maximum of 2350mm from the lowest point of the adjoining sloping garden. The top of the flat roof waterproofing of the party wall adjacent to 55 Achilles Road is 2930mm from its garden level with an additional 100mm substrate for a green roof. The parapet height is around 3075mm. The party wall drops to the garden fence height to maximise the daylight reaching the neighbours secondary ground floor window. The pre-application response regarding the volume and dimensions of the proposal was positive, only requesting a daylight/sunlight report to ensure compliance. However through our correspondence with the neighbours (discussed on page 5) we feel by revising the proposal's massing and form to improve daylight for the neighbours has improved the design. The dropped edge to no.55 has been repeated to no.51.

To provide visual amenity from all aspects and distances, we are proposing an 'extensive' and bio-diverse green roof to cover the non-glazed areas of the extension. We feel the proposed extension respects and compliments the existing building.

*Precedents*

33 Achilles Road - full rear and side extension.



Pre-application design.



Neighbour consultation mock-up.



Revised proposal submitted.

## 2. CS13 - Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards

In line with Policy CS13, the proposed extension should improve the in-use environmental impact of the property. The rear rooms of the property currently suffer from damp and have solid brick walls that offer no insulation. The result is our client rarely uses these rooms. Additionally, through excessive subdivision and poor window openings, a limited amount of natural light penetrates into the circulation spaces and basement rooms.

The proposal removes the existing ground floor external walls, providing an opportunity to ensure the new external surfaces to be insulated to contemporary standards without losing internal floor space. Additionally, the new open plan living space will have 3no. double glazed sliding doors to the rear and double glazed skylights surrounding the perimeter of the existing rear wing. This will maximise the natural light thereby minimising the need for artificial illumination.

To prevent excessive solar gain, the proposal pulls back the south facing glass garden doors to create a canopy. Internally, the ceiling coffers offer solar protection and reduce light pollution. The roof will also incorporate mechanical blinds to prevent light pollution to the apartments above. The glazing between the Kitchen and stair to the basement room is the only area that does not have built-in solar shading. This is due to it being protected from all but the morning sun by the neighbouring buildings. By keeping this area clear of solar shading, the basement should have ample natural light throughout the day. This will be a dramatic improvement from the buildings current layout.

The roof above the kitchen units and rear section of the extension will be covered with an "Extensive" and bio-diverse green roof consisting of a sedum blanket and perennials. This will provide additional insulation and reduce the urban heat island effect. This will also slow rainwater run off which is of specific benefit to the site since the property lies within an area that experiences surface water flooding. The green roof will also reinforce the concept of extending the house while minimising the effect of losing useable garden space and will have a beneficial visual effect on the neighbours compared to a fully glazed or regular flat roof. (CS4e)

Rainwater storage is incorporated in proposal. The tank is proposed to be located next to the extension on the side of no.51 Achilles Road. This will collect water from the extension and the existing rear roofs of the building. To minimise the impact of the water store height on the neighbouring property, it is proposed to have a pitched roof that comes down to the fence (1.8m) at the boundary line. Currently, all rain water from the existing roofs run directly into the mains sewer. The addition of the green roof and rain water storage will minimise the impact of rainfall from the property on the mains sewer while providing our client with a sustainable water source for their garden.

## CS15 - Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces and encouraging biodiversity

To minimising the impact of the proposal on the garden through the use of green roofs and a facade that encourages plants to grow through it should help provide a bio-diverse environment. The extensive green roof is designed for minimal maintenance, which will result in a habitat that is unlikely to be disturbed.

The roof overhanging the terrace is proposed to have a deeper substrate level. This area of the roof is also easier to access, therefore allowing for planting that requires more maintenance.

## CS06 - Providing quality homes

The building is a conversion of a Victorian terraced house. The layout consists of narrow, steep stairs in dark areas with no natural light. The addition of a basement in 2001 compounded these disadvantages by requiring further stairs and for them to be protected from fire. Furthermore, being on a site that slopes away from the property, the current apartment design requires several sets of stairs for access to the garden. The result is a disconnected series of small rooms and protected passages with sloping floors.

The proposal includes excavating under the current rear wing of the house to lower the finished floor level by between 300mm - 200mm. The resulting usable excavated material will be distributed across the rear garden to raise its level and provide a flush connection to the proposed living area of the flat. This will minimise the transportation of waste from the site to only what is necessary and not excavated spoil.

The lowered floor will enable us to provide more generous stairs to the basement and entrance level (From 40° to 35°). Due to the limitations of the site, we are not capable of providing a no-step environment but combined with the proposed flush connection to the garden, the proposal is a great improvement to the existing inaccessible layout of the apartment. To further increase the accessibility and feeling of openness, the design includes a second set of stairs from the basement bedroom to the living area. These stairs sits under the glazed roof and is surrounded by internal planters. The result will be an internal atrium that improves natural light penetration into the basement. Access to the bedroom will be through fully glazed pocket door that can disappear entirely for when the room is not in use.

Through the careful use of stairs, pocket doors and wall placement, the proposal will be a flexible, light and open apartment with considerably better circulation.

## **Neighbour Consultation**

Letters to the neighbours at No.55, No.51 and the flats above No.53 Achilles Road on 18th January. No.55 Achilles road responded to discuss the height of the proposed extension from his side and its potential issue of daylight and blocked views of the sky from the side window of the rear extension. On the 3rd February, we met to discuss the proposals and agreed the possible solution of lowering the corner of the roof to mitigate these concerns. To ensure all parties were happy, we arranged a full-scale mock up and constructed it on site on the 31st March (see image on page 3). During this meeting, the neighbour was happy agreed to support the revised proposal.

The proposed boundary to no.51 Achilles Road has also been lowered with a pitched roof to improve daylight for its rear extension even though there was no request from the neighbours. We believe this has improved the overall design by reducing the massing of the proposal, while bringing the boundary heights down to the same level as the fences improves the feeling of connection to the garden.

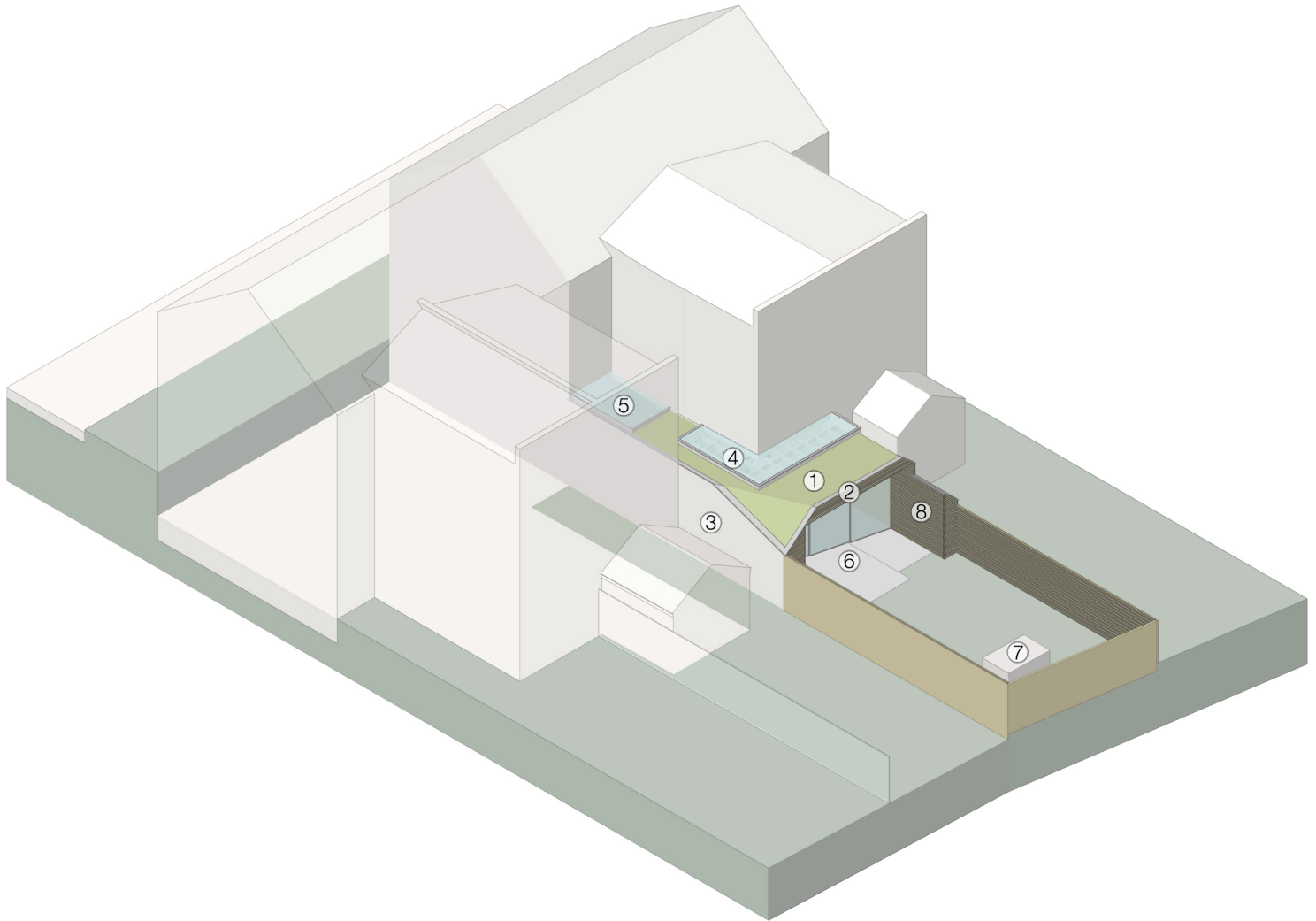
## **Conclusion**

The proposal seeks to provide improved internal natural light, living space and access to the garden through making better use of the existing internal and external area. It achieves this while limiting the impact of amenity by replacing the loss of the usable garden area with additional bio-diverse green roof and planted wall. The proposal will be a spacious and wonderful addition to the home while providing visual interest to the exterior of the property.

## **Relevant Policies**

- CS1 - Distribution of Growth
- CS4 - Areas of more limited change
- CS5 - Managing the impact of growth and development
- CS6 - Providing quality homes
- CS13 - Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards
- CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
- CS15 - Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces and encouraging biodiversity
- CS18 - Dealing with our waste and encouraging recycling

### Planning Diagram



1. Green roof covered unglazed area of extension and forms a canopy to protect against solar gain.
2. Garden Boundaries become the façade and provide a structure for plants to grow through.
3. Proposed party walls to match existing building. Walls slope down to fence to minimize impact on daylight after discussions with neighbors.
4. Bands of skylights separate the existing building from the proposal. Internal structure provides solar protection.
5. Internal atrium allowing light into the existing basement bedroom.
6. Proposed flush connection between the garden and the house.
7. Existing garden shed unchanged.
8. Rainwater storage to collect from all roofs at the rear of the property.

### Design Matrix

The design matrix describes the core ideas that have guided us through the design.

