

15 Lawford Road NW5 2LH

Design & Access Statement - May 2017

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1. Introduction

This statement provides supporting documentation for the proposed works at No.15 Lawford Road, Kentish Town, London. These works comprise of internal remodelling to the whole property, demolition of existing rear extension at ground floor and at second floor, to be replaced with contemporary zinc and glazed extensions. The clients are looking for the completed property to achieve a Passivhaus EnerPHit accreditation. For this work we are seeking full planning permission. The statement will consider the architectural context of the site, local planning policy and the design of the proposal.

2. Context

15 Lawford Road is a three storey, semi-detached villa constructed in the late 1870s as part of the Dartmouth Family Estate, within the Bartholomew Estate conservation area.

The property is set back from the street behind a modest front garden with established planting. The street facade is flat fronted, with the ground floor embellished with cream painted rusticated stucco. The two floors above are simpler in detail and have at some point been rebuilt with modern red textured brickwork, perhaps due to wartime damage. Despite this modern rebuilding, the flemish bond of the brickwork, the proportions and setting out of the windows and timber sashes match the existing villas along the road, retaining the unified character of the street. The side and rear facades still retain the original brickwork. The adjoining semi-detached property was also rebuilt, however this has since been painted.

The main entrance to the property is on the side elevation, access through a covered side walkway that has been added at a later date.

The rear facade is more utilitarian in character without the stucco embellishment, however it does maintain well proportioned timber sash windows. There are two existing rear projections- a small single storey projection adjacent to the boundary with no.13 Lawford road containing the kitchen, and a three storey projection on the other side of the rear facade containing bedrooms and bathrooms. This ground and first floor of this projection are original, however the second floor has been added later and is formed from a copper clad mansard. This mansard is out of character to the existing property and there are no other examples of this treatment on the street.

The property has a gently sloping grey slate roof, with a flat central section and hipped end. The gentle slope, large overhangs and scale of the street result in the roof not being significantly visible from the street.

To the rear of the property is a pleasant and established garden, with brick boundary walls. There are two sizeable trees within the garden and a larger tree in the neighbours garden. These are labeled T1, T2 and T3 on the planning drawings. All these trees are to be kept.

No.15 Lawford Road



Aerial view of the property and surrounding area.



Front elevation



Rear view, showing the existing copper clad mansard extension above the original two storey outrigger.

3. The Brief

The aim of the work is to create a comfortable, low energy dwelling that suits the needs of a modern growing family. This will be achieved by opening up the comparatively small spaces to create an open plan living space with good connection to the garden, generous and flexible bedrooms and substantial built in storage. The proposal also creates a study to allow working from home.

4. Design and Appearance

The majority of the work proposed at the property is internal- with the removal of walls and floors to allow a new heavily insulated and airtight structure to be built within the existing shell of the house. This is required to achieve the high levels set out in the Passivhaus EnerPHit standard. To achieve this we are working with passivhaus designers CANDO - www.candodesign.co.uk who are familiar with working with an existing building. With this remodelling, the interior spaces are to be rationalised to create an open plan living space, 4 large bedrooms with built in storage and a generous family bathroom.

To achieve the required air tightness, the existing timber framed sash windows to the main house volume are to be replaced with modern timber framed triple glazed sash windows with matching glazing bars. The mix of small steel frame and timber windows on the side elevation are all to be replaced with contemporary triple glazed aluminium framed windows. These will be one very limited visibility from the street.

We are proposing the installation of solar panels to the front and side roof slopes. Due to the massing and pitch of the roof, these will be of very limited visibility from the street and so we feel these do not detract from the character of the street.

We are proposing a more substantial change to the rear elevation with two contemporary extensions-

The existing cramped and low-quality single storey kitchen extension is to be demolished and a new wider extension constructed to contain the dining area. This extension is to be fully glazed to the rear using modern thin profile grey powder coated aluminium triple glazed sliding doors. The roof and side of the extension are to be clad in grey standing seam zinc cladding. The proposed extension is taller than the existing kitchen extension to maintain the ground floor ceiling height.

The incongruous and awkward second floor copper mansard extension is to be removed and replaced with an orthogonal zinc and glass study space. Although contemporary in detail, we feel this massing is more sympathetic to the existing property. The proposed replacement extension is to be 200mm lower than the copper mansard and so will not produce any noticeable change to the daylight reaching neighbouring properties. The glazing to the side elevation is to be obscured to avoid any overlooking issues with the neighbouring property.

With both of these rear interventions we are proposing a mixed of contemporary detailed glazing and grey zinc cladding. The similarity between the grey zinc and the existing grey leadwork tie the elements together with a complementary material palette. The contemporary flush composition and detailing clearly marks these additions as modern, respecting the original fabric of the building.



Sketch visualisation showing the two proposed glass and zinc clad extensions.

5. Pre-Application Advice

In developing this proposal, Camden Planning were contacted to obtain pre-application advice (ref: 2017/0954/PRE), with the advice prepared by Evelyn Jones and received on the 9th May 2017.

On the ground floor rear extension, the advice states- *'In principle the addition of a ground floor single storey rear infill extension is considered acceptable providing it would remain subservient to the host property. The simple lightweight structure is considered a modest size and would be a sympathetic contemporary addition to the property.'*

On the second floor replacement extension we worked with Ms Jones to produce an amended scheme that is in keeping with the original building, for which the advice states- *'The replacement of the existing second storey rear mansard addition with a contemporary second storey rear extension is welcomed as the current structure is out of keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area and detracts from the original features of the building. The massing of the proposed extension is considered an improvement and a lightweight partially glazed structure would complement the host building and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.'*

The report also states - *'The addition of PV solar panels to the front elevation of the property is considered acceptable and complies with the council's aim to encourage the use of renewable energy as set out in CPG3 (Sustainability).'*

6. Use & Access

No.15 Lawford Road is and will remain a family home, with an expanded more flexible and usable layout, ensuring its continuation as such. Access to the house through the main entrance is retained as existing.

7. Heritage Statement

15 Lawford Road and its adjoining property are well proportioned examples of upper middle-class late-19th Century domestic architecture and so contribute to the conservation area's character. Key features are the symmetrical massing of the properties to create one palatial frontage, the stucco rustication to the ground floor level and the generous sash windows on the upper floors. More detail on the property can be read in section 2. Despite the front facade of the two properties being rebuilt in contrasting brickwork, the adherence to form and composition of the original property maintains the majority of the property's original character.

With minimal alteration to the front elevation, we feel the proposal does not cause any noticeable change in heritage assets from the street.

The property's semi-detached setting is repeated along the length of Lawford Road creating a regular urban pattern, with each of the modules displaying matching key details.

Due to the property's setting and surrounding planting, the contemporary rear extensions at ground floor will have little visual impact on the rear facade as viewed from the surrounding properties.

The replacement second floor extension will be visible from the rear, however we feel the proposed orthogonal zinc and glass extension to be more sympathetic to the original character of the building and surrounding area than the existing copper mansard. Therefore this will be a positive contribution to the heritage asset and wider conservation area.

8. Summary

In designing the proposal we have carefully considered the relevant planning policies and local guidelines. We have also consulted with Camden Planning by obtaining pre-application advice and amended the proposal to incorporate the comments received.

In doing so we believe the proposal respects the character of the original and neighbouring properties. The careful use of material and composition are appropriate and complement the existing property. The completed proposal will provide the owners with modern, comfortable and flexible accommodation with minimal impact on the surrounding conservation area.

Appendix A - Relevant Planning Policies and Responses

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG1 (Design) 2015: Section 2 Design Excellence, Section 3 Heritage and Section 4 Extensions, alterations and conservatories

2.9

'Good design should positively enhance the character, history, archaeology and nature of existing buildings on the site and other buildings immediately adjacent and in the surrounding area.'

We feel the minimal change to the front elevation and the more sympathetic changes to the rear elevation enhance the character of the building and go some way to amending poor quality additions that have been added previously.

2.10

'Good design should ensure buildings do not significantly overshadow existing/proposed outdoor spaces (and) consider the extent to which developments may overlook the windows or private garden area of another dwelling.'

The proposed second floor replacement extension is to be no larger than the current extension, with the roof 200mm lower, therefore not reducing the light reaching the adjacent property. The new side window on this replacement extension is to be obscured to avoid any overlooking issues.

2.12

'Materials should form an integral part of the design process and should relate to the character and appearance of the area, particularly in conservation areas or within the setting of listed buildings. The durability of materials and understanding of how they will weather should be taken into consideration.'

The use of high quality grey zinc cladding for the proposed extensions will pick up on the use of grey lead and slate in the existing and surrounding properties, creating a complimentary material palette. The zinc will also weather over the years to create a subtle and pleasing patina.

4.7

'Alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings. A harmonious contrast with the existing property and surroundings may be appropriate for some new work to distinguish it from the existing building.'

Although complementary in materials and composition, the contemporary detailing of the ground and second floor extensions allow these to be read as modern additions distinguished from the existing building.

'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.'

The replacement triple glazed windows to the front facade and some of the rear facade will be timber framed with glazing bars and details to match the existing as close as possible.

Some sash windows will be replaced with powder coated aluminium triple glazed windows on the rear facade outrigger. These will not be visible from the street front and will tie in with the ground and second floor extensions.

4.10

'Rear extensions should be designed to be secondary to the building being extended, in terms of location, form, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing.'

The proposed rear extensions are set back from and are lower than the main volume of the property and so are subordinate. The change in material from brick to zinc cladding also supports these as being secondary.

'Rear extensions should be designed to respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style.'

The proposed rear extensions are contemporary, however they pick up on the form and composition of the existing building to determine massing and window locations.

'Rear extensions should be designed to not cause a loss of amenity to adjacent properties with regard to sunlight, daylight, outlook, overshadowing, light pollution/spillage, privacy/overlooking, and sense of enclosure.'

The proposed second floor replacement extension is to be no larger than the current extension, therefore not reducing the light reaching the adjacent property. The new side window on this replacement extension is to be obscured to avoid any overlooking issues.

'Rear extensions should be designed to allow for the retention of a reasonable sized garden; and retain the open character of existing natural landscaping and garden amenity, including that of neighbouring properties, proportionate to that of the surrounding area.'

The proposed ground floor extension fills in a narrow, impractical and overshadowed section of external space between the existing two rear projections. The main section of the garden remains unaltered.

4.11

'Materials should be chosen that are sympathetic to the existing building wherever possible.'

See 2.12

4.12

'In order for new extensions to be subordinate to the original building, their heights should respect the existing pattern of rear extensions, where they exist.'

The proposed height of the rear extension is higher than the neighbouring rear extension, however this is stepped in from the boundary so as not overshadow or be imposing. The proposed height also allows for the continuation of the existing ground floor ceiling height, maintaining the internal quality of the property.

The proposed height of the replacement second floor extension is no higher than the existing copper mansard extension and so will maintain this subordination.

CPG3 (Sustainability) 2015: Section 4: Energy efficiency: existing buildings and Section 6 Renewable Energy

4.3

'Camden Core Strategy Policy CS13, paragraph 13.9 expects development or alterations to existing buildings to include proportionate measures to be taken to improve their environmental sustainability, where possible.'

It is the aspiration for the proposal to meet Passivhaus EnerPHit standard, as such it will have a very high level of insulation and air tightness, greatly reducing the building's energy demand.

CPG6 (Amenity) 2011: Section 7 Overlooking, privacy and outlook

7.4

'Development should be designed to protect the privacy of both new and existing dwellings to a reasonable degree.'

7.5

'Where this standard cannot be met we may require you to incorporate some of the following design measures into your scheme to ensure overlooking is reduced to an acceptable level. Design measures to reduce the potential for overlooking and the loss of privacy include: Use of obscure glazing.'

As suggested above and in conversation during pre-planning, the new side window to the proposed second floor extension is to be obscured.

7.9

'When designing your development you should also ensure the proximity, size or cumulative effect of any structures do not have an overbearing and/or dominating effect that is detrimental to the enjoyment of their properties by adjoining residential occupiers.'

The proposed second floor extension will be visible from neighbouring properties. However our proposal is not larger in volume than the current copper mansard, and the roof line is 200mm lower. Together these ensure that the proposal does not have an overbearing or dominating effect.

The Kentish Town Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015 – 2030

POLICY D3: INNOVATIVE BUILDING DESIGN

'a) Proposals must be based on a deep understanding of the site and its context

b) Proposals must be well integrated into their surroundings and reinforce and enhance local character, in line with paragraph 64 of the NPPF

c) Proposals must identify and draw upon key aspects of character, or design cues from the surrounding area. Appropriate design cues include grain, building form (shape), scale, height and massing, alignment, modulation, architectural detailing, materials, public realm and boundary treatments

d) Design proposals must be of the highest quality and sustainable, using materials that complement the existing palette of materials in the surrounding buildings

e) Proposals must enhance accessibility in buildings by taking into account barriers experienced by different user groups.'

The proposal draws from the scale, height, massing and composition of the existing and surrounding buildings to create contemporary yet complementary additions to the rear facade.

The proposal is to complementary high quality materials and utilise the most up-to-date thinking on sustainable design to create a property that meeting the very stringent Passivhaus EnerPHit standard.

The existing entrances are to be improved and the internal circulation remodelled to create more space and ease of movement, improving the accessibility of the property.