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Dear Rusty,

Re: 53 Achilles Road, London, NW6 1DZ

Thank you for submitting a pre-planning application enquiry for the above property which was received on 25/08/2016 together with the required fee of £450.00. These notes were informed by a pre-application meeting held on the 21 September 2016.

1. Drawings and documents

1.1. The following documentation was submitted in support of the pre-application request:

- Site Plan (127-SU-L01)
- Location Plan (127-SU-L02)
- Existing Plans, Sections and Elevations (127-SU-01-3)
- Proposed Demolitions (127-PRE-DM1-2)
- Proposed Plans (127-PRE-01-2)
- Proposed Sections and Elevations (127-PRE-03-7)
- Proposed Renders (127-PRE-08)
- Design and Access Statement
- Site Photos (127-PH-01)

2. Proposal

2.1. Advice is requested in relation to the following proposed developments:

- Ground floor rear and side extension with part green roof to existing ground floor flat (C3). Enlargement of existing basement to allow for new access.
- It was agreed on site that the proposed replacement shed show in proposed plans would not form the subject of this pre-application advice.

3. Site description

3.1. The application site hosts a two storey Victorian terrace house which has been historically converted into separate flats; this request relates to the ground / lower ground floor flat which benefits from sole access to the rear garden of the property. The property is typical for its period and the street, with a two storey rear closet wing and a number of original features.

There exists a variation in levels across the site meaning that the front ground floor level is above that of the rear garden level. The property already features an existing roof extension in the form of a rear dormer, granted permission in 2001 (see below section).

- 3.2. The application site is not located within any Conservation Area and is not statutorily listed. There are no trees protected by tree preservation orders on or adjacent to the application site. The Council's registers identify the application site as featuring underground development constraints from surface water flow and flooding.

4. Relevant planning history

- 4.1. The following planning history is relevant to this site:

APP: PWX0103269

DATE: 09/07/2001

DESC.: Extension of top floor flat into roof space, including the provision of dormer in the rear roofslope and two rooflights in the front roofslope, and the use of the flat roof at rear second floor level as a roof terrace, together with associated external alterations

DEC: Granted

APP: PWX0103268

DATE: 05/06/2001

DESC.: Part excavation of basement and associated elevational alterations to form additional bedroom to existing garden flat.

DEC: Granted

5. Relevant policies and guidance

- 5.1. The relevant policies that would apply to this proposal are taken from the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework (Core Strategy and Development Policy documents) as adopted on 8th November 2010, The London Plan 2015 Consolidated with Alterations (2011) and the NPPF (2012). The following policies will be taken into consideration:

- **National Planning Policy Framework (2012)**
- **London Plan (2016)**
 - Policy 7.4 – Local Character
 - Policy 7.6 – Architecture
- **Local Development Framework**
- **Core Strategy (2011)**
 - CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development
 - CS6 – Providing quality homes
 - CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
- **Development Policies (2011)**
 - DP2 – Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing
 - DP16 – The transport implications of development
 - DP17 – Walking, cycling and public transport
 - DP24 – Securing high quality design
 - DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours
 - DP27 – Basements and lightwells

- **Supplementary Guidance**
 - CPG 1 – Design
 - CPG 4 – Basements and lightwells
 - CPG 6 – Amenity
 - CPG 7 – Transport
 - CPG 8 – Planning Obligations
- **LDF Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (2015)**

6. Assessment

6.1. The main issues to consider in this case are as follows:

- Principle of basement development;
- Impact on the amenity of adjoining occupiers;
- Design and heritage;

Principle of underground development

- 6.2. The proposed scheme would include some excavations to install a rear stairwell to lower ground floor level towards the rear of the site. This would necessitate the enlargement of the existing high level, lower ground floor window opening and the excavation of ground immediately adjacent to the rear elevation of the property. The existing ground floor level of the area within the original closet wing as well as the currently external patio level would also be lowered by approximately 0.45m to bring it in line with the rear garden level.
- 6.3. Development Policy DP27 states that the Council will only permit basement and other underground development that does not cause harm to the built and natural environment or local residential amenity and does not result in flooding or ground instability. DP27 requires this to be demonstrated by methodologies appropriate to the site will be commensurate with the scale, location and complexity of the scheme. For smaller schemes, information should be submitted which relate to any specific concerns for that particular scheme or location.
- 6.4. In this instance due to the intervention into the properties footings immediately adjacent to the neighbouring property; it would be expected that evidence is provided (produced by a suitably qualified engineer) that demonstrates the following:
- The development will not harm the structural stability of the host property or neighbouring properties;
 - Any history of flooding at the site or in the vicinity of the site;
 - The geotechnical properties of the ground;
 - An engineering interpretation of the implications of the ground conditions for the development of the site; and
 - Details of the retaining wall design for the basement excavation.
- 6.5. Provided that this report is adequately comprehensive, it may be possible for the Council to assess whether any predicted damage to neighbouring properties from the development is acceptable or can be satisfactorily ameliorated by the developer, without the need for a full Basement Impact Assessment. Whether a full BIA would be required would therefore depend upon the findings of the initial engineer's report.

- 6.6. If it were found that the proposed works were of high risk; a full BIA report would be required. It would be expected that this report would be produced in accordance with the criteria set out in the Council's CGP4. A copy of this document can be downloaded [here](#).

Design and heritage

- 6.7. The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. The following considerations contained within policy DP24 are relevant to the application: development should consider the character, setting, context form and scale of neighbouring buildings, and the quality of materials to be used.
- 6.8. The Council's CPG1 (Design) seeks to ensure that rear extensions remain secondary to the building being extended, in terms of location, form, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing; respect and preserve existing architectural features; and retain the open character of existing natural landscaping and garden amenity, including that of neighbouring properties, proportionate to that of the surrounding area.
- 6.9. The adopted Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood (FGWHN) Plan (2015) states that *"All development shall be of a high quality of design, which complements and enhances the distinct local character and identity of Fortune Green and West Hampstead"*. With regard to extensions to property, it states that the above shall be achieved by ensuring that they remain *"in character and proportion with its context and setting, including the relationship to any adjoining properties"* as well as *"to the form, function, structure and heritage of its context - including the scale, mass, orientation, pattern and grain of surrounding buildings, streets and spaces"*.
- 6.10. The proposed extension would infill the area of patio adjacent to the closet wing, connecting to a full width rear extension with a depth of 3m and an overall footprint of approximately 29sqm. The entire extension would feature a flat roof (formed partly of a green roof and partly by glazing) with an eaves height of approximately 3m. The area of the proposed extension when compared to that of the original house (67sqm) would suggest that the extension, by virtue of its scale, may start to lose its subordinate relationship to the host property.
- 6.11. Notwithstanding this, there has been a clear precedent set within the local area for extensions of similar or even larger scales; with a number of recent approvals at properties including nos. 31, 33, 37, 39, 47 & 55 Achilles Road. Furthermore as the area is not within a conservation area and a number of properties remain single family dwellinghouses, most properties in the local area feature rear and/or side extensions of some kind – often constructed after utilising permitted development rights. As such an extension of this scale would not be considered to appear out of character, nor disrupt any uniform pattern of development. Both neighbouring properties feature rear projections with similar depths and as such the extension would not protrude beyond the established rear building line along the row. The extensions would retain a good proportion of open garden (59sqm), maintaining the open feel to the rear of the property. The scale of the proposed extension is therefore not considered objectionable in design terms in this instance.
- 6.12. In terms of detailed design, it is noted that the proposed scheme does not particularly respond to the character, form or detailing of the host property. Whilst this is usually considered necessary in order to remain in line with the Council's policies; in this instance the scheme has been developed with suitable architectural aptitude so as to ensure that the proposed extension would harmoniously contrast with the existing property, distinguishing it from the existing building and enhancing the rear of the property and garden area. The extension is furthermore obscured from any public view, with private views being afforded only

from the neighbouring properties as well as a limited number of upper floor rear windows from properties along Berridge Mews. Whilst the scheme is therefore considered to have an appropriate detailed design, the success of this would depend upon the quality of materials used as well as an appropriate scheme of planting for the wall climbers. As such it is recommended that any formal submission is accompanied by full details (preferably a sample panel) of the external slatted timber treatment of the extension as well as the landscaping/planting scheme for the rear elevation and garden.

- 6.13. For design, sustainability and biodiversity reasons, the Council would encourage the use of a green roof to the rear extension and so its inclusion in the proposed scheme is welcomed. We would however expect to see full section plans of this element in order to be confident that it can be sustained. It is therefore advised that the detailed design is fully considered and submitted alongside any formal submission.
- 6.14. Subject to these details the proposed extension would likely be considered acceptable by planning officers during any formal application in terms of its impacts upon the character and appearance of the host property and local area.

Residential Amenity

- 6.15. Policy DP26 seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity. Factors to consider, and which are particularly relevant to this case, include sunlight, daylight, artificial light levels, noise and disturbance, outlook and visual privacy and overlooking.
- 6.16. Due to the plot layouts of the surrounding properties as well as the scale of the proposed extension, the residential occupiers likely to be impacted upon by the proposed development would be those residing at nos.51 and 55 Achilles Road only.

55 Achilles Road

- 6.17. The principle concern for the proposed extension would be the resulting impact caused upon the occupiers of no.55 by the 9.5m long and 3m high flank wall formed along this shared boundary. This area of the adjacent garden is paved and appears to be primarily an access way. During the site visit it was however noted that the facing side elevation of this property featured a number of fenestrations, as well as those situated on the recessed rear elevation of this property. Those fenestrations consist of secondary side facing windows to the existing rear extension, a clear glazed door as well as lower ground and ground floor rear facing windows. Drawings submitted in 2013 for an application at this adjacent property would indicate that none of these fenestrations are primary windows servicing habitable rooms and since that the application site is situated to the North East of this area, it is not considered that the proposed extension would likely cause any significant loss of day light or sun light into this property. Despite this consideration, it would be highly recommended that evidence is submitted that this impact to light is indeed limited (i.e. via a daylight / sunlight report) and therefore acceptable in these terms.
- 6.18. As the ground floor rear windows of the properties are at a higher level than the garden level, it is not considered that the proposed extension would cause an impact upon the outlook from this habitable room window which would cause detriment. As the other windows to be affected are secondary on the rear extension, overall it is not considered that the extension would cause a significant impact in terms of outlook upon the occupiers of this neighbouring property.

- 6.19. The proposed extension is unlikely to cause any impacts upon privacy or lead to overlooking of this adjacent property. It would similarly not lead to an intensification of the use of the site or lead to any noise or disturbance issues.

51 Achilles Road

- 6.20. This neighbouring property features the same rear building line of the host property and benefits from an existing rear conservatory. The hereby proposed extension would project 3m beyond the rear elevation of this property (1m beyond the rear elevation of the conservatory) with a height of approximately 3m. A further projection of 2m (with a height of 2.4m) is then proposed to house a rain water store.
- 6.21. Whilst it is not considered that the proposed extension would detrimentally impact this neighbour in terms of outlook, light or privacy; it is considered that the addition of the 2m long store would exacerbate the impact, causing the overall bulk to be cumulatively unacceptable.
- 6.22. It is therefore recommended that the dimensions of this store are reduced to have a height no greater than 1.8m above the neighbouring garden level. As this height would be equal to a normal garden fence, its length could then be slightly extended if necessary in order to maintain the same capacity without cause undue harm. Subject to this alteration it is considered that the proposal would be otherwise acceptable in terms of the impact to this neighbouring occupier.

Upper floor unit (no.53)

- 6.23. An additional concern regarding the extension is the impact that the proposed rooflight might cause to the rear facing habitable room windows in terms of artificial light pollution; particularly to the upper floor unit as well as either adjoining neighbours. As this space would likely be used during evenings, there is potential for artificial light to spill out of this rooflight towards these windows, potentially leading to significant disruption. Whilst it is acknowledged that the coffer system utilised to offer solar protection might also act to limit the potential for oblique radiation of light (and therefore light pollution impacts), it is recommended that this is fully assessed and justified prior to any formal submission.

7. Consultation

- 7.1. As outlined below, the LPA would always notify neighbours of proposed works at the point of any formal submission. Notwithstanding this, it is strongly recommended that you engage in early consultation prior to any formal submission. This is particularly important for the occupiers of the adjacent properties as well as the upper floor unit.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. Overall it is considered that, subject to the appropriate detailing of materials and planting, the proposed extension would be supported by planning officers during a formal submission in terms of design.
- 8.2. Concerns were however raised in terms of the potential impacts upon the occupiers of adjacent units. It was therefore recommended that additional justification was formed in terms of these impacts through the submission of a light report as well as assessment of potential light pollution. It was also recommended that the height of the rain water store was reduced to limit its impact upon the outlook and light of no.51 Achilles Road.

9. Planning application information

9.1. If you submit a planning application which addresses the outstanding issue detailed in this report satisfactorily, I would advise you to submit the following for a valid planning application:

- Completed form – [Full Application]
- An ordnance survey based location plan at 1:1250 scale denoting the application site in red.
- Floor plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Roof plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Section drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Design and access statement
- Detailed drawings and information regarding proposed green roof
- Details / a sample panel of the timber panelling
- Planting / Landscaping scheme for climbers and rear garden
- The appropriate fee (£172.00)
- Please see [supporting information for planning applications](#) for more information.

9.2. We are legally required to consult on applications with individuals who may be affected by the proposals. We would notify neighbours by email as well as putting up a notice on or near the site. The Council must allow 21 days from the consultation start date for responses to be received.

9.3. It is likely that that a proposal of this size would be determined under delegated powers, however, if more than 3 objections from neighbours or an objection from a local amenity group is received the application will be referred to the Members Briefing Panel should it be recommended for approval by officers. For more details click [here](#).

This document represents an initial informal officer view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and would not be binding upon the Council, nor prejudice any future planning application decisions made by the Council.

If you have any queries about the above letter or the attached document please do not hesitate to contact me direct.

Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

Yours sincerely,

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