

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

SITE AT 14 & 15 ST SILAS PLACE,  
LONDON NW5 3QP

PLANNING APPLICATION BY

MS CARLA STOOKE

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT  
(INCORPORATING HERITAGE ASSET IMPACT ASSESSMENT)

March 2017

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement forms part of the planning application by Ms Carla Stooke the *'erection of first floor rear extension with associated alterations to existing external staircase'* at 14 and 15 St Silas Place, London NW5 3QP.
- 1.2 This statement should be read in conjunction with the existing and proposed application drawing set, and the BRE Daylight & Sunlight Preliminary Analysis.

## **2. CONTEXT**

### **Physical Context**

- 2.1 The application site is located on the west side of St Silas Place, a short distance to the north of the junction with Prince of Wales Road. The site is occupied by a two storey, end-of-terrace residential building which dates from the 1960s. The building includes two self-contained flats, numbered 14 and 15 St Silas Place, the latter being the first floor unit and the main subject of this planning application. The first floor flat is accessed via an external metal staircase which is located adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. The ground floor unit includes a full-width rear extension, part of the flat roof of which provides the external landing (set on a metal frame) to the entrance to the first floor unit.
- 2.2 The terrace of which the application site forms part is unusual in that its rear elevation and the associated rear walled gardens to each property face St Silas Place. Other properties in the terrace to the north of the application site include small storage extensions on their rear elevations.
- 2.3 The immediate area is characterised by three and four storey residential development dating from the 1960s. The application property forms part of a U-shaped, two storey housing development. This development, which is located to the rear of a block of four storey flats which front Prince of Wales Road, is flat roofed, and the properties are faced in a mix of light coloured bricks and white, horizontal cladding.

- 2.4 St Silas Place is a short cul-de-sac which terminates against the impressive frontage of the church of 'St Silas the Martyr' which is a listed building. No other heritage assets have been identified in the immediate vicinity of the application site. Private parking is provided in front of the terrace of which the application site forms part.

### **Relevant Planning History**

- 2.5 No recent planning decisions have been identified in respect of the application site. It is not clear whether the property was constructed as two units or whether it was subsequently converted from use as a single dwelling. Similarly, no planning history has been identified in respect of the ground floor rear extension to 14 St Silas Place. This structure, and the external staircase to the first floor flat, would appear to have been in place for many years.
- 2.6 A planning application (ref: 2015/5940/P) for the erection of a first floor front extension was withdrawn on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2016 following advice from the case officer that the proposal was unacceptable because it would result in a loss of daylight, sunlight and outlook for the adjacent property, and because the extension would appear prominent and out of scale in its context.

### **The Proposal**

- 2.7 The application scheme proposes the construction of a first floor rear extension to 15 St Silas Place. The extension, which would be located on the roof of the existing ground floor rear extension to number 14, would include an angled wall along its northern elevation, and a flat roof with symmetrical angled corners. The roof to the extension would be slightly lower than the roof of the host building. The extension would also incorporate main central windows, a side window within the northern angled flank elevation, and an entrance porch. The scheme also proposes the replacement of the external metal staircase with a new staircase with contemporary-style, glazed balustrades. On the site's south elevation, a rendered infill panel would be introduced beneath the external staircase. The proposed external materials would otherwise match the existing building.

- 2.8 The proposed extension would provide enlarged and enhanced living accommodation for the occupier of 15 St Silas Place including a second bedroom.

## **Planning Policy**

### ***The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)***

- 2.9 The NPPF states that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Planning decisions should ensure that that developments function well, establish a strong sense of place, optimise the potential of the site, respond to local character while not preventing appropriate innovation, create safe and accessible environments, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription of detail but should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access for new development in relation to the local area. LPAs should not impose architectural styles or tastes. In determining applications, LPAs should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. When considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

### ***The statutory development plan***

- 2.10 The statutory development plan for the area comprises the consolidated London Plan 2016 (incorporating Early Minor Alterations 2013 and Further Alterations 2015/16), the Camden Core Strategy which was adopted in November 2010, and the Camden Development Policies DPD which was also adopted in November 2010. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

*The Core Strategy*

2.11 The following policies of the adopted Core Strategy, as summarised, are considered to be relevant to the issues raised by this planning application:-

- Policy CS1 seeks to direct growth in Camden to the most suitable locations. Development should make full use of its site whilst respecting context and taking into account the quality of design;
- Policy CS5 states that the Council will manage the impact of growth and development in Camden; and
- Policy CS14 states that the Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by requiring development to be of the highest standard of design.

*Camden Development Policies DPD*

2.12 The following policies of the Camden Development Policies DPD, as summarised, are considered to be relevant to the issues raised by this planning application:-

- Policy DP2 seeks to make the full use of Camden's capacity for additional housing;
- Policy DP5 states that there is a '*very high*' demand for two bedroom market dwellings;
- Policy DP24 requires all developments, including alterations and extensions, to be of the highest standard of design having regard to character, setting, context, quality of materials, landscaping and accessibility. The policy seeks the provision of visually interesting frontages; and
- Policy DP26 states that the Council will protect the living conditions of occupiers and neighbours in terms of noise, outlook, privacy, daylight

and sunlight.

### ***Camden Planning Guidance***

- 2.13 Camden Planning Guidance (Design) (CPG1) was adopted in July 2015. The guidance states that the Council is committed to excellence in design, and schemes should consider the context of the development and its surrounding area, the design and use of the building itself, and the materials used. Alterations should take account of the character and design of the property and its surroundings. Extensions should be subordinate to the original building in terms of scale and situation ***unless the specific circumstances of the site, such as the context of the property or its particular design, would enable an exception to this approach.***

## **3. PLANNING & DESIGN ASSESSMENT**

### ***Amount of Development***

- 3.1 The gross internal area (GIA) of the first floor flat (15 St Silas Place) is 40.5 square metres. The proposed first floor extension would provide an additional 10 square metres (GIA).

### ***Layout & Amenity***

- 3.2 The proposed extension would provide additional habitable space within 15 St Silas Place. This accommodation would be satisfactorily laid out, and would receive good levels of daylight, sunlight and outlook.
- 3.3 The planning application is accompanied by a preliminary BRE Daylight & Sunlight analysis. This confirms that the form of the proposed extension would cause no loss of daylight or sunlight for occupiers of the adjacent property to the north. This would be by virtue of the angled flank wall of the extension which would preserve a 45 degree angle of view from the closest adjacent habitable room window which is located at first floor level. It should be noted that the closest section of the ground floor of the adjacent property includes a windowless, single storey rear projection

and entrance door (as opposed to a window serving a habitable room). For the same reasons, the proposed extension would not impinge on the outlook from these neighbouring ground and first floor windows. The proposed extension to the application property would therefore have no material impact on living conditions within this adjacent property.

***Scale & Appearance (including impact on Heritage Asset)***

- 3.4 The application site is not located within a conservation area although the site lies a short distance to the south of a listed church. The terrace, of which the application property forms part, is unusual in terms of its relationship to the street. The rear elevation of the terrace faces the St Silas Place behind walled rear gardens. With the exception of the application property, the rear elevation functions satisfactorily as a section of townscape in St Silas Place, notwithstanding this somewhat confused relationship between the dwellings and the street. The terrace has an unremarkable and utilitarian appearance, not untypical of much 1960s domestic architecture.



View of application property from south-east

- 3.5 A number of unsympathetic alterations to the application property have detracted from its appearance, from the appearance of the terrace as a whole, and therefore

from the townscape quality of St Silas Place and the setting of the nearby listed building. These negative features, which are apparent in the photograph above, include:-

- (i) the 'box-like' ground floor rear extension which includes only ill-proportioned high level windows, and which emphasizes the impression that this is the terrace's rear elevation, notwithstanding its prominence in the street-scene;
- (ii) the crude and prominent external metal staircase and landing platform which have an industrial appearance; and
- (iii) the unbalanced first floor window arrangement which contrasts with the symmetrical first floor window pattern on the other properties in the terrace.

- 3.6 All these elements contribute individually and in combination to the unattractive appearance of the property, and are considered to be harmful to the local townscape including to the setting of the nearby listed church.
- 3.7 The proposed extension and associated alterations to the application property would enhance its appearance and its contribution to the local townscape. CPG1 acknowledges that site-specific circumstances may justify an exception to the normal principles applied to extensions in terms of scale and situation.
- 3.8 The proposed first floor extension would create an architecturally cohesive rear elevation to the property by integrating the discordant ground floor projection. The extension, with its angled corners, would provide a 'capping' to the ground floor rear projection which would resolve the existing abrupt elevational contrast between the ground and first floors. The extension would take the form of symmetrical first floor addition, similar to a bay projection, which would have a transitional and subordinate scale in terms of its angled flank walls and slightly lower overall height than the main roof. The elevation would be further enhanced through the improved first floor window arrangement, and matching materials would provide proper integration with the remainder of the terrace.



- 3.9 The revised staircase arrangement would replace the 'industrial-style', metal stairs, and the crude metal platform at landing level. The new stairs would appear as an integrated architectural feature with simple, contemporary glazed balustrades and render infill beneath on the side (south) elevation. This proposed treatment would be far more appropriate to the domestic character of the host property than the existing stair arrangement.
- 3.10 These proposed changes would enhance the appearance of the application property, the terrace of which it forms part, and the immediate street-scene. As such, the proposal would also improve the setting of the nearby listed building.



CGI view of proposal from south-east

### ***Landscaping***

- 3.11 The proposal would have no impact on landscaping features within or near the application site.

### ***Use***

- 3.12 The application scheme would provide beneficial additional residential floorspace which would enhance living conditions within the flat, and the property's

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contribution to Camden's housing stock. As a small two bedroom unit, the flat at 15 St Silas Place would also assist in meeting the borough's very high need for units of this type.

#### **4. ACCESS**

- 4.1 The site occupies an accessible location close to local facilities and to public transport. The proposals involve no material change to the existing access arrangements to the first floor property.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The existing form and appearance of the application property are unsatisfactory, and harm visual amenities in St Silas Place.
- 5.2 The proposed rear extension and associated alterations to the external staircase would resolve the existing architectural shortcomings of the property's prominent and unsightly rear elevation, and would thereby enhance the appearance of the property itself, of the terrace of which it forms part, and of the street-scene in St Silas Place and the setting of the nearby listed building. These works would not materially harm the living conditions of adjacent occupiers.
- 5.3 For the above reasons, the application proposal would represent sustainable development which accords with the development plan, and with national and local planning guidance.
- 5.4 The applicant looks forward to early dialogue with the case officer, and to the favourable determination of this planning application.
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