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Design and Access Statement (REV01 July 2017)
for
Householder Planning Application
for
31 Downside Crescent NW3 2AN

Contents

Proposal Summary

The Householder Planning application is for the following proposed works:

Re-building of rear single storey ground floor extension;
New infill rear extension;
Loft conversion including rear dormer and side rooflight;
Replacement roof coverings;
Replacement windows;
Minor changes to front boundary wall;
Changes to front hard and soft landscaping;
Removal of out-building.

Location

31 Downside Crescent is within the Parkhill Conservation Area and is not Listed.

The house backs on to public tennis courts of Globe Lawn Tennis Club and the wild green area of Belsize Wood Nature Reserve.

Existing Property

The property is one of a terrace of semi detached uniform late Victorian, red brick 3 storey houses. It is a single private dwelling.

The property is located in Parkhil Conservation Area. The houses in Downside Crescent are noted as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area

"*Downside Crescent was constructed on the site of Haverstock Lodge; it is densely lined with late-Victorian red brick, three-storey gabled houses with front gardens. The gabled roofscape is distinctive and virtually intact. The houses are semi-detached, sited close together to form a relatively uniform frontage. Hard-standings and cross-overs have recently replaced some front gardens, and garages and car shelters on the ground floors have been added to the fronts of some houses which break the pattern of these houses and their streetscape."*

From Parkhill and Upper Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy - part 1, 5.3, 2b

The existing property has a gross internal floor area of 275sqm.

The front façade is of red brickwork and the rear of London stock brickwork with red brick arches to windows and red brick banding. Windows are painted timber framed sliding sash. The pitched roof is slate with red terracotta clay ridge tiles.

The existing rear single storey extension is typical of the terrace albeit in this case is set a little to the side of the building. The rear extension has been altered in the past.

Vehicle access to the side of the house is shared with the adjacent property.

The large garden (20m long by 14m wide) runs down to meet the tall planting of the Belsize Wood Nature Reserve.

The external area at the front is part soft landscaping and part hard landscaping (entrance path and vehicle access).

The adjoining property has recent extensions to the rear.

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Planning History

Although there are planning records (from 1951 and 1981) showing granting of approval for the conversion of the first and second floors into self contained flats there is no evidence that this was ever implemented.
The property has been used as a single private dwelling since at least 1985 (when the previous owner said they purchased the property).

There are several historic applications for works to trees.

Planning Policy

The following policies have been referred to in preparation of this application:

London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework (LDF)

CS5 ('Managing the impact of growth and development')

CS14 ('Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage')

DP24 ('Securing high quality design')

DP25 ('Conserving Camden's heritage')

DP26 ('Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours')

Camden Planning Guidance CPG1 (Design) 2011 CPG6 (Amenity) 2013

Parkhill and Upper Park Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2011

London Plan 2011

NPPF 2012

Proposal Design Detail

Demolition of existing rear single storey extension

The existing rear single storey extension is contemporary to the main house. These extensions are a uniform feature along the entire terrace of semi-detached properties in the Crescent. In many cases (nos 5, 21, 23, 29 are just a few) they have been re-built to allow for development of the property.

This original rear extension has been altered over the years with changes to openings in brickwork, new non-traditional windows and doors, brickwork addition to side.

The existing roof is in poor condition and requires replacing. The roof has no thermal insulation and to upgrade it would require the replacement of rafters with new ones of a greater depth.

The proposed works involves opening the current existing rear extension into the main house / infill extension with an open plan arrangement – this would involve loss of the side masonry wall.

The existing floor level is below ground level and is subject to damp problems. To resolve this would involve breaking out the existing floor construction, excavating down to introduce new structural slab, thermal insulation to comply with building regulations, cavity drain waterproof system and screed and finishes. This build-up requires a greater construction depth than existing and as such the minimal brick corbel foundations would be undermined and compromised. To accommodate this new floor build-up it would therefore be necessary to underpin the perimeter walls of the existing extension.

There are large trees adjacent to the site. It is not possible to justify, for building regulations purposes, the retention of the existing foundations when so much of the rear of the building is new construction.

In light of the fact that so much of the existing fabric would be removed it is proposed that the existing rear extension is taken down and re-built.

The unsightly, later addition ‘outbuilding’ will be removed as part of this exercise.

Re-building of existing rear extension

The existing rear extension would be re-built using brickwork and would follow the same footprint as the existing. The pyramidal pitched roof form would be re-built with a natural slate covering to match the existing. The rear elevation of the replacement extension will have an enlarged glazed opening. The intention is that the essence of the existing rear extension is retained and it remains as a visibly separate entity from the infill and added extensions (see below).

Increase in depth to side element of existing rear extension

The intention is to re-build the existing rear extension to retain the essence of the original. On the whole the original footprint is to be followed – the exception to this is that where the extension returns to the side of the property this is to be increased in depth (by 0.75m) to align with the return at no33. This side return will be pulled in at the side to reflect the existing and it's height reduced so that the distinctive form of the pitched pyramidal roof is preserved and remains as the dominant visible element.

Infill rear extension

Consistent with the development of many other properties in the Crescent it is proposed that the property is extended at the rear to infill to the side of the original rear extension.

Although the property could be extended at the rear within permitted development rights (to a depth of 3m) we believe the architecture is stronger if the extension is taken to the existing rear building line (set by the original extension) that is at approximately 4m depth from the rear.

We believe it important for the integrity of the appearance of the rear of the building that the form of the original rear extension is retained rather than consumed within a single volume full width rear extension. This is especially important as the original extension is partially offset to the side of the main house. The approach taken is that the infill extension consists of a solid element that is equal I width to the original extension but is separated by a lightweight glass break (at both rear faced and roof level).

The infill extension will be constructed of brickwork and with glazing to the rear elevation.

A similar approach has been successfully employed at no5 Downside Crescent – see photograph below.

The intention however is to be more faithful to the original architecture. Where the pitched pyramidal roof of the original extension has been changed to a standard pitch with brickwork gable end at no5 it is intended to retain the original roof form for this application. A parapet upstand rather than overhanging eaves

will be employed however as this will give more of a unifying detail with the infill extension.

It is also proposed that the infill extension, as well as being separated from the original extension by glass, will be subservient in form. This will be realized by using a flat roof with rooflights, rather than mirroring the pitched roof as carried out at no5.

Loft Conversion

A rear dormer is proposed that complies with CPG 1. The dormer is contained within the roof slope and set back from ridge, hip, eaves and party wall by 500mm. The dormer will be finished in traditional roofing material such as lead cladding and will have a timber framed window.

A new conservation style rooflight will be incorporated to the side plane of the main roof. An existing rooflight on the side plane of the main roof will be replaced with a more suitable conservation style rooflight.

Roof Coverings

The existing roof coverings of the main roof will be replaced with new natural slates and red clay ridge tiles. The replacement materials will be consistent with the existing materials. The roof covering replacement is necessary because of the age and condition of the existing roof, to enable the loft conversion works and to allow thermal insulation (with associated ventilation) to be installed into the roof.

Replacement Windows

It is proposed that the existing timber framed, single glazed sliding sash windows throughout the property are replaced with replica double glazed windows. The fenestration arrangement of all windows will be matched.

Front boundary

The front boundary currently has an opening for vehicle access. This is restricted and inadequate for vehicle access. It is proposed that the opening is widened to align with the existing dropped kerb by reducing the front boundary wall length by 800mm.

The pedestrian gate opening will be defined by extending the existing wall to form 215mm wide brick posts.

The red brick front boundary will otherwise be retained at the current height which is a consistent feature along the Crescent.

Soft and hard landscaping

Hard landscaping is to be replaced with soft landscaping on the left hand side of the entrance path (when facing house). The bins are to be located in the side passage and moved out for collection to new a hard-standing (replacing soft landscaping) on the right hand side. The bins currently permanently sit next to the entrance path which is unsightly.

The details of the new and replacement soft landscaping planting is yet to be determined. The Holly tree will be retained.

The new hardstanding will be in the form of grey granite sets on a sand and aggregate bed that allows permeability.

Amenity

The infill rear single storey extension will be built up to the boundary line with 29 Downside Crescent. The height of this extension will be consistent with heights allowed under permitted development rights (ie 3m from external ground level to flat roof). The rear elevations and gardens of 29 and 31 Downside Crescent face north. The new infill extension will sit to the east of no29 – for this reason there will be no affect on the sunlight amenity of this property.

The boundary treatment is currently 2.5m (1.5m fence + 1m trellis) above the external ground level. The proposed extension at this point will be 2.85m to flat roof and 3.15m to top of parapet wall and therefore any increased sense of enclosure will not be significant.

Some external amenity space will be lost by the development of the infill extension. However the existing rear garden is large at average 17m long by 15m wide, has an area of 304 sqm and so loss of 24sqm will not have an impact.

Setting within Conservation Area

The tennis club and the nature gardens to the rear of the property are considered semi public spaces. However the boundary condition between both these sites

and the application site is such that it would not be considered that there are views from the pubic realm. Other properties in the Crescent share this relationship and it has been considered that infill extensions are not harmful to the Conservation Area in this context.

As described above the infill extension has been designed to retain the original extension as a separate entity through use of lightweight (glass) separating the two.

The infill extension has been designed to be subordinate to both the original extension and the main house.

The infill extension is set back in line with the original rear building line and therefore in it's more prominent position on the corner of the main house the original extension remains the most dominant feature at ground level.

The proposed dormer window is modest in size set back from the main roof edge and finished in traditional grey material (such as lead). This will be a modest addition to the main roof, consistent with other dormers built within the terrace and will not have a detrimental impact on the setting in the Conservation Area.

The new and replacement existing rooflights will be conservation style and so have modest projection from the roof and their siting on the ide of the property means they will not have a visual impact on the property.

Trees

There are some significant existing trees within, or just outside, the application property.

No trees are to be removed as part of the works.

T1 (Oak)
With a root protection area with 14.4m radius the proposed infill extension foundations just brushes / minor encroachment into this but are well within the limits set out in British Standard 5837.

During the construction period the root protection area of T1 will be protected following guidelines set out in British Standard 5837. Fencing and ground protection will be installed and storage of materials that could potentially leach into the ground will be restricted from this area.

T2 (Ash)
This tree is outside the property and with a root protection area with 8.5m radius is distant from the proposed extension ground works.

The root protection will be as above.

T3 (Yew)

This is close to the Ash but with a smaller RPA and will not be close to the works.

The root protection afforded to T2 will also protect this tree.

T4 (Holly)

This tree will be retained. The works will not have an impact on the RPA as the front wall is to be retained. The front path will protect the roots from access traffic during the construction period.

Traffic, Parking, Cycles

The property will remain as a single private dwelling. Existing off-street parking, with shared access, will not be changed. The development will not have an impact on traffic congestion or increase parking stress.

The property enjoys a protected side access that gives good opportunity for secure bicycle parking.