

Planning Department
Camden Council
Camden Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 9JE

22nd September 2017

Our ref: 5ADP 566

Dear Sirs

13 ST. AUGUSTINES ROAD, NW1 9RL

Please find attached a full planning application to retain the front boundary and garden treatments at the above address. These differ from the originally approved scheme for which permission was granted on the 4th February 2014 (2013/5715/P). The following documents are provided in support of this submission:

- Plans as existing (5ADP 566-02D - 2 sheets)
- Plans as approved (5ADP 566-02C - 2 sheets)
- Location plan.

The following statement will serve to put the application into context and provide the Camden planning department with information they will require to make an informed evaluation.

1. Background

The site comprises a four storey semi-detached building located on the north-west side of St Augustine's Road, towards the junction with Agar Grove. The property is divided into two self-contained flats; a lower ground floor maisonette, and a 4-bed dwelling on ground and upper floors. The property is located within the Camden Square Conservation Area and is identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, forming a pair with No. 15.

2. Previous relevant applications

Conditional permission was granted on the 4th February 2014 (**2013/5715/P**) for a basement excavation beneath footprint of existing property, with front and rear lightwells. Erection of a single storey rear extension and two-storey side extension, and the installation of a dormer window and two conservation-style rooflights to side roofslope, all to provide additional accommodation to two existing self-contained flats.

Furthermore, a non-material amendment for a variation of condition was granted, to Increase the size of the basement (by 6sqm), remove a rear external staircase and introduce of a window at ground floor level to 'basement and single storey rear extension and two-storey side extension and dormer' approved under planning permission **2013/5715/P** dated 04/12/2013.

Additionally, a full application was granted on the 17th June 2016 to demolish the existing front steps, side porch and garden side wall under **2015/3283/P**.

Finally, a pre-application enquiry was made (Ref: **2015/6940/PRE**) to determine the possibility of alterations to the front garden and boundary treatment with a view to providing for one off street parking space.

Reference will be made to the aforementioned within the following paragraphs.

3. Reason for application

Construction at 13 St. Augustines Road has now been completed. My client has recently been contacted by Camden Council regarding the discrepancy between what was originally approved and what has been constructed with regards to the front garden and boundary treatments. An enforcement notice (Case No: RS/PE/ EN17/0336) has been issued and after discussion with the case officer, it has been agreed that an application should be made to regularise the as built works, albeit retrospectively.

4. Design rationale behind current construction

The approved design for the front garden and boundary treatment can be seen in the attached plans 5ADP 566-02C 1 & 2. In essence, it retained the previously existing incongruous piers with a white picket fence as a garden boundary. The garden area itself was to be improved with planting and allow for two cycle spaces and bin storage

The existing construction has distinctly improved the original design in that the piers are now of uniform height and appearance, the white picket fence has been replaced by a wrought iron railing and two distinct entrance gates now exist for each of the dwelling houses. Additionally, concealed storage has been provided for both cycles and bins, providing a neat solution for the privacy, security and amenity of future residents at this address.

In discussing the current design, it is of value to address each of the features which have been built into the existing garden and boundary treatment, in their context within St. Augustines Road. These are:

- The piers
- The double entrance
- Concealed bin & cycle storage
- Use of a railing as boundary treatment to garden
- Overall appearance in relation to street scene

The piers:

St. Augustines Road descends towards Murry Street at an angle of between 1 and 2 degrees and therefore the piers are of slightly different height when viewed individually. However, all the capping stones match in height when viewed at eye level, forming a satisfying and symmetrical linear arrangement. The overall height is no higher than the tallest of the original piers. The piers are made of brick, which has been rendered and painted white to match the lower area of the property itself and is consistent with many of the properties along the same road. The dry cast

stone 'regency' capping stones provide a quality finish to the overall appearance of the piers. These same capping stones can be seen at several of the other properties along the road, No. 23 being one such example. Also, pier design and scale along the road is varied and disparate, as are the boundary treatments, which can no longer be said to 'characterise' the area, if indeed they had done in the past.

The double entrance:

The design value of the double entrance is in that it affords both privacy and security to the future residents of each of the two units. Each entrance path shares a common boundary of a covered cycle and bin store, with respective access to each unit's amenity. Several of the properties along the road also have double entrances, for example Nos. 7, 9, 14, 26, 43 & 52. Whilst these are not double entrances in the manner No. 13 has arranged theirs, we would like to point out that these are nonetheless examples of the same and in no way detract from the 'character' of the area.

Concealed bin & cycle storage:

The simple exercise of walking up and down St. Augustines Road brings to the attention the unsightliness of different colour waste and recycling bins in front gardens. Some residences have very old concrete, mostly pebble dashed, bin stores which in most cases are decrepit and nearly just as unsightly. In fact, No. 11 has a shed for this very purpose and we feel that our solution is a much more appropriate and sleek design in the context of the prevailing street scene. Mention was made in application **2015/3283/P** that the 'previously approved front bin store will be enlarged to suit the requirements of the additional dwelling'.

The idea behind the design solution at No. 13 is to conceal these unsightly objects behind an unassuming façade which also provides additional benefits as identified in previous sections. It also serves to enhance the front garden by removing the eyesore of random bins or other objects and providing clean lines as a backdrop to the newly planted shrubs and plants.

Use of a railing as boundary treatment to garden

Prior to the current refurbishment and enhancement of No. 13, this property had lain derelict for many years. The Ash tree in the front garden had grown beyond its intended size and consequently knocked over the previously existing low boundary wall. The trunk section at ground level is now of such a diameter that it is not possible to re-build a traditional boundary wall. Applications were made to fell this tree years ago, all meeting with refusal. Eventually, permission was granted to reduce the crown and thereby the overall scale of the tree. Nonetheless, the size at the base remains an issue. The previous solution had been to erect a white painted picket fence. The report on pre-application enquiry **2015/6940/PRE** identified this solution as 'highly incongruous within the street scene. On that basis, the decision was taken to insert a wrought iron railing fence, painted black, to tie in with the railings on the upper ground floor window 'balconies'. The fence is thin enough to be able to both clear and allow for some expansion of the Ash tree's root system. Also, this is not the only instance of black iron railings on the street, there are many more.

Overall appearance in relation to street scene:

The report on pre-application enquiry **2015/6940/PRE** mentions that, the property being in a conservation area, the test which any proposal is assessed against is to '...preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the existing site....', it also goes on to state that 'paths, boundary walls and other details characteristic of the street should be retained or reinstated unless new solutions can be presented which enhance the area'. It also goes on to state that '...works to restore or replace the front boundary treatment with a sensitive alternative would be welcomed'. By the aforementioned, we strongly feel that we have demonstrated that a sensitive alternative has indeed been found, within the confines of site restrictions, such as the Ash tree for example and would go so far as to argue that an exemplary solution has been found to concealing unsightly bins and bicycles etc., thereby enhancing the enjoyment of the appearance of a front garden and improving the street scene as it stands.

Further development will occur along this street, as is already the case, bringing with it the requirement for sensitive solutions to such problems as have been dealt with in this statement. Contrary to opinions stated in the pre-application report previously mentioned, St. Augustines Road appears, to a design professional such as myself, who is not local and has visited the area a handful of times, not to have front boundary uniformity to it whatsoever.

The property at No. 13 has been tremendously enhanced by the recent complete refurbishment, evidenced by several local residents who were approached during a recent visit. The overall consensus was, at worst, that it was 'nice'.

Whilst we are sensitive to the intricacies of an individual's 'taste', we submit that, while not built to the originally approved design, the front garden and boundary treatment has been carried out considerably and actually serves to enhance the street scene, adding an air of quality to the property.

We therefore ask that you grant retrospective planning permission for the works described above and shown in the attached drawings.

We trust our application meets with your approval. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

5 Arches Design & Planning

Matthew J. Scholes