

MORETON HOUSE, SOUTH GROVE N6 6BJ

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent Application

31st August 2017

Amended 3rd October 2017; amendments in red



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1 INTRODUCTION

Moreton House is a grade II listed semi-detached house dating from c. 1715, facing Pond Square within the Highgate Conservation Area. The new owner wishes to extend and carry out alterations to the five-storey 5-bedroom property to accommodate an artists studio, update services and domestic facilities, and recover some of the quality of the original house. In particular it is intended to improve the relationship of the interior spaces of the house with the long south facing garden by implementing alterations to the various extensions that have accumulated to the rear of the property during the C20.

This report duplicates some of the background historic information provided within The Stephen Gray Consultancy Heritage Assessment. However the assessment of significance of the property and impact of the proposals on the historic fabric is fully addressed within the Heritage Assessment and not repeated here.

A site visit to the house was made by Camden's Senior Heritage and Conservation Officer, Sarah Freeman on 16th June 2017, as part of the pre-application assessment. A subsequent pre-application advice letter dated 14th August ref 2017/2975/PRE is included with this submission.

2 THE PROPERTY

2.0 History

A detailed analysis of the history of the house is provided within The Stephen Gray Consultancy Heritage Assessment Part I, but a summary description here provides an introduction to enable an analysis of compliance with general planning policy.

The house was built in 1715 as the eastern twin of a pair of attached town houses, the adjoining at no. 15 being replaced with the existing Victorian house of significantly increased footprint in 1868. The original build of Moreton House is very shallow in plan, comprising two rooms per floor over four floors, plus attic, with a central staircase between. A single pitched clay tiled roof runs between flank chimney stacks. Despite its modest floor plan it presents a staggering five windows in width to front and rear elevations, many of which would probably have been blind in the original construction.

A deep but narrow 2-storey closet wing appears to have been added at the western boundary to the rear during the C19 or perhaps earlier. During the C20 the following further additions were made:

1907-37	Two storey rear extension against closet wing;
1907-37	Two storey side extension to east flank of main house;
1937-68	Lean to wc (since demolished)
1969	Two storey bow extension increasing depth of original eastern rooms; widening of existing two storey rear extension;
1972	Roof extension to side extension to create third floor level;
1985	Rear dormer windows and conversion of attic to habitable space

The house and attached railings and gate were grade II listed in 1954, which didn't stop the last owner carrying out radical alterations in 1969 to the original plan form, albeit reusing historically interesting bow French casement windows likely dating from late C18.

The house was substantially destroyed by fire in 1983 and subsequently rebuilt to almost identical form, employing a combination of traditional and modern construction methods. The Survey of London plans made in 1936, alongside careful surveys after the fire enabled accurate reproduction. Whilst parts of the C20 extensions survived the fire to the rear, much of the original 1715 fabric was lost. Investigations suggest that original fabric can now only be found in the following areas:

Exterior

Part of masonry to front wall only
Original rear and flank walls to main house
Chimney stacks
Front windows to east basement room
Front basement door
York stone paving
Front iron railings

Basement

Staircase and paneling

Door to stair store
Ground, first and second floors
Floor structure to west rooms only

Notably there appear to be no surviving floors or ceilings. Whether there is original plaster behind the 1985 paneling is not known, but the basement brick walls appear to have been fully scabbled back to brickwork to take a drained cavity tanking membrane and overcoated with bonding plaster. During the progress of the works it is proposed to carefully record any evidence of historic fabric.

The Heritage Statement includes an assessment of significance of all elements of the building in light of its age, quality and detail.

Within this application for Listed Building Consent the property is described in the following parts: Main house; Side Extension; Rear Extension; Closet Wing; Bow extension.

2.1 Context & Setting

As detailed within the Heritage Assessment, South Grove falls within Sub-Area 1: Highgate Village, described as the historic 'core' of the Highgate Conservation Area.

As noted above, the house still remains one of a pair, although the adjoining house to the west was reconstructed to a very different design in 1868. The United Reformed Church that forms the east boundary of the rear garden was built in 1859.

The house is oriented north-south with a generous front garden, enclosed by railings with a parking space to the east. The rear garden is over 50m long but narrows to almost half the width of the rear façade of the house. Views over London are restricted by the towering church and flank wall to no. 15 South Grove.

The house fronts South Grove which forms the southern boundary of Pond Square. It is tree lined and permitted cars park on the south side of the street perpendicular to its direction.

THE PROPOSALS

2.2 Outline

The proposals are detailed fully in the submitted general arrangement and detail drawings, and summarised for the purpose of this document as follows:

General

Expose and finish timber board floors;
New heating and hot water installations;
Electrical installations;
Overhaul and alterations to rainwater and foul drainage systems.
Minor work to fireplaces: eg new hearths, slips and lining of flues to **submitted detail**

Basement floor

New suspended timber floor and wall linings to form bike store within vault;
Reduce ground levels and lay new york stone paving to front area, with new manhole and cast iron gully;
Re-hanging and adjustment to doors;
Removal of modern brick partition wall within Bike Cloaks;
Replacement of modern wall linings; new niche cupboards;
Partition to create wet room within Bedroom 5 and associated drainage including new section of floor slab **to detail with tile finish;**
New softwood floorboard finish to floors;
New york stone finish to Lower Hall

Ground floor

Overlay oak strip structural flooring with **softwood floorboards to match existing above;**
Re-hang entrance door to original hand;
Strip out non-original paired doors; new single leaf door; new paneling to create insulated stud wall to Living room with reuse of existing paneling to detail;
Strip out cupboards and kitchen to form through Living room/ Library; create plaster downstand bulkhead between rooms;
Reduce cill to rear window and replace window with double glazed painted timber framed French Casement doors to Library to detail;
Infill opening in Library with paneling to suit with gib door to Laundry **to detail;**
Strip out glazed door; raise cill and insert new sash window to Laundry **to detail;**
Form new opening between Library and Rear Hall;
Form new opening in partition wall between Lobby and Rear Hall;
Form new door opening between Rear Hall and Dining;
Form new opening in west 1969 wall to accommodate fridge freezer;
New openings to take windows to match glazed doors to Dining **to detail;**
Form nib walls, bulkhead and adapt cornices accordingly between Kitchen and Dining **at line or original rear wall to main house;**
Reinstate original fireplace opening; new chimneypiece;
Form new opening to flank wall of original house between Kitchen and Cloaks;
Raised floor and partition walls within Side Extension to form Cloaks and WC;

Raise head of garage door opening and replace garage doors with new doors with fanlights over;
Form opening in rear wall of Side Extension; glazed extension with W20 rear doors and patent glazing over.

Garden

Extend stone paved terrace and steps to match existing; new steps to access Studio Terrace;

Extend existing steps to rear Dining glazed doors; replace treads

Form new raised oak veranda;

Replace fencing at boundary with church with extended flank wall to extension;

First floor

Rehang door to Dressing to swing > 90° to detail;

Strip central post and high level panel to landing partition;

New paneled lining to Bedroom 2/ Study to improve acoustic performance;

New gib door opening in existing paneling from Bedroom2/ Study to Study Library;

Fix existing door shut; infill door between original Linen and Family Bathroom and extend partition with new door opening to new Family Bathroom;

Strip out C20 t&g boarding to Study Library to expose earlier plaster/ skirting;

Replace rear winder stair with new straight short rise flight to detail;

Form nib walls, bulkhead and adapt cornices accordingly between Dressing and Bedroom 1;

New partitions, lining, raised floor and fit out to form Ensuite Bathroom 1 and Walk In Closet;

Replace single glazing with double glazed units to front Side Extension to detail.

Second floor

Rehang doors to Bedrooms 3 and 4 to swing > 90°;

Insert new door into landing partition;

New raised floor and reconfiguration of Ensuite Bathroom 2;

Replace paving to terrace with oak decking;

Replace single glazing with double glazed units to front Side Extension to detail;

Attic

New flush conservation rooflight to rear slope;

New stud wall to support new boilers

Raise ceiling to ridge within Landing;

Exterior

New boiler flues through roof

Strip out steel balustrades to front

New concealed satellite dish to rear box gutter

2.3 Planning history

The historic planning file has not been accessed and so planning history is limited to that uploaded to the Planning Explorer as noted within the Heritage Statement, which includes:

HB/0003382

1983

The demolition of the remainder of the building following fire damage and reinstatement to match the original

CTP/B10/12/1/HB537 & CTP/B10/12/1/15091 1972

Erection of additional storey to the side extension to provide additional bathroom facilities

Pre-application comment, was received 14th August 2017 ref 2017/2975/PRE. These comments were formalised after amendments were made in response to on-site discussions. The outstanding concerns raised in this letter have been addressed in the proposals as follows:

6.1.3 Installation of French doors

To retain some legibility of this change, it is considered to be preferable to create the opening within the existing brickwork without the addition of further red brick dressings.

The extended red brick dressings have been removed.

6.2.1 Basement

The proposed installation of glazing within the historic external door is of concern as limited assessment has been made. If it can be justified that the existing panel is a later addition then this element of the proposals may be supported, however consideration should be given to leaving this historic door in tact due to its significance as a surviving historic architectural feature.

The proposal has been omitted

6.2.2 Ground Floor

The proposed creation of a new opening within the original 18th chimney breast (a new chimneybreast was created within the centre of the room during the 1980s restoration) is considered to be inappropriate. A more discreet location for this could be towards the front elevation of the house, tucked in within the recess to the left hand side of the chimneybreast. This could be designed as a jib door so as to not impact on character of the room.

The suggested amendment has been made.

It has been informally agreed that the following documents will be submitted under separate cover to form part of this application to fulfill the requirements of the pre-application advice letter:

Exterior

Rear extension details	1:20/5/2	A3
Rear windows to bow extension	1:20/5/2	A3
Structural appraisal of new rear windows		A4
New double glazed units to existing windows	1:20/1	A3
New glazed doors	1:20/5/2	A3
New sash window to Laundry	1:20/5/2	A3
New garage doors and fanlight	1:20/5/2	A3
Ironwork repair method statement		A4

Interior

Alterations to existing doors and openings	1:20/5	A3
New internal doors	1:20/5	A3
New wet room details	1:20	A3
New ground floor partition wall/ door opening	1:20	A3
Alterations to fireplaces	1:20	A3
Replacement short rise staircase details	1:20	A3

Services

Services plans indicating pipe runs/ ducts	1:50	A3
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Any outstanding detail information required may be conditioned but it has been agreed that pre-commencement conditions can be avoided. If it transpires that this is not achievable then it is requested that the opportunity is provided to submit further additional information to be considered as part of this application to avoid delay to commencement of construction.

2.4 Policy considerations

The following policies were considered when formulating the proposals:

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Chapter 7 Requiring good design (paragraphs 56-61, 66)
Chapter 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
 (paragraphs 128,134 & 138)

The London Plan March 2016

Policy 7.4 Local character
Policy 7.6 Architecture
Policy 7.8 Heritage assets and archaeology

Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 Managing the Impact of Development
D1 Design
D2 Heritage

Supplementary Planning Guidance

CPG1 Design (2015)
Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2007

2.5 Use and amenity

The house will remain in single family occupancy. The amenity will be improved as a result of the proposal by way of landscaping works to the rear. The rear garden measures approx. 472m² and as such the extension of footprint of 5m² does not constitute loss of amenity.

2.6 Layout, Privacy and Light

The accommodation that results from the alterations to the property is suitable in terms of scale and organisation to satisfy the requirement of Camden's Core Strategy and the London Plan, without affecting the privacy for both the users of the altered dwelling and neighbouring occupants. The existing relationship between flank windows to no. 15 South Grove and the rear windows and garden to Moreton House already introduces some overlooking. An analysis of existing and proposed 'overlooking cones' concludes that the potentially increased overlooking introduced into the proposed Dining Room windows and rooflight to Moreton House are inconsequential, as agreed within the pre-application advice letter.

2.7 Refuse

The refuse bins will continue to be stored within the deep front area, within which sufficient space is available to separate recycling and refuse.

3 TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

3.0 Parking

The garage space is to be converted into studio use, reducing the available off-street car parking spaces from 2 to 1, which discourages car use in accordance with local and national policy. The applicant's family has only one vehicle and so there will be no impact on the on-street parking availability as a result.

3.1 Cycle storage

Space for 6 cycles and cycling accessories is to be provided within a Bike Store which is to be conveniently accommodated within the existing vault.

3.2 Access

Improvements are not proposed to be made to the access to and into the dwelling due to the historic significance of the building and its setting and the relative ease of existing arrangement: the existing access from the road to the front door of the dwelling involves a single step at the boundary gate, and four shallow stone steps with handrail to one side to reach the front door. Existing shallow steps drop into the front area from street level, with handrails to both sides.

Within the house, the Principal or Entrance floor is on a single level and is provided with a wc. The historic stairs will not be altered to improve access to the first and second floors, which are of a reasonable gradient of 36° and with risers no higher than 180mm. The existing stair to the basement is of very high heritage significance, and so despite its less accessible design, being steep and narrow, will not be altered. Similarly the staircase to the Attic is very steep, but any alterations are precluded by the form of the roof and the head height required by the more significant staircase below. Neither of these 'service' stair flights are proposed to be fitted with handrails but if the need arose in the future then temporary rails could be fitted without harm to the significance of the fabric.

The short rise winder flight at first half landing is to be replaced with a straight flight of no greater rise or gradient, but of more generous tread depth due to its form, which will ease access. Again handrails are not proposed to be installed but could be in the future if the need arose.

Circulation within the Principal floor will be improved by the proposed opening up of the fabric to connect the Dining via Rear Hall to Library. The adjustment of floor levels within the Side Extension mean that the ensuite bathrooms at first and second floor are more easily accessible from the associated bedrooms. The newly fitted out bathrooms will maintain or provide improved access for assisted use.

Exits to the gardens to the rear will be improved. At ground level the new double glazed doors to the rear of the Library will achieve a level threshold via a new raised veranda into the garden. Wide glazed doors will also provide improved access from the new Studio into the Studio Yard and through to the lawn.

4 SUSTAINABILITY

4.0 Fabric

Where possible upgrading of thermal elements within a building are encouraged. However the grade II listing of the house precludes any alterations to the existing fabric where such work would cause harm to the special interest of the asset. In this case it will not be possible to upgrade walls where historic brickwork, panelling or plaster exists or where such work would affect the plan form of the property. However it is proposed to improve the cavity tanking to the masonry walls at Basement level and such work results in a neutral impact on the significance of the property. Insulation is already present between the rafters to the roof, and will be retained. Where insulation does not exist presently within floor voids this is to be added to ensure that areas within the house which may not be required to be heated fully or full time, do not draw warmth from those areas which are in constant use. The existing sash windows are in good condition and those fitted during the 1980s within the front elevation of the Main House already have double glazing. Where the detail of existing glazing bar rebates allows for putty fixing the single glazing to the earlier 20C sash windows within the Side Extension, Rear Extension and Closet Wing will be replaced with 12mm thick Slimlite® double glazed units with white spacer bars. Modern staff beads are to be replaced with proprietary staff beads with integral draft brushes, if this will achieve improvement to thermal performance.

4.1 Services

A new heating and hot water installation is to be installed, to include high efficiency boilers and insulated hot water storage which will contribute significantly to a reduction in fuel consumption. Heating will be controlled over three separate zones, will be remotely operable and involve the latest intelligent technology to minimise waste.

4.2 Electrical installation

The age and quality of the house does not offer itself to complex LED lighting solutions; installations will be simple and traditional, and where there is no conflict with the character of the dwelling, light fittings will be low energy. Electrical heating to Bathrooms will be controlled on thermostatic programmers with intelligent capabilities.

4.3 Water

The capacity/ demand of sanitary fittings will comply with current building regulations for alterations to existing dwellings.

4.4 Renewables

Due to the sensitivity of the historic house, and its relatively poor thermal performance, renewable energy installations are not appropriate.

4.5 Quality and workmanship

The quality and status of the original build and quality of subsequent 20C reconstruction has, 300 years after its original construction, resulted in a high value property. This allows the owner to invest in appropriately high quality services from consultants and contractors, to carry out alterations, repairs and ongoing maintenance that will enable their own long term enjoyment but also the continued survival of this remarkable house.

5 SUMMARY

It has been shown that through careful consideration of the conservation of this significant property it is quite possible to satisfy the needs of a large family today, without unreasonable conflict with broader planning policies.