

Design & Access Statement

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE REFURBISHMENT OF THE
GROUND FLOOR FLAT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW BASEMENT
FLOOR AT 3 ETON AVENUE, LONDON NW3



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Prepared by

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CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by BB Partnership Ltd in support of a full planning application for the refurbishment of the self-contained ground floor flat and the construction of a new basement floor and associated external landscaping.
- 1.2 This application follows a recently withdrawn application (ref. 2017/4837/P), the change being a reduction to the size of the basement to reflect Camden's Local Plan 2017, specifically policy A5 which replaced the Development Plan and Core Strategy.
- 1.3 The statement is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:
- Location Plan
 - Accompanying photographs sheet
 - Existing and Proposed Drawings prepared by BB Partnership
 - Heritage Statement prepared by Alan Baxter Ltd. (dated November 2017)
 - Structural Statement prepared by Alan Baxter Ltd. (dated October 2017)
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment prepared by Dr. Frank Hope (dated July 2017)



Aerial view of the site and the surrounding area

2.0 THE EXISTING BUILDING AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The proposed site is located on the south side of Eton Avenue, at the east end of the road near the junction of Primrose Hill Road and England's Lane.
- 2.2 The site is included in the Belsize Park Conservation Area, and is within sub-area three of the Conservation Area: the Eton Avenue Area. This is typified by predominantly late-Victorian housing of the Queen Anne style, with some examples of Arts and Crafts style as well. Materials used are mainly red brick and red clay roof tiles.
- 2.3 The buildings along Eton Avenue, particularly nos. 1-9, contribute positively to the character of the area. The site itself, 3 Eton Avenue, is not listed however it is recognised as a building of architectural merit within the conservation area and is therefore a non-designated heritage asset as defined in the NPPF.
- 2.4 Originally constructed as a single-family dwelling in 1885, 3 Eton Avenue has since been converted to flats and has seen numerous changes in form since, notably circa 1959 when the west side of the house was removed and replaced with the self-contained Coach House building (3a Eton Avenue). A timber-framed conservatory was later added to the rear of the ground floor flat.
- 2.5 Further information on the history of the house and the surrounding area can be found in the accompanying Heritage Statement.
- 2.6 3 Eton Avenue is a 3-storey building with a footprint of approximately 19m long by 10m wide. It has a small front garden and large rear garden typical of the other buildings along the street.
- 2.7 The site itself is rectangular, measuring approximately 480m².

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 A search of the relevant planning history for the site on Camden's website lists the following applications:
- 3.1.1 2017/4837/P (Withdrawn 13.10.17)
Extensions to ground floor flat including basement excavation with rear extension and roof terrace, replacement glazed extension at ground floor level, and associated landscaping including erection of garden shed
 - 3.1.2 2011/1475/P (Granted 23.05.11)
Retention of shed with pitched roof and timber decking in rear garden in connection with the existing residential (ground-floor) flat
 - 3.1.3 2006/2358/P (Granted 17.07.06)
Erection of a single storey timber framed conservatory to the rear of the existing garden flat

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE (REF. 2016/7043/PRE)

- 3.2 Written pre-application advice was received on 3rd March 2017 (reference 2016/7043/PRE) which deemed the principle of basement development at the site to be acceptable.

4.0 THE PROPOSED SCHEME

- 4.1 The planning application seeks full planning permission for the refurbishment of the ground floor flat and the extension of the flat through the construction of a new basement floor and a replacement conservatory to the rear, and associated external landscaping.
- 4.2 It is also proposed to replace the existing shed to the rear of the garden with a new shed on the existing base, which matches exactly the size and appearance of the existing one being replaced.
- 4.3 This application follows application 2017/4837/P, which was withdrawn as the proposed basement would not comply with Camden's new Local Plan 2017 Policy A5 brought in to replace the Development Plan and Core Strategy. The scheme which is the subject of this application features a reduced basement in line with the new policy and feedback from the planning officer following the withdrawal of the previous application.
- 4.4 Currently the ground floor flat has a GIA of approximately 136m². The proposed lower ground floor will have a GIA of approximately 153m², resulting in a proposed total GIA of approximately 289m².

BASEMENT DEVELOPMENT

- 4.5 The design of the basement has been informed by a Basement Impact Assessment prepared Alan Baxter Ltd. which accompanies this application and should be referred to for further detail. It concludes that the proposed basement can be built safely without causing a detrimental impact to the local groundwater regime, slope stability, surface water regime or adjacent structures. It is also considered that the proposals are resistant to the risk of surface water flooding from nearby sewers.
- 4.6 The scale of the basement has been reduced as requested in the pre-application advice and feedback from the planning officer on withdrawn application 2017/4837/P. The withdrawn scheme had a basement extending approximately 4.8m into the rear garden and included a full width lightwell to the rear extending a further 1.75m into the garden.
- 4.7 The basement proposed in this application will be limited to the footprint of the existing building where possible as requested by the planning officer in feedback from the withdrawn scheme and subsequent correspondence. The existing small raised deck immediately outside the family room is retained, with the steps up from the terrace level repositioned from the front to the side. It should be noted that the floor level of the raised deck is kept as existing, ensuring there is no change to the levels of privacy or overlooking of the neighbour's property resulting from the development. Two small lightwells are proposed to the front and two rectangular lightwells are proposed to the rear to provide the basement rooms with natural light.
- 4.8 It is necessary to extend the basement under the raised deck area to enable access to the deck from the conservatory whilst also enabling the bedroom below to be served by the lightwell. It is not considered that this will result in any further impact on the appearance or character of the Conservation Area than that already resulting from the proposed scheme.
- 4.9 The lower ground floor level of the front and rear elevations will be red brick to match the existing above in accordance with the Belsize Park Conservation Area guidelines. New windows will be aligned with the existing ones above, matching the proportions and detailing.
- 4.10 The retaining walls of the rear lightwells and smaller front lightwell will be faced with render, painted a pale colour to maximise the light reflected into the basement rooms. They will not be visible from the street and therefore will have no impact on the appearance of the street-scene. The lightwells will be paved with York stone slabs in the traditional manner.
- 4.11 The proposed larger lightwell at the front of the property will have red brick walls to all sides, the brick matching the existing building.
- 4.12 Camden's Development Policy DP27: Basements and Lightwells states that the Council will consider whether the proposed scheme harms the appearance, the architectural character or setting of the property or the established character of the surrounding area. The basement will be a discreet addition to the property, with the front lightwells only partly visible from the street. As such it will cause no harm to the appearance and the setting of the property nor the character of the Belsize Park Conservation Area in accordance with Policy DP27 and Policy CPG4 (especially paragraph 2.3).

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.13 The proposed basement level and associated railings around the lightwells, the new entrance gate and the replacement conservatory to the rear are the only external changes proposed.
- 4.14 All new windows or French Doors to the proposed lower ground floor (except for those to the replacement conservatory) will be traditional timber casements, detailed to match the existing on the floors above. The existing windows at ground floor level will be retained and refurbished/repaired where necessary.
- 4.15 The depth of the existing front garden (approximately 6m to the front elevation) means a proposed front lightwell can be comfortably accommodated. Front lightwells are considered characteristic of this part of the conservation area due to the amount of properties on Eton Avenue already having basements. The retention of the existing front garden wall and hedge planting, and a sloping landscaped area to the front of the lightwell will ensure it has a minimal impact on the streetscene.
- 4.16 It is proposed to replace the existing mild steel gate with a cast-iron gate of a more suitable design and scale for the property, which when closed will obstruct any view of the proposed development from the street. The proposed development will therefore have minimal impact on the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area. The retention of the front garden and hedge planting will also help preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area in accordance with paragraphs 2.19 and 2.20 of local policy CPG4.
- 4.17 Following discussions with the planning officer it has been agreed that the smaller front lightwell will be covered by a metal grille rather than be surrounded by railings in order to ensure there is no detrimental impact on the character and visual appearance of the conservation area.
- 4.18 For these reasons, and also for the reason that the majority of buildings along the south side of Eton Avenue already have basement floors with lightwells visible from Eton Avenue, it is not considered that the proposals will have a detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area or the visual appearance of the streetscene.
- 4.19 it is not considered that the proposals will have any detrimental impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties.

REPLACEMENT CONSERVATORY

- 4.20 The existing timber-framed conservatory to the rear was erected in the 1990s in a pastiche Victorian style that although suits the architectural style of the existing house is clumsy and poorly detailed, especially where the structure abuts the rear wall and bay to the house.
- 4.21 It is proposed to replace the existing conservatory with a new, lighter-weight, metal frame conservatory of a similar footprint and of a form, scale and height that ensures it will remain visually subservient to the host building with better connections to the house. The design will be contemporary in style rather than traditional, ensuring it remains less intrusive on the existing

architectural features and improves the rear elevation of the existing when compared to the existing.

- 4.22 It therefore complies with Camden's Policies CPG1 (Design Section 4 – Extensions, alterations and conservatories), DP24 (Securing high quality design), DP25 (conserving Camden's heritage) and DP26 (managing the impact of development on occupier and neighbours).

5.0 OTHER MATTERS

- 5.1 It is not proposed to include any additional parking, with the occupants of the ground floor flat continuing their existing arrangement of requiring parking permits for street parking.
- 5.2 Communal refuse and recycling storage facilities will be provided to the front of the property, and collection will be as per the current arrangement.

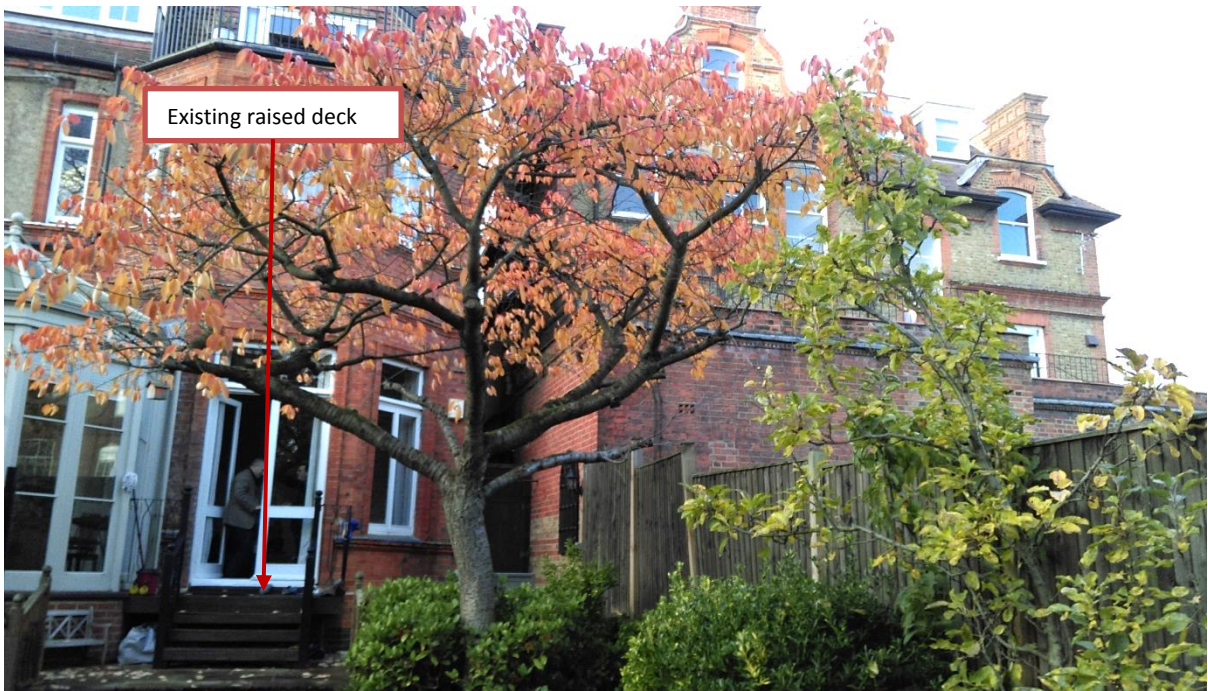
TREES

- 5.3 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been produced by Dr. Frank Hope, which accompanies the application and considers the implications of the proposed development on the existing trees on and around the site.
- 5.4 The report identifies 4 trees as being potentially affected by the development, with 2 of these being low quality and can be removed (although T1 to the front of the property should be replaced at a later date). The two large trees at the back of the garden are in a poor condition but do not need to be removed to allow the development to go ahead. As such they should be protected as per the methods set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
- 5.5 The report identifies no arboricultural reasons why the development cannot go ahead. For further information please refer to the full document which accompanies the application.

AMENITY

- 5.6 Currently the ground floor flat benefits from approximately 200m² of private outdoor amenity space to the rear. With the exception of the area lost to the rear lightwells this will be retained in the proposed scheme. As such it is considered that there will not be a detrimental impact on the private amenity space as a result of the proposed works.
- 5.7 The existing 1m brick wall and 1.4m close-boarded timber fence which forms the boundary to the east of the site (with 1 Eton Avenue and 25 Primrose Hill Road) will be retained. Feedback from the planning officer following the withdrawn scheme expressed concern that the scheme would result in increased overlooking of the neighbouring garden from the terrace area, however this will be no higher than the existing raised deck and will extend the same distance into the garden.
- 5.8 It should also be noted that any overlooking would be of garages and a driveway rather than amenity space or adjoining garden, as shown in the view from Primrose Hill Road below.





Above – View from garden showing existing raised deck and garden fence (to be retained)



Above – View of existing garden fence to be retained. Garages to other side not visible.

6.0 ACCESS STATEMENT

- 6.1 No changes are proposed to the existing vehicular access to the site.
- 6.2 No changes are proposed to the existing communal pedestrian access arrangements to the site or to the ground floor flat.
- 6.3 Temporary access to the upper floors will be formed via the existing communal entrance and stairs for the duration of the construction process, and will be kept safe and secure at all times.
- 6.4 Circulation within the flat and the communal entrance is designed to comply with Lifetime Homes and Part M requirements where possible due to the constraints of the existing building.