

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

REAR EXTENSION AT GROUND AND LOWER GROUND LEVEL,
AND RECONFIGURATION OF THE INTERNAL LAYOUT

3A MORNINGTON CRESCENT,
LONDON, NW1 7RH

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1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

This project has been commissioned by Mr Dilhan and Mrs Emily Sebastian, local residents, lawful owners and leaseholders of the property at 3A Mornington Crescent NW1 7RH since May 2014. The property in question, as well as the overall crescent it belongs to, are listed and situated within a conservation area.

In May 2017, Mr and Mrs Sebastian commissioned architectural practice, 'Twist In Architecture' to deliver the project from pre-planning to completion.

Mr and Mrs Sebastian's wish is to revive and upgrade their family home, with extending the property at the rear to fit a family sized kitchen at the ground floor and to enlarge the master bedroom underneath it at the lower ground. Alongside the extension, they wish to insert a much needed WC at the ground floor with minimal reconfiguration of the existing internal walls. The property had the rear extension at the ground floor previously, but for the reasons unknown it had been demolished at the ground floor with a portion of the external walls remaining to form the balustrade to the void above the lower ground patio. The design team has done an extensive research of the history of the building and its surroundings, and during the comprehensive design process aimed to deliver the highest quality proposal, both respecting and complementing the host building and its listed status alongside delivering an aesthetically pleasing, modern and comfortable living space fulfilling all Building Regulations standards that the current property does not conform to.

The proposal in this application comprises changes to the rear of the property only, at both the ground floor and the lower ground floor fully within the ownership of the clients.



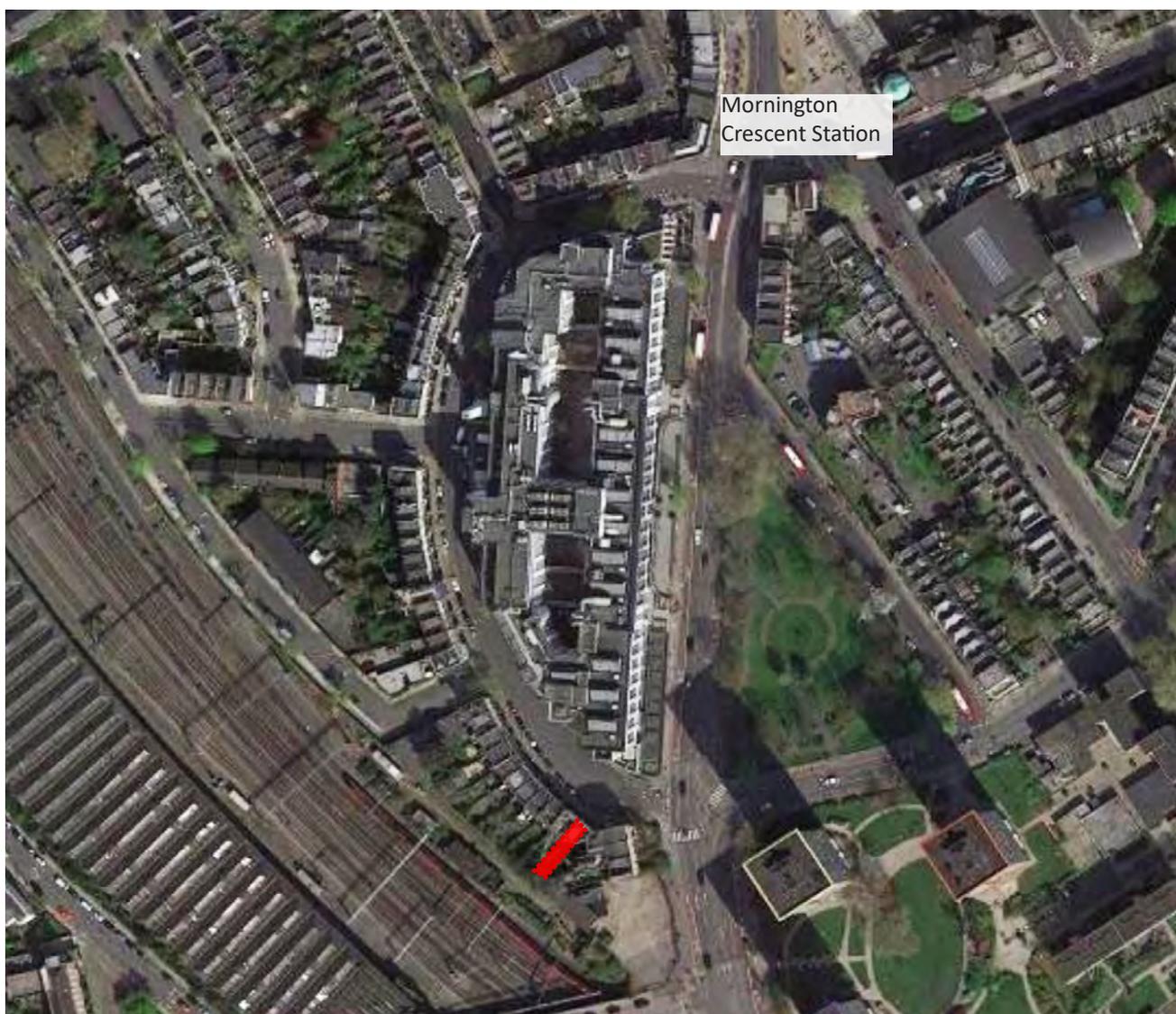
Existing rear elevation

2.1 DESCRIPTION

The property and site in question are located at 3 Mornington Crescent NW1 7RH, situated around 200m south from the Mornington Crescent Underground Station. The property falls within Camden Town conservation area, and the property is Grade II listed.

Existing property at 3 Mornington Crescent is a period terraced building, built in 1820s, consisting of a ground floor with 3 storeys above, and the lower ground level underneath. The property was separated into flats in 1973 with Mr and Mrs Sebastian owning the maisonette Flat A spanning the ground and lower ground levels, including the rear garden with the access from their property only.

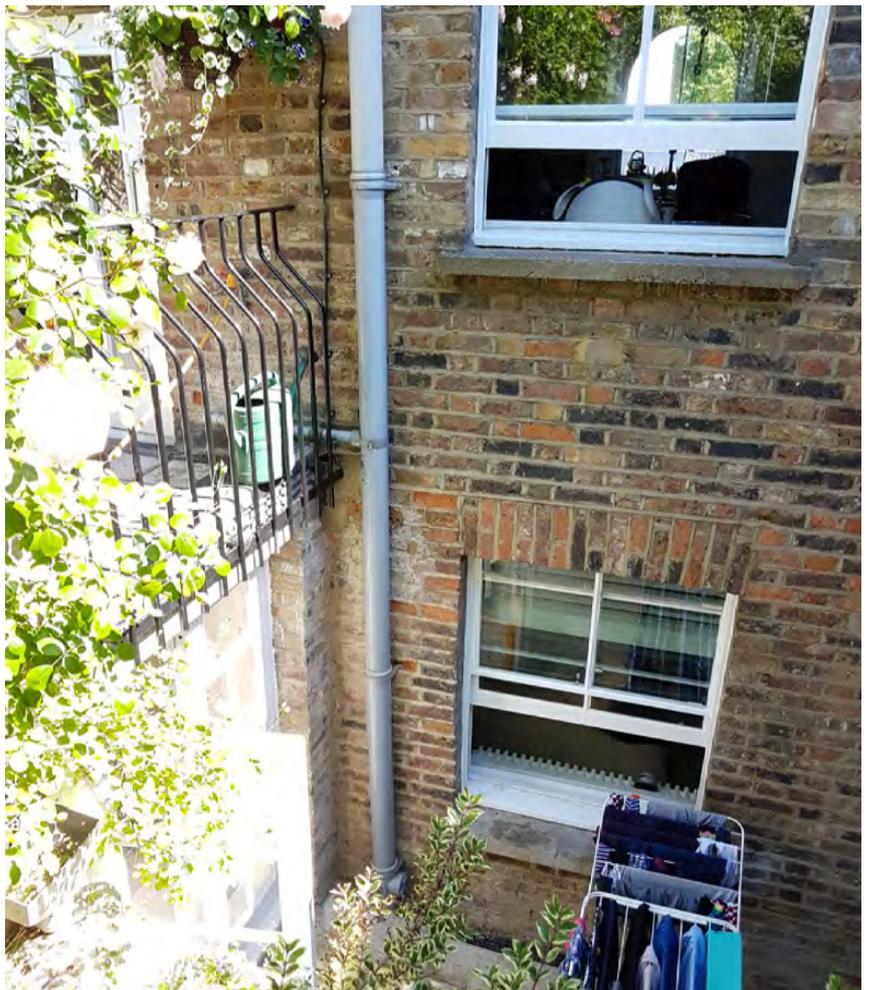
The rear garden is located roughly at the ground floor level, with a small patio located at the lower ground level with the access via the balcony doors of one bedroom, and the window of the other bedroom overlooking it. The rear garden is accessed via the private stairwell, three steps down from the main ground floor level on the way to the lower ground. The access to the garden is via a narrow and small doorway, only 1700mm tall, presenting a quite constrained single access to the rear garden. The property had a rear extension at the ground floor as well as the lower ground, but for the unknown reasons it was removed at the ground floor in the past, with a portion of external walls kept to form a balustrade to the patio below.



Location Plan | NTS 



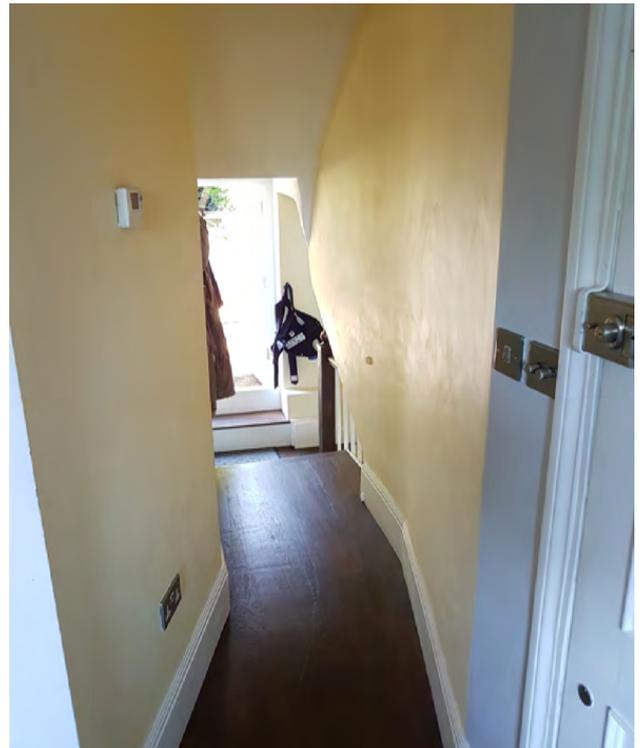
Existing access to the rear garden



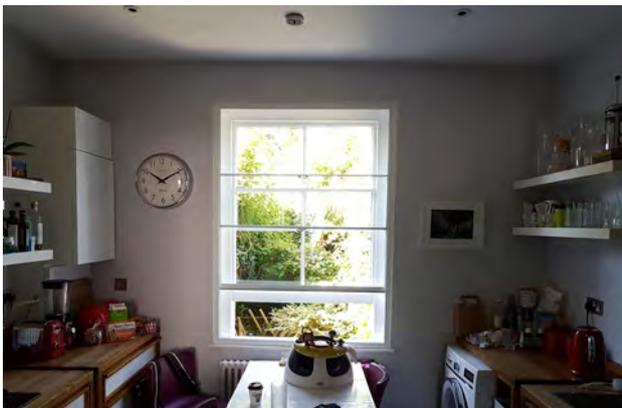
View to the patio and rear elevation



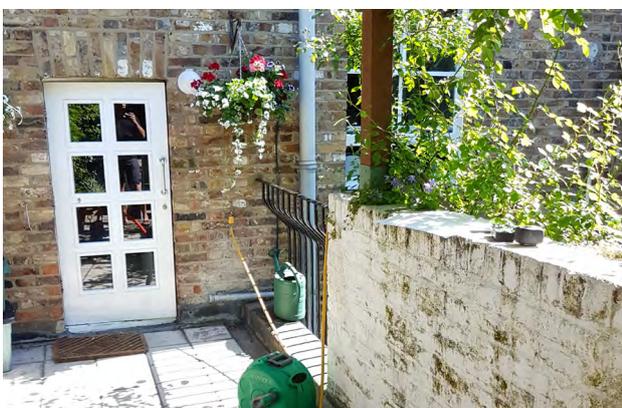
Living room & existing features (not part of the proposal)



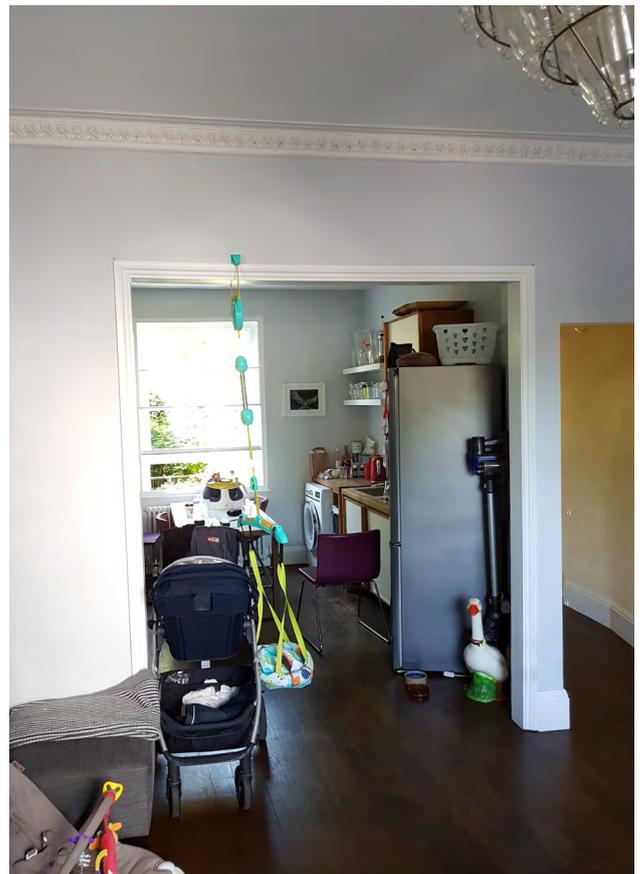
Corridor towards the main stairwell & garden door



Kitchen, window and the spine wall (right hand side)



Rear garden, leftover walls from previous extension



Living room towards the corridor and kitchen

2.2 PLANNING HISTORY

The site at 3 Mornington Crescent had two relevant planning applications:

1. Conversion of 2 & 3 Mornington Crescent, N.W.1, into 7 self-contained dwelling units, including the erection of a 2-storey rear extension on No.3.

Status: Conditional 15-03-1973

2. Internal refurbishment of ground floor to include removal of modern inserted lobby in front room, new kitchen, replacement fire surround and replacement of floor boards.

Status: Granted 13-02-2007

We would like to point your attention to the following relevant applications of similar proposals for listed properties all granted by Camden Council recently (non exhaustive list):

1. Application Number 2007/5235/L

Site Address 6a Mornington Crescent London NW1 7RH

Proposal: Internal alterations at ground floor level including relocation of an entry door to ground floor flat and modifications to partitioning.

Status: Granted 21-12-2007

Relevance: Similar internal alterations at the spine wall and internal staircase at a similar listed property in the same terrace.

2. Application Number 2015/2042/P

Site Address 5 Gloucester Crescent London NW1 7DS

Proposal: Erection of single storey rear extension to lower ground level with new external staircase to ground level to create roof terrace with glazed balustrade; installation of one rooflight on roof level and replacement with timber sash windows to rear; internal alterations including removal of partition walls to reconfigure internal layout of lower/ground floors and part lowering of 2nd floor to accommodate shower room.

Status: Granted 12-08-2015

Relevance: Extension of a listed property at the garden level; non-historic plan form extension has been granted without any evidence of any previous historic extensions.

3. Application Number 2007/5823/L

Site Address 54 Gloucester Crescent London NW1 7EG

Proposal: Erection of part one, part two-storey rear extension and internal alterations to the existing single-family dwellinghouse.

Status: Granted 18-02-2008

Relevance: Extension of a listed property at the garden level; non-historic plan form extension has been granted without any evidence of any previous historic extensions.

4. Application Number 2013/2908/P

Site Address 69 Arlington Road London NW1 7ES

Proposal: Erection of new part-width rear extension, following demolition of existing and installation of glass roof to attic of dwelling house.

Status: Granted 05-08-2013

Relevance: Extension of a listed property at the ground and lower ground levels; non-historic plan form extension has been granted without any evidence of any previous historic extensions.

5. Application Number 2014/6767/P

Site Address 13 Arlington Road London NW1 7ER

Proposal: Alterations to rear openings at ground and 1st floor levels, including a glass balustrade, and installation of new sash windows facing the rear and side.

Status: Granted 24-03-2015

Relevance: Alterations of the historic rear elevation to create new openings, loss of historic fabric

6. Application Number 2015/3065/P

Site Address 27a Burton Street London WC1H 9AQ

Proposal: External alterations including single storey rear infill extension at lower ground floor level and associated internal works.

Status: Granted 01-09-2015

Relevance: Alterations of the historic rear elevation to create new openings, non-historic plan form extension has been granted without any evidence of any previous historic extensions.

2.3 PRE-PLANNING ADVICE

In July 2017, the design team submitted the design proposal with the accompanying heritage statement to the Council for the pre-application advice, and met on site with the planning and heritage officers from Camden Council.

On 30th of August we received the written advice stating that it is likely the proposal as submitted would fail at the planning application.

The design team has seriously considered all comments from Camden Council, both verbally during the meeting, and the written advice and are satisfied that we have addressed all concerns and amended the design accordingly. Alongside the amended proposal, the design and heritage consultants have formulated the following comments in response to the written pre-application note by Camden Council:

8. Design | Extension | Ground Floor

- *Previously we proposed the removal of the window and enlargement of the opening for the improved access by removing additional brickwork to the sides. Considering the Council's advice we have changed the design and the access to the extension is the same width as the window, resulting in no additional brickwork loss.*
- *It is acknowledged that most approved extensions in the crescent are of 'closet wing' type but in further analysis of these extensions, it is clear that these are poorly envisaged and executed with their construction further blocking the listed building's fabric and therefore having a detrimental impact on the building's design and historic assets. We believe the solution presented with this application is an improvement in exposing and treating the listed building and the historic assets in the crescent.*
- *The advice states that **'There would be no objection in principle (subject to design) to reinstate the extension seen on the 1970s drainage plans, which would be more in line with others seen on this terrace'** but unfortunately this solution is impossible to execute due to the limitations of the existing access. Such project would not be able to obtain statutory Building Regulations approval, and it is unfeasible and not safe in the modern age to access the kitchen of a family home through a 1700mm tall opening.*
- *Furthermore, in regards to the size / width of the extension, the design team with the heritage consultant undertook further research of the relevant Camden and National Policies and we concluded there are no requirements to limit the scope of any extension to a historic size of previous extensions. This is further demonstrated by the previously approved and recent extension projects with alterations of the rear elevation, performed on listed properties within Camden Council - some examples listed on the previous page.*

8. Design | Extension | Lower Ground Floor

- *The external steps to the garden are not a typical feature in a historic building of this type, but they would significantly improve the quality of living and safety for the residents. The ability to go to their own private garden from their bedrooms, and furthermore to gain an additional fire escape route for two bedrooms is seen as hugely beneficial by the design team and the clients. Furthermore, this is not a feature that would be visible from the front of the building or virtually anywhere else apart from the handful of flats above the Flat A.*

8. Design | Internal Alterations

- *The detailed investigation on the stairwell and the spine wall and whether they are historic will be performed upon the Planning approval, but it is worth to note that preliminary observations by the heritage consultant point that the stairwell is not original and the new opening for in the spine wall would have a very limited impact upon the overall solid to void ratio of the wall as well as the spatial quality of the rear room.*

9. Basement Excavation

- Detailed exploration and the recommendations given in the Basement Impact Assessment by the structural engineering consultants. It is worth to note that during the excessive research, nothing detrimental to the proposal has been unearthed.

10. Amenity

- Considering the Council's advice we have altered the design of the skylight and included a slim and tall rib structure to ensure there is no issue with regard to the overlooking or direct light spill onto the neighbouring windows. This has been tested both in 2D and 3D until a satisfactory design has been found. The design team maintains that the skylight position should remain under the existing window, given the overall balance of solid / opening of the facade.

11. Conclusion

We have altered the proposal considerably so a bare minimum of the historic fabric has been disturbed, as detailed in this document and the project drawings.

In terms of the historic plan form, the only available option for the project is to have the access to the extension and subsequently to the garden via the existing window opening due to the limited height of the existing rear doorway, and as such the width of the extension would have to increase to allow for the suitable access. Furthermore, in regards to the size / width of the extension, the design team with the heritage consultant had further research of the relevant Camden and National Policies and we concluded there are no requirements to limit the scope of any extension to a historic size of previous extensions.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 MASSING AND VOLUME

The proposed works comprise rebuilding the previous ground floor extension in a slightly enlarged format, and extending the existing lower ground extension to match. Due to the fact the lower ground extension has only one visible elevation, and it is not visible from virtually anywhere apart from the flat's garden, the proposed works appear as a single storey extension only.

The extension edge towards the neighbouring building at 2 Mornington Crescent has a 1.2m gap to the boundary wall, whilst towards the 4 Mornington Crescent the extension is right at the boundary, as the previous extension - now demolished. In order to maintain sensible ceiling height at the extension the portion of that boundary wall is proposed to increase in height for 6 courses of brick, to match the existing boundary wall. Such alteration, and the increase, will have, in our opinion, a negligible effect on the natural light provisions / overlooking at the neighbouring side. Also, the level will be below that of the current trellis work and thick foliage on top of the boundary wall.

The extent of the proposed extension, especially the width, is heavily constrained with the planning of the original house. Due to the only available access point being at the place of the existing rear window (explained in detail at the following pages), the width had to be increased to allow for the access, and it is matching the existing rear elevation window line.



Axo view of the proposed extension

3.2 LAYOUT

The proposed layout comprises internal and external alterations to both levels of the existing maisonette flat with the enlargement of the existing rear extension at the lower ground floor, and the erection of the same sized ground floor extension. The existing flat contains several shortcomings in terms of the general use and practicalities, especially when used by a growing family, and the major issues are to do with the following:

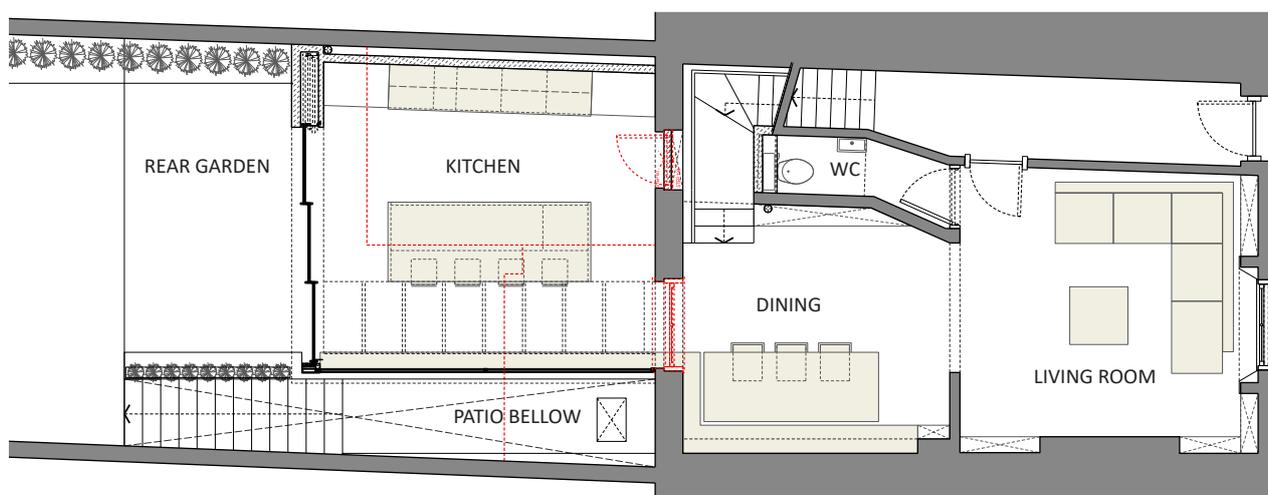
- Lack of a decent sized kitchen and dining areas;
- Lack of a ground floor WC;
- Access to the rear garden is too narrow and short, well below acceptable limit to pass Building Regulations, and as such poses as a serious health and safety risk for the users.
- The existing extension at the lower ground has never been built properly and has continuous damp issues and fabric problems that are in constant need of rectifying, rendering the bedroom uninhabitable.

The design team has considered the brief extensively, and paired with the in-depth study of the host building, heritage assets, and the overall architecture of the terrace, the team has proposed a high quality spatial scheme with the sensible layout, clearly planned zones and the highest quality materials complementing the existing material palette.

Ground Floor:

Ground floor had an extension in the past, but it was demolished for unknown reasons before the current owners purchased the flat. The extension was accessed via the same doorway that leads to the rear garden currently. The design team has considered a proposal where the new extension would be of the same width as the demolished extension, but that proposal had to be discarded - as there are no available options to enlarge the access via the existing doorway. Therefore, considering those limitations, such a proposal would not pass the statutory Building Regulations, and it would be deemed unfit for use. It is worth stating that the current access to the garden has the same limitations and would have been deemed unfit for use if it was proposed now, given the current regulations.

The only available option for the access to the new extension, and the rear garden, is through the existing rear ground floor window. Considering the fact the property is listed, the design team is planning to limit the disruption to the building's fabric, and the proposal considers the removal of the window (non-original window) and the brickwork underneath only. The existing single leaf door to the garden would be removed as well, and salvaged bricks to match existing would be used to brick up the opening, set a brick away to express the former doorway. Part of the project design is to expose the rear brick wall internally with all existing openings and arches above kept as features, in effect preserving the whole elevations to be seen without obstructions.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan | NTS 

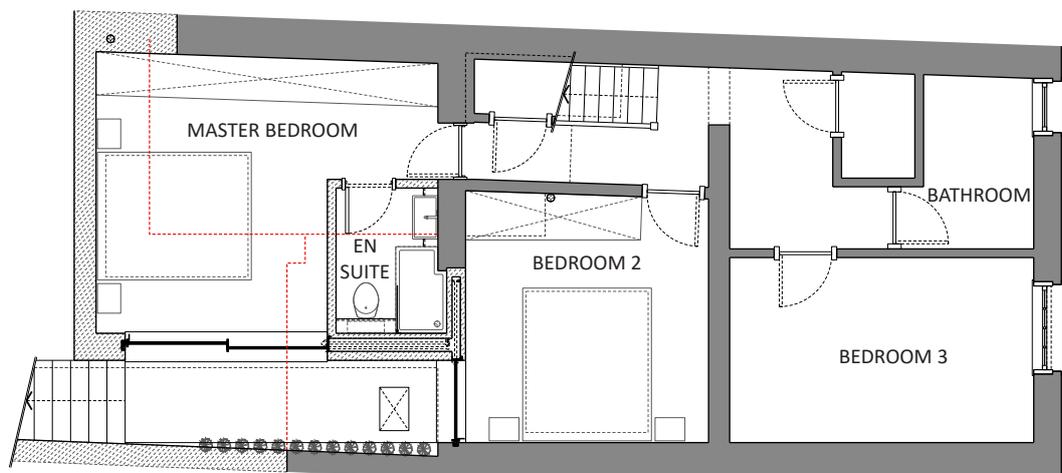
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The only proposed internal alteration is to insert a much needed WC to the ground floor. Similarly as above the design team considered only the proposals where the disturbance to the existing fabric would be minimal, where the new WC would have been fitted within the existing corridor. Paired with fitting the WC in the existing corridor zone, the top three steps of the non-original stairwell are also altered to create a much better flow in the house.

Lower Ground Floor:

Lower ground floor comprises the alterations to the Bedroom 2 where the existing window would have to be removed and blocked, and a new opening created closer to the boundary wall due to the enlarged extension.

The enlargement of the existing lower ground rear extension would comprise the creation of a larger master bedroom and the associated en-suite. Both affected bedrooms at lower ground would have direct access to the patio. The new stairwell access to the main rear garden at the ground floor is envisaged, to further benefit the functionality and the flow within the house, and also to act as an additional fire escape from those two bedrooms. The additional fire escape is not required considering the current Building Regulations, but it is prudent to strive for the highest fire safety standards given recent high profile cases. The design team believes the additional fire escape would greatly benefit the security of the house and its residents.



Lower Ground Floor Plan | NTS 

3.3 APPEARANCE, MATERIALITY & CONTEXT

The proposed extension's build-up is of a lightweight & airy construction, dominated by high quality glazing elements, and a thin, elegant fair-face concrete element gently touching the original brick wall. The design team's first priority was to limit the disturbance of the original fabric, and to complement it with the new addition. The only alteration of the building's elements at the main, ground floor is the removal of the rear window and the garden single leaf door, both confirmed not to be original, but modern replicas. The only alteration of the building's fabric at the ground floor level is the removal of the portion of the brick wall underneath the rear window to make room for the only possible lawful (Building Regulations) access to the extension and subsequently the rear garden.

Fully conscious of the potential perceived negative impact on the listed building by the removal of the original fabric and replicas of the original elements, the design team aims to offset this by the highest quality design of the new addition with the following benefits:

- The width of the existing window is kept as the new access to the extension, keeping the balance and the clean lines of the rear elevation; This is further aided by the matching width of the skylight above
- The rear wall is preserved entirely as a main feature of the interior in the new design, including the arches above the existing openings and all existing detailing; Compared to the existing limited views due to the foliage, trellis and other clutter, the proposal allows for much more exposed existing fabric
- Fitting the historic and matching corncicing details to the dining room, establishing a clear division between the historic and modern spaces

As explained previously, the design team has considered a 'traditional' approach where the extension would match the previously built and demolished extension, with traditional construction, but we have found that the access to the extension would not be able to pass the obligatory Building Regulations standards, and such a construction in terms of materiality would further confuse the original host building with the new addition. The design team feels that to preserve the historic fabric of the original building for the future generations, the best proposal for this project would adopt modern, complementary materials and construction to complement and accentuate the historic.



Proposed extension

At the lower ground, the enlarged extension would have limited effect on the original fabric and elements, with only the existing non-original replica rear window being replaced and a portion of the brick wall removed (and reused in the project) to allow for the new glazing and the access to the lower ground patio.

With the fair-faced concrete and glazing elements fitted in minimal white coloured aluminium frames, the proposed materials of the side of the lower ground extension is white aluminium panelling to reflect as much natural light as possible and to further limit the material palette to accentuate the original brick.

The roof of the extension is dark grey zinc roofing with integrated gutter to present a clean, high quality 5th elevation to the residents of flats above. Given that the property edges the mainline railway at the end of the garden, there are virtually no neighbours opposite of the property, and subsequently there are no neighbouring properties that can see the extension from any angle apart from a handful of windows from the flats above the Flat A. Despite this fact, the design team has put every care to design every elevation, as well as the interior of the flat with utmost care to detail using only the highest quality materials. To limit the light pollution from the new skylight to the flats above, and to limit any overlooking issues, a thin and tall ribs are fitted underneath the skylight to channel the light in a desirable way. Whilst we have minimised any impact on neighbours above, it is worth to note that the windows directly above are from the corridor and the kitchen - no habitable rooms.



Proposed interior view and the exposed original brick wall

3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

This project has been conceived with an awareness of environmental, social and economic sustainability. Both the applicant, and the agent, Twist In Architecture are committed to realising an exemplar project of sustainable design.

New planned elements will be constructed utilising modern construction method with more than required thermal and acoustic insulation built in the new floors, external walls, roof structure and the slab. The new glazing is a high quality triple glazed units within thermally broken aluminium frames. Modern materials and techniques will guarantee high quality of build is provided, with minimal building time to ensure minimal discomfort to the neighbours.

Furthermore the design team will comply with current Building Regulations and other required standards.

3.5 ACCESS & AMENITY

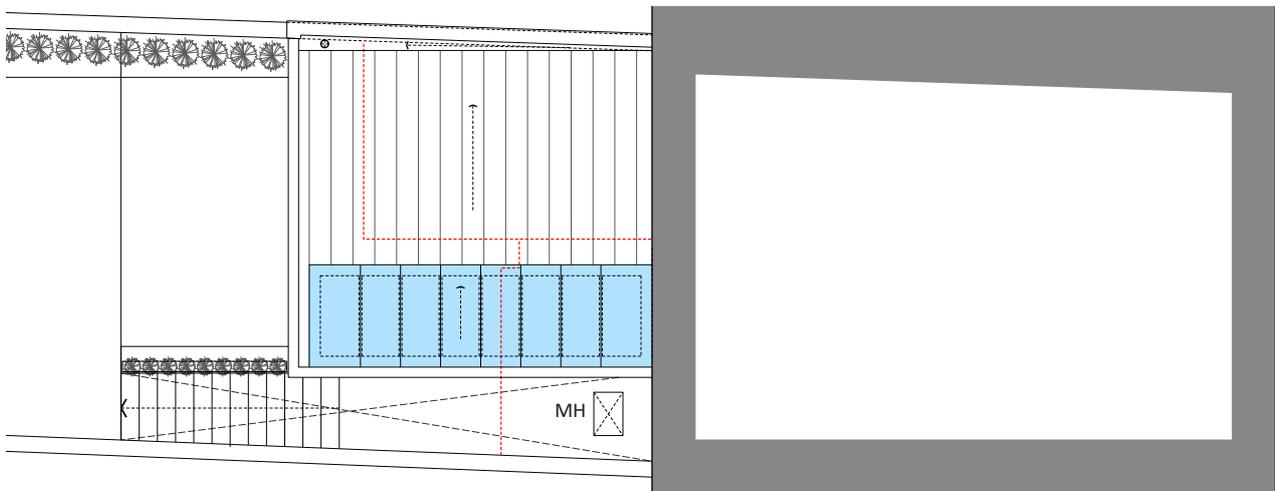
The access to the new flat remains the same, with the alteration of three internal steps of the stairwell to the lower ground ensuring easier communication without height issues. The newly proposed access to the extension and subsequently the rear garden is a considerable improvement comparing to the existing, and it will be of a sufficient height, unlike the current access.

The rear garden is re-paved and will be accessed from the new extension step-free as well as the new extension from the original house, further ensuring safety and inclusiveness, as proposed by the legislation.

3.6 FLOODING AND SURFACE WATER

The site is identified within Flood Zone 1 in the Flood Map for Planning in the Environment Agency's maps section, and as such it has a low risk of flooding and it does not require flood risk assessment.

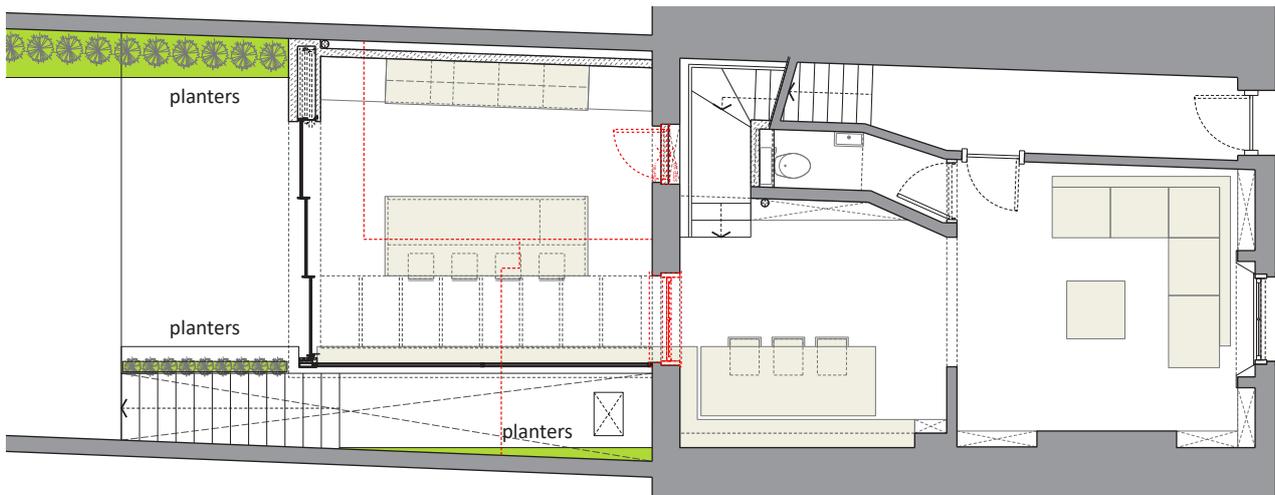
Rain water collected at the extension's roof will be connected to the main sewage from the manhole located at the patio at the lower ground. Surface water from the patio and the portion of the rear garden will be collected to the same manhole as well.



3.7 LANDSCAPE AND FOLIAGE

With the new proposal, and deeper extension there will be some minor shrubs and climbers removed and tidied up, but no tree is planned to be removed or altered due to the proposals. All more matured trees are situated towards the back of the garden.

In keeping with the current lush feel of the rear garden there is a series of proposed planters for climbers, shrubs, flowers and other foliage at both lower ground and ground levels.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan | NTS 



Mature tree at the end of the garden

4.0 PLANNING POLICY COMPLIANCE

All planning guidance has been observed and consulted in the design process. This page states detailed compliance with policies D1 & D2, with the policy D2 and all matters with historic fabric further analysed in the separate Heritage Statement by the heritage consultant. Basement Impact Assessment by the structural engineer consultant, studies policy A5 and the buildability of the basement extension.

Camden Local Plan 2017 - Policy D1: requires development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality which improves the function, appearance and character of the area (abbreviated).

We believe we demonstrated with our proposal the highest architectural and urban design quality, that is serving to improve the appearance of a listed building, and the whole conservation area. We would like to point further a considerable improvement of the functionality of the house and an increase in safety.

Carefully considering all points (a to o), the design team feels especially to have excelled at the points, c, d, e & h, due to its careful consideration of the construction, materials and the character of the host building and the overall conservation area, and the improvement on health and safety features and the provision of natural light.

Camden Local Plan 2017 - Policy D2: the Council will preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings (abbreviated).

The design team has put all the efforts in preserving the historic fabric, with the limited disturbance. The new addition, in parallel with vastly improving the living quality of its residents, further serves to enhance the host building and its historic assets by fully accentuating and exposing them.

The design team has carefully considered the relevant policies for Designated Heritage Assets, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, with the proposed minimal removal of the existing fabric at the main level of the building - representing only limited brickwork underneath the window, and the loss of the ground floor window. The bricks from underneath the window are planned to be salvaged and used in the project, as listed before, and the greater benefit of the proposal is the full exposure of the rear wall in the interior of the flat, with all detailing kept and visible. We believe the proposed access via the ground floor window is the only acceptable and lawful way to access the extension and the rear garden, and as such outweighs the minimal loss of brickwork underneath the replica window, and the window itself, as it was confirmed that the window is a replacement. We state again, that the current access is not according to Building Regulations, and as such poses health and safety risks.

5. DESIGN TEAM

Twist In Architecture was formed officially in 2012 as an architectural & design practice.

Twist In Architecture is a professional design practice founded on complete design delivery through creativity, energy, focus and detail. Working across residential developments to civic buildings and master planning, we have delivered projects in concept design and detail documentation stages to on site role and practical completion. Our growing portfolio contains built and on-going projects in the United Kingdom, Australia, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.

We believe that every project is unique and that it should respond to the environment, climate, location, brief and client's needs in a truly unique way. We avoid repetition and recycling of ideas as this enables our work to be individually tailored to each project.

More information is available on:
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