

31 MACKESON ROAD, NW3

PLANNING STATEMENT

TO ACCOMPANY THE APPLICATION FOR A VARIATION OF A
CONDITION (MINOR MATERIAL AMENDMENT) FOR THE AMENDED
DESIGN OF TERRACE PLANTER BOXES



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RIBA CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 We are architects acting on behalf of Anahita and Niall Kirkpatrick who are the owners and occupiers of the single-family house at 31 Mackeson Road, NW3.
- 1.2 This Statement accompanies their application for the variation of a condition to allow for the amended design of the fixed planter boxes to the roof terrace.
- 1.3 The key design aim has been to ensure that the proposed planter boxes are functional for easy maintenance and to provide the right volume of lightweight soil required for our clients' plants to grow and flourish, without any additional incursion on the neighbouring building's amenity.

2.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

- 2.1 Prior to refurbishment works at 31 Mackeson Road, the flat roof, which can be seen from nearby roof terraces and windows, was unsightly and barren: please refer to the aerial photographs in Appendix 1 that show that previously existing flat roof condition.
- 2.2 The planters are constructed from timber and plywood around the proposed slender galvanised steel uprights that support the terrace handrail. The timber and plywood is over-clad with pale grey Millboard - an extremely durable plank material that is resistant to rotting and which has also been used for the decking to the approved roof terrace.
- 2.3 The proposed plants are being carefully selected by our clients' landscape designer, all to be chosen for their suitability for use at roof level so as to resist wind and flourish in the long term. To assist with keeping the plants healthy and sufficiently irrigated a cold water tap has been installed at terrace level: a 7-day timer will be attached to the tap and that will feed a perforated hose (wrapped in a geotextile membrane) that will run through the planters.
- 2.4 As well as enhancing the immediate vicinity with well-maintained greenery the planter boxes also serve to provide privacy for nearby residents by screening and containing the usable terrace at low level along two sides and restricting it to an area that is set 1.4 metres from the roof edges - in accordance with LB Camden's policy for roof terraces, and giving a usable terrace area identical to that shown on the terrace plan for which approval has been granted by the Council.
- 2.5 Following expert guidance from a landscape designer, who advised our clients that at least 500mm deep growing material should be provided so as to ensure that their plants remain in a healthy condition at roof terrace level, the proposed planters are larger than currently proposed on the approved planning drawings.
- 2.6 The resulting higher level of the planters makes them significantly easier and safer to maintain and to weed than would have been the case with the planters shown on the approved planning application drawings.

3.0 AMENITY

- 3.1 Please refer to the accompanying 726_PL_211 NEIGHBOURING AMENITY DIAGRAM, which assesses whether the planters have any significant effect on amenity in respect of the immediately neighbouring occupants of 29 Mackeson Road
- 3.2 This sectional diagram illustrates how the proposed planters make little to no additional incursion on the neighbouring building's amenity. A line drawn at 45

degrees up from the mid-point of the first floor habitable room window of the adjacent flats at n° 29 Mackeson Road firstly, and primarily, intersects with n° 31's existing flank wall elevation.

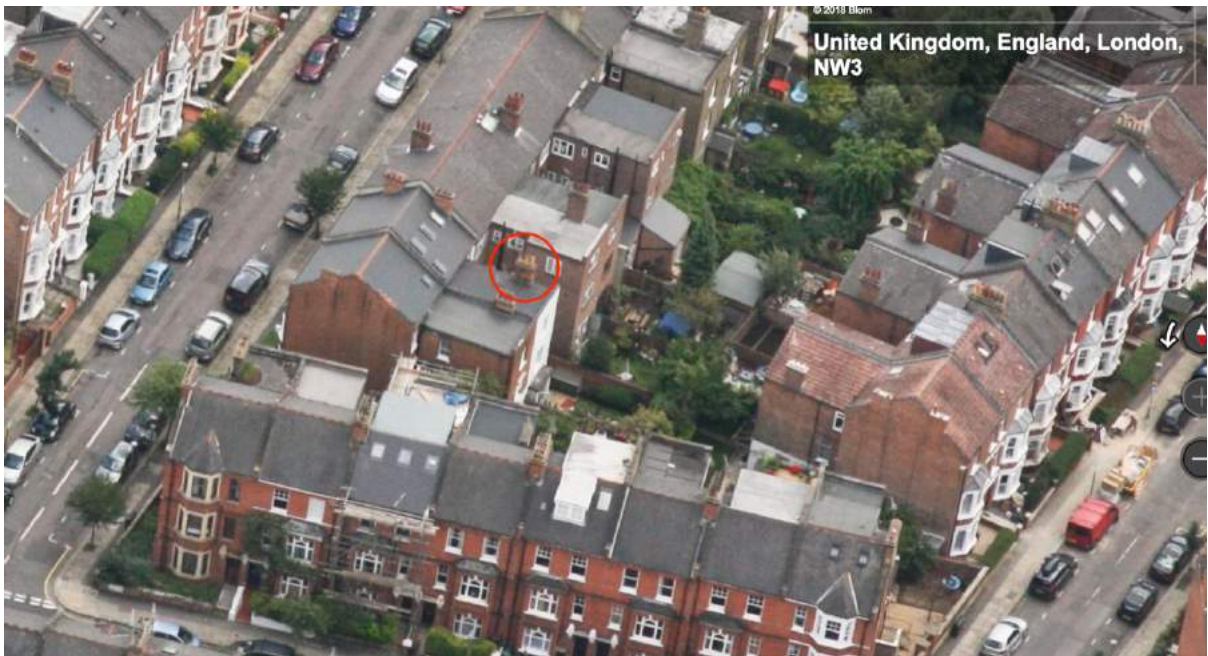
- 3.3 Another key factor that needs to be taken into account in any evaluation of the planters is that at the start of the recent refurbishment works at 31 Mackeson Road our clients removed from the edge of the flat roof a tall existing chimney-stack that had previously impacted significantly on the potential views out from the flank windows of the rear of the flats at n°29. We have noted that previously existing stack on our drawings; please also refer to the attached screenshots (Appendix 1), taken from Bing aerial maps and our pre-construction photograph (Appendix 2) that show the position and size of that chimney stack. The photograph also shows the unsightly plastic vent pipe that was visible from n°29 and has now been diverted and also illustrates how the stack, topped by two large TV aerials, was leaning significantly and presented a potential safety risk to the occupants of both n°s 31 and 29. The removal of that stack from the eastern edge of the flat roof of n°31 was included in the proposals that had been granted planning approval by the Council.
- 3.4 We would reiterate our belief, and that of our clients, that the amenity benefit to the immediately adjoining residents from the removal of this chimney stack and of the TV aerials should be factored into the Council's assessment of the proposed planter boxes whose greenery will by definition represent an environmental benefit at roof level of the kind which Camden council in its written policy guidance seeks to encourage.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Given all the above factors we are therefore firmly of the opinion that not only do the proposed planters not impact negatively on amenity levels in this locality but that they actively enhance them. The planters have been designed with great care and have been built with precision using the highest quality and most durable specified materials. The proposed lightweight soil (currently already on site) has been chosen as it is resistant to drying out and this - coupled with the proposed inbuilt irrigation system and the wind-break effect of the slatted timber privacy screen on the boundary with n°33 (which formed part of the planning approval) - will provide an environment for the selected plants to grow and prosper. This will create a long-term healthy and calming natural environment - providing forage for bees and other wildlife - and whose appearance will be enjoyed not only by our clients but by all nearby residents whose windows or roof terraces have views of this roof.

Appendix 1.

Below images sourced from Bing Maps showing the existing roof terrace with the removed chimney stack highlighted.



Appendix 2.

Below photograph taken before refurbishment works, showing tall existing chimney-stack that had previously impacted significantly on the potential views out from the flank windows of the rear of the flats at n°29.

