

## **Design and Access Statement**

**Proposed Additional Floor to be added to the Existing Approved  
Lower Ground Floor, Ground and First Floor Rear Extensions plus  
Internal Alterations and Refurbishment**

**of**

**49 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 6PG**

Prepared by:

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## ***Introduction:***

### **Location:**

The application site in question is located at 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue (herein 'application site') and originally comprises of an 842 sq m linked detached Victorian property. The building is arranged over 5 floors with lower ground floor, raised ground floor and 3 storeys above. The third floor is a recessed area and smaller in size situated in the hipped roof. To the rear of the property there is a large garden.

Although the building is not listed it is situated within the Fitzjohn's Netherhall Gardens Conservation Area. Adjacent to the site, to the south, is the St Mary's School. The school is operationally separate from the application site albeit there was originally a physical connection at the ground floor with a shared roof. The remainder of the surrounding properties are predominantly residential in use, being either flats or dwelling houses.

49 Fitzjohn's Avenue is located on a fairly steep sloping site where the adjoining properties are considerably larger and tend to dominate the street scene. 51 Fitzjohn's Avenue, situated higher up the road, is some seven metres taller at eaves level than 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue and the difference in levels of the ridges of the roofs of the two buildings is even greater. Travelling down Fitzjohn's Avenue the total height of 51, 49 and 47 do not step down with the slope of the road. In fact, it is clear that the ridge level of 47 Fitzjohn's Avenue is approximately 1 metre higher than the ridge of 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue.

### **The Building:**

49 Fitzjohn's Avenue was originally designed as a single red brick detached house consisting of a lower ground floor, a ground floor, two upper floors and roof space. The house is constructed of solid brick walls with timber floors with a main pitched tiled roof with various flat roof areas built to provide the required headroom within the roof space for various accommodations. During its life it was converted for use as a convent (The Congregation of Jesus) where it was connected to the St. Mary's School at both basement and ground floor levels by a single storey flat roof ground floor extension. During the latter part of its use very little money had been spent maintaining the building and the grounds/rear garden had been totally neglected and become completely overgrown.

### **Recent Planning History:**

The process in obtaining the necessary Planning Approvals to revitalize the building started with an application to change the 'Sui Generis' use to that of a single dwelling and that approval was obtained on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2014 (Ref: 2013/6477/P).

Following receiving pre-application advice from Camden Planning Authority an application was made and approved on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 (Ref: 2015/5379/P) for an extension of the existing Lower Ground Floor; the Ground Floor and First Floor, plus the complete internal refurbishment of the building to provide both a two bedroom and a three bedroom apartment at Low Ground Floor Level; a two bedroom and a three bedroom apartment at Ground Floor Level; a four bedroom apartment at First Floor Level and a four bedroom apartment at Second and Third Floor levels. The third floor being within the roof of the building.

Following that approval, we made some minor alterations to the location of some windows and added the required smoke vent rooflight for which we obtained Planning Approval dated 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018 (Ref: 2017/4895/P) for the variation of Condition 2 of the previous planning approval.



The Original Front Elevation of 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue showing how subservient 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue is to 51 Fitzjohn's Avenue.



The original rear elevation of 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue which shows how subservient 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue is to rear of 51 Fitzjohn's Avenue.



The original rear elevation of 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue which shows how subservient 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue is to the Listed Building of 47 Fitzjohn's Avenue.

## ***Proposals:***

### **Outline Proposals:**

The scheme presented back in November 2014 included the addition of a further two stories to the height of the property and significant alterations to the roof scape to provide the space for the then proposed twelve apartments. Camden's written response to a pre-application meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014 stated that such a proposal would *"create a significant bulk and massing to the rear and height of the property". "It would increase the footprint of the property as well as its overall size by around 80 percent". "The grounds of the site are large and perhaps there is some scope to develop an extension of some kind, however the proposed five storey rear extensions would represent an unacceptable enlargement of the property destroying the property's current structure and historic value". "Additionally, the proposed fenestration is very different to the existing and is unsympathetic in its scale and general design by way of its windows, size, scale, stepped design and roof design". "The proposed two storey roof extensions are also not supported as they would be unsympathetic, too large and have a harmful impact on the existing roof design".*

Camden Borough Council having accepted the principle of residential use for this site and having approved our proposed extensions to the rear of the property and internal alterations to produce the necessary additional space to allow us to design a small number of much needed apartments (six number apartments), we feel that the addition of a single floor immediately above the second floor, following the same footprint of that second floor, would allow us to provide just one additional apartment. Such an upwards extension designed to be sympathetic to the age and character of the building would not be detrimental to the street scene because, 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue is presently set between two very imposing, in height and bulk, buildings.

Upon reviewing Camden's response to a pre-application meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2014 we have in the design of the additional floor taken into consideration the following: -

- a) The original additional two storey proposal ignored the existing footprint of the second floor. The rear extension was considerably deeper at these levels and was not representative of the scale of the original building. This new proposal will add just one floor above the existing second floor which has the same footprint as the original building and thus this will not significantly increase the bulk of the building.
- b) The proposal for an additional floor will increase the total number of apartments on site to seven which is well below the twelve proposed back in November 2014.
- c) This additional floor will be identical in design to that of the presently approved design of the second floor, forming a single duplex apartment mainly set on the third floor but having a fourth bedroom within the roof. It will be the second floor that will be designed as an additional three-bedroom apartment.
- d) The original additional two storey proposal ignored the original design of the roof and replaced it with a steeper angular roof with dormer and other windows set within a gable end along the front elevation of the building. This obviously completely changed the architectural character and form of the building. The design of the roof within this proposal will remain as existing, thus keeping the integrity of the roof form. It will just be lifted by one floor, thus retaining the roofscape of the original building.
- e) The height and the detailed design of the elevations of the additional floor have been dealt with sympathetically and are subservient to the floors below. *There will only be a simple brick band separating the second and third floor levels.*
- f) The windows within this additional floor will have a simple brick surround to reduce the framing detail and they will also be smaller and subservient in design to the windows of the floors below.
- g) The existing front elevation will remain as the existing building and approved design. The only difference is the introduction of the subservient third floor between the existing second floor and retained roofscape.

In all other respects, the detailed design and fitting out of the additional apartment will be to the highest standards demanded for such properties within this area. The proposed landscaping, refuse and garden storage, bicycle storage will be as the current Planning Approval for the six apartments. The proposed design does not decrease the area of the rear communal landscaped gardens which enhance the quality of living within 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue.

Parking and access for the disabled is clearly dealt with within the Lifetime Homes Assessment included with the current Planning Approval and remains unchanged. The small additional floor will be designed with the same sustainability features of the rest of the development as previously approved.

#### **Detailed Design Principles:**

As with the "Approved Proposals" one of the objectives is to remove the single storey link between 47 and 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue and tidy up the very small side additions that can be seen from the rear of the property.





The front of the single storey link between 47 and 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue



The rear of the single storey link between 47 and 49 Fitzjohn's Avenue

The existing front elevation has a number of interesting yet unusual features. For example, the white painted timber windows at Ground and First Floor Level look like standard double casement windows. However, they are actually a set of double casement windows set under a sliding sash element, some of which have a leaded glazing feature. Because of the age of the building it is likely that the original windows were the normal sliding sash windows and over time the bottom sash was removed and replaced with a double casement. We are having to replace these windows because of their very poor condition and the replacements will remain as double casement windows under a top sliding sash window and the leaded glazing detail will be placed within the sliding sash.

The front elevation windows at second floor level are a mixture of white painted timber sliding sash, replacement fixed windows with top hung elements and casement windows with top fixed lights. These will be replaced with white painted timber sash windows, bringing them back to their original format.

Within the extension of the building we are installing white painted timber sash windows of a size and scale to match the original design. These windows will be set within the cavity of the wall behind the outer leaf of brickwork to give the appearance of the window details of the original building.

Another feature of the front elevation is that the stone window sills are one and a half brick courses high and have a cut half height brick course set under the stone sills. We are repeating this detail throughout the whole of the proposed extension.



Detail of the one and a half brick high stone sill.

We have been very fortunate in finding a facing brick which not only matched the existing in texture and colour but is also of the old imperial size. This allows us to follow the brick coursing of the original building in alternative headed and stretch bond brick coursing and with the careful selection of special bricks we are able to repair/replace previously damaged bricks and continue specific details around the side chimney breasts.

Although the roof structure is being replaced, its shape, size and appearance will be the same as the existing as we are following the footprint of the existing first floor. The details of the guttering, fascias, soffits and corbelled brickwork immediately under the roof finish will match the existing, and the fibre cement (replacement) slate roof will be replaced with true artificial blue/green slates.

Also, included within the design is the slight increase in size of the lightwell to the left-hand side of the main entrance staircase, to make it have the same projection as the right-hand lightwell. This will potentially increase and thus improve the daylight into the front Lower Ground Floor rooms.

Our intentions are to maintain throughout the original character of the building and although being one storey higher, make it visually appear to be as original as possible.