

Design and Access statement

5 Akenside road, London NW3 5BS

Revision B

26 June 2018



Image 1 Front elevation of property from road

Design statement:

Context

Flat 2 consists of the upper storeys of this semi-detached building. Previously two separate flats, it was given planning permission in 2017 to be combined into one flat (ref: 2017/5873/P). The entire building (including the adjacent semi-detached house) and garden is owned by the same family. The ground floor of no 5 is used as a photographic archive.

The property is in the Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area and has many of the properties listed in the statement - Dutch Gables, overhanging eaves, leaded casement windows etc. which make it a positive contributor to the area.

In 2017 the owners obtained pre-application advice for constructing a glazed addition and balcony where the terrace is now proposed. The advice raised concerns regarding the design and appropriateness of the addition, and therefore the advice is reproduced in full below with annotations to show how the concerns have been fully addressed in the revised proposals (below).

Proposal

The owners of flat 2 wish to create a terrace above the existing rear addition with access from their kitchen and allowing access down to the garden below via stairs at the end.

Justification

Flat 2 is now a large flat with no immediate external open space. The owners will have a need for direct access to external space and the garden below for their young children. Currently the only access to the garden is by leaving the building onto Akenside road and re-entering via a small side alley. Giving the flat external space will be in accord with Local plan H6 and the London plan.

The proposal will require the removal of the clay tile pitched roof to the rear addition and the lowering of the attached WC. This change will not be out of keeping with many properties in the area as well as the paired property of no. 4 as similar works have already occurred.

Pre-application advice

The pre-application assessment is reproduced in full below in italics, excepting the final part relating to the combination of the flats, which is not relevant here. Responses relating to this application are in bold.

6. Assessment

Proposed extensions and heritage concerns

The site is a positive contributor to the Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area. It is described in detail in the Conservation Area statement, including its roughcast-rendered upper storeys. It has an existing pitched-roof ground-floor rear extension springing from a shallow kickback. Its side elevation is clearly visible from the road.

Concerns with regard to the proposed removal of the bay window parapet

It is noted that a flat-roofed fully glazed first-floor rear extension above the existing rear extension is proposed. Additionally, it is proposed to remove the parapet from an existing bay window and run a balcony/terrace across its top, accessed by removing the apron from the windows above and making these into full height French windows. This alteration would be discouraged as it would alter the character of the rear of the property which is relatively intact. In addition to an alteration to the bay window which we think would be harmful to the character of the property, we would also discourage the introduction of a balcony in this position.

No work is now proposed to the bay window or parapet in question. No balcony is proposed.

Concerns with regard to proposed glazed first-floor extension

It is considered that the proposed first-floor extension would not be subservient to the host building, and would not be more than one storey below the eaves contrary to CPG1 (Design).

Paragraph 4.13 of the Camden Planning Guidance 1 (CPG1) states that in most cases, extensions that are higher than one full storey below roof eaves/parapet level, or that rise above the general height of neighbouring projections and nearby extensions, will be strongly discouraged.

No glazed extension is now proposed. A simple terrace – rather than the previously proposed full height glazed extension - will be suitably subservient to the main building.

The first-floor extension would replace a traditional pitched roof with an atypical modern form with a high level of overtly modern full-height glazing. In addition, its flank wall would be clearly visible from the public road. The fully glazed flank elevation would present an out of place form at high level in the Conservation area, and would additionally introduce problems of light pollution and overlooking.

The glazed addition is not now proposed, and the proposed railings will be in keeping with other external railings on the property. There will be no light pollution issue as the space is now external. A trellis to eye height has been proposed to mitigate overlooking issues to the adjacent 26 Weddedburn road, although it should be noted that the terrace overlooks a shared car park and bin storage and not garden space and can only be seen from the road at one very specific vantage point. A taller trellis exists on the rear addition of no. 4 - see figure 2 below)

Similarly paragraph 4.16 of CPG1 states that conservatories should normally be located at ground or basement level. Only in exceptional circumstances will conservatories be allowed on upper levels. As the first-floor extension in this proposal is fully glazed, it would create the aforementioned issues of inappropriate/non-historic forms/materials at high level and is contrary to policy regarding upper-level conservatory-type structures. However, were it composed of masonry it would appear heavier still and so be even less subordinate and so harm the proportions of the positive contributor.

No conservatory now proposed.

Concerns regarding the enlargement of the rear windows above the bay window

To the rear, the pair of houses is almost completely symmetrical at first-floor and attic levels and we seek to preserve unaltered and attractive rear arrangements. Higher parts of buildings are generally more widely visible, so alterations are less likely to be acceptable, and in this case the enlargement of the first-floor windows would not be supported.

With regard to the proposed balcony, although modest in scale, it is considered that the proposal would disrupt the original design of the host building and the historic pattern and established townscape of the surrounding area.

Balcony to bay window is now omitted, and no works are proposed to this window. Note that the adjacent kitchen window has been modified to match the access doors in the same position at no 4 and therefore the proposed amendments actually provide more symmetry between the two buildings.

Furthermore, although it is understood that the pair of houses is in single occupation, it is still likely that any balcony/terrace in this proposed location would require screening to its sides to prevent overlooking, thereby increasing the amount of bulk and alteration at first-floor level.

Not relevant as balcony now omitted



Image 2 Trellis on adjacent property, no 4.

Conclusion

The proposals present a modest change to an existing building that unlocks much needed access to an existing and under-used garden as well as an additional escape route from the upper storey home in case of fire. Changes to the existing building fabric are the minimum required to allow this, and do not harm the symmetry of the rear elevation but actually enhance it. Any overlooking issues to the adjacent property are mitigated by a trellis and greenery.

Access Statement:

The proposal is a private flat. The proposal will have no significant effect on disabled or semi ambulant for the primary access to the building, but the new stairs to the garden will be built in accordance with the Approved Documents, and as they will be 900mm wide with handrails on both sides (unlike the main access stairs) and therefore may be a preferable access for some semi-ambulant persons.

END