

FLAT 3 277 GRAYS INN ROAD WC1X 8QF

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR PLANNING APPLICATION

This Design and Access statement has been prepared by Jones Lambell LLP Architects and Interior Designers to explain the proposed alterations to the property in association with the submitted Full Planning Application.

Summary of Application

1. This application is for the demolition and reinstatement of an existing mansard roof and for alterations to the rear of the roof.
2. The building is in the Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation Area in the borough of Camden.
3. The application is for the purpose of refurbishing the property to bring the accommodation and efficiency of the property to the current standard expected of a private residence in the area.
4. The property is early to mid-19th Century

Location

The property is located towards the northern end of the Grays Inn Road in the Kings Cross Ward of Camden.

Grays Inn Road is a predominantly commercial area with residential roads branching off it.

The site has an excellent location in terms of public transport with Kings Cross and St Pancras in walking distance and well as Euston Station. Underground and bus links are excellent. There are numerous cycle routes within the area.

Heritage

1. 277 Grays Inn Road is a 4-storey building the fourth floor being a non-original mansard roof.
2. 277 is part of a disrupted terrace (Nos. 251 to 307) between Argyle Street and St. Chad's Street. With the exception of No. 277, they possess shops with two storeys of plain brick facing above. The first-floor windows are set in arched recesses as elsewhere on this estate. A number of the shopfronts are original and have swept ends to their fascia's.
3. The terrace is broken by new development. 261 to 265 is a single large youth hostel. 275 is a large office block.
4. No.277 is currently divided into 3 flats. It was previously occupied by Whitbread's with the brewery behind which was originally designed for use as the North London Horse Depository. Its principal entrance still exists under No. 277 Gray's Inn Road and leads to Hand Axe Yard behind which is the site of a new residential development.
5. The historic treatment of the arch and entrance to the building have been lost.
6. The two storeys above have plain sash windows and the whole is finished with a pediment.
7. The mansard roof was added in the 1990's.

Planning History

The property was divided into flats in the 1990's and the mansard roof added, rear facing only. Ref P9602476R1.

In 2007 an application was made to add the front facing mansard. Ref 2007/5777/P. This was refused but won on appeal ref APP/X5210/A/08/2083216.

Proposed Design

The proposal is to reconfigure the internal layouts to a more accommodating scheme. Presently there is a bedroom and en-suite bathroom and a shared bathroom to the front, a small kitchen / diner centrally and a bedroom to the rear. There is no meaningful living room. There is a terrace to the rear. Only the rear bedroom has access to the terrace.

The revised layout positions a decent living area to the rear of the property with a kitchenette and dining area all with good access to the terrace. In order to travel from the front door to the living area to the rear, a new corridor has been added, and this requires a small addition to the rear mansard to allow access. There are two sets of French doors to access the Terrace. One set will remain, and one set will be turned 90 degrees and repositioned to allow for the new section of corridor.

To the front of the property are two bedrooms. This area of the flat has a very low headroom. The proposal is to reconstruct the front facing mansard to allow a more reasonable and consistent head height through the flat. Currently the ceiling heights differ by 600mm from room to room which is uncomfortable for the occupants. The flat also has two low cross beams due to the low roof height which are very perceptible in the flat. These will be raised.

In the planning appeal consideration was given to the front elevation and the perception of the mansard behind. The height of the mansard was set by the apex of the pediment. Two windows were allowed in the appeal behind the pediment.

The mansard can be seen from both the pavement opposite and further down Britannia Street opposite.

Raising the mansard will be seen only marginally more than it is currently from the opposite pavement. As 227 was the centre property in a line of terrace houses it was therefore prominent and elevated. This can be seen in the higher horizontal coping under the pediment and this is still reflected in the amendments to the roof however the roof is still subservient to the pediment and does not detract from it. Many of the other buildings that form part of the terrace have had mansard roofs added and these are more prominent in the street than No.277. The alterations to no 277 reinstate the buildings dominance in the street scape. see drawing 813-017.

The long view from down Britannia street opposite is a different matter. Whilst the mansard is seen as being at the same height as the apex of the pediment, what was not appreciated at the appeal, was that the ridge behind the mansard is also visible. From a distance it therefore looks like the mansard is significantly higher. The roof is also cluttered, and this clutter is also visible due to the low roof level. See drawings 813-014 & 015

At the time of the appeal the large development behind on Hand Axe Yard had not been started. It has now been completed and the development overshadows No.277. The buildings are in a variety of materials and finishes. The aesthetics are contemporary and appropriate, but they add to the confusion and this disrupts the view of No.277. The elements in the appeal that were protected have been lost and the line of the pediment has been obfuscated by the overriding new elements behind. Instead of the sky to highlight the building outline there is a jumble of dark and light shapes and forms.

The proposal aims to redress this and reinstate to original perception of the façade. Raising the mansard resolves both the above issues by creating a solid backdrop to the pediment to define and highlight the original form. The façade and pediment will again be seen as unique and the mansard itself will disappear into the background of the new development. The clutter that is currently seen will be out of sight. See drawing 813-016

The building currently suffers from constant leaking from an internal rain water pipe. This pipe is located in the base of the box gutter to the front of the building behind the pediment. Due to the existing roof configuration this pipe currently takes runoff rain water from the front half of the roof. It is not possible to change this as the existing ridge prevent water running to the rear from the front section of roof. The pipe is difficult to access to clean regularly and either becomes blocked at roof level causing the box gutter to fill or due to leaves etc getting into the pipe it blocks lower down within the pipe which can be much more serious and cause damage internally.

By altering the roof, it will be possible to direct all the rain water to the rear of the building where there is an existing rain water pipe running down the rear façade which is easily accessible. Only rainwater from the mansard face will then run down the front internal pipe greatly reducing maintenance and potential leaking and damage to the building fabric and the property of the inhabitants.

The proposal affects no material harm and does not compromise the existing façade or pediment. We believe the proposal will greatly benefit the building itself and its perception in the wider surrounding area.

Access

Access to the building is as per the original design and it is not proposed to make any alteration to it.

The proposal does not make any change to the access from the public highway or to the means of vertical movement within.

Landscaping

There is no landscaping

Refuse Disposal

The refuse location and method of disposal will remain unchanged.

Sustainability Appraisal

The proposal addressed sustainability issues by modernising the roof to extend its useful life. The insulation of the roof will be specified to modern standards and will upgrade the energy efficiency of the building. The refurbishment work required to the existing external fabric will preserve the building for the future.

Conclusion

We believe that this application is for a sustainable development which conforms to the requirements of the London Plan and the relevant policies of Camden's Local Plan.

We believe that the proposals are sympathetic to the character of the area and there is not material harm. These proposals have a positive impact, and will improve, the external appearance of the building and will enhance and preserve this charming property. We hope you can support this application.

Reference

National Planning Policy Framework

Camden Local Plan

D1 Design

D2 Heritage

CC1 Climate Change Mitigation

Conservation Area Statement 22 Kings Cross. Sub Area 4 Gray's Inn Road