

Design and Access Statement

15 Dartmouth Park Road - NW5 1SU London

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Modifying alignment of rear staircases to patio and garden, creating new access to the garden from the kitchen, replacing basement doors, replacing kitchen window with French windows and associated works.

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1 Introduction

1.1 General information

The property is at 15 Dartmouth Park Road that is within Dartmouth Park Conservation Area in the London Borough of Camden.

The building is a five storey Victorian house with a deep garden to the rear and it is not listed.

There are not significant applications recently submitted regarding the property.

2 Conservation Area

2.1 Dartmouth Park Conservation Area

“Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Statement” is effective guidance to understand the specifics of the area and to drive the design process towards results which make a positive contribute to the special interest and character and appearance of the area. In this section, just those parts of the Appraisal which are relevant to the proposal are mentioned. These parts will be recalled later, when the proposal is described.

Section **4.0 Character and Appearance of the Area**, common to all the sub areas, states:

4.5 Railings and other front boundary treatments, many original, are quite extensive in their variety, but the common feature is that these elements - gates, walls, fences, hedges or railings - complement the architecture. Traditional wrought and cast ironwork, brick walls and piers, stone pier-caps and copings are characteristics of this part of the conservation area as much as the buildings themselves.

This paragraph is relevant as the proposal includes intervention on existing railings and installations of new ones.

Section 7.29 describes the specific of Dartmouth Park Conservation Area as follows:

7.29 Dartmouth Park Road (West). Building started in the late 1850s at the western end (the section in this sub-area), a development by Lawford on behalf of Lord Dartmouth. Between Grove Terrace and York Rise the properties are mainly handsome three-storey semi-detached villas with semi-basements, and front gardens enclosed behind low garden walls or railings. Some properties however are grouped in threes and there is one single house. The original front walls match their house, usually gault bricks, with piers two bricks square with moulded or flat stone caps. The arrangement of houses results in significant gaps between them. Ground floors are raised above semi-basements (apart from No.2, which is detached, double fronted, with an Ionic porch) with classical porticoes and front doors, two panelled with no glass. Most of the buildings are three-storey over semi-basements, stock brick with applied decorative details including stringcourses, eaves brackets, moulded window cases and stuccoed quoins picked out in white. They are flat fronted, many with interesting plaster decoration. [...]

The following line is relevant since 15 Dartmouth Park Road is mentioned:

Nos.3,5,13,15,17,19,27,29 have first floor ironwork balconies with French windows. [...]

It is relevant what is listed as “negative features” in Sub Area 2 – Dartmouth West and others sub Areas:

- *Unsympathetic replacement windows*
- *Unsympathetic repairs*
- *Permitted development alterations such as reroofing, painting or replacing windows with unsympathetic materials.*
- *Erosion of architectural details*
- *Unsympathetic replacement doors and windows*

Appendix 5 lists the issues affecting the whole of the CA (just relevant parts mentioned below):

- *Elevation alterations and loss of details – The properties in the area have a wealth of applied decoration and detail on them, however on many buildings these have been lost: eg finials, decorative bargeboards, iron pot guards, front doors etc.*
- *Incremental additions and alterations to buildings such as satellite dishes or replacement windows have a detrimental appearance and cumulatively their impact is much greater.*
- *Unsympathetic rear and side extensions (including inappropriate roof terraces)– sometimes these can alter the harmony and balance of a property or group of buildings.*
- *Inappropriate roof terraces and fencing*

Part 2 – Management Plan, states:

The Council will particularly encourage proposals which seek to redevelop those buildings and spaces which are considered to have a negative impact on the special character or the appearance of the conservation area.

And:

Development proposals will be expected to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Dartmouth Park Conservation Area.

About “Quality erosion and loss of architectural detail”:

The appearance of characterful buildings within the conservation area is harmed by the removal or loss of original architectural features and the use or inappropriate materials. For example, the loss of original joinery, sash windows, front doors and natural slate roofs, can have considerable negative impact on the appearance of a historic building and the area. It is often possible to successfully upgrade windows and doors through draft-proofing, secondary glazing and the installation of thicker glass without harmfully altering the appearance of the building.

About Rear extensions:

Within the conservation area there are many interesting examples of historic rear elevations, many of which are exposed to public views from the surrounding streets.

The original historic pattern of rear elevations within a street or group of buildings is an integral part of the character of the area and as such rear extensions will not be acceptable where they would diverge significantly from the historic pattern.

About Street furniture and floor-scape:

The conservation area has a wealth of York paving stones, granite kerb stones, granite gutter channels and setted areas. These and other increasingly rare examples of historic street furniture add interest and character to the public realm within the conservation area.

The above refers to floor-scape and paving to the street front and there is no mention about materials to the rear external areas.

3 The house in the context of the Conservation Area

In this section, the house is described against the specifics of the Conservation Area in order to highlight those characteristics matching the character and the appearance as described in the Appraisal and those which appear to be unsympathetic.

To complete the assessment, also those parts of the building which are not affected by the proposal will be briefly described.

3.1 Front street façade



Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the street front (15 Dartmouth Park Rd to the left, number 13 to the right).

The building perfectly matches the description of “three-storey over semi-basements, stock brick with applied decorative details including stringcourses, eaves brackets, moulded window cases and stuccoed quoins picked out in white”.

In particular, “first floor iron works balconies with French windows” are clearly visible.

Figure 2 below shows a detail of the railing to the balcony. The ironwork is elaborate. Noticeably, the height of the railing doesn't comply with current Building Regulation.

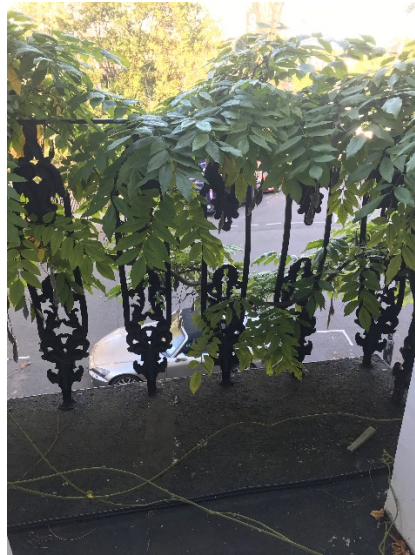


Figure 2

3.2 Rear façade



Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the rear façade. The protruding volume to the right of the façade (where the staircase is) seems to be an original feature since number 13 has exactly the same volume.

Although original, this protruding volume has details and features which appears to be results of late alteration.

This is the case of the railing to the external staircase (Figure 5) and also the side window at lower ground level to the patio (Figure 4) where the lintel (Figure 7) doesn't match the brickwork lintel to the other windows (Figure 6).

The railings to both staircases (Figure 5) are particularly unsympathetic because of the material (stainless steel) and lack of detail. It is possible that the staircase itself was a late addition given that the bounding is different (Flemish to the house, Stretcher to the stair) as visible in the detail in figure 7.



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

3.3 Access to the garden

The rear garden is accessible from three points (see Figure 8 next page): (1) directly from the main road via the alley between the building and the garage; (2) from the raised floor (entrance level), through a lobby to the rear of the entrance hall contained in small protruding volume to the rear facade; (3) from the lower ground patio.

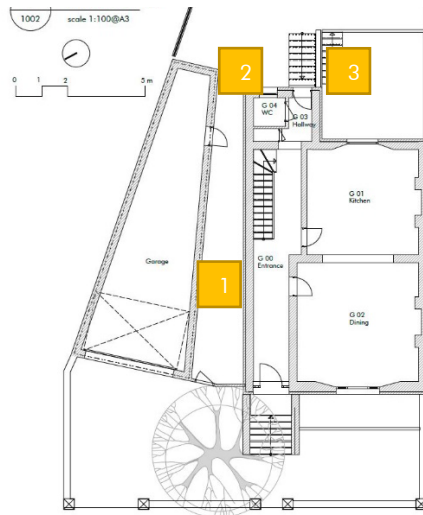
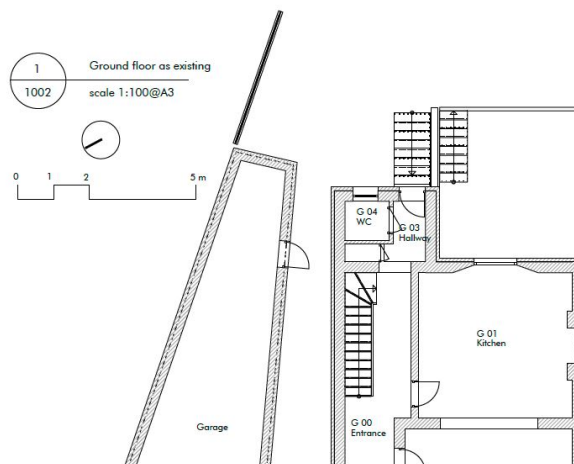


Figure 8

3.4 Note about WC at entrance level and accessibility issues

As shown in the plan below, the access from the entrance level through the hallway (G.03 in the drawings) makes the only WC (G.04) at the entrance level very small and not complying with Building Regulations in terms of accessibility.



3.5 Windows and doors to the rear facade

The kitchen at entrance level has a window looking towards the garden on the South-West elevation (yellow box in Figure 9). This window is an original feature matching the windows upstairs as type, frame and material.

Downstairs, a double sliding door (Figure 10) give access from the lower ground level to the patio and then to the garden level via the staircase described above. This is clearly a late alteration as the opening has been plastered all around probably to hide the structural works necessary to create a larger opening. The door frame, in particular, appears to be unsympathetic with the original windows and door in regard to type and material.



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

3.6 Relationship with the property next door

As shown in Figure 11 above, the property at 13 Dartmouth Park Road, has a conservatory extension at the same level of the patio. Along the boundary line, a fence provides supports to climbing plants (see also Figure 10).

4 Design proposal

4.1 General description

The proposals consist of the following minor alterations:

- Provision of a new access from the kitchen to the rear garden to re-design the toilet to be accessible;
- Different position of the external staircases from Lower Ground and Raised Ground floor to garden level;
- Replacement of the glass door at lower ground level;
- Creation of a new window to the side of the protruding volume to the rear façade;

4.2 The new access to the garden from the kitchen

A modest balcony is proposed to create a direct link from the kitchen to the garden. This way, the new WC at entrance level is designed to be accessible improving the general use of the house (Figure 12).

Changing the access to the staircase, the original rear door is transformed into a window to match the existing to the toilet.

As a by-product, the new door to the balcony will bring more natural light into the kitchen.

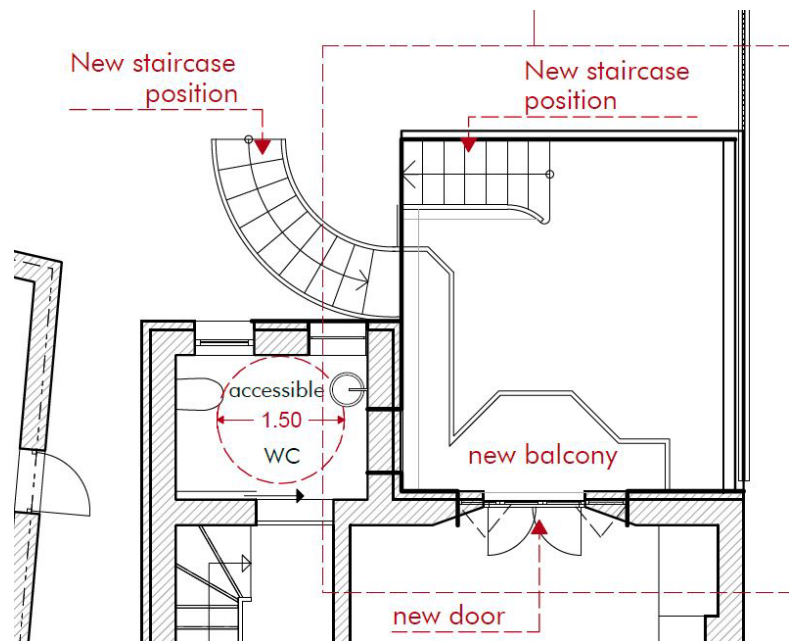


Figure 12

4.3 Repositioning the staircases

As a direct consequence of the proposed balcony layout, the external staircase from Lower Ground to garden moves in a different position and the staircase from raised ground level to garden remains basically in the same position just with a gentler footprint.

4.4 Replacement of the glass door at lower ground level

As a general improvement, it is proposed to replace the double sliding glazed door at lower ground level to the patio with a double folding French door (Figure 13) with timber frame, painted white to match the other existing windows.

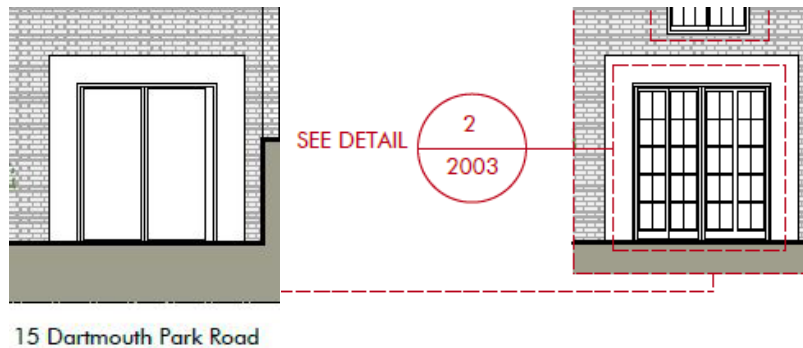


Figure 13

4.5 Creation of a new window to the side of the protruding volume to the rear façade

The last proposed alteration regards the small protruding volume to the rear façade which corresponds, in the plan, to the utility room at LG level, to the new accessible WC at raised GF and, at the landing level to the staircase from ground to first floor, to a small study. This small study already has windows to two sides, so it is proposed to add a third window as shown in the drawings to bring in more natural light (Figure 14).

As this window faced the garden next door (13 Dartmouth Park Road), the glass will be obscured. Dimension and frame of the window will match the one on the other side (see Figure 9). It is worth to be mentioned that the property next door already has glazing on the opposite side even though with a slightly different arrangement of the openings (Figure 15).



Figure 14



Figure 15

4.6 Material and finishes

All materials and finishes are proposed to match the existing (staircases to be solid, with brickwork below and stone to the steps) or to be sympathetic with the historical character of the building and the Conservation area.

The steel modern-looking balustrade to the external staircases will be replaced with traditional black painted spindles.

The balustrade to the balcony will recall the original guarding to the front balcony since a perfect match is very difficult to be achieved.

The new windows and doors will be white painted timber to match the original frames.

Details of proposed materials and finishes are described in detailed in the following drawings:

- ACD 0918 2001_Balcony detail
- ACD 0918 2002_Patio detail
- ACD 0918 2003_Door details

4.7 Overlooking measure

The main purpose of the proposed balcony is providing a direct link to the rear garden and bringing more light inside the kitchen. The balcony's use will principally be to facilitate this access, i.e. as a passageway. It will not create an overlooking issue towards the adjoining property (i.e. number 13).

However, as a further precaution, it is proposed to raise the existing fence (which currently supports climbing plants) to create a green screen which would avoid even the risk of any overlooking issues.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Additional information

Additional information is available in the enclosed documents as follows:

Drawings:

- ACD 0918 1001_Lower ground as existing and proposed.pdf
- ACD 0918 1002_Raised ground floor as existing and proposed.pdf
- ACD 0918 1003_First floor as existing and proposed.pdf
- ACD 0918 1501_South-West elevation as existing and proposed LD.pdf
- ACD 0918 1501_South-West elevation as existing and proposed.pdf
- ACD 0918 1502_West elevation as existing and proposed.pdf
- ACD 0918 2001_Balcony detail LD.pdf
- ACD 0918 2001_Balcony detail.pdf
- ACD 0918 2002_Patio detail LD.pdf
- ACD 0918 2003_Door details.pdf
- ACD 0918 500_Location Map.pdf

5.2 Conclusion

- The proposal aims at improving the use of and the access to the building also in respect of the use of the building for disabled people.
- The proposal has been developed to make a positive contribution to the conservation area by removing items which don't make positive contribution (e.g. steel balustrade, double sliding doors, etc) as described in Section 3 of this document and by introducing new materials which do make positive contribution (French doors, traditional spindles and balustrade) which are explicitly mentioned in the "Dartmouth Park Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Statement" as specific characteristic in the CA.
- The proposal doesn't alter any area visible from the public road and doesn't affect the street scene.
- Specific measures have been included in the proposal to avoid any overlooking issue.

The above suggests that the proposal, as described and illustrated in this Statement and the enclosed documentation, should positively considered by the Local Authority and therefore approved.