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Design & Access Statement
20 South Hill Park,
London, NW3 2SB

February 2019

HeathWalkerStudio.

Site address

20 South Hill Park , Hampstead, London NW3 2SB

Applicant

Mrs H Ferid-Hands

Agent

Jeremy Walker ARB RIBA

HeathWalker Studio 19-20 Gt Sutton Street, London EC1V 0DR

HeathWalker Studio is a award-winning architectural practice based in London, with a portfolio of projects across the UK. We have extensive experience in private residential projects and our work on historic buildings has received several design awards. Jeremy Walker is a member of the Heath & Hampstead Society Planning Sub-committee which comments on local planning applications.

Supporting Drawings

327 12 Location Plan

327 12 Existing Plan

327 14 Proposed Plan

Existing house and flat at 20 South Hill Park

20 South Hill Park is a 4-storey townhouse in the South Hill Park Conservation area. The house is one of four in a row of matching Victorian townhouses with predominantly brick facades to the street side. The character of the four houses in this block is expressed through a consistent language of stucco gables, triplets of arch-head windows, brick and stucco bay windows and strongly expressed porches supported on stucco columns with decorative bovine heads over each doorway.

To the rear, elevations are simpler with the brick facades punctuated by the familiar and elegant proportions of sash windows and brick bays which are typical of this area. Lower ground floors are typically stucco and at upper levels windows have been enlarged and roofs extended in a variety of ways

Number 20 occupies the levels above and including the ground floors and is the applicants' home. The basement flat in the lower ground floor below also belongs to the applicant also and is rented out. The garden is in their demise and accessed via an existing metal stair through a rear door at the Ground floor floor.



Photographs



Rear elevation to No. 20



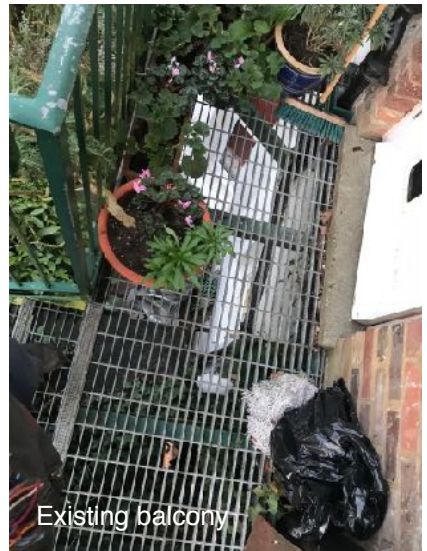
Existing stair to garden



Looking across boundary wall towards garden of No. 18



Existing stair



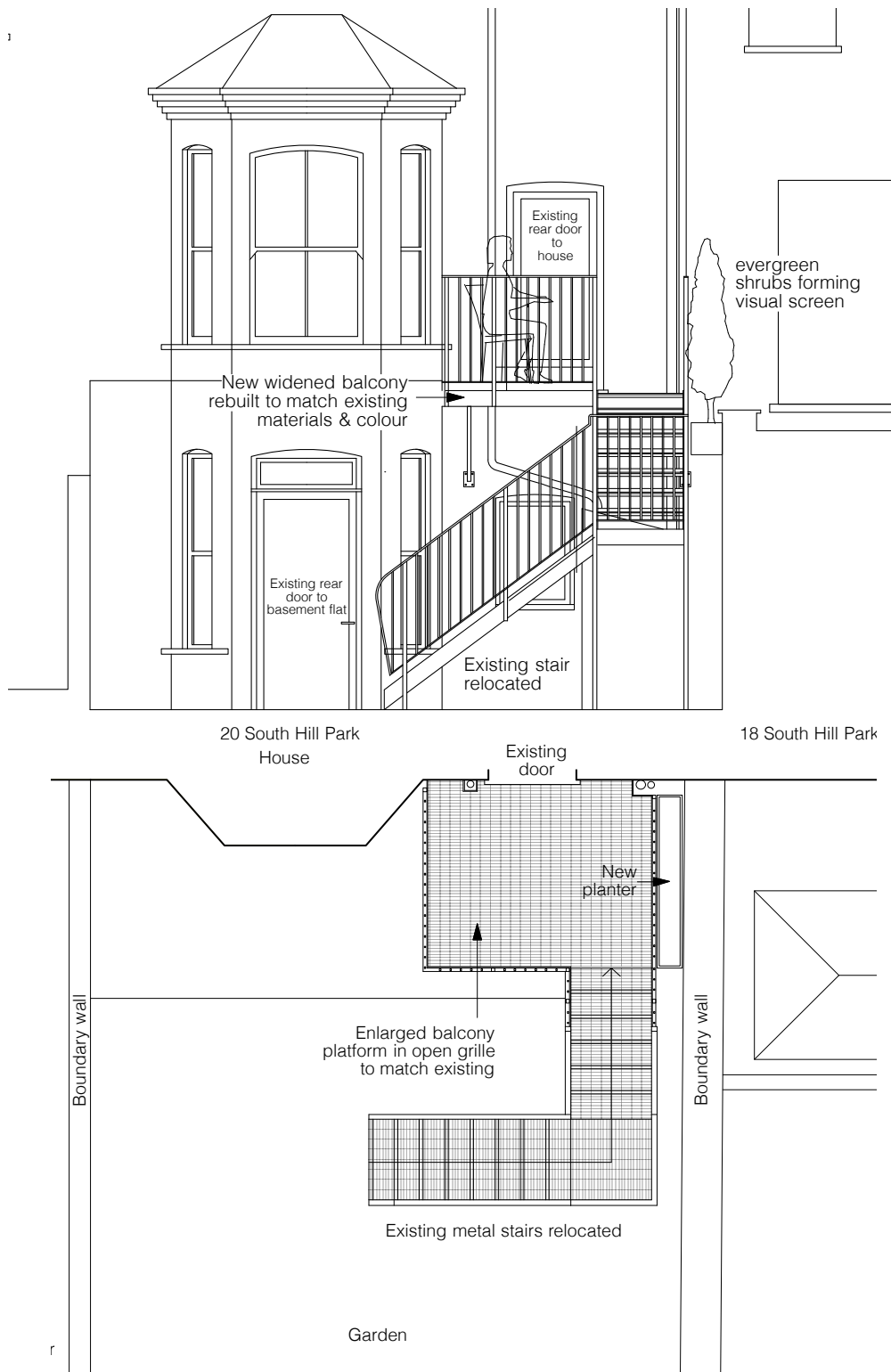
Existing balcony

Purpose of Application

As they get older, the occupants John and Heidi Ferid-Hands, are finding it increasingly difficult to use the stair to access the garden at the rear. They would like to alter the existing stair design so that they can put a small table on an enlarged landing outside at the top of the stair from which to enjoy the garden. The existing stair and landing is proposed to be modified to allow this, retaining the existing style of metalwork.

Proposal

The proposal is to enlarge the depth of the existing balcony, retaining and moving the existing stair out slightly to accommodate this. The balcony will be the same width as currently and the dimensions and materials of the guarding, railings will be replicated exactly. The balcony platform will be constructed in the same open metal grille with edge plates and support profiles to match existing.



Planning context

There are numerous examples of extensive additions and modifications to the rear of the houses in this conservation area which have been consented, with varying degrees of impact on the rear elevations of the houses in question.

In the immediate vicinity of 20 South Hill Park there are three examples of consented schemes which are of particular relevance to this proposal:

2011/1469/P 18 South Hill Park: New 3m deep, full width single storey extension, Victorian style modern conservatory with large glass roof light set into flat roof and full width glazed doors. Immediately adjacent to the existing stair which is the subject of this application.

2015/3192/P 26 South Hill Park: New cast iron balcony at first floor, 3m wide x 1.2-1.8m deep, new metal spiral stair

2018/5568/P 24 South Hill Park: New contemporary style extension at lower ground floor, timber cladding with sedum roof and large glazed patio doors

All three of the above examples have a considerably greater impact on the rear elevation of the houses in question and consequently the character of the local conservation area than this application proposes. Specifically the new balcony and spiral stair at 26 South Hill Park, while set back, have a significant visual impact on the host house. The proposal we submit here, by contrast, is to make a small modification to an existing stair & balcony which will be almost unnoticeable and have negligible impact.

Conservation area considerations

The proposed amendments to the stair are consistent with the requirement of the Conservation Area statement to balance and harmony of the existing architecture, which is to be respected and maintained.

CPG1 (Design) states that balconies should form an integral element in the design of elevations and that consideration should be given to:

- detailed design to reduce the impact on the existing elevation
- careful choice of materials and colour to match the existing elevation;
- possible use of screens or planting to prevent overlooking of habitable rooms or nearby gardens, without reducing daylight and sunlight or outlook
- need to avoid creating climbing opportunities for burglars.

The proposals will reuse the existing stair and replicate the existing balcony with only a modest increase in its size. The details will exactly match and the increase in size mean that the impact of the proposals on the elevation will be negligible, and indeed indiscernible to anyone other than the occupants of the garden.

A screen of dense evergreen planting is proposed to address overlooking, as explained below. Since a stair already in place, these proposals do not increase the climbing opportunities for burglars beyond what currently exists.

In summary, the visual impact on the rear elevations conservation area will be minimal since the proposed alteration to the stair will leave it very similar to the existing design. The stair is, and will remain, barely visible from anywhere but the applicant's own garden.

Pre-application advice

Pre-application advice has been sought for a similar proposal with a wider balcony than the current proposal. The advice given was as follows and the design submitted addresses all of these points as set out in the following pages:

- Amenity: concern about loss of light to the basement due to an enlarged balcony. This has been addressed by the proposals as explained below.
- Amenity: concerns about overlooking to the adjoining neighbour at No. 18. This has been addressed by the proposals as explained below.
- Character and appearance: The conservation officer commented that the proposed balcony in the pre-application design wrapped around the first splay of the bay, obscuring the form of the bay and leading

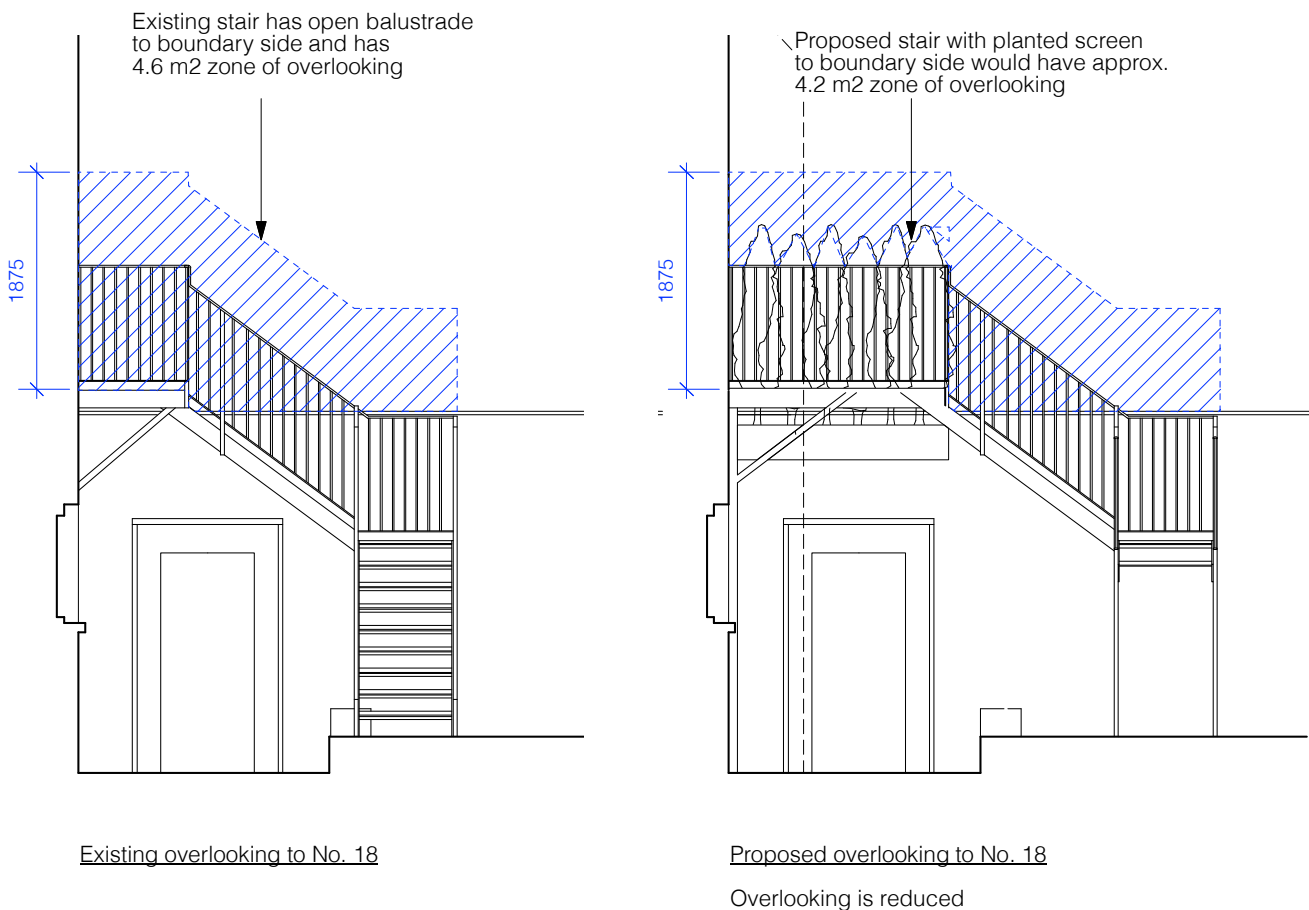
to visual clutter. The proposed balcony has now been reduced in width to allow the bay window to be read as distinct.

- It was also noted by the officer that terraces were typically built on top of extensions rather than free standing. However the existing stair in this freestanding format was originally consented by Camden and the proposal is merely to adapt the existing stair which will have minimal, visual impact on the existing character of the rear of the house, almost indiscernible to anyone other than the occupants of No 20 or the flat below.

Overlooking

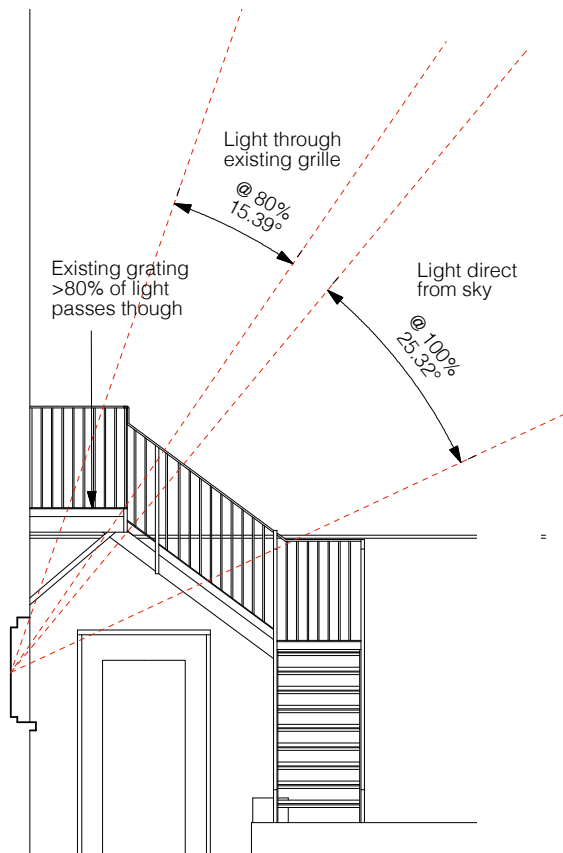
Since the proposal is to simply modify the existing stair and balcony which are already in this location, the effect of these proposals on increasing overlooking will be negligible. With this in mind, we wrote to and subsequently have met neighbours on both sides at Nos. 18 & 22 to explain the proposal. To date they have been supportive and did not raised any objection to the proposals.

However, to ensure overlooking does not become an issue the proposals now include a visual screen to ensure the proposals can improve on the current situation. The following diagram demonstrates this:



Daylight to flat below

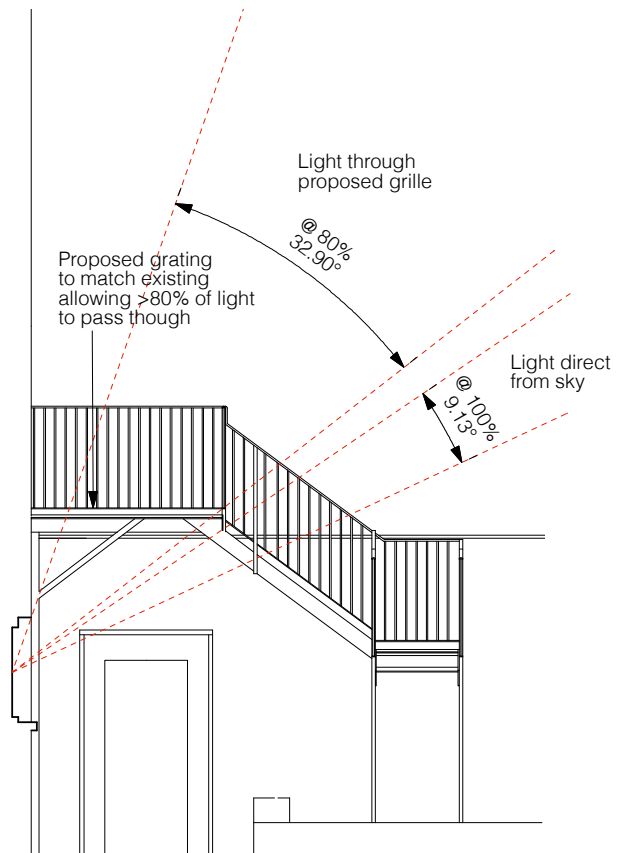
The new balcony will use exactly the same grating profile as currently existing, minimising any impact on the daylight reaching the kitchen window to the flat below. The daylighting study below demonstrates that the impact will be less than 6%, which is within accepted guidelines.



Existing daylight to kitchen window below stair

Section through stair

Total daylight = equiv. to 37.6° of sky

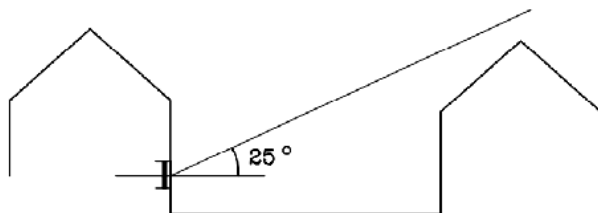


Proposed daylight to kitchen window below stair

Section through stair

Total daylight = equiv to 35.4° of sky = 6% reduction

The standard test for whether a new structure is likely to be acceptable is that it should not obscure more than 25° of the angle of visible sky from an existing window, i.e. 25/90° or 27% reduction. These proposals will reduce light by only 6%.



Daylight and sunlight likely to be acceptable

Access

No change to the existing accessibility of the house or garden would result from these proposals. However, they would give the applicants considerably improved enjoyment of the garden, increasing its amenity to them considerably, which is very much in the spirit of what improving accessibility intends.

Conclusion

The proposals are simply to extend the depth of the existing balcony by a small amount and reuse the existing stair. As such, the impact on the rear elevation to the existing house will be negligible and considerably less than many other approved schemes in the locality. Viewed from outside the garden, the impact will be virtually un-noticeable. We have also demonstrated the impact of overlooking is no worse and the effect on daylighting to the lower ground floor flat is negligible.

Balanced against this the benefit to the applicants will be very significant in that it will allow them to enjoy their garden as they get older and find the stair harder to negotiate.

We therefore believe there is a strong case for approval of this very modest proposal.