

PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF EXISTING SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE AND CONSTRUCTION OF TWO NEW SINGLE FAMILY HOUSES, AT 57 CAMDEN MEWS, LONDON NW1 9BY

Design and Access & Planning Statement - 10 June 2019

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Site Location and Description:

57 Camden Mews is a two storey house with front and rear gardens and driveway providing off street parking to the side of the house.

The property was built in 1970 in facing brickwork with timber infill panels, later replaced by UPVC panels and double glazed windows to match. The house has a flat roof and is detached, although the north/east flank wall is built on the site boundary and abuts no 59 Camden Mews, this adjoining house was constructed 15 years later in 1985. The south/west boundary wall is constructed in facing bricks and abuts the adjoining Tesco and petrol station car park. The rear site boundary to the back garden of no. 208 Camden Road is a 2.5 metre high timber fence.

The existing property is within the Camden Square Conservation Area and is considered a 'neutral building' along with the adjoining properties including no's 59 and 61, by the Camden Square Townscape Appraisal. The existing house is in poor condition and adds no value to either Camden Mews or the Conservation Area. The proposed demolition and development of two new houses on the site provides an opportunity to create a high quality sustainable development that will add a positive contribution to Camden Mews and the Camden Square Conservation Area.

This application is a supplementary application to:

- a) Planning Permission Ref 2015/5046/P. Extensions to front, side and rear to enlarge existing dwelling and erection of new additional house to side; with associated alterations to all facades (subject to a S106 Agreement).
- b) Permitted Development Consent Ref: 2016/4986/P Construction of new basement under footprint of existing house (Certificate of Proposed Lawful Use).

Camden Mews is one of the longest cobbled streets in London and provides an eclectic mix of contemporary houses along its length from York Way to the north and Rochester Square to the south. The houses are generally a mix of two and three storey properties predominantly built tight up against the narrow pavement creating a sense of enclosure to the street as one passes along its length. However, the Mews changes character halfway along its length; at the site of this application, where the intimate, enclosed nature of the street falls away. Abingdon Close flats and houses directly opposite 57 Camden Mews is a public housing development built in the '60's and is set back from the street with open spaces between the three and four storey buildings with a public link/footpath through to Camden Square Gardens. A three storey flank wall to no 86 Abingdon Close sits tight against the pavement opposite the site (see photographs). The Mews also opens up to the south side of the site with the Tesco and petrol station car park, a vast open space that connects back to Camden Road. The design proposals for the site is generated as a direct response to this change in character of Camden Mews and the open spaces of the immediate site context.

Mews History

Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal provides the following information on the mews:

Camden Mews was originally intended to serve the rear of houses via a cobbled roadway, but the mews in Camden New Town were not implemented as first intended, and were possibly curtailed after the success of the Camden Square development had been compromised by the impacts of the Midland Railway Line and the cattle market. Only a few mews buildings were built to serve the grander houses of the square; other plots remained empty until recommended planning densities were raised after the Second World War.

Camden Mews and Murray Mews represent areas of artists/architects studio houses which became fashionable from the early 1960s. Parts of the mews remained unfinished, and years later, as traffic on main roads and land values increased, the relative seclusion and cheapness of the land made them popular places for architects to build their houses. This accounts for the inventiveness and variety that is characteristic of these mews.

The majority of plots have been built as independent dwellings and/or workshops at the ends of the gardens of the frontage houses. The original character of the mews as subsidiary to the Square has largely been respected in the modern redevelopments, which are generally of two or two and a half storeys and of a high design standard. They take an imaginative approach to development in the spirit of a mews' scale, form, and variety of styles and materials.

Local residents have produced a document titled 'Policies and Actions Needed to Sustain and Enhance Both the Built and Living Environment of Camden Mews in response to the number of applications for new development in the Mews. Although the document is not a material consideration, its contents are noted and we consider that the scale of our proposed development will not harm the character or appearance of the mews.

Design Proposals:

The design proposal is to demolish the existing 'neutral building' and construct two new high quality sustainable family houses on the site, to be numbered 55 and 57 Camden Mews. The houses will be constructed in contrasting materials from the same palette used historically throughout the mews, in blonde facing brickwork; exposed hardwood panelling and glazed panels. The houses will provide three and four bedroomed family accommodation with upper floor terraces and green roofs as shown on the proposed drawings and computer generated images.

Basement accommodation will be provided to both properties with double height areas to bring natural light, ventilation and vertical aspect into these subterranean spaces.

The existing off street parking space will be retained for the use of the new house at number 55.

Access & Layout

The entrances to the houses will have level thresholds for easy access with wide entrance doors.

The internal planning of the houses provides natural lit habitable spaces with the use of openable roof lights over circulation areas, bathrooms and staircases and double height spaces to maximise and enhance the quality of the internal living areas.

55 Camden Mews will be a split level arrangement front to back to enable easy access to the rooms from half landing levels. The house is arranged over four split levels with front and rear courtyards, three double bedrooms on the upper levels with roof terrace and open plan living spaces on the lower levels connected vertically by a double height space at the rear to allow daylight to flood into the lower living space.

The split floor levels allows the roof terrace to be 'recessed' and contained within the overall volume of the house and provide a south/west facing external amenity overlooking the wide open spaces of the adjoining car park and beyond.

57 Camden Mews is the larger of the two properties with more generous internal accommodation comprising four bedrooms to the upper levels with a roof terrace and open plan living spaces on the ground floor with level threshold access onto the rear garden. In the summer months, the sliding glass doors at the rear, open up to the garden to form a seamless transition between internal and external space, connecting the garden and extending the living space into the garden. The basement accommodation will be naturally lit and ventilated via a double height space at the front and structural glazed roof lights at the rear.

Scale and Appearance:

The scale and appearance of the development is informed by the local context around this part of the Mews; the open spaces and scale of Abingdon Close flats opposite; the petrol station/Tesco car park at the side of the site; and the scale of no 208 Camden Road flats at the back of the site. Refer to the site plan, the photographs and the proposed sections through the site to fully appreciate the scale of this immediate context. The development remains subservient to these surrounding buildings and the immediate context.

The proposal is to increase the density of the site and build a high quality full width development to match the scale of neighbouring properties along the Mews. The development will have two storeys built out to the established building line of the street, with a third floor set back from the street to match the prevalent street pattern. Due to the open spaces opposite the site, and the adjoining car park to the side, there is no loss of amenity, overlooking, or loss of outlook from the surrounding houses and flats. The second floor level over number 57 is set well back from the street so it is not visible, it is also set back from the rear facade to reduce the scale and any impact from the rear of the site.

The additional house (no 55) will act as a 'bookend' against the open space of the adjoining car park. The house will be fully glazed to the front and rear elevations with the addition of layered horizontal slatted timber 'veils' to provide screening and privacy as required, The terrace and strategically located apertures in the side elevation overlook the Tesco car park and will inadvertently 'police' the anti social behaviour that takes place there on a regular basis 'after hours' near the site boundary of 57 Camden Mews, where there is currently no policing or overlooking from surrounding buildings to discourage any unlawful activity.

Vertical slatted timber and perforated metal screens are located at the ground level boundary interface to the Mews to provide privacy and security to the entrance courtyards of both properties and recalls the historical use of metal shutters to the vehicle repair garages of the recent past, some of which still remain on Camden Mews.

We believe the proposed redevelopment of the site at 57 Camden Mews with two new single family sustainable houses will enhance the varied, contemporary mix of the Mews and will be a positive addition to the Camden Square Conservation Area.

PLANNING STATEMENT

This application differs from the previous approved applications for this site 2015/5046/P and PD/2016/4986/P through the introduction of the following changes:

The application is for full demolition of the existing property to enable the construction of a higher quality and more sustainable development of two new single family houses.

The existing flank wall retained under application 2015/5046/P and formed the party wall between the two houses will now be demolished and relocated half a metre northeast to provide a wider footprint for the new house at no 55. This will improve the internal planning of no 55 and provide a higher quality additional house.

Demolition will also simplify the construction of the basement granted under PD/2016/4986/P and enable the basement to extend under both properties with improved subterranean living spaces bathed in natural light and ventilation through the introduction of double height light wells. The basements will be vertically, fully integrated habitable living spaces to provide a higher quality development.

The side elevation facing Tesco car park has also been redesigned following more detailed consideration on how direct south/west sunlight; controlled views over the car park; ventilation and privacy impact on this highly exposed elevation. This amounts to the introduction of a series of small glazed apertures, light slots and openable timber vents inserted into the flank brick wall to provide a more considered articulation of the elevation and its visual prominence from both Camden Mews and Camden Road across the adjoining car park and petrol station forecourt.

A second floor level has also been introduced behind the high brick parapet of 57 Camden Mews granted under application 2015/5046/P, to provide an extra bedroom with ensuite bathroom. This volume has been set back from the lower floors behind a roof terrace so it is not visible from street level. This will reflect the existing street pattern of the Mews that includes other recently completed second floor developments in the immediate context of this site at no's 41 and 6 Camden Mews. This top floor addition is also set back from the rear facade to maintain the appropriate scale and proportions of the building when viewed from the rear or across the Tesco car park where it is concealed from long views behind 55 Camden Mews where the first floor parapet height has been maintained in line with the previous approved scheme.

The internal planning of the two houses, the sections and the external elevations have also been changed to reflect the demolition of the existing house, the relocated party wall between the houses, and the retention of off street parking for the use of 55 Camden Mews.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The council expects and will be given a contribution to affordable housing from this development as it provides an additional home and involves a total addition to residential floor space of more than 100 square metres. This contribution will be made in accordance with the requirements set out in planning policy H4.

John Kerr Associates Ltd