

16 Downside Crescent, NW3 2AN

1.0 Site

1.1 The application site comprises a semi-detached house on the south east side of Downside Crescent. The house is divided into three self- contained flats, one per floor. The house has previously been extended with a single storey rear extension.

1.2 Downside Crescent falls within the Parkhill and Upper Park Conservation Area. It is neither listed nor identified as a building of townscape merit. It is considered to make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

2.0 Relevant planning history

January 1959- Conversion to maisonette on the ground and first floor and self- contained flat on the second floor.

December 1967- Alterations to existing rear extension and erection of an external timber staircase to first floor

May 1969- confirmation that planning permission was not required for use of the ground and first floors as two self- contained flats

January 1970- Rear extension and staircase

3.0 Proposal

3.1 The existing single storey rear extension was constructed in the 1970s. It is set in 0.8m from the side elevation of the house to accommodate a staircase leading up from the garden onto a roof terrace. There was also stairs leading out to the terrace from the first floor flat. Due to subsidence, it is proposed to demolish the existing structure and replace it with an extension of a similar size.

3.2 The proposed extension is the same depth as the existing extension and will extend across the width of the house. The proposed extension is 540mm higher than existing, to allow a higher ceiling closer to the height of the original, throughout the rear ground floor. The proposal includes a roof light along the back edge of the extension, in the same location as existing.

3.3 A roof terrace is proposed at first floor level (as existing) with direct access from the dining area of the first floor flat. The size of the terrace has been enlarged, extending part way in front of the first floor living room, but maintaining a separation of 2.5m from the boundary with no.18.

4.0 Relevant Local Planning Policy

4.1 The Local Plan for the London Borough of Camden was adopted in 2017. The relevant planning policies contained within this document are set out below:

4.2 Policy A1 Managing the impact of development

4.3 Policy A1 seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. Planning permission will be granted for development unless it causes unacceptable harm to amenity.

4.4 Policy D1 Design

4.5 Policy D1 requires all development to be of high quality design, compatible with the local character including the relationship to existing townscape and development patterns.

4.6 The policy also requires that development preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with policy D2, is sustainable and comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character.

4.7 Policy D2 Heritage

4.8 Policy D2 states that development proposals should preserve and where appropriate enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

4.9 Conservation areas are designated heritage assets, and as such according to policy D2, all proposals in conservation areas should preserve and, where possible enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

4.10 The Council will also seek to preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

4.11 Guidance

4.12 Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) 'Altering and extending your home', adopted in March 2019, sets out the Council's approach to house extensions. The guidance supports policies A1, D1 and D2 set out above. It also refers to the CPG 'Amenity', adopted March 2018, which provides more detailed advice on how an extension can be designed to avoid impacting on neighbours outlook, light and privacy.

4.13 CPG 'Altering and extending your home'

4.14 Paragraph 2.5 advises that materials and other alterations should always be complementary to the existing building and its features.

4.15 Paragraph 3.1 sets out good practice principles for rear and side extensions, which are;

- a. be secondary to the building being extended, in relation to its location, form, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing;
- b. use complementary materials;
- c. respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building;
- d. respect and preserve existing architectural features;
- e. respect and preserve the historic pattern and established townscape of the surrounding area
- f. do not cause a loss of amenity to adjacent properties with regard to daylight, sunlight, outlook, light pollution/spillage, privacy. Refer to guidance set out in CPG for Amenity;
- g. allow for the retention of a reasonably sized garden;
- h. retain the open character of existing natural landscaping and garden amenity;
- i. allow for the retention of wildlife corridors.

4.16 Paragraph 3.2 states that a rear extension is often the most suitable form of extension to a house or flat.

4.17 Paragraph 3.3 advises that a single storey is generally preferable.

4.18 Paragraph 3.4 states that the width of a rear extension should be designed so it is not visible from the street and should respect the rhythm of the existing rear extensions in neighbouring sites.

4.19 In relation to roof terraces, paragraph 4.11 states that balconies and terraces should complement the elevation upon which they are located. Consideration should be given to:

- detailed design to limit impact on the existing elevation
- complementary materials
- setbacks to minimise overlooking
- possible use of screening
- screen should preferably be 1.7m high, timber and not visually permeable
- avoid creating climbing opportunity for burglars

4.20 Paragraph 4.17 concerns light spillage from roof lights on lower floors and advises that roof lights should be positioned at least 1m from the building line below windows to habitable rooms, and/or obscure glazing be inserted to minimise any glare.

4.21 CPG 'Amenity'

4.22 Section 2 relates to overlooking, privacy and outlook. Paragraph 2.2 states that the Council will expect development to be designed to protect the privacy of the occupants of both new and existing dwellings to a reasonable degree. The extent of overlooking will be assessed on a case by case basis.

4.23 Paragraph 2.3 notes that the places most sensitive to overlooking are typically habitable room and gardens at the rear of residential buildings. The area of garden nearest to the window of a habitable room is most sensitive to overlooking.

4.24 Paragraph 2.11 advises that roof terraces should be carefully sited and designed to reduce potential overlooking.

4.25 Paragraph 2.14 notes that the proximity, size or cumulative effect of any structures should avoid having an overbearing and/or dominating effect that is detrimental to the amenity of neighbouring properties.

4.26 Section 3 refers to daylight and sunlight and sets out the requirement for a daylight and sunlight study where the 45 degree and 25 degree tests cited in the BRE guidance are not met. It provides details of what the study should include.

4.27 3.22 notes that the BRE document provides advice to developers and decision makers and therefore it should be regarded as a guide rather than policy.

4.28 Paragraph 3.23 notes that the Council consider the outcomes of the daylight and sunlight study flexibly, where appropriate, taking into account site specific circumstances and context.

4.29 Parkhill and Upper Park Conservation Area appraisal and management strategy identifies the important characteristics of the conservation area.

5.0 Assessment

5.1 The main issues to be considered with respect to this proposal are: amenity; and design and impact on the conservation area as a heritage asset.

5.2 Design and Heritage Impact

5.3 The property is located within the Parkhill and Upper Park Conservation Area. Downside Crescent is noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Strategy document as being densely lined with late-Victorian red brick, three storey gabled houses with front gardens. The character of this part of the Conservation Area is derived from the uniformity and detailing of the front façade of these houses as well as the traditional boundary treatments and landscaping. No.16 has been well maintained and retains the original architectural detailing and front boundary treatment.

5.4 The proposal is for a ground floor rear extension to replace an existing extension, which will not be visible from the street. The proposed extension will have no impact on the street scene and as such the character and appearance of the Conservation Area from within the public realm will be maintained.

5.5 The proposed extension will be constructed in stock brickwork to match existing. It is single storey with a flat roof, proportionate to the existing house in terms of height, scale and mass. It is the same depth as the existing extension, therefore the garden size will remain unchanged and the existing trees will be preserved in accordance with policy D2.

5.6 The proposed extension complies with the design guidance set out in Camden's Planning Guidance 'Altering and extending your home', in that the proposed extension is secondary to the building being extended, in relation to its location, form, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing.

5.7 The proposed roof lights are positioned at the back edge of the extension in a similar position to the existing roof lights. The new balustrade around the roof terrace will have a metal framework and

a wood handrail with glass panels and will have minimal impact on the appearance of the rear of the house.

5.8 The proposed extension is a high quality contemporary design compatible with the character and appearance of the house and neighbouring properties in accordance with policy and guidance. As such, the proposal preserves the character and appearance of the house and the conservation area.

5.9 For these reasons the proposed extension complies with the requirements of the Council's design and heritage policies D1 and D2, and advice contained in Camden's supplementary planning guidance.

5.10 Amenity

5.11 Policy A1 seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. The policy states that permission will be granted for development unless this causes unacceptable harm to amenity.

5.12 The policy sets out a list of amenity issues which will be considered in determining each application. In relation to this proposal the relevant issues to consider are:

- Sunlight, daylight and overshadowing;
- Visual privacy, outlook.
- Light pollution/spillage

5.13 Sunlight and daylight.

5.14 A daylight and sunlight report, provided by Schroeders Begg, is included with the application in accordance with the Council's Guidance set out in CPG 'Amenity'. The report shows that the proposed extension complies fully with the BRE guidance in terms of the impact on the levels of daylight and sunlight to nos 14 and 18, with the exception of the rear terrace to the garden flat at no.18.

5.15 The terrace garden receives limited sunlight as existing. The proposed extension, which increases the height on the boundary by 540mm, will result in some loss of sunlight into this amenity space and does not meet the BRE guidelines. However, the report points out that where sunlight into a garden area is already so limited any small change when measured, will appear disproportionately high. To try to provide a more detailed overview, measurements have also been taken at mid-summer. This shows that at mid-summer the loss is minimal (4%). The report concludes that on balance, there is no adverse overshadowing impact resulting from the proposal.

5.16 Since the report was prepared, a minor change has been made to the proposed roof lights. An email is enclosed from the consultant (Schroeders Begg) which confirms this amendment will have no impact on sunlight and daylight to neighbouring properties.

5.17 Camden Planning Guidance 'Amenity' recognises that the BRE provides guidance rather than policy and that the Council will consider the outcomes of daylight and sunlight studies flexibly and take into account the site specifics and context in determining applications.

5.18 In this case the daylight and sunlight report concludes the proposal will not have an unacceptably adverse impact and as such the proposal accords with policy A1.

5.19 Visual privacy and outlook

5.20 No.14 is a 3 storey block of flats with balconies at the rear. There are existing first floor terraces at no.16 and no.18 as well as to a number of other properties along this part of Downside Crescent.

5.21 The proposed terrace at no.16 is larger than existing, extending part way in front of the living room windows to the first floor flat; and positioned 540mm higher than the existing terrace. There is as existing mutual overlooking between properties. The proposed terrace maintains a separation between the adjacent dwellings to ensure the current level of privacy is maintained, by setting the balustrade in from the edge of the roof.

5.22 In terms of outlook, the increased height and bulk of the extension will not impact on no.14 due to the gap of 2m between nos. 14 and 16. The outlook of the window to the garden flat at 18, closest to the extension, is already limited by the existing extensions to no.18 and no. 16. The additional height will not affect the outlook from this window.

5.23 Light pollution/spillage

5.24 It is noted that the Council's planning guidance advises that roof lights on lower floors should be obscurely glazed and positioned at least 1m from the building line. However, in this case the proposed roof lights are replacing existing roof lights that are clear glazed and provide a view of the sky and trees, which the applicant would like to maintain. In terms of light spillage there will be no material difference and as such the proposal complies with policy.

5.25 The scheme has been designed taking into account the amenity of neighbours. The proposed extension is no deeper than the existing extension and the additional height has been kept to a minimum. The size of the terrace has been limited to ensure the amenity of neighbouring properties is not compromised. The proposal complies with policy A1 and the guidance set out in the SPD 'Altering and extending your home'.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The proposed extension is a contemporary design of high quality, compatible with and complementary to, the character of the existing house and the local area. The proposal preserves the character and appearance of the Parkhill and Upper Park Conservation Area, and as such complies with policies D1 and D2.

5.2 The house as extended respects the amenity of neighbouring properties in accordance with policy A1.

5.3 The proposal complies with the relevant policies of the development plan and planning permission should therefore be granted.

