



**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019**  
**Our ref: 2019/1347/PRE**  
**Contact: Gavin Sexton**  
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*By email*

Dear Giles Lovegrove,

**Re: The Coach House, 20a Ferncroft Avenue, London, NW3 7PH**

Thank you for submitting a pre-planning application enquiry for the above property which was received on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 together with the required fee of £432.69. It should be noted that the address of the site is 20a Ferncroft Avenue, not 20 as stated in the Planning Statement.

## **1. Overview**

- 1.1. Advice is sought in relation to a proposed basement extension, enlarged single storey rear extension and addition of side dormers to the front roofslopes to the dwellinghouse.
- 1.2. The existing rear extension appears to have been added following planning approval in 2003 (planning ref 2003/2488/P). The rear dormer, alterations to the roof and the front lower bay were consented in 2006 (ref 2006/5643/P). The front boundary treatment appears to be recent.
- 1.3. The site is a two-storey single-family dwelling house located on the north east side of Ferncroft Avenue. The dwelling forms an early infill development in the form of a coach house attached to No 20 Ferncroft Avenue and sits subordinately in relation to its attached neighbour. The site is in the Redington/Frogna Conservation Area (CA) and the property is noted in the Conservation Area Statement as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## **2. Assessment**

### Basement construction

- 2.1. The basement proposals involve a new glazed lightwell to the front of the property, with the remainder of the excavation wholly under the footprint of the dwelling, as enlarged by the single storey rear extension.

- 2.2. The principle of a single storey basement on this site is acceptable. The scale of the basement is presented as meeting the criteria of policy A5 (a-m).
- 2.3. The street is characterised by relatively deep front gardens which are often sloped and some of which have existing lightwells or basement level carparking. The dwelling has a low wall with hedging separating the parking area from the front bay which has the appearance of a lightwell upstand. It is considered that there is sufficient precedent and variety in the neighbouring front gardens for a front lightwell to be in keeping with the context and the principle of the lightwell is therefore acceptable. The depth of the proposed lightwell means that it would not be overly visible from the street and is therefore acceptable. The glazed approach is also acceptable although it should be accompanied by a small upstand on the forecourt side to shield it in views from the street.
- 2.4. Although the proposed basement is only inset marginally from the boundaries at the rear, it would be entirely under the extended property and therefore would not prejudice the ability of the site to maintain a planted margin. This is acceptable.
- 2.5. However, there are several trees in the neighbouring garden immediately adjacent to the extended footprint of the basement. Any application for the basement works would need to be accompanied by a Tree Retention and Protection statement prepared by a suitable qualified Arboriculturalist, which identifies how the health and longevity of the trees would not be undermined by the proposals. In the event that an arboricultural survey finds that the proposals would lead to harm to the trees the scale of basement and possibly the rear extension would need to be reduced sufficiently to avoid the harm.
- 2.6. A planning application for the basement proposals would need to be accompanied by a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA). The Council's records indicate that the application site is in a site of Claygate Beds, which has special significance for its construction and ensuring land stability is maintained. The BIA will need to be produced by an appropriately qualified professions and completed in line with the Council's adopted pro-forma. You are strongly encouraged to review the BIA-related guidance and help notes on the Camden website, including the notes on the Scope of Engineering services required to provide a satisfactory BIA. Full details are available at [www.camden.gov.uk/basements](http://www.camden.gov.uk/basements).
- 2.7. The BIA would need to be independently audited by the Council's Consulting Engineers and the cost of that would be in addition to the planning application fee. Full details are available at the above link.
- Rear extension
- 2.8. The depth of the proposed extension is not insignificant, however it would still be subordinate to the original building, it would maintain the majority of the rear garden and it would be screened from the neighbouring dwellings on both sides by the existing boundary treatment or by existing extensions. The scale of the extension is therefore acceptable.
- 2.9. The existing extension has a roof terrace atop. It appears from the drawings that the position and size of the terrace would be maintained as existing. Any enlargement of the roof terrace would raise concerns about the potential for overlooking to neighbouring properties habitable rooms and would be resisted.
- 2.10. Any planning application should include a detailed section of the green roof showing the depth of substrate and should be accompanied by a planting schedule and schedule of maintenance. This would avoid the need for such details to be required in a pre-commencement condition. Guidance notes on the Council's preferred approach to Green Roofs are provided in the Camden Planning Guidance on Energy efficiency and Adaptation.

- 2.11. It is evident from the proposed section that the rear portion of the extension would step down from the level of the main kitchen. This has three key impacts:
1. It increases the minimum depth of excavation for the basement necessary to achieve acceptable floor-ceiling height at basement level.
  2. It results in an overly dominant ground floor rear elevation which accounts for almost 50% of the height of the pitched-roof building.
  3. It results in the need for greater excavation of the rear garden area from its existing levels, which may have consequences for the character of the rear garden and trees.
- 2.12. You are advised to remove the additional step down at the rear portion of the extension in order to minimise its impact, so that the development provides a more balanced rear composition and requires less excavation. For the reasons set out above the scale and design approach of the rear elevation of the ground floor extension is not acceptable as currently proposed.

#### Roof extensions

- 2.13. The proposal is to add dormers to both sides of the front pitched roof. The front gable is a prominent feature of the building and prominent hipped gables are also characteristic of other nearby properties on the street. The Redington Froggnal Conservation Area Statement identifies prominent roofslopes such as these as being sensitive to additions.
- 2.14. The roofscape at the rear has already been altered and raised to accommodate more roofspace and it is considered that the further addition of dormers to the side pitches, at the front of the dwelling, would add unacceptable clutter to the roofscape and would undermine the composition and architectural style of the front of the building. This element of the proposal is therefore not acceptable in principle.

#### Trees

- 2.15. As mentioned above there are a number of trees close to the proposed basement/rear extension. Any proposals would need to include existing/proposed trees on the drawings and a tree survey and protection plan produced by an arboriculturalist would be required to explain how those trees will be protected during the construction process.

#### Construction management plan

- 2.16. Any planning application for the proposals will require a draft Construction Management Plan to be submitted in order to address how the impacts of the extensive excavation would be carried out without harm to the nearby highway and neighbouring amenity. Details of these requirements, including the CMP pro-forma, are provided on the Camden website (search for 'Construction Management Plan'.)

### **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1. The proposals for basement and rear extension are acceptable in principle. Revisions should be made to the rear extension in order to make the design and massing acceptable.
- 3.2. The proposals to add dormers to the prominent front gable roof would harm the composition of the roofscape and the building and would not be supported as part of a planning application. In order to avoid associated harm arising, any formal application would need to be supported by both a basement impact assessment and tree protection details.

### **Planning application information**

If you submit a planning application which addresses the outstanding issue detailed in this report satisfactorily, I would advise you to submit the following for a valid planning application:

Completed form – [household]

#### Plans

- An Ordnance Survey based location plan at 1:1250 scale denoting the application site in red.
- Floor plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Roof plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Section drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'

#### Supporting Information / Reports

- Design and access statement (incl. Heritage report)
- Planning Statement
- Basement Impact Assessment (in line with pro forma and CPG)
- Tree survey and protection plan

Please see [supporting information for planning applications](#) for more information.

- a. We are legally required to consult on applications with individuals who may be affected by the proposals. We would notify neighbours by sending out e-alerts, putting up notices on or near the site and advertising in a local newspaper. The Council must allow 21 days from the consultation start date for responses to be received.
- b. It is likely that that a proposal of this size would be determined under delegated powers, however, if more than 3 objections from neighbours or an objection from a local amenity group is received the application will be referred to the Members Briefing Panel should it be recommended for approval by officers.

**This document represents an initial informal officer view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and would not be binding upon the Council, nor prejudice any future planning application decisions made by the Council.**

If you have any queries about the above letter or the attached document please do not hesitate to contact me direct.

Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

Yours sincerely,

#### **Gavin Sexton**

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