

## **Planning Statement**

**Proposal:** Excavation for a single storey basement extension with new patio area, new lightwells to the front and rear elevation, installation of glazed balustrade with handrail at ground floor level for means of access/exit to the proposed basement, replacement of ground floor front window with a new door, erection of brick pier and metal railing front boundary treatment, replacement of windows throughout and associated external alterations all associated with existing ground floor flat.

**Site:** Flat 1, 12 Platt's Lane London NW3 7NR

## **1.0 Relevant Planning History**

1.1 Planning permission was sought for an identical scheme in 2016 (planning ref: 2016/4899/P). The proposal was considered acceptable by the council but the applicant was unable to enter into a legal agreement requested by the council, therefore, the application was withdrawn by the applicant.

1.2 Planning permission (ref: 2016/0739/P) was granted in May 2016 for the demolition of an existing conservatory and part of the rear wing and the erection of a full width rear/infill extension with 3 rooflights to provide ancillary residential floorspace. This extension was completed in summer 2016.

## **2.0 Proposal**

2.1 The basement will be located almost entirely under the dwelling's footprint, with small lightwell areas outside the footprint. The additional floorspace will provide a living room and dining room, play room, utility space and a gym/yoga room and shower. A room is also identified for any necessary plant.

2.2 The basement works would provide 168 sq m of additional floorspace (GIA). This, combined with the previously permitted rear extension, would enable the reconfiguration of the dwelling to provide a high quality five bedroom, family sized dwelling.

2.3 In addition to the creation of the basement and associated patio, the following 1.5 minor works are also proposed:

- Erection of a glazed balustrade surrounding the rear patio
- Replacement of all ground floor windows on the front and side elevations with timber sash windows to the same dimensions as existing.
- Alteration to the existing ground floor window to create a new timber door with fanlight above.
- Replacement of the ground floor front door with a new timber front door.
- Removal of the existing brick wall on the front boundary and replacement with a brick pier and black metal railing boundary treatment.

## **3.0 Planning Assessment**

3.1 Planning permission was sought for an identical scheme in 2016 (planning ref: 2016/4899/P). The proposal was considered acceptable by the council but the applicant was unable to enter into a legal agreement requested by the council, therefore, the application was withdrawn by the applicant.

3.2 The principle of extending a dwelling using high quality design is acceptable in accordance with Camden policies. CPG 4 'Basements and Lightwells' contains additional and specific advice relating to basement extensions and associated lightwells to ensure that proposed developments are designed in accordance with policy. The document sets out the key

principles for this type of development. These principles relate to the importance of scale, location and overall design of basement developments, and provides additional guidance for developments within conservation areas. The proposal adheres to these principles, as discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

3.3 Planning policy states that permission will only be granted where a scheme will not cause adverse impacts on drainage, flooding, groundwater conditions and structural stability. The policy requires developers to demonstrate via appropriate methodologies that schemes:

- a) maintain the structural stability of the building and neighbouring properties;
- b) avoid adversely affecting drainage and run-off or causing other damage to the water environment;
- c) avoid cumulative impacts upon structural stability or the water environment in the local area;

3.4 Proposals for basement extensions must be supported by a Basement Impact Assessment produced by a chartered engineer who is a member of their relevant professional body. The applicants have commissioned a Basement Impact Assessment by Soils 5.9 Limited consultants which examines each of the matters set out within policy DP27 and CPG4. The Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) is included as part of this planning submission.

3.5 The BIA provides a detailed assessment of the soil type, flood risk, having been informed by site investigation data and information regarding the construction methods, sequence, loading and allowable bearing capacity. The assessment minimises any potential risk to the structure and foundations of the property and neighbouring properties during the course of construction. The Assessment identifies that the proposed basement will not have any impact upon the surface water being received within the site or on neighbouring sites. Furthermore, the site is not located close to an existing water course or a flood risk area.

3.6 Overall the BIA concludes that, subject to an appropriate monitoring regime being established during construction, there are no outstanding issues of concern (singularly or cumulatively) from a stability, groundwater or surface water perspective.

3.7 The application property is located within the Redington and Frogna Conservation Area but is not identified as a building that makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

3.8 The Development Plan requires development of the highest standard of design that respects the local context and character and preserves and enhances heritage assets, including conservation areas. All development should consider character and setting, the quality of materials, the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level and the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping, including boundary treatments.

3.9 CPG4 acknowledges that the bulk of basement developments tend to be concealed wholly underground, away from public views. Often skylights and lightwells are the only visible external manifestations associated with basement developments. However, just as overly large extensions above the ground level can dominate a building, contributing to the over-development of a site, an extension below ground can be of an inappropriate scale.

3.10 In this case very limited external manifestations are incorporated into the design, the scheme will have no demonstrable impact on the Conservation Area or the character of the property. CPG4 sets out that where basements and visible lightwells are not part of the prevailing character of a street, new lightwells should be discreet and not harm the architectural character of the building, or the character and appearance of the surrounding area, or the relationship between the building and the street. The guidance also adds that where front gardens are quite long, lightwells can be more easily concealed.

3.11 The application property (No.12) benefits from a set back hard surfaced front area which is used for car parking. A small lightwell is proposed to the front and would be covered by two small areas of louvered walk-on glazing. Given, No. 12's generous setback from the public highway, these small areas of glazing would be barely perceptible from public viewpoints. A similar, small area of walk on glazing will supply a side lightwell. This is located beyond a timber gate which provides access to the rear garden, and will be wholly screened from public views. Other than the inconspicuous front lightwell there will be no external manifestations to basement extension visible from the public domain.

3.12 The Basements and Lightwells CPG4 states that 'any exposed area of basement development to the side or rear of a building will be assessed against CPG1, section 4 'Extensions, alterations and conservatories.' According to this guidance, exposed areas of basements should be:

- Subordinate to the building being extended;
- Respect the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style;
- And retain a reasonable sized garden.

3.13 To the rear of the property a sunken patio, accessed via external steps from the garden, will create an exposed area of basement development. The submitted drawings show that the proposed basement is clearly subordinate to the main dwelling because it is single storey, only involves excavation under the footprint of the host property and permitted rear extension, and has floor to ceiling heights which are not greater than that of the upper floor levels of the house. The basement windows align with the windows on the permitted rear ground floor extension and are of the same form and scale, in order to relate to the façade above.

3.14 The basement extension would involve the creation of a sunken patio, but would still retain the vast majority of the rear garden which will remain very generously sized. The proposed subterranean development will therefore allow an increase in floorspace to create a high-quality family sized dwelling without having any demonstrable impact on the appearance or massing of the existing building.

3.15 Within the Appraisal, Conservation Area Guideline R/F2 states that extending into basements will only be acceptable where it would not involve harm to the character of the building or its setting. From public views within the conservation area, the external expression of the proposed basement extension will be limited to the small areas of walk-on glazing above the lightwell to the front elevation. As a result the basement will be barely perceptible from public views and will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

To the rear, the new glazed doors and sunken patio will only be visible from private views within the application property grounds. The width of the windows would be in line with those permitted within the rear extensions (under application 2016/0739/P) and it is not considered that these features will cause any demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

3.16 The Council's Local Plan Policy A5 (Basements), relates solely to basements developments sets out that basements proposals should:

- f. not comprise of more than one storey;
- g. not be built under an existing basement;
- h. not exceed 50% of each garden within the property; i. be less than 1.5 times the footprint of the host building in area;
- j. extend into the garden no further than 50% of the depth of the host building measured from the principal rear elevation;
- k. not extend into or underneath the garden further than 50% of the depth of the garden;
- l. be set back from neighbouring property boundaries where it extends beyond the footprint of the host building;
- m. avoid the loss of garden space or trees of townscape or amenity value

3.17 The proposed basement adheres to each of these requirements within the 5.26 emerging policy.

3.18 In addition to the basement works, a number of smaller alterations are proposed to complement the general refurbishments to the dwelling. The existing brick wall on the front site boundary is structurally compromised. It is proposed to replace the wall with a brick piers and black painted metal railings. These match with the boundary treatment at the neighbouring Windsor Court site, and is considered to enhance the appearance of the conservation area.

3.19 The additional minor alterations involving the replacement timber door and replacement timber sash windows are all considered to be in keeping with the design of the application property and wider conservation area

3.20 The construction phases of a development can have an impact on amenity and this is a particular issue for basements.

3.21 In order to ensure that any disruption associated by construction is minimised, a 5.30 Construction Management Plan (CMP) has been prepared by Aleck Associates Ltd in advance and is included within the application submission. The mitigation measures set out within the CMP can be secured by a planning condition. The CMP carefully considers the key construction matters such as hours of work, construction-related deliveries and waste removal, and method of construction, in order to mitigate the impact of the construction phases on neighbouring occupiers.

3.22 The introduction of front and side lightwells and a rear sunken patio will not allow any overlooking to adjoining properties and will not have any demonstrable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential occupiers.

3.23 In terms of the impact on living accommodation for occupiers of the application premises, the basement extension will provide a high quality, enlarged dwelling. The new floorspace will benefit from natural light from the front and side lightwells, and full floor to ceiling glazing on the rear elevation fronting the sunken patio. It is considered that these lightwells will ensure that the basement receives satisfactory levels of natural light.

3.24 The application site currently benefits from a tree on the site's front boundary, and several mature trees along the rear garden boundary. The Tree Report sets out how tree protection barriers and construction exclusion zones will be utilised to ensure the health of all trees on site. A suitably worded condition can be imposed to ensure that the proposed measures are adhered to.