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Via Planning Portal only

17th March 2020

Dear Sir/madam

PLANNING APPLICATION - THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY LOWER GROUND FLOOR REAR EXTENSION WITH EXTERNAL ROOF TERRACE, NEW PATIO AND EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO PROPERTY INCLUDING NEW AND REPLACEMENT WINDOWS AND DOORS.

29 MARESFIELD GARDENS, LONDON, NW3 5SD

Please accept this covering letter as an accompaniment to this full planning application for a proposed extension and alterations to the existing property at 29 Maresfield Gardens. This letter provides a summary of the site and the proposed development.

Please also find enclosed a completed application form, CIL form, a full set of existing and proposed plans including site location plan, a Basement Impact Assessment, a Surface Water Drainage Assessment, and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Outline Method Statement.

The site

The site comprises a four-storey semi-detached Victorian property located on the west side of Maresfield Gardens currently used as 4 residential flats. The property, along with neighbouring development, comprises an elevated ground floor set approximately 2 metres above the street level set behind an enclosed front garden. A lower ground floor is situated approximately 1 metre below the street level. A substantial private garden is located to the rear of the property.

The site is located within the Fitzjohns / Netherall Conservation Area. The building is not statutorily or locally listed, however it is identified in the Fitzjohns / Netherall Conservation Area Statement (2001) as a building which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

There are no trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders within the application site, however, any trees are afforded protection by virtue of their siting within the conservation area.

Surrounding development is characterised by street frontage residential development comprising red brick properties of a similar size and scale comprising a mix of single residential homes and converted flats.

The proposal

This application seeks full planning permission for proposed extension and alterations to the existing property. The proposed development can be described as:

‘Erection of single storey lower ground floor rear extension with external roof terrace and new external patio with new stepped access to rear garden. External alterations to property including replacement of ground floor rear window with french doors, installation of new window and enlarged window to lower ground floor side elevation and installation of new front entrance door to provide access to upper floor flats’.

In detail the proposal consists of:

- New stepped face brick rear extension measuring 4m-6m depth including extended patio at lower ground floor with porous paving. Blue roof to be used for the extension to enable storage of water beneath the paving finish.
- New steps up and down to garden level from lower ground floor and ground floor
- New skylight over rear extension to allow for additional natural light at lower ground floor
- New french doors at rear ground floor level in replacement of a window opening.
- New window and enlarged window to lower ground floor side elevation
- New hidden front entrance door to upper floor flats.

For full details of the proposed development please refer to the supporting plans and elevations.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which incorporates three specific strands – economic, environmental and social. The following sections are relevant to the consideration of this application; Section 11 (making effective use of land), Section 12 (achieving well designed places), and Section 16 (conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

Local Planning Policy

The adopted Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden (LB Camden) comprises the London Plan (2016), the Camden Local Plan (2017), the Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) Documents and the Fitzjohns/Netherall Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011). The following policies are considered relevant to the consideration and determination of this application:

London Plan 2016

- Policy 3.14 – Existing Housing
- Policy 7.4 – Local Character
- Policy 7.6 – Architecture
- Policy 7.8 – Heritage Assets
- Policy 7.21 – Trees and Woodlands

Camden Local Plan 2017

- Policy A1 – Managing the Impact of Development
- Policy A3 – Biodiversity
- Policy A5 – Basements
- Policy D1 – Design
- Policy D2 – Heritage

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)

- Altering and extending your home CPG
- Amenity CPG
- Basements CPG
- Design CPG
- Trees CPG

Fitzjohns/Netherall Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011)

- New development – Guideline F/N1
- Rear Extensions – Guidelines F/N19, F/N20 and F/N21.
- Trees and Landscaping – Guidelines F/N27, F/N28 and F/N30

Planning Assessment

Principle of basement/lower ground floor extension

The Camden Local Plan (CLP) states that a lower ground floor with a floor level partly below the ground level will generally be considered as basement development. In this context CLP Policy A5 applies which states that the Council will only permit basement development where it is demonstrated that the proposal would not cause harm to neighbouring properties; the

structural, ground, or water conditions of the area; the character and amenity of the area; and the significance of heritage assets. It advises that in determining proposals for basements and other underground development, the Council will require an assessment of the scheme's impact on drainage, flooding, groundwater conditions and structural stability in the form of a Basement Impact Assessment. Camden's adopted Planning Guidance on basements (CPG Basements) provides further detail on the application of that policy.

In light of those requirements, a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) dated March 2020, supported by a Surface Water Drainage Assessment and Outline SUS Strategy, has been submitted to support this application where the technical criteria of the policy are discussed in detail. The BIA concludes that no adverse residual or cumulative stability, hydrological or hydrogeological impacts are expected to either neighbouring structures or the wider environment.

Consequently, there are no policy objections in principle to basement development subject to the satisfaction of a number of technical matters and detailed considerations which are all considered either in the supporting Basement Impact Assessment, the Surface Water Drainage Assessment and Outline SUS Strategy, and/or below.

Design and visual impact

Section 12 of the NPPF refers to well-designed places. Paragraph 127 (c) states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

CLP Policy D1 requires development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality, and have particular regard to design and visual impact and to the context within which it is placed, and the contribution it makes to the landscape qualities of the area. The aim of this policy is reflected in London Plan Policies 7.4 (Local Character) and 7.6 (Architecture) and the Design CPG. Specific guidance in relation to extensions to existing properties is further provided in the 'Altering and extending your home' CPG.

In accordance with the 'Altering and extending your home' CPG, the proposed rear extension by virtue of its single storey height and lower ground level would appear subservient to the existing property. The proposed depth of the extension at 6 metres is considered modest in comparison to the substantial size of the existing property and the neighbouring properties (no.31 and 33 Maresfield Gardens) which have had similar, and significantly larger, extensions to the rear. The footprint of the extension has been staggered where its depth is reduced from 6 metres to 4 metres in order to allow for a proposed new patio area but also to reduce the overall mass of the extension. Due to the size of the existing rear garden a generous rear garden beyond the patio will continue to be provided.

CPG guidance advises that rear extensions should not be visible from the street and should respect the rhythm of existing rear extension to neighbouring sites. Due to the close proximity of the neighbouring dwelling at no.31 and that the property forms one half of a semi-detached pair with no.27, no such views to the rear of the property are achieved from the

street. Consequently, the development will not negatively impact on the space between the site and the neighbouring properties.

The extension is proposed to be constructed from a mix of facing brickwork, large glazed openings to the lower ground floor and a glass balustrade surrounding the roof terrace. Whilst the extension will have a contemporary appearance, the materials are similar to that used to neighbouring extensions. The large expanses of glazing at lower ground floor level will allow plenty of natural light into the property whilst the transparency of the glass balustrade will ensure the appreciation of the rear elevation of the property is not disrupted.

The proposed detailing and proportions of the french doors will match the fenestration to the existing property whilst the proposed new windows to the side elevations will match those to the side elevation of the rear extension. The proposed entrance door to the upper floor flats is set within the front elevation storm porch where it will have no discernible visual impact on the street scene. The window and door alterations will therefore respond sensitively to the appearance of the property.

In summary, the proposed development represents a high-quality proposal which is sympathetic to the existing character and appearance of the existing property and its surrounding context.

Heritage Impact

Case law dictates that decision makers are required to give *great weight* to any harm to the significance of a heritage asset and how this should be applied is set out in section 16 of the NPPF. CLP Policy D2 states that the Council will preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas. These aims are further reflected in London Plan Policy 7.8 (Heritage Assets).

In respect of the design considered in its own right, and the relationship to surrounding neighbouring properties, it has been identified above that the proposed works will respond positively to the host dwelling and the sites context. There will be no adverse effect on the wider views of the Conservation area or the property as a building of positive merit.

Neighbour impact

CLP Policy A1 seeks to protect the amenity of Camden's residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered. It seeks to ensure that development protects the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents. London Plan Policy 7.6 requires development not to cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings in relation to privacy. Further guidance is provided in CPG Amenity which sets specific standards of development with regard to amenity.

By virtue of the extension's modest scale and massing and location at lower ground floor level, and having regard to the existing boundary treatments and vegetation which will screen the

development from neighbours, the proposal will not have an overbearing impact or result in an unacceptable reduction in daylight or sunlight to neighbouring occupiers.

The proposed roof terrace has been purposefully set in from the boundary with no.31, which combined with the existing high hedgerow to this neighbouring boundary, will ensure no overlooking or loss of privacy to this neighbour. To the south side of the roof terrace, a proposed 1.8-metre-high trellis screen is proposed to prevent overlooking to this neighbour. At lower ground floor level existing boundary treatments will further prevent overlooking from windows proposed to the extension and the side elevation of the property.

For these reasons the proposal will have an acceptable impact on neighbour amenity.

Tree impacts

CLP Policy A3 states that the Council will resist the loss of trees and vegetation of significant amenity, historic, cultural or ecological value. It further requires trees and vegetation which are to be retained to be satisfactorily protected during the demolition and construction phase of development. This is echoed in the guidance contained in the Trees CPG.

The development will result in the removal of one small Holly Tree which is located in close proximity to the corner of the lower ground floor extension. Whilst the loss of the tree is regrettable, the tree is regarded as a Category C tree (low quality) whereby it has little individual significance and no amenity value. Its removal is therefore acceptable.

In order to protect other trees within and adjacent to the site it is proposed to install tree protection measures. This will include the installation of tree protection fences prior to the commencement of any groundworks and which will remain in place until all building works are completed. Furthermore, it is proposed for small cut back work to be carried out to the neighbours Apple tree to provide a constructional clearance space to avoid damage to this tree.

The proposed development will therefore not result in the loss of any trees and vegetation of significant amenity, historic, cultural or ecological value, and it has been demonstrated how those trees to be retained will be satisfactorily protected throughout the development. For full details please refer to the supporting Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

Summary

As demonstrated within this letter and supporting documents, the proposed development will have no adverse residual or cumulative stability, hydrological or hydrogeological impacts to either neighbouring structures or the wider environment. The proposed works are considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the property and Conservation area, and on neighbouring amenity. It has been demonstrated that the resulting footprint of the extended dwelling would not impact negatively on trees of any significant amenity value. The development is therefore in accordance with the aforementioned Development Plan policies and it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

I trust this letter and the enclosed documents provide you with sufficient information to determine the application but if you require any points of clarification or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Stuart Minty
Director
SM Planning