

# STUDIO 29 ARCHITECTS LTD

Covering letter and statement

23rd March 2020

5A Greville Place, London, NW6 5JP

## FULL STATEMENT OF CASE

### 1.0 Introduction

This statement forms part of the Appeal Application in connection with the Planning Application and Listed Building application ref: 2019/4709/P and 2019/5406/L for no 5A Greville Place, London, NW6 5JP, which was submitted in September 2019 and the decision for refusal which was issued 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

The proposed planning application was for the following:

- erection of roof extension
- minor alteration to front elevation, widening entrance door

In this cover letter I would like to respond to the delegated report completed by the case office dealing with the application at Camden Council.

### Heritage and Design

*3.1 The Council's Policy D2 Heritage states that the Council will preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their setting, including listed buildings. The same policy states the Council will resist proposals for alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building. Policy D2 Heritage also states the Council will require the development within conservation areas preserves, or where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area.*

The dwelling in question is a two-storey high building with plain white façades and small faux-Georgian type fenestration. The shape of the house is currently cubic, which relates to neither Georgian style property nor a coach house typology. The house's appearance does not positively enhance the character of the area nor street. It distinctly disrupts the street elevation as it has a very abrupt shape compared to the delicate shallow roof pitches of its listed neighbouring buildings.

*3.2 The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments, including where alterations and extensions are proposed. Policy D1 requires extensions to consider the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings; and the character and proportions of the existing building.*

The design considered the existing character of the house and its context – basing the gable fronted elevation on the houses within the local area which have small centrally placed windows or motifs in the gable. I have included a number of photos below of houses in the same style below:



*Gable front house with motif on Carlton Hill, NW6*



*Double gable fronted house with 2 windows one in each gable pitch on Carlton Hill, NW6*



*Gable front house with centrally placed bullseye window on Carlton Hill, NW6*



*Gable front elevation with central placed window , Carlton Hill , NW6*



*2 X Gable fronted houses with centrally placed motif window, Greville road, NW6*





Gable fronted house with centrally placed motif window



Double Gable-fronted property with centrally placed windows, Greville Road, NW6

The neighbouring property of no 5A (no 3B) has a gable front elevation and asymmetrical windows. No.5A is a flat roof building and does not fit into the context well at all and has over time after a number of developments has become an unattractive building whilst the neighbouring buildings have collectively delicately sloped roofs and pitches – no 5A in contrast has quite an abrupt straight roof profile and always catches the eye first. The concept of adding the pitched gable front to no 5A Greville Place was to balance out the elevation. The elevation above reads as a whole as there is no separation between the properties (which is quite uncommon in this area as dwellings tend to be well spaced with landscaping and trees), the two shallow pitched listed houses on both sides of the street elevation above form a mirrored effect (or act as bookends) to the two centre properties. The studio/coach house properties stand out from the two shallow roof buildings as their shapes are quite strong independently. The proposed pitched gable roof to no 5A would create a harmony between its neighbour no 3B and allow the two shallower pitch roof buildings to stand out. We still intend to keep the proposed roof height much lower than that of the existing shallow roof of the main villas so there is no domination of the overall height of the building (the proposal is over a metre lower than no 5's roof).



*Existing buildings on Greville Place , showing no's 3A, 3B, 5A and 5 (from left to right)*



*Proposed buildings Greville Place, showing no's 3A, 3B, 5A and 5 (from left to right)*

*3.3 CPG Design clearly states that the Council will only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and where possible enhances the character and appearance of the area.*

The proposed design enhances the existing building and makes the property fit well into its surrounds and in turn the Conservation Area. The street elevation would be more harmonious.

*3.4 Section 16, and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("the Listed Buildings Act") are also relevant. These sections impose a statutory duty on the planning authority to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and their setting. In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*

*3.5 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is also relevant. This section places a general duty on the planning authority that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area.*

The property no 5A is not of special architectural or historic interest as it has been altered a number of times over a long period of time from the 60s onwards. The setting is of more interest here and the proposal of the roof extension improves the setting of the listed buildings positively by allowing the main villas to be more distinct in the street elevation, whilst the two central studios mirror one another.

*3.6 The effect of these sections of the Act is that there is a statutory presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings, their setting and conservation areas. Considerable importance and weight should be attached to their preservation.*

The proposal does not affect the existing façade of the neighbouring listed buildings, as the property is already attached to the property and has been altered a number of times to make it the independent dwelling it is today. Adding the proposed roof extension will only add balance to the composition of the five attached houses.

*3.7 The proposed extension is considered too tall and bulky, does not act as a subservient element to the main villa and would harm the hierarchy and proportions of the buildings at the application site. The relationship between the main villa and the subject building would be changed to such an extent that the structure to the south would visually challenge the dominance of the host villa, thereby causing harm to its significance. Furthermore, the proposed windows to the side elevation of the roof extension are considered too large and would dominate the roof plan, and clearly does not respect the hierarchy of windows in the building, contrary to the Council's design policy. A further impact on the significance of the listed building occurs as the proposed pitched gable feature of the design means the listed building may stylistically relate more to its listed neighbour No. 3 Greville Place, and would erode the visual relationship between Nos. 5 and 5a. The significance of its listed neighbour would be harmed through the implementation of this development.*

The main villa is taller than the proposed roof extension by 1.1 metre. The new proposed roof extension is still subservient to the villa. The property at no 5a currently has a flat roof profile which distracts from the delicate shallow pitches of the main villa's roof. The proposed side roof glazing of no 5A's roof is angled upwards, and set back 1.5m from the front façade face and therefore there is a limited view of this from street level, side elevation or rear elevation. The proposed front gable wall with central window relates to the design of no 3B Greville Place and also to the properties in the area – when no 5A was originally built as a coach house it was considerably smaller than the main villa and was part of the property at no 5, now it is an independent dwelling with independent gardens and has been substantially changed so much so is the distortion of scale that it does not appear as an ancillary property to the main villa any longer.

*3.8 The application site is within the St John's Wood West sub area according to the Conservation Area Appraisal. The Appraisal has noted this sub area has retained much of its original character and appearance and the built environment is of high quality. Furthermore, the grade II listed buildings represent important examples of both the early development of the Conservation Area and later development in the Victorian period. Nos. 1, 3 and 5 Greville Place are grade II listed detached stucco villas built in early 1820s and is the oldest section of the Conservation Area. They are characterised by their hipped slate roofs and a smaller ancillary building on the side amongst many other features. Further along the road are more examples of stucco-style buildings and villas. As such, the proposed roof extension and mansard roof form with gable end would harm the character and proportions of the host villa and the ensemble of traditional buildings in this area. The roof extension would add significant bulk and uncharacteristic prominence to an otherwise ancillary-style building and would adversely impact the oldest section of the Conservation Area.*

St John's Wood West sub area may have retained much of its original character and appearance, but buildings in Greville Place have been in many cases dramatically altered. The properties on this road have a very varied appearance due to this. The other examples of the stucco building have been also altered to an unrecognisable character of the main villa and smaller ancillary building.





*An example of the property opposite – stucco house with coach house extended and side ancillary house which is now adjoined to apartment block*



*An example of the street elevation showing the variety of property types in the road, some later conversions have created properties that do not fit into the typology of the area. Many properties have certainly not been preserved in the style as they would have been built in 1820s, and so the street is a mismatch of styles and is not a good representation of the oldest part of the Conservation Area.*

The existing building at no 5A is cubic and very bulky in appearance and does not have a positive effect on the street elevation. The proposed roof extension would in fact balance out the shape of the building against its neighbouring properties and give a more delicate appearance than it has now.

*3.9 Where harm is caused to a heritage asset, local planning authorities should give ‘great weight’ to preserving the asset’s significance, in accordance with paragraph 193 of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification and where harm is caused to a heritage asset, the NPPF requires decision makers to determine whether the harm is substantial, or less than substantial, paragraph 196 requires that harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals.*

The main villas are considered a heritage asset and the appearance of these buildings remain unchanged and unharmed in this proposal. No 5A independently cannot be seen as a heritage asset due to the major alterations it has undergone since it was first built and it does not retain its original coach house typology or scale. The proposed street elevation clearly shows that the property appearance of the main villas are not harmed by the proposal. The proposed roof extension is substantially lower in height than the main villa's shallow roof and is a different design to the main villa to reinforce the hierarchy of the main villas.

*3.10 This is further supported in Local Plan Policy D2 Heritage which states 'The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm'. The Council's view is that the harm in this case is 'less than substantial'. However, the proposal does not meet the public benefit test. A proposal which would cause harm should only be permitted where public benefits outweigh the heritage interest. There are limited public benefits to outweigh the harm in this instance. Therefore the proposals have not meet the requirements of either the Local Plan Policy D2 Heritage or paragraphs 194 or 196 of the NPPF and thus is unacceptable.*

The proposed roof extension improves the setting of the listed buildings compared to its current appearance. It is even stated in a previous application report for application ref: 2011/4864/L and 2011/4864/P, that

*'Although the proposal would add yet another storey which is contrary to guidance contained within CPG1, design officers agree that the shallow roof form would improve the character and appearance of the existing building.'*

and then in the same report indicate that the removal of the floors to accommodate the new shallow roof level and alterations to the fenestration is carried out in a sympathetic way.

*'The internal alterations to floor levels at the rear of the property would alter the fenestration and detailing to the rear. In view that the existing windows at the rear elevation of the subject dwelling do not follow the alignment of the adjoining property, Number 5 Greville Place, the re-positioning of windows are not deemed to adversely impact the character and appearance of the listed building or its neighbours. Windows proposed at third and second floor levels would match the detailing and materials of the existing, further details including cross sections will be required by condition. The proposed internal and external alterations to provide an additional bedroom within the roof is considered sympathetic to the listed building and therefore deemed acceptable in relation to policy DP25.'*

Surely the harm is greater to take down all the internal floors /ceilings and alter the position of the windows of no 5A than add a slightly taller roof extension than the previously approved shallow roof form (the proposed roof extension now is only 483mm taller). The proposed roof extension is still at a substantially lower height than the main listed villa roof of no 5 (the roof extension proposal is over a metre lower than the roof of the main villa).

In terms of a public benefit the property would be more viable economically, it is in an area where there are a large number of family homes and the property currently only has 2 bedrooms, which is very little for the typology of the house and the area. The proposed roof extension would extend the number of bedrooms to 5. This means the property which becomes more flexible could potentially encourage the residents to work directly from home, which would have some benefit on the local transport network. The extension would provide much needed space in the home which would make the property more viable as a future family home and does not necessitate the need to move home

as frequently and stay within the community the family have been part of for years. Visually there is a benefit from the street which would benefit both the public and the resident.

*3.11 It should be noted that there has been a previous approval (Application ref nos.: 2011/4860/P and 2011/2864/L) for a very shallow hipped roof, set behind the parapet. However, this has not been implemented. It should be also be noted that in the assessment of the previous permissions, the original proposal was for a similar mansard roof but it was also considered unacceptable in design terms for the same reason as it would have challenged the visual primacy of the main villa and the relationship between the listed buildings. Thus, the approved scheme was altered and the mansard roof was ruled out. The current scheme here would introduce a mansard roof type extension which would be even taller than the previous proposal. Whilst the 2011 proposals for a mansard roof extension were unacceptable under a different planning policy and guidance regime, this continues to be the case as the revised national and local planning and guidance have not brought about any material changes to take into consideration.*

The roof extension proposal design was considerably changed to allow a frontage to the property at no 5A which mimicked the property at no 3B, the previous application with the tall mansard did not have any relevance to any of the neighbouring buildings and stood out creating a more pronounced appearance. Our design of the roof extension also proposes that the mansard starts 1.5m away from the front façade to help reduce the building mass form on the existing street elevation. It is true that with the previously approved application design the form was changed to show a shallower roof profile, however the difficulty with this is it meant that the existing property floors and ceilings would on the whole have to be demolished and reconstructed potentially causing the Listed Building more damage. In this instance the practicality of the design has to also be taken into account with this proposal and how it is to be carried out and the harm would be less if the building floors could be retained and the roof extension added on to the existing form (bearing in mind the height of this proposal is only 483mm higher than the approved roof form).

#### **4 Amenity**

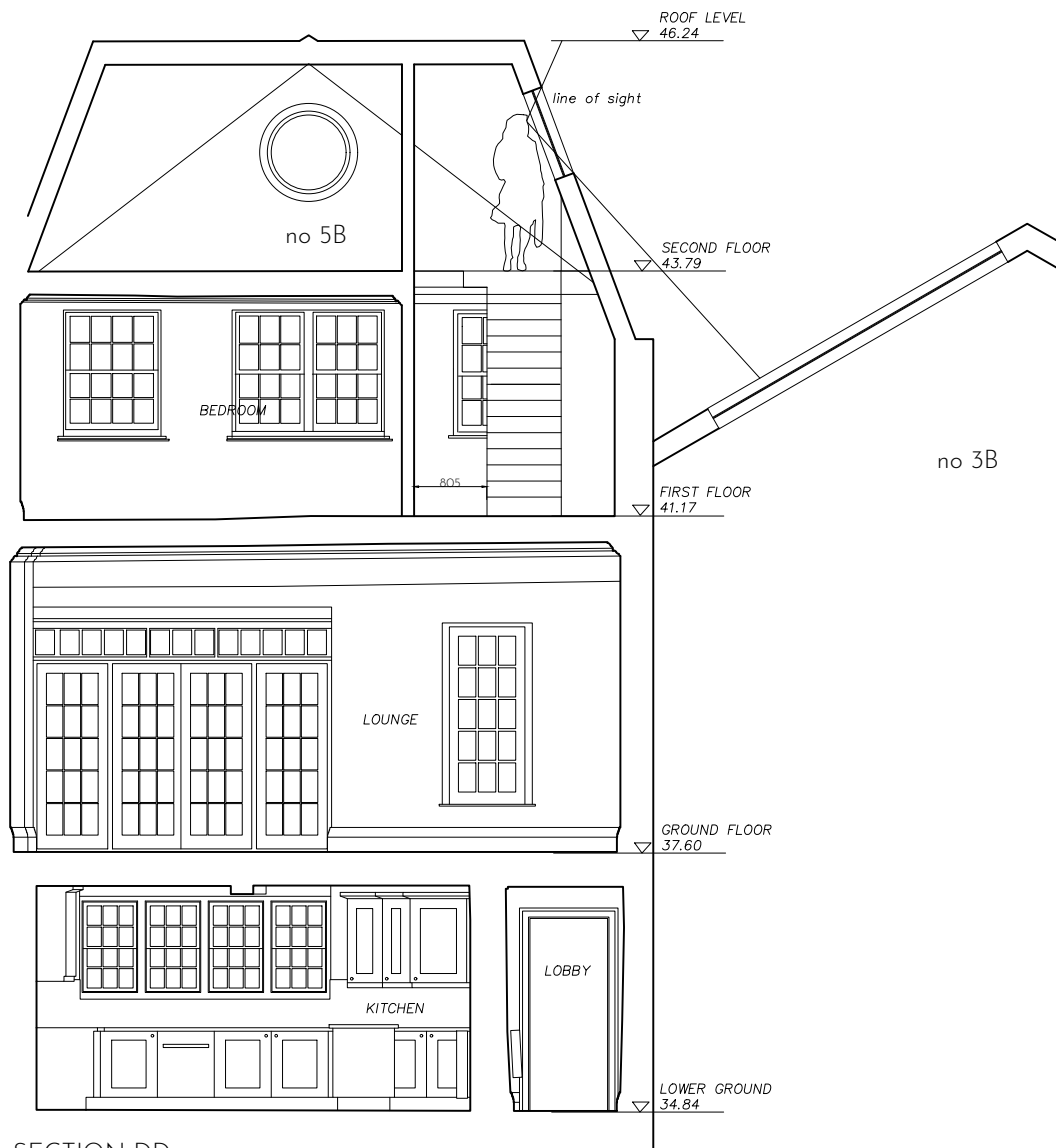
*5.1 Policy A1 of the Camden Local Plan seeks to ensure that the amenity of neighbours is protected including visual privacy, outlook, sunlight, daylight and overshadowing.*

The design has been carried out to ensure there is no overlooking of the neighbours, that the privacy is retained and the outlook and natural light intake is still good. The proposed side dormers of the roof have angled glazing rather like that in the roof of the studio no 3B, which intakes natural light throughout the day, has a view mainly of the sky and has limited issues with overlooking.

*5.2 One objection has been received in regards to the proposed extension blocking light and overlooking the neighbouring property. It is not considered the mansard roof extension would reduce the amount of daylight/sunlight into the rooflights at No. 3B Greville Place materially. However, given that the extension would sit higher than the roof of No. 3B, the introduction of windows on the south-western side elevation of the roof extension would give the applicant a direct and unrestricted view into the habitable spaces of the adjoining No. 3B through its rooflights. This would result in a loss of privacy and overlooking to the occupiers of No. 3B.*

The proposed side dormers are angled so the natural light path through no 3B's windows is uninterrupted. No 3B has a large expanse of roof glazing which faces the north east side, which currently faces the solid wall of no 5A. Adding an angled roof extension to the top of the building will make little change to the intake of light through these windows. The proposed roof windows to the

southwest side have been designed at a cill height of 990mm from the finished floor level and the wall which they are in is pitched which mean that the view over no 3B is not easily offered.



SECTION DD

(1:50)

## 5 Conclusion

6.1 The proposed mansard roof extension, by virtue of the detailed design, massing, windows and sitting, would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance on Conservation Area and dominate the neighbouring grade II listed host villa. In line with the NPPF, whilst the harm is considered to be 'less than substantial', there are no demonstrable public benefits to outweigh the harm, thus the proposal is unacceptable. The proposal would also result in the loss of privacy and overlooking to the adjoining occupiers of No. 3B Greville Place.

The character of the property is enhanced with the proposed roof extension, not only the building appearance is improved but also the setting of the building within the surrounding heritage assets.

The proposed extension has limited overlooking opportunities into no 3B Greville Place as the windows have been set high and they are within an angled wall to limit viewing directly downwards into the neighbouring property. The dwelling is made more viable economically, socially and sustainably through this alteration.

*6.2 The proposal is therefore contrary to policy A1, D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017. It is also contrary to the provisions of the London Plan 2016 and the NPPF 2019.*

We believe that it is not contrary to the policies A1, D1 and D2 and London plan 2016 and NPPF 2019.