

# DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

September 2020



42 Alma Street, Kentish Town NW5 3DH

## INTRODUCTION

An application is being made for planning consent for alterations and extensions to an existing dwelling at 42 Alma Street in Kentish Town in the Inkerman Conservation Area. The proposed alterations include restoration of historical features to the front elevation forming part of the historic terraced dwellings as well as a part single and part double storey extension to the rear of the property. This Design Statement is appended to the application to set out the details of the design approach which has been followed for the proposals and to explain considerations over potential impact on the context of the building.



*Aerial photo with plot indicated*

## THE SITE

No. 42 Alma Street was built as part of a terraced street developed in the 1850s on the West side of Kentish Town Road during speculation spreading across North London in tandem with the new railway lines. This particular quarter was laid out with street names commemorating the Crimean War. Similar to adjoining roads, Alma Street features modest 2 storey terraced dwellings although portions of the street provide additional accommodation at a lower ground floor level. The simple London stock brick houses with slate finished, butterfly roofs originally featured ornamental stucco surrounds to windows and entrances on the street side under a continuous raised parapet line to conceal the roof shape. The Inkerman Conservation Area was designated in 2001 with a Conservation Area Statement following in 2003. The street is essentially intact in its original form although a significant number of addresses have lost their original stucco detailing and a small number of properties have been extended with an additional attic storey. The most common alterations to properties since the designation have involved single and double storey extensions into their rear gardens.

The historic OS Maps as well as the CA Map itself suggest that all properties originally featured partial width rear outriggers. Whatever the quality and pattern of such original outriggers, it would appear that few if any have survived the 20<sup>th</sup> C. In fact both No. 42 & its adjoining neighbour No. 43 currently have no outrigger at all and are confined to the simple 2 storey main terrace block. In this format the rear gardens measure approximately 5M wide x 12M deep which are generous in proportion to the internal accommodation. Existing trees along the rear boundary effectively screen overlooking from and onto Raglan Street behind. No. 42 Alma Street has been extensively modified over its life with the loss of the ornamental decorative stucco work to its front elevation as well as internal partitions forming the original entrance hallway at ground floor and subdivision of the front bedroom at 1<sup>st</sup> floor to form a bathroom. The property is not statutorily listed but there are very few extant features which would warrant protection in any case.



*Historic ordnance maps of Inkerman Conservation Area*



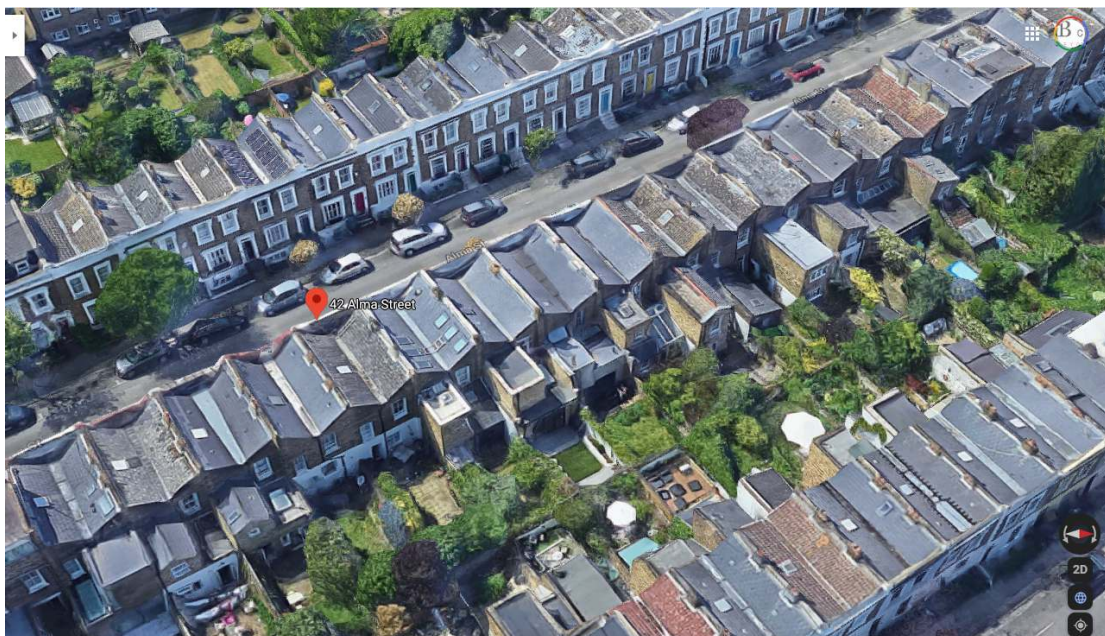
*Map of Inkerman Conservation Area with plot indicated*



*Views of existing rear garden & neighbouring extensions*



*Views of existing internal spaces*



*Aerial views of the existing Alma Street terrace showing the diversity of rear extensions*

## **DESIGN PROPOSAL**

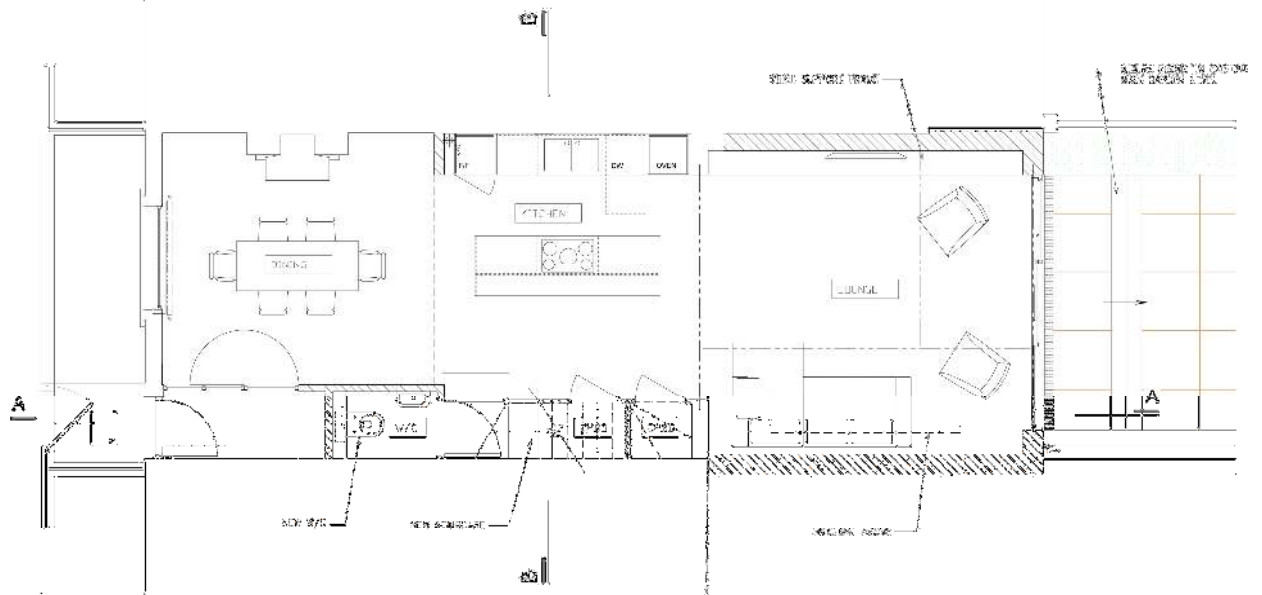
The new owner of No. 42 Alma Street intends to fully refurbish the property to enhance the original Victorian dwelling through sensitive reintroduction of authentic features to the street side combined with carefully designed contemporary extensions to the rear. As mentioned above there is evidence from historical maps that the properties all originally included rear outriggers although No.'s 42 & 43 appear to be the only ones which do not currently include such accommodation. The terrace features an extremely diverse range of extensions to neighbouring dwellings, most comprising full width at ground floor and partial width at 1<sup>st</sup> floor although some are full width at that level as well. Undoubtedly a number of these extensions may predate the designation of the Inkerman Conservation Area, however research of recent applications in the road has uncovered consents granted at No.'s 13, 15, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, 49 & 51. A number of these precedents will be discussed in further detail below.



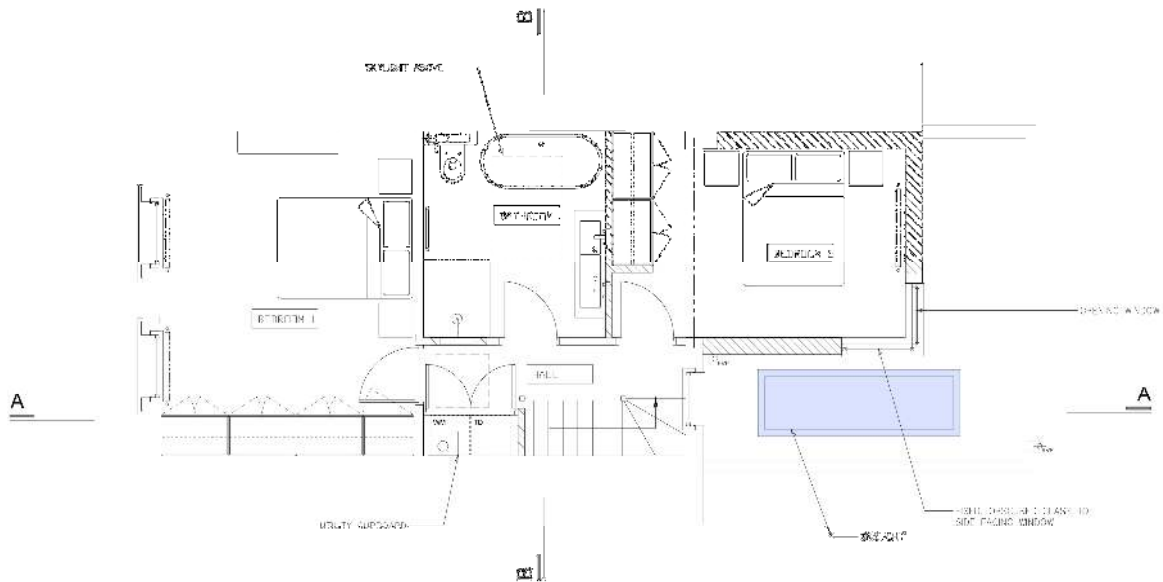
*No. 42 compared with a neighbouring property retaining decorative stucco details*

The properties of Alma Street were originally built at relatively modest cost, however they did feature additional detailing to their front facades. Their entrance doors and windows incorporated extended sills with stucco frames surmounted by profiled lintels supported on scrolled brackets. As part of the refurbishment works the applicant intends to restore these features to match those of other properties including those next door at No. 41. The sash windows would be replaced with new double glazed, painted timber ones matching the details and profiles of the existing. The extant metal railings and base wall would be retained and refurbished.

The main proposed alterations to the property would comprise extensions to the rear at ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor levels. The adjoining property at No. 41 has been historically extended along the boundary with a double storey brick wall 3.3M deep x 5.5M high and a further single storey lean-to extending 1.7M deep x 2.5M high. This massing has a significant impact on the rear garden of No. 42 as well as on the aspect from its ground and first floor windows. The scheme for No. 42 proposes a full width extension to the ground floor which would match the depth of the extension at No. 41, thereby ensuring minimal impact on that property. To the other side at No. 43 the scheme would represent an increase in height of the existing brick boundary wall of 1.4M with the overall height of the extension reducing by approximately 0.4M due to the raised level of the main garden space. The depth of the proposed extension would match that recently consented at No. 51 Alma Street (Ref 2019/0756/P). Although there are precedents for full width extensions at 1<sup>st</sup> floor, the typical format in Alma Street is for partial width extensions which retain one of the 2 rear facing window bays. The scheme for No. 42 proposes an extension 3.3M wide and matching the depth of the adjoining volume at No. 41. The flat roofed volume would feature a full height corner window reducing the mass of the volume and clearly expressing the contemporary nature of the proposal. The new roof would intersect below the butterfly roof form of the main house with which it would purposefully contrast. The design would provide an improved internal layout with 2 generous double bedrooms and a large shared bathroom top lit via a new skylight, all at one level. The proposed massing would also significantly reduce the potential impact of a the first floor extension on the adjoining neighbour at No. 43.



1 PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
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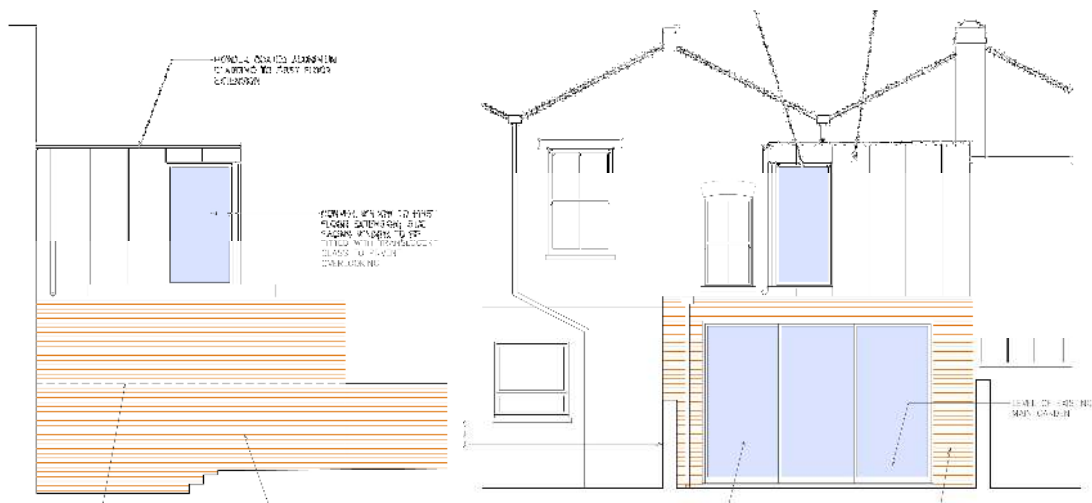
1 PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
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*Proposed ground & 1<sup>st</sup> floor plans*

Consents for single and double storey rear extensions have been granted in Alma Street more or less continuously both before and after designation of the Inkerman Conservation Area. The Officer's Report from a consent granted at No. 39 (Ref 2011/6201/P) noted precedents at No.'s 38, 44 & 49. The Report from the consent granted at No. 13 (Ref 2012/6436/P) noted precedents at No. 39 & 49 while the more recent consent at No. 51 (Ref 2019/0756/P) cited precedents at No.'s 38, 39, 44 & 49. A number of planning cases have been granted on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate including those at No.'s 46 & 49. A number of these cases provide interpretations of Camden planning policies which are important for the scheme hereby submitted. Many cases have established the principle of part single & part double storey rear extensions, however that for No. 46 (Ref 2015/1354/P & 2015/3838/P) established the more unusual format with the upper storey extension aligned on the northern side.



The Appeal Decision identified the existing butterfly roof form as a ‘key characteristic’ of the CA and determined on a very similar scheme that “the height of the proposal would mean that this feature would be retained and would still be readily visible”. It continues “the height of the proposal would also be in keeping with the other existing extensions along the terrace”. The Inspector accepted that flat roofed extensions are typical of the context and disagreed with the Council’s opinion that the proposal was too wide stating that “whilst it maybe (sic) wider than some other extensions, this in itself does not mean it would be harmful.” Lastly, the Appeal confirmed that “the fenestration proposed would present contemporary design solutions which to my mind would be sympathetic to the host property...” The contemporary approach to the proposal was judged to meet paragraph 24.6 of the DMD which specifically allows that high quality contemporary design will be welcomed.



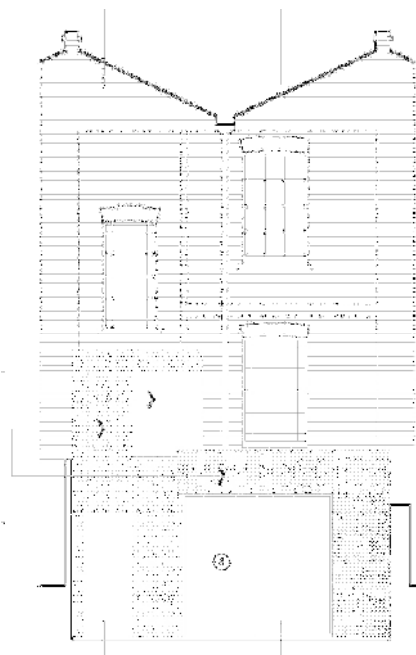
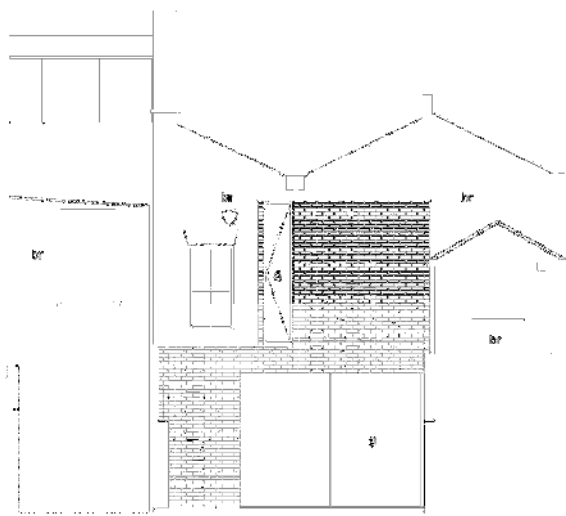
*Proposed side & rear elevations of extension*

The materials of the proposed extension would differentiate the ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor elements clarifying their relationship to the host dwelling. The main ground floor element would be finished in brick to match both the existing dwelling and the garden wall it would in part replace. The principle garden face would comprise a simple, minimally framed set of triple track sliding glass doors which would open the new internal living space onto the garden room. In contrast, the suspended first floor element would be finished in powder coated aluminium cladding matching the colour of the metal on the feature corner window and reducing the visual impact on the original brick elevation. The side facing windows would be fitted with translucent glass to prevent overlooking of the adjoining property.



*Precedent by Bchitecture for metal clad extension*

A number of precedents exist in Alma Street for contemporary designs which carefully contrast with the context of the CA. The extensions at No. 51 follow a similar approach to those proposed in this application with brickwork to the ground floor and charred timber cladding to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor with the Officer's Report confirming that "the contemporary design is complementary to the historic building and the wider built context. The ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor extensions at No. 39 are both finished in Eternit cladding with contrasting colours and a distinctly contemporary glazing design with metal frames with the Officer judging that "the glazing and simple form of the extension further reduces its visual impact" and "the high quality and simple design would preserve and enhance the appearance of the conservation area." Finally, the strongly contemporary design proposed at No. 13 was granted consent with multiple corner windows and a panelised Sto render cladding system; the Officer's Report considered the proposal "overtly modern in terms of its design and appearance and as a result, would undoubtedly sit in contrast to the main building" citing the extension allowed at No. 39 as a precedent.



*Consented extensions to No. 's 46, 51, 15 & 13 Alma Street*

## **PLANNING POLICY**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning authorities should presume in favour of sustainable development. It further establishes support for conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance so that their contribution to the environment and enjoyment of their unique qualities can be ensured to continue. Policy 7.8 of the Mayor's London Plan provides with respect to the historic environment that development should conserve, restore, re-use and be sympathetic to the form, scale, materials and architectural detail of those assets. This proposal has also carefully considered with regard to relevant policies of the Camden Local Plan (2017), A1 Managing the Impact of Development, D1 Design and D2 Heritage, and the supplementary planning guidance CPG1 'Design' (2015) as well as the Highgate Conservation Appraisal and Management Strategy (2007).

Policy D1 outlines the Council's approach to securing high quality design in development. We particularly note the Council's support for "high quality contemporary design which responds to its context". Policy D2 states that "the Council recognises that development can make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, heritage assets and will encourage this where appropriate." The alterations would enhance the quality of the original Victorian terrace without compromising its legibility. Original details and materials of the building would be carefully restored to secure its heritage value. With respect to the Inkerman Conservation Area, the proposals would maintain and enhance the existing Heritage Asset in its contribution to the local environment.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- The design proposals represent a carefully considered proposal to refurbish and extend a building forming part of the Inkerman Conservation Area. The building has a very simple character and has been extensively modernised by preceding owners prior to its designation.
- Where possible original features would be restored and enhanced by the project while the most recent and unsympathetic insertions would be removed and replaced with an extension which would contribute positively to its setting without compromising the amenity of neighbours.
- The proposals would enhance the presence of the building within the Conservation Area and contribute positively to the setting.
- The new layout would provide an enhanced living environment for its residents, thereby securing the building's future and ensuring it continues to contribute as a viable heritage asset.