

## DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

CHANGE OF USE AND CONVERSION OF CURRENTLY UNUSED LOWER GROUND FLOOR SPACE TO ONE BEDROOM FLAT (CLASS C3); ERECTION OF NEW REAR EXTENSION TO THE NEWLY FORMED FLAT; NEW ACCESS AND STAIRS FROM THE STREET LEVEL WITHIN THE REINSTATED LIGHTWELL INCLUDING ERECTION OF RAILINGS AND ALTERATIONS TO THE GROUND FLOOR SHOPFRONT TO THE EXISTING GROUND FLOOR SHOP

126 CAMDEN ROAD,  
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# TwistInArchitecture

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**1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

This project has been commissioned by Mr Aaron Horn, a local resident, freeholder and a leaseholder of the property at 126 Camden Road, NW1 9EE. Mr Horn, living locally in Camden borough purchased the run-down property in 2015, comprising a vacant shop at the ground level with the unused lower ground in poor condition and in desperate need for an upgrade.

Mr Horn managed to revive and upgrade the vacant shop at the ground floor into a successful retail space (keeping the existing A1 use), benefiting the local community. The lower ground space is still unused as it is not required for the operation of the ground floor shop. The proposal outlined in this application is to convert the unused lower ground space into one bedroom flat (proposed C3 use) and to add a rear extension to enlarge it. The lower ground level lends itself naturally to the conversion as there is an existing lightwell at the front. The existing lightwell is currently covered with a thin concrete slab, so independent access from the pavement can be easily provided - matching other properties in the street. At the rear of the property, an extension is proposed while maintaining an external patio space benefiting the new residential unit. The extension at the rear allows increasing the currently limited area of the flat, to provide a quality living unit for the residents.

The proposal in this application also comprises changes to the shopfront to allow for the new access, the stairs and natural light into the front areas of the lower ground level. The new lightwell cover will also significantly improve access to both the shop at ground floor and the existing residential unit at 126A Camden Road.



Existing front elevation



## 2. SITE & SURROUNDINGS

### 2.1 DESCRIPTION


The property and site in question are located at 126 Camden Road, NW1 9EE, located less than 100m north of the Camden Road Overground Station. The property falls within a conservation area, and the property is not listed.

The existing property at 126 Camden Road is a period building, ground + 2 storeys, with the additional third level within the mansard roof behind the parapet, and the lower ground level. There are two separate units in the building, with the A1 shop comprising ground and lower ground level including the rear garden being owned by Mr Horn. He also holds the freehold of the whole property.

The ground floor of the building is presented to the street with a separate door to the residential unit at 126A Camden Road spanning over the first, second and the mansard levels. The shop is presented to the street with the full-width aluminium shopfront comprising the glazed entrance door and two fixed side glazed panes. There is also a three-parts shutter in front of the shopfront, matching shopfront glazing widths, with the shutter box hidden behind the shopfront sign-board. The access to both doors is via a patched concrete approach, with irregular and confusing steps leading to approximately 0.5m raised ground level of the shop. The concrete surface appears as an additional covering the existing lightwell that was built at an unknown time. Furthermore, the load-bearing front brick wall at the lower ground level has a blocked up opening which was presumably used as a window to bring light in the lower ground via the lightwell.

The rear garden is located at the intermediate level in-between the ground and lower ground levels of the shop. It is in particularly poor condition, with fences and boundary walls in need of an upgrade. The garden is accessed through the existing WC located at the intermediate garden level in between the ground and the lower ground levels. The rear garden is flanked by tall neighbouring walls completely enveloping the rear garden.



Location Plan | NTS 





Shopfront



Shopfront



Rear lightwell & window



Rear elevation and neighbour's tall walls



Rear lightwell & upstand



Rear elevation

## 2.2 PLANNING HISTORY

In April 2015 the design team submitted an application for the site in question (Application Ref: 2015/2073/P) for a similar change of use proposal, without the rear extension. We have received a draft planning approval for this proposal, but the proposal was not taken forward at that time.

### Other relevant planning history

The site at 126 Camden Road has seen a small number of planning application during the last 30 years. The list of applications and their descriptions (sorted by date):

1. Display of internally illuminated fascia sign to front of ATM in association with the retention of ATM installed in front elevation of existing glazed shop front (Class A1)  
126 Camden Road London NW1 9EE  
Ref. No: 2012/3014/A | Registered: 14-06-2012 | Status: Refused and Warning of Enforcement Action to be Taken
2. Retention of ATM installed in front elevation of existing glazed shop front (Class A1)  
126 Camden Road London NW1 9EE  
Ref. No: 2012/2971/P | Registered: 14-06-2012 | Status: Refused and Warning of Enforcement Action to be Taken
3. The retention of an internally illuminated sign above automated teller machine (ATM).  
126 Camden Road London NW1 9EE  
Ref. No: 2011/0975/A | Registered: 20-06-2011 | Status: Refused
4. The retention of an automated teller machine (ATM) to existing shopfront.  
126 Camden Road London NW1 9EE  
Ref. No: 2011/0970/P | Registered: 20-06-2011 | Status: Refused and Warning of Enforcement Action to be Taken
5. Construction of external access to basement including erection of railings, plus alterations to the shop front, as shown on drawing Nos: 9613/01,02  
126 Camden Road London NW1 9EE  
Ref. No: P9603171 | Registered: 25-11-1996 | Status: Grant Full Planning Permission (conds)
6. The display of an internally illuminated shop fascia sign measuring 14'9"x 1'6".^As shown in your drawing No.1787.^Period of consent: 1st September 1985 to 31st August 1990.  
126 Camden Road London NW1 9EE  
Ref. No: 8580148 | Registered: 13-06-1985 | Status: Grant Approval for Advertisement

Neighbouring properties in the similar postcode have received close to 40 planning applications. Similar application has been lodged for a neighbouring property - No. 2005/1910/P at 120 Camden Road named 'Change of use including works of conversion of lower ground floor from retail (class A1) to one bedroom flat (class C3). External alterations including creation of a lightwell and new stairway to street level' and it was granted a planning permission.

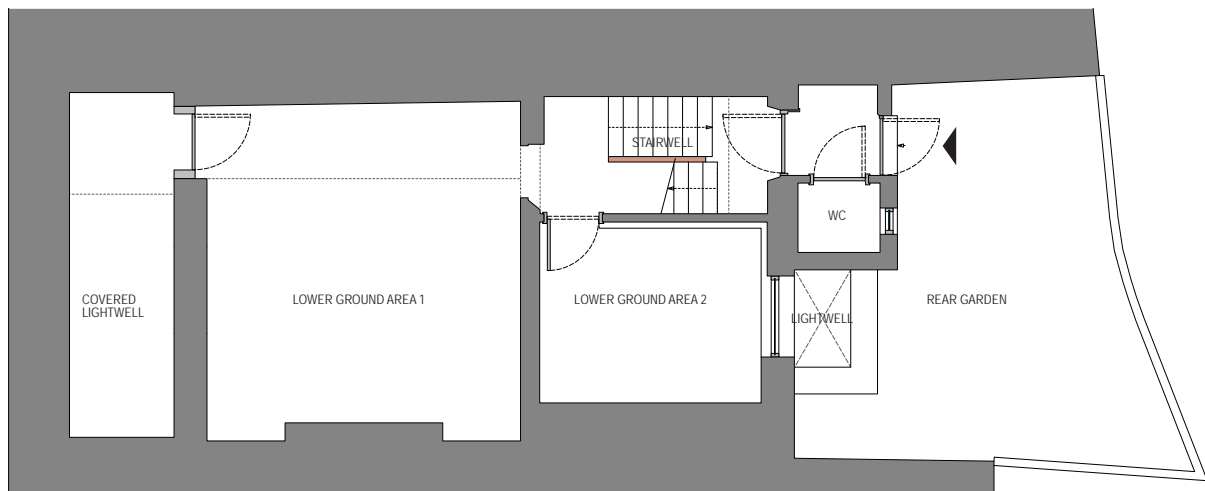


**3. PROPOSAL**

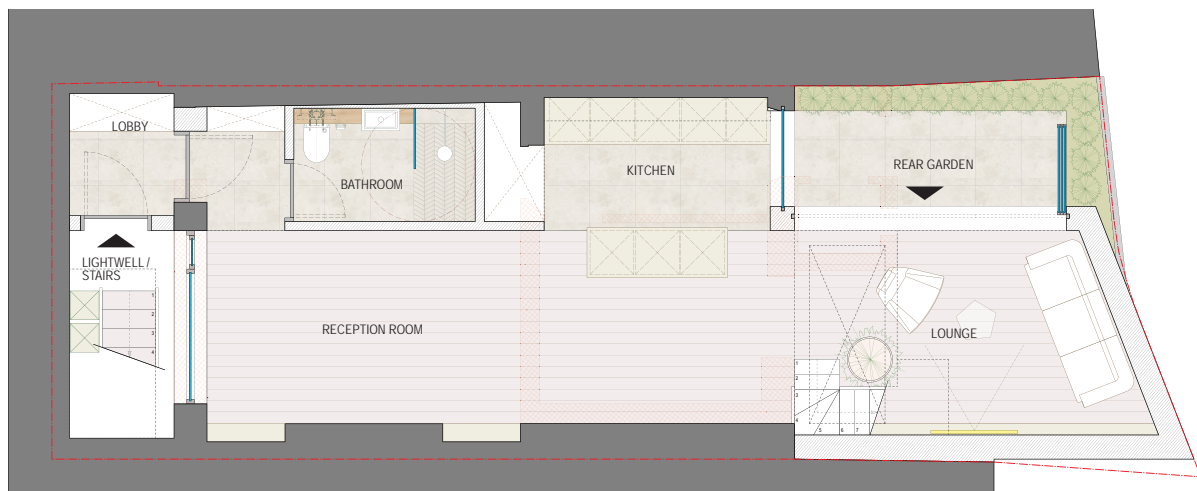
**3.1 PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE**

The lower ground level is currently unused, and it is in a terrible material condition and a desperate need for refurbishment. The ground floor is already utilised to create a successful retail shop, and for that use (or indeed any other suitable A1 use) there are no foreseen sufficient requirements for the appropriate utilisation of the lower ground area. Given that there are successful examples in the street and immediate neighbouring buildings where the lower ground is converted to residential use, and given the presence of the appropriate lightwells both at the front and the back, our suggestion would be to convert the lower ground floor into a self-contained flat (C3 use). The new flat would benefit from separate access from the street level utilising existing front lightwell to fit an external staircase. Furthermore, the front loadbearing masonry wall already has an opening, currently blocked, that would be used to bring light into the flat's newly formed living room & kitchen area. By altering the shopfront to resemble the neighbouring ones, a sufficient opening in the lightwell can be provided to fit comfortable metal stairs and to bring an adequate level of natural light into the flat from the front side.

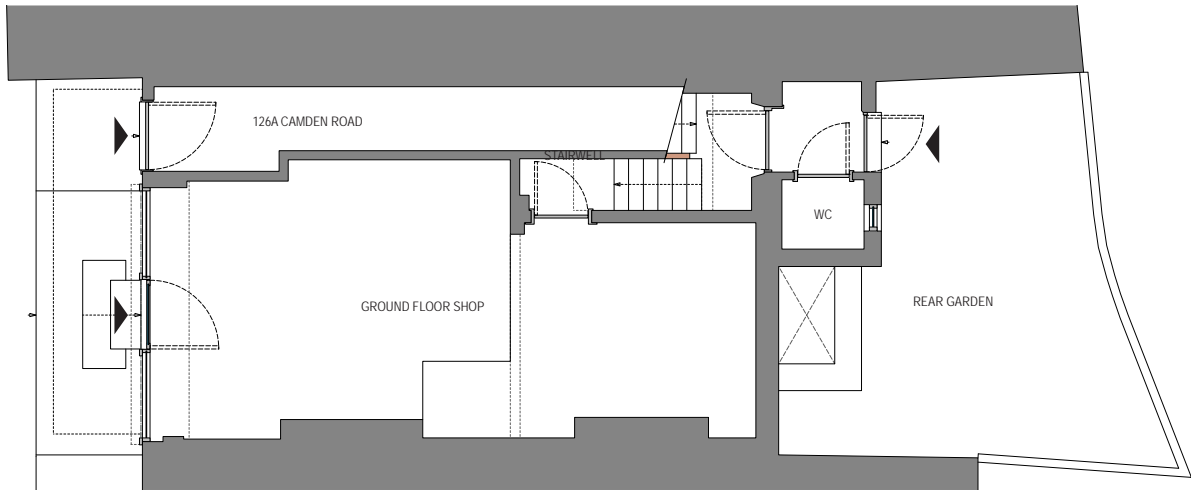
The rear side already has a lightwell and a window bringing natural light inside from the rear side. The extension at the rear would not have any impact on any neighbouring backyards and their natural light provision, given they already have high extensions at the rear. The proposed extension would increase the size and quality of the flat, further improving the resident's amenities.



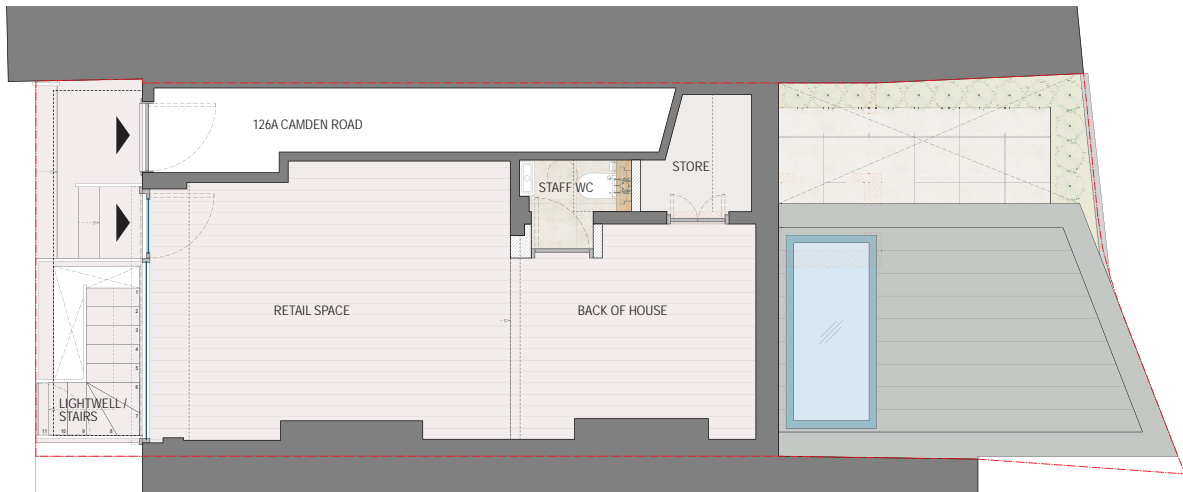
Existing lower-ground level & rear garden | NTS 




Proposed lower-ground level & rear garden | NTS 



Existing ground level | NTS 



Proposed ground level | NTS 



Existing front elevation | NTS



Proposed front elevation | NTS

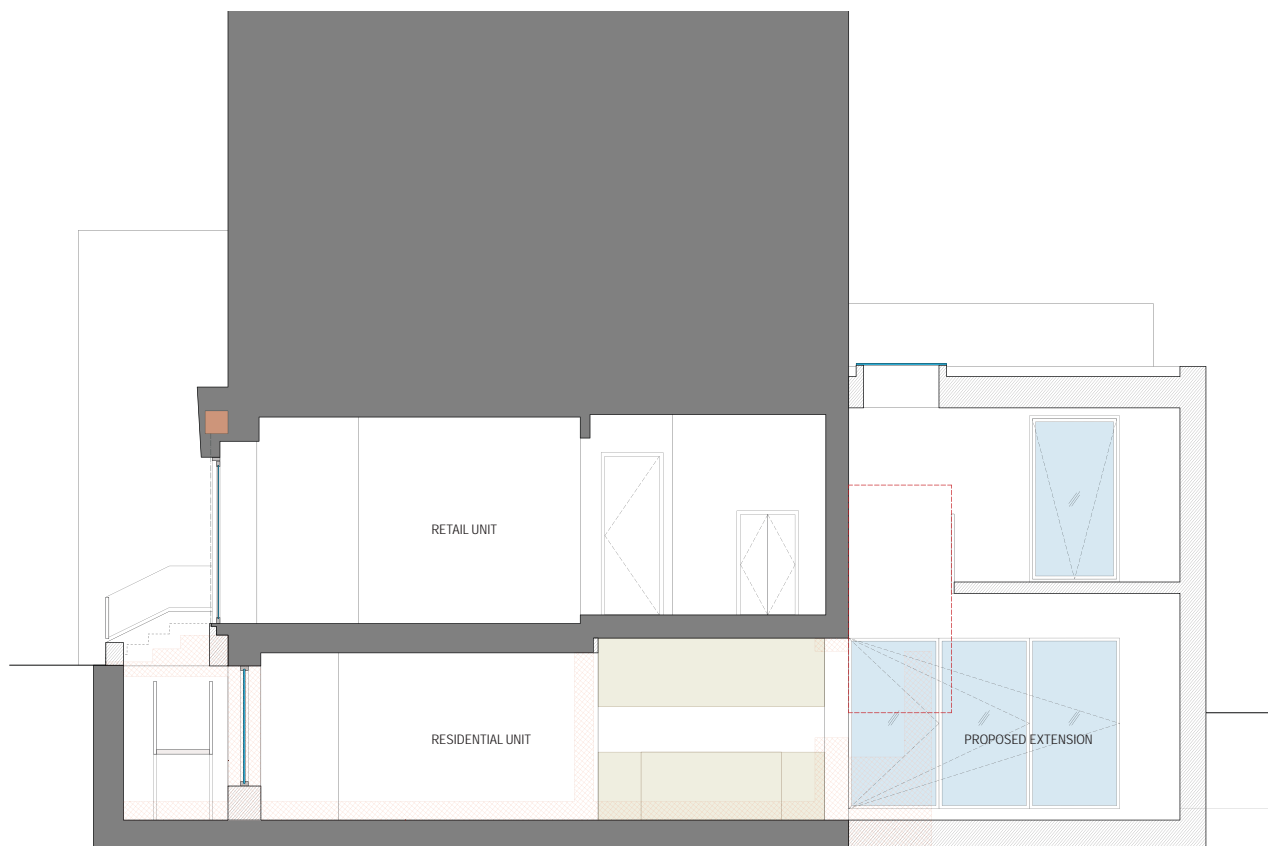


**3.2 LAYOUT**

The proposed layout comprises internal and external alterations to both levels of the existing shop to create two independent entities with the coffee shop at the ground level, and the residential flat at the lower ground level.

The retail shop entrance is moved closer to the north side of the property to allow the new staircase at the south side of the reinstated lightwell leading to the new flat at lower ground level. The existing access to the lower ground is blocked with a new fire-proof partition to the flat below. By blocking the stairwell to the lower ground, the utilisation of the existing WC for the shop is not viable. Therefore we are proposing a new staff only WC on the ground floor.

The new flat is accessed via the new stairwell within the existing lightwell at the front, directly from the street level. Reinstating and enlarging the window at the front side provides the spaces below with the natural light from the lightwell, whilst the entrance to the flat is through the lobby within the covered part of the lightwell. Lounge, dining and bedroom areas are located at the rear of the property, where the natural light provision is much greater than at the front. The direct access to the patio from the flat would also serve as the additional fire escape.



Proposed long section | NTS

**3.3 APPEARANCE, MATERIALITY & CONTEXT**

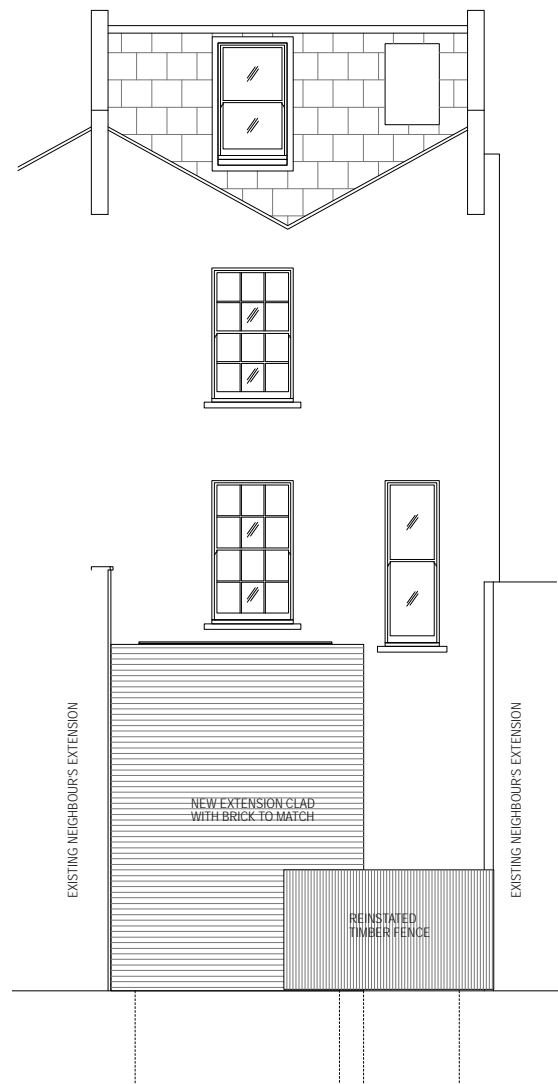
The predominant colour of the existing shopfront is black, and the proposed new shopfront will be constructed in timber, in keeping with the existing door to 126A Camden Road and the neighbouring shops. The newly exposed front lower ground elevation will be either in cleaned & repointed original brick (TBC after brick quality checks during strip out) or rendered. The new window and the entrance door to the lower ground flat will both be made in timber with similar proportions of the shopfront.

The railing and the gate are proposed to be made in black coated steel with the in-fill made out of thin steel profiles with 100mm gaps to maximise natural light penetration to the lower ground. The railing will be fixed to the solid upstand rising from the pavement to the ground floor level to create a visually balanced solution at the front elevation.

The brickwork at the rear elevation will be cleaned and repaired as necessary, and the new extension clad with brick to match the existing. The new glazing at the rear extension will be high-quality powder-coated aluminium units.



Proposed front elevation | NTS



Proposed rear elevation | NTS

**3.4 SUSTAINABILITY**

This project has been conceived with an awareness of environmental, social and economic sustainability. Both the applicant and the agent, Twist In Architecture are committed to realising an exemplar project of sustainable design.

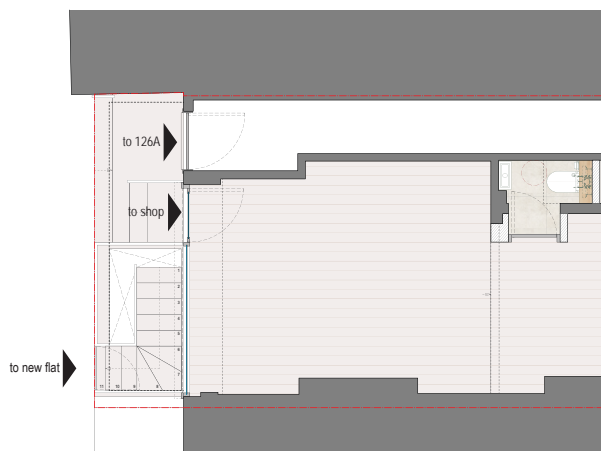
New planned elements will be constructed utilising modern construction method with required thermal insulation built in the new floor of the flat to benefit the new residence. Modern materials and techniques will guarantee a high quality of build is provided, with minimal building time to ensure minimal discomfort to the neighbours. New residential glazing will be quality double glazed units within aluminium frames, and the timber frames for the shopfront.

Furthermore, the design team will comply with the current Building Regulations, and it will aim to perform well against criteria in the Code for Sustainable Homes.

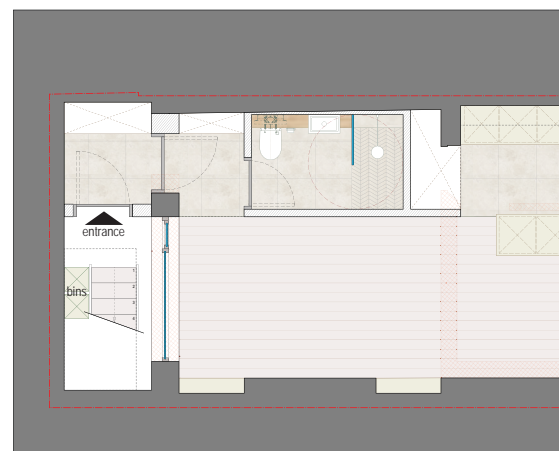
**3.5 ACCESS & AMENITY**

The new flat is located at the lower ground level, approximately 2.04m below the pavement level, and it will be accessed via the new planned external staircase, calculated as 185 (h) x 250 (d).

The rear garden is lowered to match the new finished floor level of the lower ground floor and the extension.



Proposed ground level | NTS



Proposed lower ground level | NTS

**3.6 FLOODING AND SURFACE WATER**

The site is not identified as in the risk of flooding in the Flood Map for Planning in the Environment Agency’s maps section.

Surface water at the exposed parts of the front lightwell will be removed via the existing drain in the lightwell, and at the rear via the waste pipe in the garden, or it may be feasible to disperse surface water within the grassed part of the garden (to be confirmed by a detailed study).



## 4.0 PLANNING POLICY COMPLIANCE

The project and the site appears to be within a conservation area and the property is not listed. The project is applied for a Full Planning Permission.

### Lifetime Homes Standards:

Criterion 1 - There is no parking provided for the new planned residence, as it is in front of the bus stop, on a busy double-red line high street extremely close to amenities and public transport.

Criterion 2 - No parking provided, see 1.

Criterion 3 - Approach to the private gate is directly from the pavement level, and due to the site constraints staircase to the flat's entrance is the only viable option in terms of the access. We propose the mildest 185 (h) x 250 (d) steps that can fit within the existing lightwell.

Criterion 4 - The entrance in front of the flat will be illuminated and it will have level access over the threshold. The main entrance will also be in the clear path after the staircase with no obstacles. There is also 300mm nib at each side of the entrance door.

Criterion 5 - NA

Criterion 6 - There are no planned corridors in the flat.

Criterion 7 - Provision for the turning circle of min 1500mm will be provided in the main areas. Kitchen planning will consider necessary requirements.

Criterion 8 - Living room is located at the entrance level.

Criterion 9 - The unit can easily be amended so the bedroom is located at the entrance level.

Criterion 10 - Bathroom is located at the entrance level, and it is considering all necessary requirements.

Criterion 11 - Bathroom layout lends itself readily for appliance with this criterion

Criterion 12 - NA

Criterion 13 - Bathroom can be readily joined with the bedroom via an additional direct doorway. Hoisting feasibility will be examined upon opening up works commencement.

Criterion 14 - See 10, 11 & 13.

Criterion 15 - All new glazing planned as required.

Criterion 16 - Service controls will be planned as required.

### Change of use resulting in loss of employment space:

We believe no real employment space will be lost with the proposed change of use of the lower ground level of the existing shop, that is currently unused, due to no foreseen sufficient requirements for the appropriate utilisation of the lower ground area as a part of a viable A1 use of the shop.

**5. DESIGN TEAM**

**5.1 TWIST IN ARCHITECTURE**

Twist In Architecture was formed officially in 2012 as an architectural & design practice.

Twist In Architecture is a professional design practice founded on complete design delivery through creativity, energy, focus and detail. Working across residential developments to civic buildings and master planning, we have delivered projects in concept design and detail documentation stages to on site role and practical completion. Our growing portfolio contains built and on-going projects in the United Kingdom, Australia, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.

We believe that every project is unique and that it should respond to the environment, climate, location, brief and client's needs in a truly unique way. We avoid repetition and recycling of ideas as this enables our work to be individually tailored to each project.

More information is available on:  
[www.twistinarchitecture.com](http://www.twistinarchitecture.com)

