

Design & Access Statement

Residential Ground Floor Extension of 126 Fleet Road, London, NW3 2QX

v1.1

Planning application February 2021

1.0 Project Summary

1.1 Introduction

The following statement describes the proposals for the property:

“An architecturally sensitive and design led erection of side and rear extension, utilising best in class materials and techniques. It will improve daylight amenity within the property, make better use of the available direct light within the garden, and improve the natural environment, making it more useable for the inhabitants and visually more pleasing for the neighbours. The design seeks to improve the connection of the living space with the garden, and make better a long neglected Victorian terraced ground floor garden flat”.

The owners intend to improve the dilapidated property to very high design standards, and to accommodate a growing family.



Project concept sketch as viewed from roof terrace above. Showing green roof, verdant garden, sunlight path from behind 128 to the left, and 124 garden extension to the right.

1.2 The Site

126 Fleet road is located within the Mansfield Road Conservation Area, the boundary of which runs down the road. The house is three storey, and sits within a terraced row.

This scheme does not concern the property frontage, but the space at the rear of the property, which is hidden from view not only by the front facade, but equally by a three storey wall abutting the rear of the garden.



Location of 126 Fleet road within the Mansfield conservation area

2.0 Context & Site Analysis

2.1 Site Character: Existing Property

The existing property to which this application relates is a one bedroom flat on the ground floor of a Victorian house in some disrepair. The house has been converted into three self-contained flats.

The main works relate to the rear of the property, which has the following key distinctive features:

- The rear garden wall is approximately 6.8m high meaning that the rear of the property is not visible from any adjacent streets or properties
- The adjacent property (No. 124) steps down in height to accommodate the change in ground level, and has an existing extension running the whole stretch of the garden to the rear 6.8m garden wall
- Property 128 steps up to accommodate the change in ground level
- The rear of most properties along this street have been painted white.



View looking North showing garden rear wall



View of adjacent extension looking East



View looking South of rear elevation

3.0 Proposals

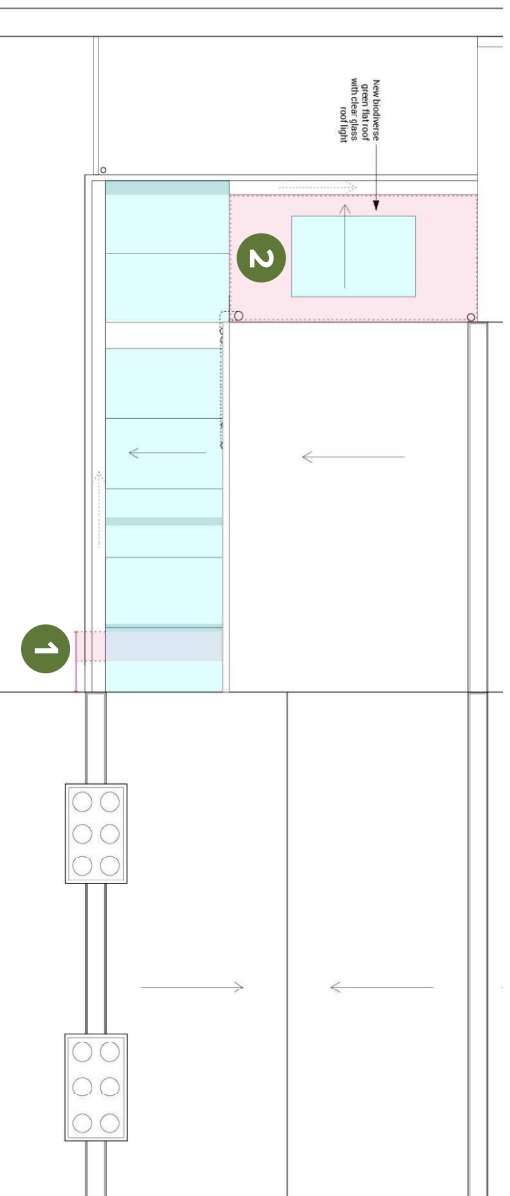
3.1 Design Summary

In the existing flat, natural daylight to the kitchen-dining area, bathroom and bedroom is extremely limited. The current configuration, with the bathroom at the rear, has a poor connection to the garden, which prevents any light distribution, and does not afford a pleasant living space.

To create a kitchen and living space, which is well-connected to the outdoors, and makes good use of available natural light, the proposal makes the following key changes:

1. The erection of a single storey rear and side extension and internal reconfiguration of bathroom position. The side extension has been designed with a pitched structural glass roof to allow for the lowest possible boundary wall height whilst maximising internal head room
2. The addition of a large triple sliding door to the garden to maximise natural light and connection to the garden
3. A structural glass roof and light-well to ensure good natural light to the existing bedroom.





Changes made during pre-application

“The property lies within Mansfield Conservation Area, and any alterations/extension to the building should therefore preserve and enhance the character and appearance of this conservation area. Within this context, there is no uniformity in terms of the pattern and layout of the gardens to the north side of Fleet Road with approximately 16 of the 26 properties completely infill the rear gardens with full width rear extension of 1, 2 storeys or more, which has been strongly influence by the existing high rear boundary wall of approximately 7.4m between Byron Mews and 80 – 130 Fleet Road”

*Paragraph 2.3 of the delegated report for 124 Fleet road

3.2 Design Methodology

A number of issues raised during the pre-application stage have been addressed, and the response reworked as follows.

1 Light and ventilation

Increased size of light-well for the second bedroom to one metre by shifting the bathroom back.

2 Complimenting character and appearance of conservation area

The Mansfield Conservation Area Appraisal 2008 references divergence from a historic pattern. In the case of Fleet road, this is not visible from the street scene. In addition, divergence from the pattern has been established by the neighbouring properties.

With reference to paragraph 2.3 of the delegated report* (facing quotation) for 124 Fleet road (application 2014/4348/P), a precedent has been set by a total of 17 of 26 properties on the road diverging from the historic pattern. Therefore guidance regarding preservation of uniformity is no longer relevant here.

Even so, taking heed of the conservation area guidelines, the proposal goes one step further in complimenting the character and appearance of the conservation area, through the inclusion of a biodiverse green roof. This has additional benefits. See Section 3.6 for further details.

3.3 Area

A minimum of 5 sqm of private outside space should be provided for one-to-two person dwellings and an extra 1 sqm should be provided for each additional occupant.

****Section C4.2.1 of the London Housing Design Quality and Standards guidelines**

The development adds an additional 19.5m² of internal space to the side and rear of the property. The resulting garden will be 12.5m².

Section 2.11 of Home Improvements CPG for Camden January 2021 states, **"Allow for the retention of a reasonably sized garden"**.

Yet as there is no specific measure in the guidance of size of outside space in the Camden Planning guidelines, we refer to the London Housing Design Quality and Standards guidelines**.

Section C4.2.1 stipulates private gardens should be no smaller than 5m² for a one to two person dwelling and an extra 1m² to be provided for each additional occupant.

We believe our proposal, whereby the garden will be 12.5m² - more than double the minimum area requirement - is reasonable. With built in banquette seating and storage for foldable tables, the garden becomes ideal for alfresco dining in the small pool of sunlight that falls on the back wall during summer months.

3.4 Scale

The side and rear extension is standard in scale and within the boundary of the ground floor flat. The extension has been designed in such a way for the following key and important reasons:

- The objective of the design is to maximise natural light throughout
- The rear elevation is not visible from any street or adjacent property and therefore we believe the proposal should be considered acceptable
- The importance of maximising daylight is further accentuated by the existing 6.8m high rear garden wall
- Single storey rear extensions are to be found on the road. Most notably the adjoining ground floor flat of 124 Fleet road was granted permission for a rear extension spanning from rear elevation to garden wall. Some other precedents of note on the road are 78, 148
- The ground floor extension will echo the original historic plan view of rear elevations by uniformly wrapping around parallel to these. Any visual impact of the design is mitigated further by the greening of the roof, which aligns closely to the stepped nature of the extensions seen on the road, for example number 76.

Visual impact for neighbours

For the neighbouring ground floor 128, the extension to the rear has little more visual presence than would be the case with a side infill. In fact, the extension will afford more privacy than the current fence does by displacing any source of sound further down the garden. Foliage will be encouraged to grow for extra privacy. On the opposite side, neighbour 124 has no windows overlooking the garden and thus the extension will not be seen.

Visual amenity of the area

Owing to the built-up nature of the back gardens on Fleet road the visual impact on the area is nil. The aforementioned rear wall of the garden to the North, and the three storey terrace to the South, make the gardens in Fleet road very secluded. Any chance of visual disruption to residents in the upper floors further West along the terrace is minimised by the green roof which blends with the garden aesthetic. To the East along the terrace, the view would be obscured by the existing extension at 124.

Neighbours Light

The new extension takes into account the trajectory of the sun, and will not cast shadow on the neighbouring gardens, as any shadow it were to cast, would be subsuemed by the shadows cast by the main buildings and garden rear wall throughout the seasons.

Outlook

The edge of the side return will be in the region of the current fence line and will not impinge on any views (other than those of the existing side elevation). Where necessary, the side-return roof panels will be opaque glass for added privacy. Owing to the shallow extrusion of the extension into the rear garden, the flat will not be overlooked by upstairs neighbours.

The extension will not cause harmful impact in relation to loss of light, outlook, and privacy to the neighbouring amenity.

3.5 Materials & detailing

The proposal looks to ensure that the design does not adversely affect any neighbouring properties and will be made using matching and high quality materials, as recommended in the Mansfield Conservation document:

“High quality design, appropriate scale, form and materials and high quality execution will be required of all new development, including smaller alterations such as shop fronts, signage, and extensions which can harm the character and appearance of the area to an extent belied by their individual scale”

To address the points raised in this extract, professional architects and tradesmen have been consulted. Particular care has been taken to select the highest quality materials and finishes such that the extension becomes a subservient yet elegant addition to the existing building.



Side return roof reference



Crittall rear extension elevation reference



Banquette seating reference



Kitchen scene with continuous floor reference

- Below are the key design and material considerations proposed:
- The side extension walls will be of a matching London brick painted white as per the existing elevations
 - The rear glass doors will be bespoke heritage crittall doors
 - The side extension boundary height conforms with the 45 degree test from the centre of all the windows to number 128 ground floor flat. The boundary wall has been designed to work with a pitched roof which, along with the gutters, will be hidden behind a parapet, minimizing any impact to the adjacent flat
 - The windows and doors will be high quality aluminium double glazed units that enhance the thermal properties of the building.

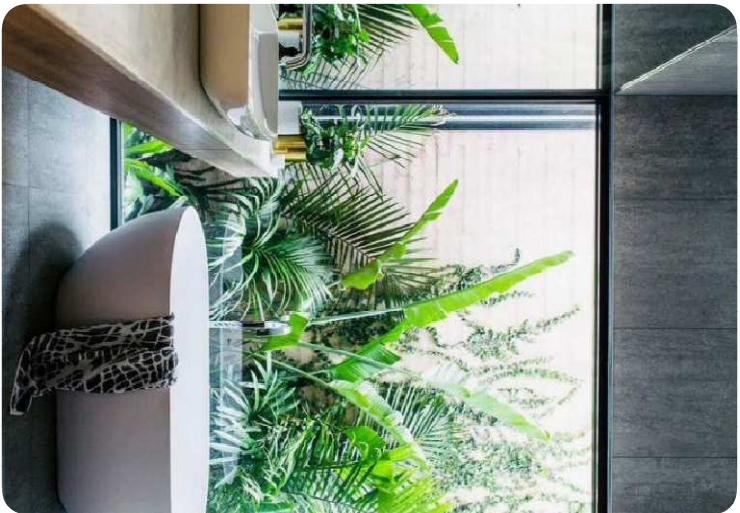
Visual Amenity

The proposed scheme does not remove any characterful details of the building, as stipulated in the conservation statement, and therefore we believe there will be no negative impact on the heritage of the building.

3.6 Landscaping

The current garden consists of an uneven concreted slope covered with dilapidated decking, and was inherited in a state of great disrepair. The garden area will be made good by levelling-out and laying poured polished-concrete-style resin; extending into the kitchen-living area. The resin is a more sustainable alternative to concrete and will create an intentional continuous space, especially when the glass doors are opened, bringing the 'outdoor-in'.

The perimeter of the garden will be edged with banquet seating. Contained vegetation, and a vertical garden wall will be planted to encourage insects, bees and small birds to find a home, in a currently very barren run of gardens.



Reference for 'outdoor-in' approach continued into bathroom/bedroom light-well



Vertical green wall reference



As previously noted, the garden is not visible from afar owing to the enclosed nature of the boundary walls, so the rear extension will only be seen from above. To mitigate any possible divergence from historic pattern identified in the Mansfield conservation area statement 2008, the roof to the rear will be greened with living plants so as to blend in a more harmonious way than the current courtyard. As noted in line with Section 2.11 of Home Improvements CPG for Camden January 2021, this improves the biodiversity value.

The total area of possible greened space is maximised. Where previously it not practical to green the garden, now this untampered biodiverse roof will bring nature closer to home. It will additionally bring more of a 'garden flat' feel to the flat above.

We have tried to make sure the design not only increases privacy, but also makes much more of the garden and nature, as juxtaposed with the dim, mossy courtyard presented currently. In this way, the proposal dims not to detract from the visual spacing and siting of the terrace and will compliment the visual amenity of the area.

4.0 Access

The proposed development does not alter the current access strategy.

5.0 Sustainability

It is our intention to place sustainability in both design and construction at the forefront of this proposal, in-line with Camden's supplementary planning guidance.

This will include the following:

- Re-inviting nature to the garden
- Minimising both energy demands and energy loss
- Maximising passive solar lighting
- Incorporating the use of recycled and energy efficient materials
- Incorporating the use of locally sourced building materials
- Reducing the impact on the external environment and maximising opportunities for cooling and shading (planting, and green roof).

6.0 Conservation Area Guidelines

Summary of key points made

“Successful modern design can be of the 21st century and enhance the conservation area, by carefully assessing and responding to the form and qualities of surrounding buildings and spaces”

- Mansfield Conservation guidelines

When designing the extension we have been respectful of the outlined considerations in the Mansfield Conservation Guidelines. As 126 has been neglected for much of the last decade the project will rejuvenate a home that has long been uninhabited by owner occupiers, with a smart and considered addition.

Visual amenity of the terrace

The visual amenity of the terrace is not affected as the gardens are not overlooked. The historic pattern at the rear of the terraces is not visible from the street scene and a divergence from the historic pattern has already been established by the neighbouring properties. And so preservation of uniformity no longer applies on Fleet road.

Visual amenity of the existing building

The extension will sit subservient to the imposing three storey Victorian Terrace. The extension will not be overlooked by the public as mentioned, and will not affect the wider aesthetic. The extension will not contribute to “the loss of original joinery, sash windows, front doors and natural slate roofs, (which) can have considerable negative impact on the appearance of a historic building and the area”, these either not existing in this location, or having been replaced by inferior versions already.

Design and materials

As mentioned in the guidelines there is a space for successful modern 21st century design. The materials previously mentioned include - London yellow brick, and bespoke heritage sliding doors which are complimentary to the historical aesthetic of the building. The design balances this with important practical issues - thermally superior glass to meet environmental standards and contribute to mindful sustainable design.

The current concreted terrace garden is highly sloping and uneven which is inconvenient for use. We would be looking to create a uniform ground level from the open plan kitchen/living room through to the garden. The design thesis being it will invite the outdoor in; an elegant combining of spaces, rendering the currently impractical garden an enjoyable, habitable space. Indeed a vital outdoor extension of the living space - banquette seating will abut the back wall, with discrete storage in the seated segment for garden implements.

Environmental conservation

A vertical garden, within the height and width confines of the property, will be fostered, against the generous three storey rear wall. The green roof of the rear extension will contribute to the biodiversity of the truly reinstated garden flat. Ultimately creating a green oasis and encouraging wildlife; birds, bees, butterflies back into the terrace rear gardens.

7.0 Appendices

“
Thank you for your appraisal.”

Planning drawings

Location:

- 126 - 01 - EXT - Location MAP
- 126 - 02 - EXT - Block Plan

Existing:

- 126 - 03 - EXT - Existing Ground Floor Plan
- 126 - 04 - EXT - Existing Rear Elevation
- 126 - 05 - EXT - Existing Rear Side Elevation
- 126 - 06 - EXT - Existing Roof Plan

Proposed:

- 126 - 07 - PRP - Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- 126 - 08 - PRP - Proposed Rear Elevation
- 126 - 09 - PRP - Proposed Rear Side-Return Extension
- 126 - 10 - PRP - Proposed Roof Plan