

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT & HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

FLAT 1, 9 BRACKNELL GARDENS, NW3 7EE. PROPOSED NEW BASEMENT LIGHTWELL WITH HORIZONTAL FLUSH METAL FLOOR GRILLE TO THE EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION RIGHT HAND BAY WINDOW; AND LOWERING THE SILL HEIGHT TO THE EXISTING LEFT HAND BAY LIGHTWELL WINDOWS TO MATCH THE PROPORTIONS OF THE EXISTING HOUSE WINDOWS.



Left: Existing front elevation to Number 9 Bracknell Gardens. *Centre:* Round and square bay windows to either side of the front entrance door showing the railings to the existing left hand round light well. *Right:* Existing planting bed approximately defining the location of the proposed new lightwell to the right hand side bay window.

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Aerial map showing Number 9 Bracknell Gardens located to the south side of the street with rear gardens backing on to the rear gardens to Finchley Road.

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement and Heritage Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE's) Design and Access Statements (2006) and the criteria outlined in the 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice' suite of documents (2015), as issued by Historic England with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and related guidance given in the Good Practice Advice notes 1, 2, 3 and Advice Note 2.

The report accompanies detailed drawings of the existing building and proposed alterations in support an application for Full Planning Permission for works to form a new lightwell to Flat 1, number 9 Bracknell Gardens, NW3 7EE. The application includes revisions to the design made following formal Pre-Planning advice (Planning Reference: 2021/0488/PRE) and a full Basement Impact Assessment.

The proposed alterations to the existing house have been carefully designed to respond to the proportions and special architectural interest of both the host building and wider streetscape. The dimensions of the proposed new lightwell correspond to the original bay window and the existing lightwell, with flush metal floor grille and timber framed casement windows matching the original house windows. The lightwell will allow the existing basement room to become a bedroom currently much needed for the family and more in keeping with the size of the flat.



Left: Number 9 Bracknell Gardens front elevation, existing lightwell to the left hand bay window. Right: Right hand bay window as existing.

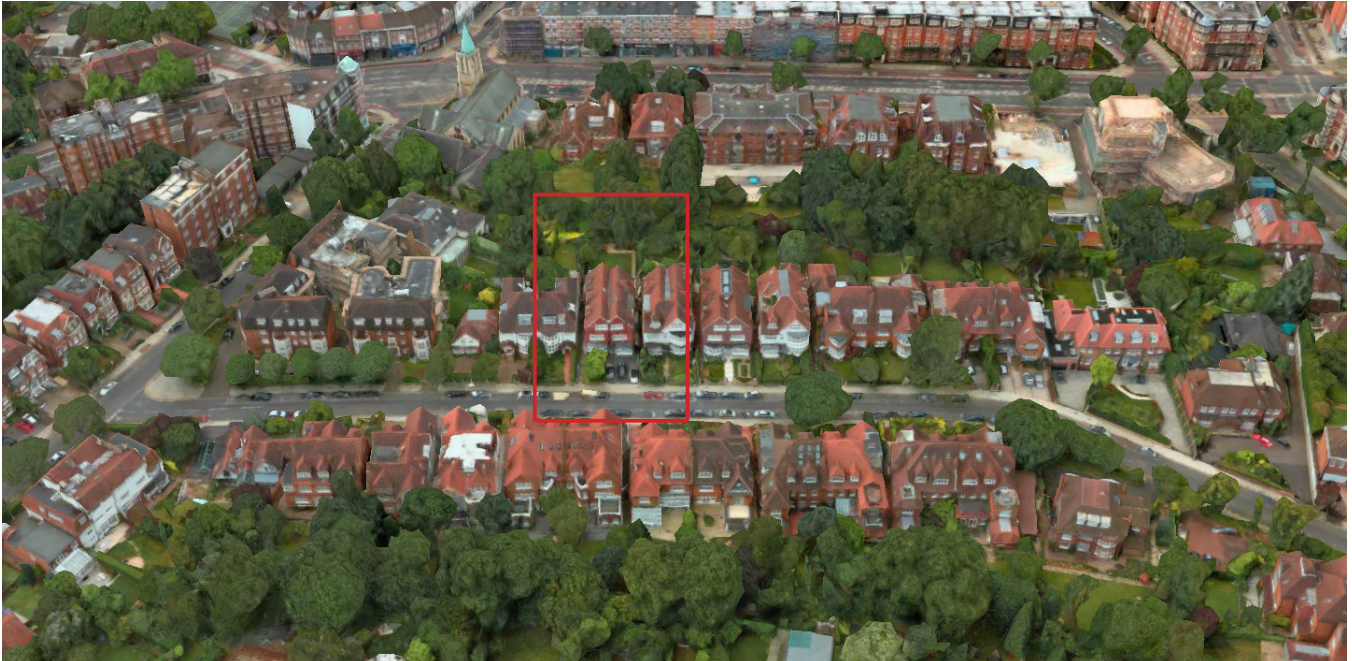
2. Site Context and Historical Analysis

Number 9 Bracknell Gardens is set back behind a long front garden to the west side of the street, mid way between Frognal Lane and Oakhill Avenue. The house is located close to Finchley Road and a few minutes walk to Hampstead Station, and comprises a large detached 4 storey Edwardian house (3 storeys plus lower ground) with well detailed red brick bay windows to the ground floor, hanging tiles to the upper floors and notable timber moulding and elegant casement windows to the front elevation.

The building has high ceilings and generous windows to the ground, first and second floors. The original ground and lower ground floor flat has been previously extended both at basement level and to the rear (Planning Reference: 2011/0600/P and 2011/3489/P) creating a large family dwelling with sole use of the front and rear gardens.

The building is well maintained and forms an important piece in the cohesive arrangement of substantial detached houses some of which are now divided to form flats, and some remaining as single family homes. The street elevation is notable for the simple detailing and repeating pattern of alternating round and square bays and decorative gabled elevations.

To the rear of the house a well designed contemporary extension and roof terrace coordinate well with the original architecture and matches similar alterations to neighbouring houses.



Aerial view of Bracknell Gardens showing the subject property at Number 9 to the west side of the road with Finchley Road at the top of the image.

The house is currently divided into 3 separate flats across 4 storeys including a recently constructed basement floor. The subject flat includes the majority of the original ground floor, rear terrace and entire basement level with bedrooms and living spaces accessing the private rear garden. The upper floor flats are accessed via the side alleyway and the subject flat via the original front entrance door. The house is located within the Redington and Frognaal Conservation Area (Sub Area 6), and is noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. The appraisal document states:

Bracknell, Greenaway and Chesterford Gardens are three parallel roads that link Frognaal Lane in the south to Oakhill Avenue and Redington Road to the north. Each of these has a distinct character determined by their style of architecture, density of development, topography and sense of enclosure / openness.

Bracknell Gardens was laid out and developed from 1905 onwards and took its name from a Maryon Wilson estate in Berkshire. It features a mix of Free Style and Neo-Georgian houses of which 16-26 (1907-8) and 17-23 (1910-13) are semi-detached houses designed by C.H.Saunders and built by W.J.King and No.s 6-14 (1907-8) and No.s 9-15 (1907-8) designed by William A.Burr and built by James Tomblin. Bracknell Gardens rises slightly from its northern and southern ends, at the junctions with Heath Drive and Frognaal Lane respectively.

Bracknell Gardens features two architectural themes. The lower, southern stretch of the road is characterised by groups of semi-detached two and three storey Edwardian houses with prominent street facing gables. Whilst different designers and builders have used a variety of materials, including tile hanging, render and yellow and orange brickwork, there is a consistency of character. The upper, northern, section of Bracknell Gardens has larger Neo-Georgian houses of later origin.

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Left: Existing front elevation to Number 9 Bracknell Gardens showing the existing lightwell to the left hand bay window, and the right hand bay window where the proposed lightwell will be formed. *Right:* Existing high fence between Number 9 Bracknell Gardens and the neighbouring house at Number 11 Bracknell Gardens.

3. Proposed Alterations_Design and Volume

The proposed alterations include the creation of a new front lightwell to the right hand bay window to match the existing lightwell to the left hand bay. The lightwell will allow the existing basement room to be used as a bedroom, and the room above to be reinstated as a front reception room. Currently the 2 spaces are connected via a mezzanine balcony preventing access to the front bay window and creating a dark basement room below.

The dimensions and detailing of the new lightwell are based on the existing lightwell and the scale of the original bay window, giving balance to the front elevation and improving the current arrangement with regards to streetscape and the overall elevation. The lightwell will be covered by a decorative metal floor grille with bars close enough together to form a safe surface, whilst letting sufficient daylighting and ventilation to the basement level bedroom.

It is proposed that low movable planters will be positioned around the perimeter of the grille with low box hedging to exactly match the existing planting around the bay window and garden path.

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Front and rear elevation drawings showing the existing left hand and proposed right hand lightwells, and the existing 2 storey extension to the rear.

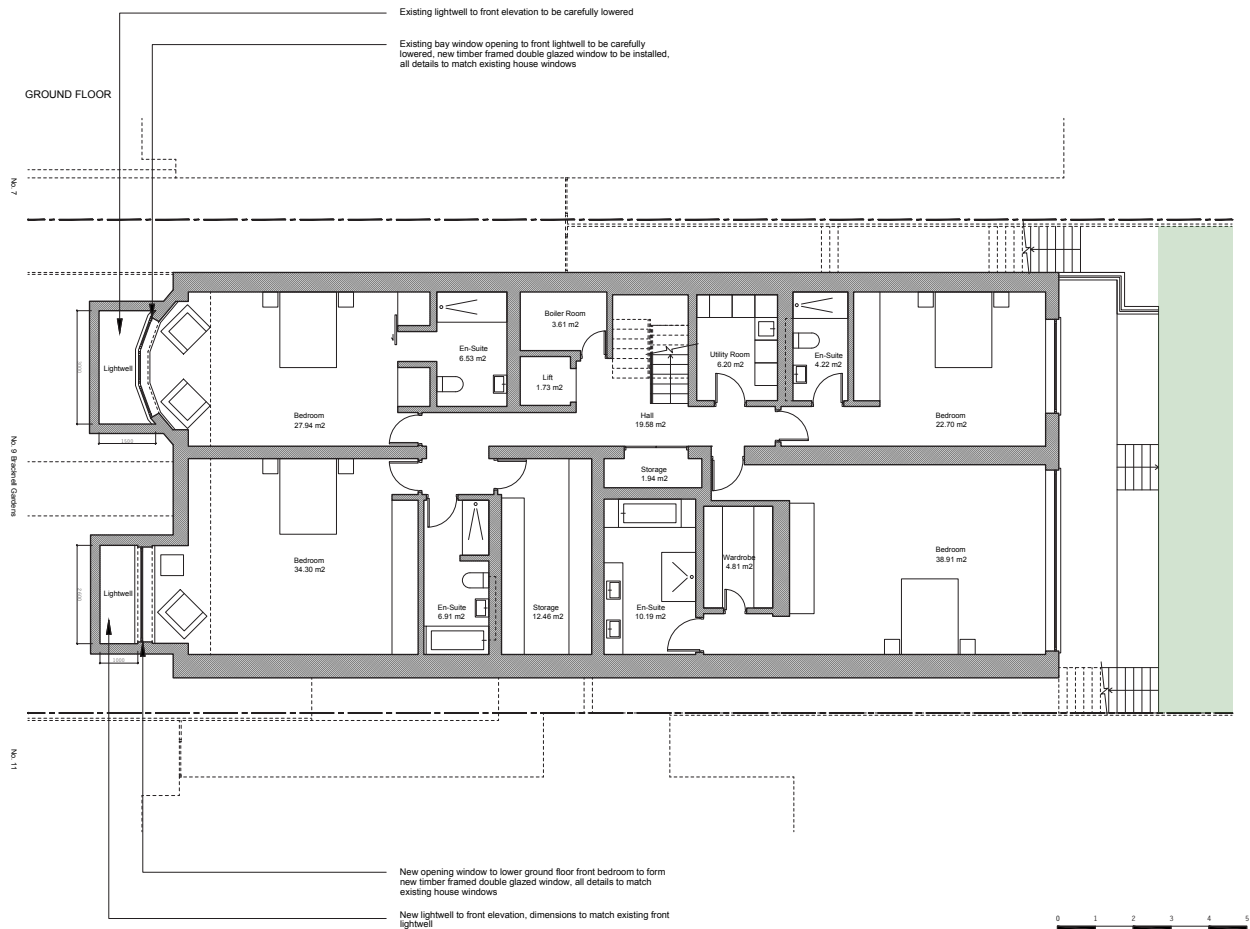
Other alterations include the lowering of the sill to the existing lightwell window to improve the ventilation and natural daylighting, and to replace the current high level windows which do not have glazing bars and are not in keeping with the original house with well made casement windows that exactly match the existing house joinery and fenestration.

The proposed lightwell and alterations to the existing basement level fenestration are designed to read as a natural part of the existing and original building, in keeping with the Conservation Area streetscape and subordinate to the main house.

The original ground and lower ground floor flat has been previously extended both at basement level and to the rear (Planning Reference: 2011/0600/P and 2011/3489/P) and comprises a well designed dwelling constructed to a very high standard of finish throughout.

The standard of accommodation and alterations make a positive and long term contribution to the locality, the house itself and to the provision of high quality housing to meet the aspirations of both LB Camden and the London Plan.

The proposed lightwell will improve this further and have no impact on neighbouring dwellings and other upper floor flats within the same building. The flat grille will not be visible from the street and will not affect the existing parking area or access to Flat 1. Flats 2 and 3 are accessed separately from a side entrance.



Proposed Basement Level Floor Plan.

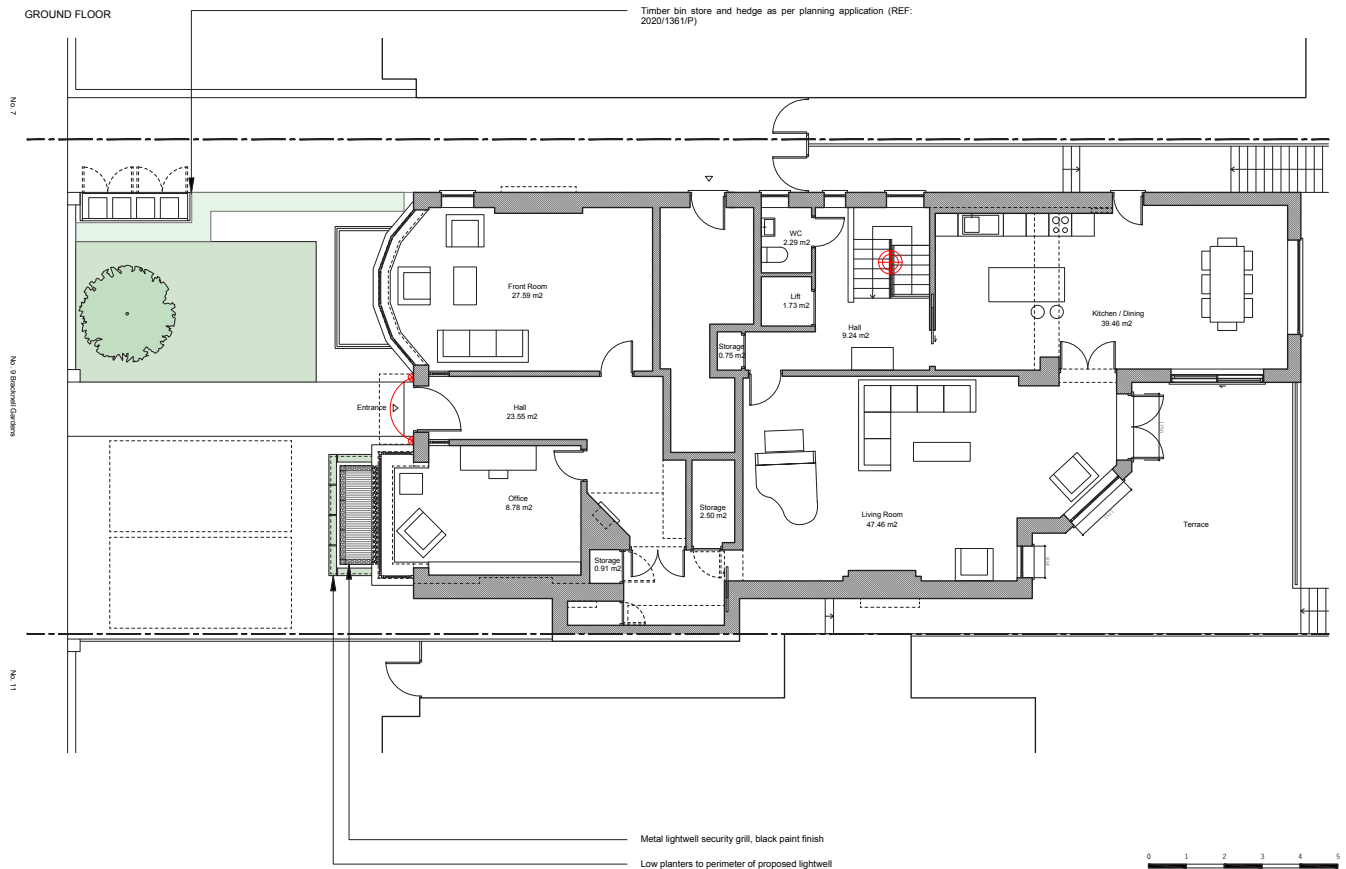
4. Pre-Planning Advice and Feedback

The design of the proposed lightwell railings has been adjusted and revised to respond to specific Pre-Planning Advice (Planning Reference: 2021/0488/PRE). Pre-Planning Advice included discussions regarding the specifics of the proposals and detailed written feedback which notes that *'there are no objections to the principle of this development, subject to the suggested amendments and submission of further details as referenced'*.

The written feedback recommends that the following amendments and additional information are addressed as part of an application for Planning Permission:

- *'Whilst changes to the fenestration would not be unduly prominent from the street'* the proposed lightwell would ideally be fitted with a flush grille rather than a railing matching the existing left hand bay lightwell. This has been revised and forms a substantial improvement to the front elevation view.
- *'Policy A5 of the Camden Local Plan and CPG Basements requires applications which involve significant excavation (as in this instance) to demonstrate to the*

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Proposed Ground Floor Plan showing the existing and proposed lightwells, front garden and existing parking spaces.

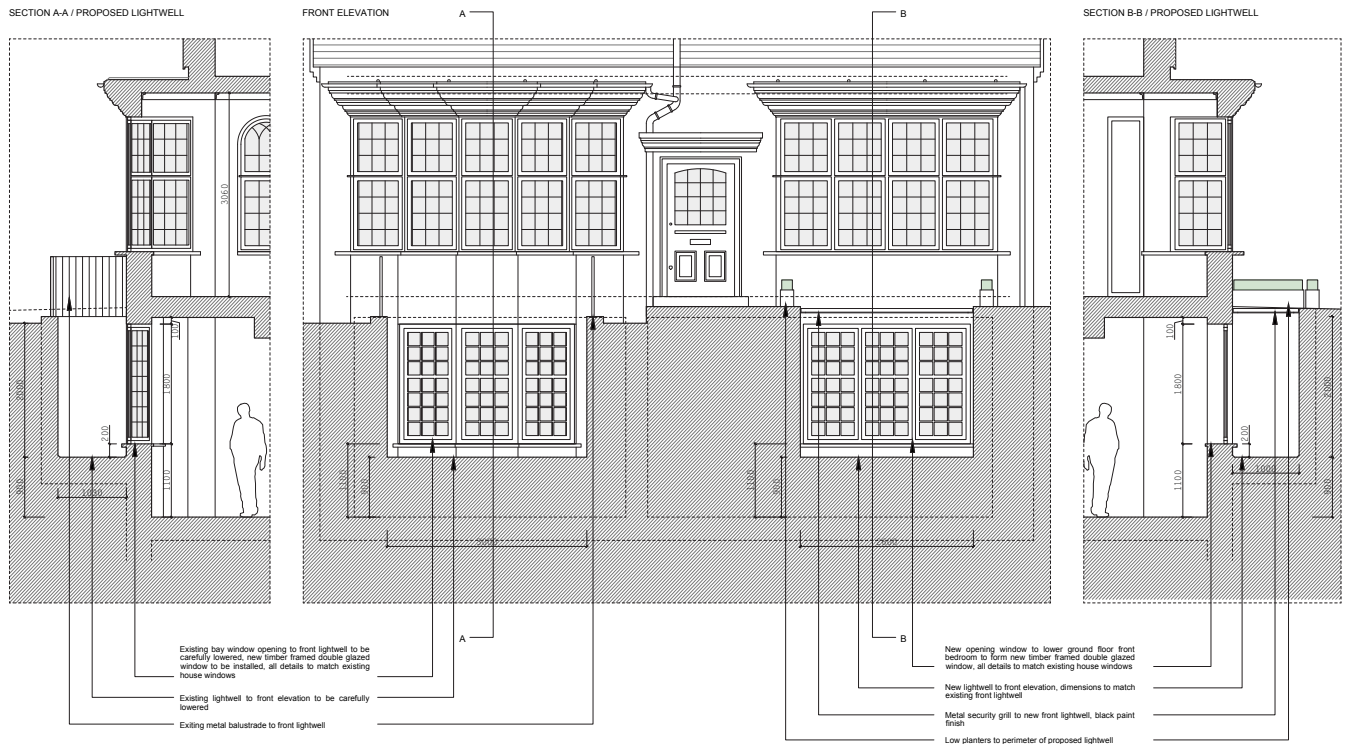
satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that the proposal would not cause harm to neighbouring properties, or the structural, ground, or water conditions of the area; this would be completed through the submission of a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA)'.

A full Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) has been prepared in support of the application by Chartered Consulting Engineers CH Simple Design and concludes that:

'The proposed minor basement development is unlikely to result in any specific adverse impacts relating to land or slope stability, the hydrogeology and hydrology of the site and the surrounding area based on the desk study and the proposed development information provided for the site'.

The report proposes a system of perimeter piling prior to excavation of the lightwell, which will reduce impact to neighbouring properties both during construction and in the long term.

The property includes a recently added basement level with reinforced concrete retaining walls supporting the entire original house. The proposed works will involve adjustments and extension of the existing retaining wall structure rather than creation of new basement level internal space / accommodation.



Detail section drawing showing the alterations to the existing left hand lightwell window and the proposed new right hand lightwell.

5. Materials and Sustainability

The proposed alterations are designed to improve the existing basement level accommodation, create an additional bedroom needed by the owners for teenage children, and generally improve the daylight and natural ventilation to the basement level front rooms.

The brick bay will remain exactly as existing and the lightwell rendered and painted white below ground level to match the existing lightwell to the left bay. Bespoke timber windows with slimline double glazed units will be made to exactly match the details and proportions of the existing front elevation windows.

The metal grille will be of robust construction, made to measure wrought iron with a simple decorative edge pattern painted black to match the existing lightwell railings.

The proposals are designed to have no visual impact on the streetscape and view to the front elevation, whilst providing additional high quality and healthy living accommodation. Well constructed basement level accommodation is by nature 'sustainable' as it is naturally well insulated and airtight.

This is offset against the complex construction processes required, however in this instance the provision of new windows, daylight and natural ventilation to the previously constructed basement rooms represents a substantial improvement to the current below ground bedroom accommodation with the minimum of disturbance and excavation works.

6. Amenity Space

The house has a large south-west facing rear garden with mature trees and lawn, well tended shrubs and both a patio and raised terrace. The walled front garden is almost 10 metres deep with a strip of lawn and ample parking for 2no. cars. The proposed lightwell will not affect the 2no. existing off street car parking spaces.

The proposals are designed to minimise impact on neighbouring views and amenity, responding to the existing arrangement and original house volume, and further maximising the standard and quality of the interior accommodation.

7. Ecology, Trees and the Surrounding Environment

The proposed lightwell and alterations will have no impact on the existing trees or front lawn. The lightwell will replace a narrow strip of flower bed along the bay window drip line, otherwise this side of the front garden is entirely paved and no additional planting will be affected.

8. Access, Parking and Public Transport

Local shops, supermarkets and amenities at Hampstead and Finchley Road are within walking distance from the property, and the site is extremely well located for cycling and public transport links. The property has 2no. off street parking spaces to the front of the house with space to walk on either side. On street parking on Bracknell Gardens and all nearby streets is limited to residents permit bays and pay by phone bays.

9. Bins and Recycling

The proposed alterations do not affect the existing arrangements for bin and recycling storage. Domestic rubbish and recycling are currently collected weekly from wheelie bins stored in a dedicated space within the front garden.

10. Conclusions

The application proposals are modest in scale and the result of a thorough design process, exploring different options and prioritising the conservation and character of the historic fabric and spatial integrity of the existing building; and making a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the setting and context.

The proposed alterations are well judged and both exterior volumes and interior floorplans carefully designed to provide well proportioned, future proof habitable space, filled with daylight and set out to enhance the relationship between the interior and exterior spaces.

The proposals are derived from an understanding of the National Planning Policy Framework, the London Plan, the Camden Local Plan, the Redington and Frognal Conservation Area Appraisal and all relevant supplementary guidance.

On the basis of this assessment we would conclude that the scheme is in keeping with the existing house, garden and locality. We are seeking specific advice and comments on the proposed scheme prior to developing the designs further.

11. Supporting Drawings

The following drawings have been submitted in support of this application:

2062_EX_001	Site Location Plan
2062_EX_100	Lower Ground Floor Plan as Existing
2062_EX_110	Ground Floor Plan as Existing
2062_EX_120	Roof Plan as Existing
2062_EX_200	Detail Section as Existing
2062_EX_300	Front and Rear Elevations as Existing
2062_EX_310	Side (south) Elevation as Existing
2062_EX_320	Side (north) Elevation as Existing
2062_PA_002	Site Location Block Plan
2062_PA_100	Lower Ground Floor Plan as Proposed
2062_PA_110	Ground Floor Plan as Proposed
2062_PA_120	Roof Plan as Proposed
2062_PA_200	Detail Section as Proposed
2062_PA_300	Front and Rear Elevations as Proposed
2062_PA_310	Side (south) Elevation as Proposed
2062_PA_320	Side (north) Elevation as Proposed

Basement Impact Assessment (BIA)_CH Simple Design Consulting Engineers