

No. 8 Strathray Gardens – Heritage, Design & Access Statement

Please note, this proposal has sought and received pre-planning advice, application:
2021/2848/PRE

1. Scope of the Proposal

We have been appointed by the freeholder, in consultation with the leaseholders, of No. 8 Strathray Gardens to apply for consent in respect of renovation to the property. This is in relation to the set legal requirement of freeholder and leaseholders to maintain and improve the property, which is now in a Conservation Area, at least every decade. The proposed development is intended to restore and improve, where possible, the traditional appearance of the building and to maintain the character of the Conservation Area, whilst enabling the building to adapt to changing occupant needs with improved living space. The proposed works include: the replacement of external windows, maintaining and reinstating where required like for like timber frames, with the addition of slim double glazing; restoration of the front door, changing the painted colour from white to black; improvement of the front entrance area, with an enlarged bin storage (to accommodate current Camden bin size) and replacement of the loose driveway gravel with resin bound gravel; new rear garden access from the upper ground level via a spiral stair and external balcony; rooftop solar panels and access safety railings; a new small circular window to the gabled front elevation.

2. The Site



No. 8 Strathay Gardens - Location

No. 8 Strathay Gardens in a five-storey, red brick house in the Belsize Conservation Area. The property was built before 1895 as a single dwelling, converted in the 1950s into separate flats.



No. 8 Strathay Gardens – Front and Rear Elevations, 2021

3. Heritage

3.1 Belsize Conservation Area

Belsize Conservation Area sits on the on the rising land between Chalk Farm at the bottom of Haverstock Hill and Hampstead at the top, and extends westwards to Swiss Cottage. It forms a triangle of land bordered by Haverstock Hill, Adelaide Road and Fitzjohn's Avenue.

In March 1973 the Borough's Planning and Communication Committee agreed the designation of the Belsize Park Conservation Area subject to consultation. The area was centred on Belsize Park, Belsize Park Gardens and Belsize Village. The report to Committee stated:

...Belsize Park is an area of large scale, imposing semi-detached Victorian Villas of distinct yet uniform appearance. They show elaborate and consistent architectural detail and within the designated boundary there is little to detract from the unity of appearance. Belsize Village is also an area of considerable charm, the particular character of the village being one of the main justifications for designation...

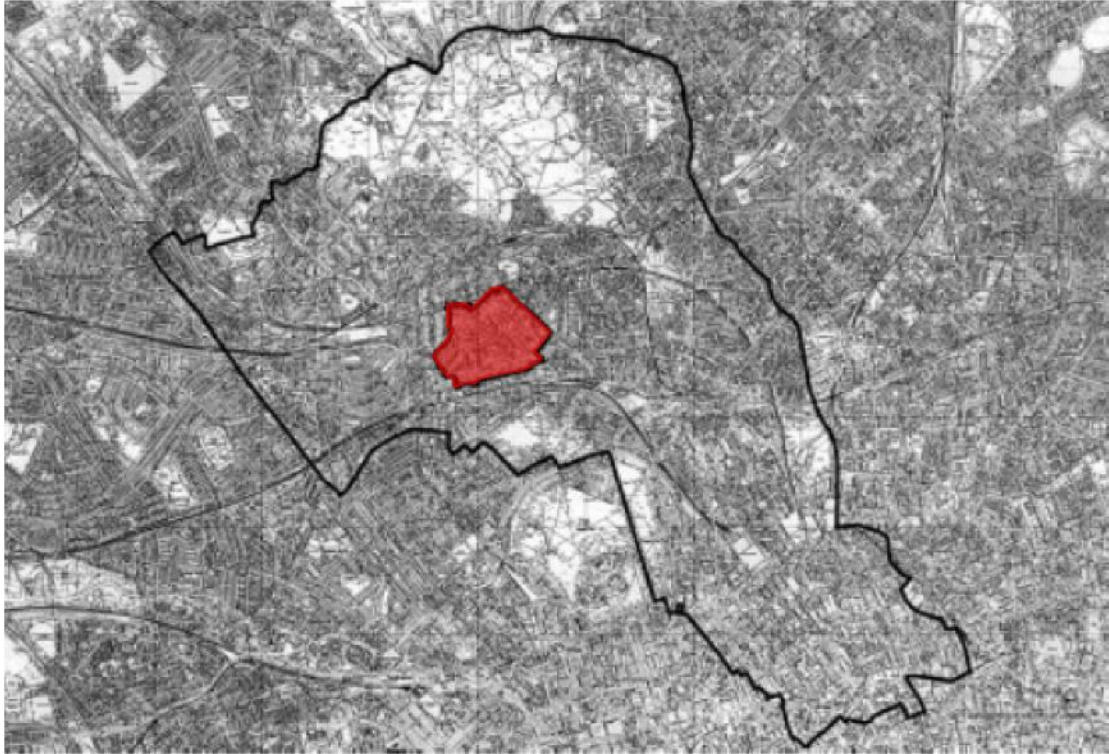
The Conservation Area has been subsequently extended on a number of occasions, and now covers Strathray Gardens.

Character and Appearance of the Area

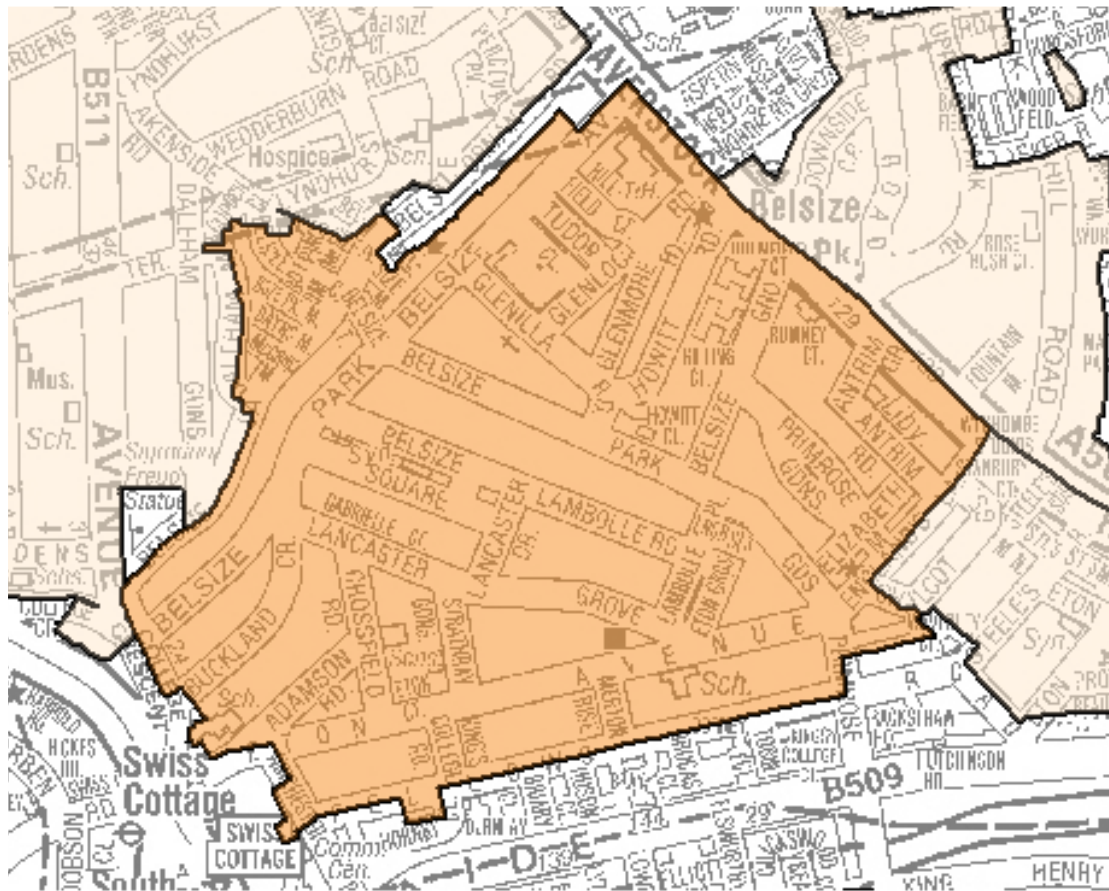
The Belsize Conservation Area is an important example of mid-19th century speculative development on a grand scale. Large Italianate villas 'in the fashionable Kensington style' are planned in pairs of three or four storeys plus basement with ornate Classical details including grand porticos and ornate balustraded boundary walls and railings. Surrounding streets are equally attractive and very typically late 19th century in red brick with Arts & Crafts detailing including intricate and low sweeping roofs, render details and multi-paned windows. Mature trees, green front and rear gardens and glimpses of gardens through the gaps between houses are important in providing a setting for the built form.

The Belsize Conservation Area is divided into six sub areas. In most cases the sub areas have a distinct, broadly uniform character, although there are pockets of development that depart from the general character. The six sub areas are:

1. Belsize Park (including Belsize Avenue, Belsize Park, Belsize Square, Belsize Park Gardens, Belsize Grove, Buckland Crescent, Lancaster Drive and the northern end of Lancaster Grove).
2. Belsize Village (incorporating Belsize Lane and the mews areas to the north, Belsize Crescent and Belsize Terrace).
3. Eton Avenue (including Strathray Gardens, the southern end of Lancaster Grove, Lambolle Road, Lambolle Place, Eton and Lancaster Garages and Fellows Road).
4. Glenloch (incorporating Glenloch, Glenmore, Glenilla and Howitt Roads).
5. Primrose Gardens/ Antrim Road (including Antrim Grove and the Haverstock Hill frontage).
6. Englands Lane (including Elizabeth Mews).



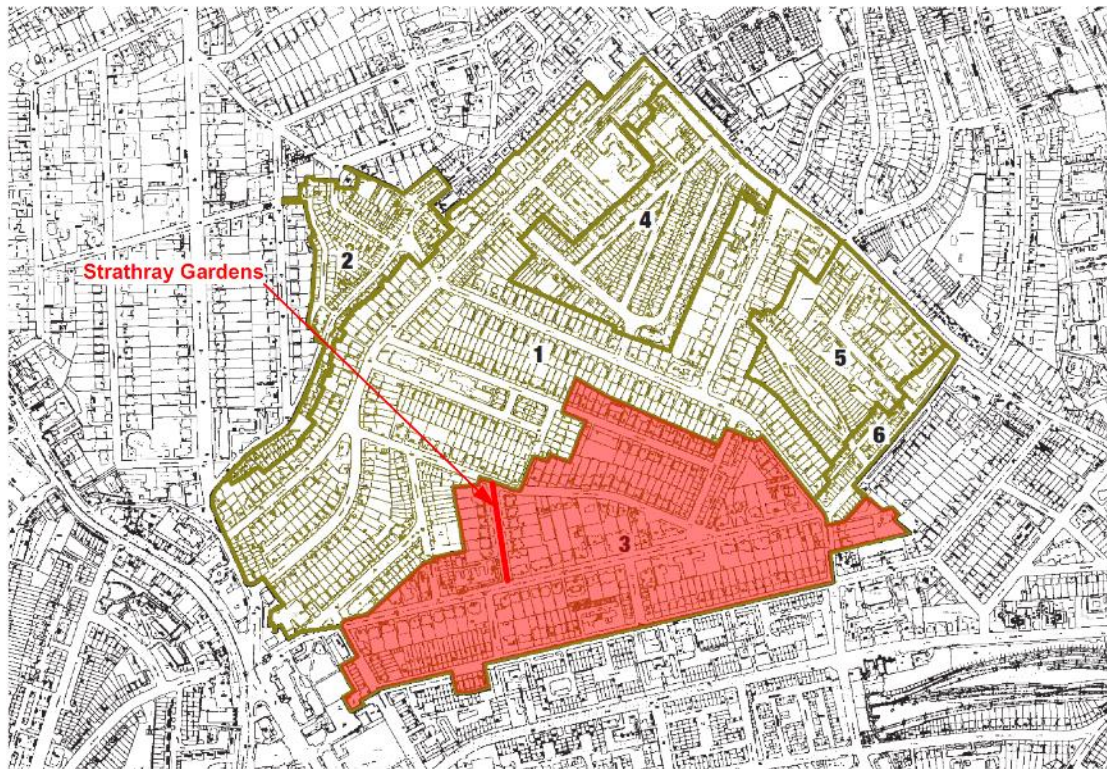
Camden and location of the Belsize Conservation Area.



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Belsize Conservation Area

3.2 Eton Avenue and Strathray Gardens



Belsize sub area three: Eton Avenue, including Strathray Gardens.

The Eton Avenue Area

This is a consistent area of predominantly late Victorian housing with some Edwardian pockets, built on land primarily in the ownership of Eton College. The houses within this area are smaller than the villa development to the north, being predominantly two storeys with an attic level. The properties in this area are notable for their varied styles and elevational treatment. There is however consistency of materials generally, red brick with red clay tiled roofs being a recurrent theme. The streets have a constant building line and only small gaps between the buildings. The houses have front gardens with boundary walls defining the edge of the properties along the street. Within this sub area certain elements share particular characteristics. These are:

- Eton Avenue / Strathray Gardens
- Fellows Road/ Winchester Road
- Lambolle Place/ Lancaster and Eton Garages
- Lambolle Road and the southern end of Lancaster Grove

Strathray Gardens

Eton Avenue and Strathray Gardens are relatively quiet, straight residential roads of large, detached red brick houses. They were developed over a period of approximately fifteen to twenty years starting in 1885 with much of the development at the eastern end of the area being undertaken by William Willett and Son. The mature trees that line the streets are a defining characteristic of this area, filtering views of the frontages and providing enclosure to the street. These houses are predominantly of Queen Anne style, but with groups of buildings showing some Arts and Crafts influences. However, as is typical of the period there are a variety of domestic revival influences. The predominant materials are red brick, red clay tiles

and tile hanging. These are contrasted with a variety of materials including London stock brick on upper floors, roughcast render and half-timbering to give visual interest. The use of decorative terracotta is also evident. Despite the differences in the elevational treatment along the street there are a number of recurrent themes: asymmetrical composition of the elevations, canted and curved bays, large slab chimneys, gables and white-painted timber casement and sash windows sub-divided by glazing bars into smaller panes.

Strathray Gardens is a particularly consistent street with identical walling and gate piers (unfortunately the wall and gate piers to No. 12 have been removed to form frontage parking, and unsympathetic copings have been introduced at No. 2) although the houses are of differing designs. All of the buildings along the street positively contribute to the character, with the exception of the modern insertion at No. 11.

Strathray Gardens does not contain any listed buildings. Strathray Gardens's buildings which make a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area include Nos. 1-9, 2-14.

Traditional materials and features of Strathray Gardens which enhance the Conservation Area include tiled street name plates, mature street trees, front boundary walls of redbrick with octagonal piers, string course, coping and caps of terracotta.



Typical portico and entrance column features of Strathray Gardens.



Strathray Gardens streetscape.



Strathray Gardens streetscape – aerial view from Google Earth.

3.3 Negative Features, Current Issues and Guidelines (specific to the following development proposal)

Negative Features of Eton Avenue

A number negative features of the Belsize CA sub area of Eton Avenue are recognised as a result of disproportionate scale, lack of sensitivity in design and detail to enable developments to contribute to the character of the area, interruption of consistency in frontages, out of keeping materials and designs. Specific examples include:

- Eton Avenue Lowlands - a five storey block out of scale and overly prominent at the entrance to the Conservation Area.
- Lambolle Road No. 18 - an overly prominent block constructed from inappropriate materials.
- Lambolle Road Nos. 5-7 - out of scale with the rest of the street.
- Merton Rise Nos. 3-11 - do not contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.
- Loss of boundary wall and gate piers - interrupt otherwise generally well-defined and consistent frontages (e.g. 38-40 Eton Avenue, 12 Strathray Gardens, 55 Lancaster Grove).
- Buildings outside the Conservation Area which detract from its setting - the obtrusive extension to the Britannia Hotel at the corner of Primrose Hill Road and Fellows Road. (a V2 bomb landed on this site in the closing days of WWII.)

Current Issues

The Belsize Conservation Area retains much of its architectural integrity. Generally, despite imposition of the motor car into the public realm and the insertion a scattering of buildings from the second half of the 20th century within the Conservation Area, the majority of the area retains the essence of the character and appearance that would have prevailed in the 1930s. Key areas where post-war development has had an impact are the Haverstock Hill frontage and along Fellows Road. The pressures exerted on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are fourfold.

New Development – Alterations and Extensions

The majority of applications for planning permission within the Belsize Conservation Area involve minor alterations and extensions to existing dwellings. This can have a cumulative impact on elements that contribute to the character and appearance of buildings, streets and areas as a whole. The most noticeable changes within the area often result from a number of developments, also including the following that are relevant to the scope of the following proposed development:

- Alteration to, or replacement of windows, porches, doors, and other features. This includes the use of inappropriately scaled and detailed modern doors and window frames, in unsuitable materials.
- Addition of roof terraces or balconies. The key issue being roof terraces with inappropriate railings that are prominent in the street scene.
- Addition of external services.
- Inappropriate design and materials.
- Loss of original features. (The classical ornamentation on the villa development and terraces has been particularly susceptible.)
- Extensions of excessive bulk, massing or height.
- Loss of original detailing (e.g. pilasters, scrolls, cornices and stallrisers).

Guidelines

Materials and Maintenance

- BE15 In all cases, existing/ original architectural features and detailing characteristic of the Conservation Area should be retained and kept in good repair, and only be replaced when there is no alternative, or to enhance the appearance of the building through the restoration of missing features. Original detailing such as porticoes; door and window architraves, pediments, hoods and finials; eaves brackets; balustrading; cornicing; timber shopfront facades, iron balustrades, timber framed sash windows, doors, where retained add to the visual interest of properties. Where removed in the past, replacement with suitable copies will be encouraged. Original, traditional materials should be retained wherever possible and repaired if necessary.
- BE16 The choice of materials in new work will be most important and will be the subject of control by the Council.
- BE17 Generally routine or regular maintenance such as unblocking of gutters and rainwater pipes, the repair of damaged pointing and stucco, and the painting and repair of wood and metal work will prolong the life of a building and prevent unnecessary decay and damage. Where replacement is the only possible option, materials should be chosen to closely match the original. Generally the use of the original (or as similar as possible) natural materials will be required, and the use of materials such as concrete roof tiles, artificial slate and PVCu windows would not be acceptable.
- BE18 Original brickwork should not be painted, rendered or clad unless this was the original treatment. Such new work, whilst seldom necessary, can have an unfortunate and undesirable effect on the appearance of the building and Conservation Area and may lead to long term structural and decorative damage, and may be extremely difficult (if not impossible) to reverse once completed. Re-pointing if done badly can also drastically alter the appearance of a building (especially when “fine gauge” brickwork is present), and may be difficult to reverse.

Rear Extensions/Conservatories

- BE21 Planning Permission is usually required for the erection of a rear extension or conservatory. However, modest single storey extensions to a single family dwelling may be exempt from permission under the General Permitted Development Order 1995 depending on the proposed volume & height. It is advisable to contact the Planning Service to confirm if this is the case.
- BE22 Extensions and conservatories can alter the balance and harmony of a property or of a group of properties by insensitive scale, design or inappropriate materials. Some rear extensions, although not widely visible, so adversely affect the architectural integrity of the building to which they are attached that the character of the Conservation Area is prejudiced. Rear extensions should be as unobtrusive as possible and should not adversely affect the character of the building or the Conservation Area. In most cases such extensions should be no more than one storey in height but its effect on neighbouring properties and Conservation Area will be the basis of its suitability.
- BE23 Extensions should be in harmony with the original form and character of the house and the historic pattern of extensions within the terrace or group of buildings.

The acceptability of larger extensions depends on the particular site and circumstances.

- BE24 The infilling of yards and rear spaces between buildings will generally be unacceptable.
- BE25 In many locations there are views along rear elevations from adjoining streets. Rear extensions will not be acceptable where they would spoil a uniform rear elevation of an unspoilt terrace or group of buildings.

3.4 Impact of the Site Heritage on the following Development Proposal

It is important that a high standard of design should be required in all new developments. New development should create a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and local distinctiveness of an area by being well-designed functional, attractive and sustainable. Support is unlikely to be given where proposals for new developments fail to relate to the established landscape character. The following proposal seeks to address this through a proposed refurbishment and extension that is in appropriate proportions and utilising materials and forms in keeping with the surrounding context. This will work to improve the external elevations - to be more in keeping with the original building appearance and typical/local character details – whilst improving the size, layout, access to daylight and access to the garden (these improvements varying between the flats) of four of the property's five flats. This will enable the property to adapt to changing family needs, such as space for further family members, childcare arrangements and home offices.

The following table summarises how the following development proposal addresses relevant current issues and guidelines for the Belsize Conservation Area.

4. Design & Access

4.1. Context – No. 8 Strathray Gardens

No. 8 Strathray Gardens is a five-storey, red brick house in the Belsize Conservation Area. The property was built before 1895 as a single dwelling, converted in the 1950s into five separate flats (each of the floors constituting one flat, Flat 1 being the lower ground/garden level and Flat 5 being the top/roof level). During the late 1980s a rear room was created in Flat 1, filling in an empty area underneath the Flat 2 kitchen, thus infilling the rear corner of the original property. This retains a lean-to roof structure at Flat 2 level, where the original Victorian structure had experienced war damage. Further to the house, a WWII Anderson Shelter was found in the back garden. The mound footprint of this structure, along with an old garden shed above ground, are still visible at the back left of the garden.

External doors are timber and glass, a number of them featuring decorative glass and leadwork. The front door is in need of refurbishment and repair to the decorative glass. External windows are mostly timber frame sash and side hung casement windows, in addition to some more recent metal frame and uPVC frame single and double glazed units. A few of the internal timber frame windows feature decorative glass and leadwork. The windows are in need of repair and some need replacement, due to deterioration of the frames and hinges.

Replacing the more recent uPVC and metal framed windows, where possible, would improve the appearance of the property and help to maintain the character of the area. The addition of slimline conservation double glazing would greatly improve the energy efficiency of the property. The external window sills are also in need of repair.

External drainage includes some of the traditional/original guttering and black cast iron rainwater down pipes, in addition to some more recent plastic guttering and rainwater pipework to the rear and side elevation (to the Flat 3 external terrace). External waste/soil water pipework is located on all four external elevations. This is particularly messy (in layout and installation) to the rear and side elevation (around the Flat 3 terrace). The external drainage pipework is in need of repair and, where possible, improvement to the layout.

The external brickwork and tiled roof are also in need of refurbishment (included in current/immediate works plans of the freeholder and leaseholders).

The immediate locality is the residential street of Strathray Gardens, with some neighbouring schools. The property location is within the Belsize Conservation Area. As such, a respectful preservation and enhancement of the existing characteristics of the street and general area are particularly important. The work could be phased with the already permitted demolition and building works planned at the Hall School, which is located immediately behind No.8 Strathray Gardens.

A number of nearby properties, located along Strathray Gardens and other nearby, have been sensitively extended and modified to varying degrees over the years. For example, along Strathray Gardens, examples include the introduction of a glass domed roof access and roof terrace/access railing, rear and side extensions, new outbuildings, replacement windows and doors, new external staircases and minor elevational alterations.



Circular window (time of this modification to the front elevation unknown) featured in the front elevation gable of No. 4 Strathray Gardens.



Rooftop railing of Nos. 4 and 6 Strathray Gardens, visible only from the rear gardens (not from the street or pavement).

4.2 Proposed Scheme

The proposed development is intended to restore and improve, where possible, the traditional appearance of the building and to maintain the character of the Conservation Area, whilst enabling the building to adapt to changing occupant needs with improved living space. The proposed works to No. 8 Strathray Gardens include:

1. Replacement of the existing external windows throughout property (all elevations), maintaining and reinstating where required like for like timber frames, with the addition of slim double glazing (some existing windows are traditional timber frame, some more recent uPVC and metal frame replacements).
2. Restoration of the front door and its features, changing the painted colour from white to black.
3. Front entrance area improvements:
 - Enlarged bin storage (to accommodate current Camden bin size).
 - Replace existing overhead light with x2 side lights - brass options to match existing ironmongery. Coordinate with a new house No. sign.
 - Reconfigure rainwater downpipe to tidy front door surround.
 - Replacement of the loose driveway gravel with resin bound gravel.
4. Flat 2 (upper ground floor) rear garden access via a new stair and balcony, accessed via a doorway (the doorway created by extending an existing window) to the side elevation. A black metal stair and railing design will match the existing railing design located throughout the property. Opaque privacy glass will be used for the new doorway.
5. Flat roof area safety railings, solar panels and enlarged existing roof lights. Access to the flat rooftop and a rooftop water tank is existing. A sensitive hoarding could also be introduced to conceal the water tank further. The railings will be based from the sunken flat roof area (150 mm below the visible ridge line) and set back from the front elevation. The railings will therefore only be visible from the back of the rear gardens, not from street level (see examples of Nos. 4 and 6 Strathray Gardens).
6. Creation of a small circular window in the gabled front elevation, to allow daylight into Flat 5 (this is already a feature of No. 4 Strathray Gardens).

4.3 Materials

Materials are integral to the architectural design, appearance and character of a building. The choice and use of materials and finishes therefore plays a crucial role in any alteration and extension given the impact that they have on the appearance and character of a home and Conservation Area.

All replacement and new windows will follow the original window design and scale and timber frame of the existing windows, like for like, introducing slim double glazing to improve energy efficiency. Where previous timber framed windows have been replaced with more recent meta or uPVC, those replaced will reinstate the original timber frame and help to restore the building to its traditional appearance and character. The new external staircase and new external railings will be a traditional painted black metal design, to match that already featured along the existing front external entrance and upper level balconies (apart from the existing Flat 3 balcony railing – replaced in the proposed design - which is wood). The new external bins storage – that will replace the existing bins storage, providing larger storage to accommodate the current Camden bins size – will be of the same white painted timber (matching the white painted timber of the front façade details and window frames) and black ironmongery (matching the existing external railings).

4.4 Layout

Please refer to proposed plans, sections and elevations for the layout, in conjunction with the following description.

The proposed layout will maintain most of the existing internal layout, while providing a new access to the rear garden from the Flat 2 kitchen (enlarging an existing external window into a door).

The rooftop solar panels will be positioned between the existing/enlarged existing roof lights on the flat roof area, the new roof access safety railing to enclose the perimeter of the flat roof area.

The proposed development will furthermore work to improve the existing drainage layout during the construction works, reducing and tidying as much as possible the existing external services.

4.5 Access

All existing access to and within the property is maintained through the proposed development. Further to these existing access points, the proposed development will introduce access from Flat 2 (upper ground floor) to the rear garden via new French doors and an external spiral staircase. Whilst maintaining the existing access to the rooftop, the proposed rooftop safety railings will improve the safety of this access.