

# 4D PLANNING™

Chartered Town Planners & Architectural Technicians

## DESIGN AND ACCESS / PLANNING / HERITAGE STATEMENT

Use of flat roof as amenity terrace, erect boundary railings, install sliding hatch access door, and associated alterations to the roof including glass flooring.

**Property Address:** Flat 3, St Andrews House, 252 Gray's Inn Road.

**November 2021**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** This Design and Access / Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of the applicant in respect of a planning application for use of flat roof as amenity terrace, erect boundary railings, install sliding hatch access door, and associated alterations to the roof including glass flooring. This Statement should be read in conjunction with other drawings and documents accompanying the planning application.

**1.2** This Statement comprises:

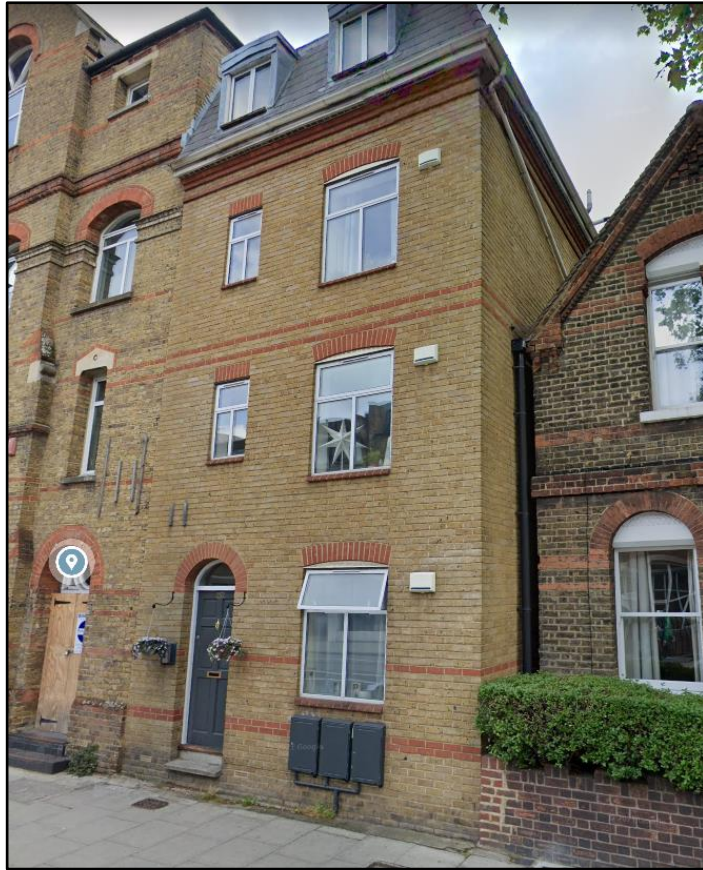
- A description of the application property and surrounding area;
- A description of the proposed development;
- A summary of relevant planning history; and,
- An assessment of the proposed development against relevant planning policy.

## **2.0 APPLICATION PROPERTY AND SURROUNDING AREA**

**2.1** The existing property is a three storey terraced property (with rooms in the roofspace) located on the east side of Grays Inn Road and near the corner with Wren Street. The property is divided into flats.

**2.2** The property is not listed but is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

**2.3** There is variety in architectural form and style in buildings nearby. There are also many examples of roof terraces in the wider area including on the opposite side of Grays Inn Road at 175-185 Grays Inn Road.



*Figure 1 – Existing property*

### **3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

**3.1** It is proposed to form a terrace area on top of a flat roof. No new building work / footprint is proposed as the flat roof already exists. Associated with the terrace use it is proposed to install a sliding hatch access door and boundary railings to a height of 1.1m. The railings would be set back from the roof/building edge and planters are proposed the entire length of the railings to ‘soften’ the visual appearance of them. The door hatch is very low rise and would have no visibility whatsoever from the streetscene.

**3.2** The terrace would have a usable area of approx. 30m<sup>2</sup> which is modest in size in comparison to typical dwelling gardens. The terrace would facilitate much needed private outdoor amenity space where none exists at present.

**3.3** Covid-19 has reinforced the importance of outdoor residential spaces and the quality thereof. In initial Covid lock-downs many flat owners/residents effectively became house-bound with no convenient or safe access to outdoor space. Covid has emphasised the importance of having private outdoor spaces at properties, particularly flats, and it is considered that alterations to flats to facilitate

amenity space should be viewed pragmatically and favourably by all local authorities. The applicants require the proposed terrace area through necessity (i.e. need for outdoor space accessible directly from the flat), and from a strong desire to enhance quality of life in the flat.

#### 4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 A review of Camden online planning records does not reveal any recent/ relevant planning records for the property in question.

#### 5.0 PLANNING POLICY

##### Camden Local Plan (2017)

5.1 As can be seen in Figure 2 below, the site is not affected by any planning designations other than being in a conservation area and adjacent a locally important open space.

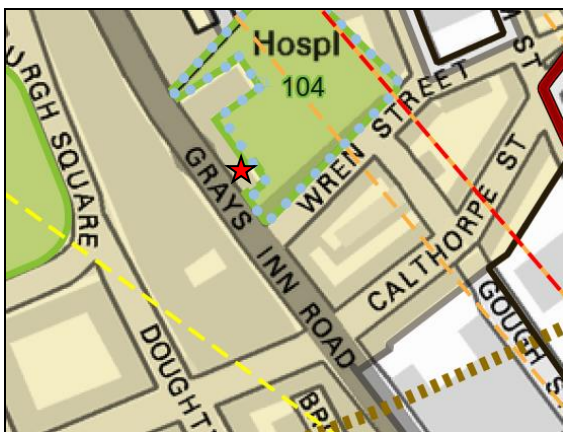


Figure 2 – Extract from Lambeth Local Plan Policies Map. Red star indicates approximate location of site.

5.2 Policies C1 (health and wellbeing), A1 (managing the impact of development), D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage), are of relevance to the proposed development. In short these require that development: provide high quality environments, provide good levels of amenity for occupants and not adversely impact on neighbouring amenity; that development be of high quality design, and that development does not adversely impact on heritage assets. ***The proposed development is considered compliant as follows:***

- ***The works would have minimal impact on the visual appearance of the building. There would be no adverse impact on the public realm including from St. Andrew's Garden – the terrace railings would be set back from the roof/building edge and would be largely seen against the backdrop of the higher building No. 252b to the north. No alterations are proposed to the external elevations of the building.***

- *There would be no loss of surrounding amenity as a result of the proposed works – this is discussed further in section 6 below.*
- *Roof terraces are a common feature in high density urban areas.*
- *Heritage impacts are discussed below.*

## **Bloomsbury Conservation Area**

**5.3** The property is not locally listed, nor Grade I or II listed.

**5.4** The property sits within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. A review of the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) indicates that the special character of this area is multi-faceted but in large part derived from its formally planned arrangement of streets and the contrasting leafy squares, and classic style townhouses. No. 252a, amongst many other buildings, is noted as a ‘positive contributor’ to the conservation area.

**5.5** Development of the nature proposed is not cited in the Appraisal and Management Strategy as being a negative feature or threat.

**5.6** It is considered the proposed works would have negligible impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. No original features would be altered.

**5.7** 4D Planning have a recent appeal decision for works in a conservation area whereby the Planning Inspector fully accepted that there can be differences and subtleties between properties in conservation areas. In Appeal Ref. No. APP/Q5300/D/21/3274676 concerning a hip to gable, rear dormer and other alterations to a property in a conservation area, in upholding the appeal the Inspector noted:

*“Whilst I accept that this would involve a change to the appearance of the front elevation, it would not, in my judgement, significantly affect the character or appearance of the host property or the contribution that it makes to the MCA. As I confirmed above, there are a variety of roof styles and building forms within the area. Some properties have projecting gables at the front or two storey gables to the side (including No.9). The proposed gable end would not, therefore, be out of character within that context, it would be subservient and proportionate and would add to the variety of building styles/forms that is a feature of the area”.*

*It is strongly submitted that the proposed works would be subservient to the host property and would not materially alter the host building style and form, nor would the works be out of character on the street which has a variety of roof forms.*

## **Design CPG 1**

**5.8** Section 5 of this Guidance deals specifically with roof terraces. It states

*“5.23 Balconies and terraces can provide valuable amenity space for flats that would otherwise have little or no private exterior space. However, they can also cause nuisance to neighbours. Potential problems include overlooking and privacy, daylight, noise, light spillage and security.*

*5.24 Balconies and terraces should form an integral element in the design of elevations. The key to whether a design is acceptable is the degree to which the balcony or terrace complements the elevation upon which it is to be located. Consideration should therefore be given to the following:*

- *detailed design to reduce the impact on the existing elevation;*
- *careful choice of materials and colour to match the existing elevation;*
- *possible use of setbacks to minimise overlooking – a balcony need not necessarily cover the entire available roof space;*
- *possible use of screens or planting to prevent overlooking of habitable rooms or nearby gardens, without reducing daylight and sunlight or outlook; and*
- *need to avoid creating climbing opportunities for burglars.*

*5.25 A terrace provided at roof level should be set back behind the slope of a pitched roof in accordance with Figure 7, or behind a parapet on a flat roof. A terrace should normally comply with the following criteria:*

- *The dimensions of the roof should be sufficient to accommodate a terrace without adversely affecting the appearance of the roof or the elevation of the property.*
- *A terrace will only normally be acceptable on the rear of properties. It is normally inappropriate to set back a mansard to provide a terrace.*
- *It should not result in the parapet height being altered, or, in the case of valley/butterfly roofs, the infilling of the rear valley parapet by brickwork or railings.*
- *Any handrails required should be well set back behind the line of the roof slope, and be invisible from the ground.*
- *It should not result in overlooking of habitable rooms of adjacent properties”.*

*The proposed terrace is considered to fully adhere to this guidance. There would be minimal impact to the appearance of elevations given the modest railing height and that it would not be a continuous solid screen. No alterations are proposed to the elevations. There are no long range views of the property from main thoroughfares – on approach from the north the roof is hidden behind existing higher built form, and on approach from the south the roof is hidden by tall mature trees. As stated, the terrace railings would be set back from the roof/building edge and*

*would be largely seen against the backdrop of adjoining higher buildings including No. 252b to the north.*

## **6.0 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY**

**6.1** It is not considered there would be any adverse amenity / privacy impacts arising from the proposed works. The terrace would not directly overlook any private amenity areas. Any other over looking would not be materially different than what is possible from upper floor windows at present.

**6.2** The terrace would not give rise to any noise / nuisance over and above what any rear garden would provide. We note other Planning Inspectorate precedent in assessing an appeal on a London property relating to a terrace:

*“The Council’s refusal reasoning raises concerns about the ‘possibility’ of noise and disturbance to neighbouring occupiers. However, this is a residential area and a certain amount of noise is therefore inevitable. No evidence has been adduced to suggest that future users of the terrace would generate unacceptable levels of noise”.*

(Ref: APP/A5840/W/15/3129093).

*In recent years 4D Planning have successfully gained planning permission and won appeals for raised terraces on a significant number of properties in various London boroughs, and it is our opinion that the terrace in question is appropriate to the host property and would not have any adverse impacts to neighbouring residential amenity.*

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

**7.1** The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with the Camden Local Plan and design guidance. There would be no adverse impacts to neighbouring residential amenity, and no adverse impacts to the character and appearance of the conservation area.