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Architects



Design & Access Statement:
7 Stratford Villas, London NW1 9SJ

Refurbishment of ground to second
floors.

1.0 Site Description:

No. 7, Stratford Villas is a semi-detached three storey 19th Century Villa situated within the Camden Square Conservation Area. The front elevation of the house faces onto Stratford Villas, while the side elevation faces onto Rochester Square, forming the southerly end of the terrace. A semi-derelict double garage belonging to the property exists on its north-west boundary, against the old nursery site at the centre of Rochester Square.

The building is in a generally poor condition and has lost all of its original window joinery. A decent run of cast-iron railings sitting on a dwarf wall along the street edge survives particularly on the side elevation, although there are some gaps. The front door leading to the raised ground floor has an attractive painted stucco surround with pairs of flanking pilasters sharing a single capital and supporting an entablature with wreath motifs on the frieze. The arrangement may interpret elements taken from the *Choragic Monument of Thrasyllus* in Athens.

Internally, the building is split into approximately six separate dwellings - the precise allocation of the arrangement of the existing spaces on the upper floors into dwellings is hard to determine. This work was previously carried out under separate ownership. The lower ground floor contains a partially refurbished one-bed flat with access to the rear garden. The entrance to the flat is through the side elevation on Rochester Square. No internal staircase is extant between the lower and upper ground floors. The upper floors of the house - from raised ground to second floors - contain five bed-sits. These are single room dwellings with shared staircase access and in some cases, shared bathrooms. Cooking facilities are almost non-existent.

The site falls within an area indicated as making a “positive” contribution in the CAA audit of heritage assets map, while Stratford Villas and Rochester Square streets are indicated as having “neutral” impact.

2.0. Project Description:

The proposals are for the amalgamation of the five existing bed-sit type flats on the raised ground, first and second floors of the house into one family-sized dwelling. It is proposed to enlarge the existing front and rear dormer windows and to fit new timber-framed, double-glazed sash windows throughout.



Front and side elevations



Side and rear elevations showing entrance to lower ground floor flat



Garage at end of plot



Typical bed-sitting room

The existing self-contained one bedroom flat on the lower ground floor is to remain as a separate dwelling. Proposals for the refurbishment and extension of this dwelling are submitted in a separate application.

3.0 Description of Proposed Works

Internal - as described in accompanying drawings:

- The upper floor bedsits will be combined to provide a three-bedroom family flat with separate kitchen, sitting room and study.

External - as described in accompanying drawings:

- The existing dormers to front and rear will be enlarged. The dormers will be glazed with timber sash windows and clad in lead or zinc.

The existing aluminium framed glazing to all windows will be removed and replaced with double glazed, timber framed sash and case windows. It is proposed that the new glazing has an arrangement of margin panes as on adjacent properties.

4.0 Discussion of the Proposed Works

Internal

The proposals will result in the provision of:

1No. One bed flat (as existing on lower-ground floor)

1No. Three to four bed flat on upper floors.

It is accepted that the proposals will result in an overall reduction in the number of dwellings within the building. However, the Council is asked to take into consideration the extremely low quality of the existing (and vacant for some time) bedsits, which are unlikely to meet any contemporary housing standards. The existing servicing and fire-safety arrangements would not meet contemporary regulations, even for a house in multiple occupation (HMO).

It is suggested that the maximum number of dwellings that the existing building can reasonably accommodate without significant external alteration is two as proposed, and the Council is further asked to note that the proposals will result in a mix of accommodation types on the site, thereby helping to preserve the mix of housing types available to meet the requirements of differing households in the borough.

External

The external works include:

The enlargement of the existing dormers to front and rear;

The replacement of the existing aluminium framed glazing with traditional pattern timber framed sash and case windows with double glazing.

All houses in the immediate terrace have both front and rear dormers. No.7 currently has the smallest back and front dormer windows on the street. While a significant enlargement is proposed, it is not considered that the size of the new dormers would be excessive. The proposed dormers are of traditional design and materials and have been designed in accordance with the guidance in the relevant Camden SPG.



Rear View of Stratford Villas showing existing dormer windows on the terrace - No. 7 is at far right.

The replacement of the existing aluminium framed glazing with timber sashes of traditional pattern will make a significant contribution to enhancing the immediate street scene and conservation area, as well as providing a more efficient and sustainable thermal envelope to the building. The removal

of multiple bedsits will also provide an opportunity to rationalise the arrangement of waste pipes on the facade. It is anticipated that the number of external pipes can be significantly reduced to the benefit of the street scene.

Anti-social behaviour

The LPA is asked to note that the site, which has been vacant for some time, has been the location of a significant amount of anti-social behaviour in recent months. The approval of the proposed works and subsequent occupation of the building will help to prevent these sorts of activities to the benefit of the wider area.

5.0 Sustainability

All new elements, materials and build-up insulation values will be specified to meet or exceed the relevant Building Regulations and will significantly improve the environmental performance and internal comfort of the building.

6.0 Access

Access conditions into and within the house are not altered by the proposals.

7.0 Conclusion

The proposals will provide a mix of high-quality housing types on the site. The replacement glazing and new dormer windows will enhance the street scene and conservation area with appropriate traditional design and materials. Occupation of the currently vacant building will help to reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour occurring on and around the site. The applicants and their agents believe that, if approved, the proposals will have a positive impact on the conservation area and contribute meaningfully to the supply of mixed housing in the borough.

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Achievement Award 2021