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Via Planning Portal only

Dear Sir/Madam,

HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING APPLICATION - THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO THE EXISTING HOME INCLUDING NEW BASEMENT LEVEL, REAR EXTENSION AND ROOF EXTENSION

12 ELDON GROVE, LONDON, NW3 5PT

Please accept this covering letter as an accompaniment to this householder planning application for proposed works at 12 Eldon Grove, London, NW3 5PT. This letter provides a summary of the site and the proposed development.

Please also find enclosed a completed application form accompanied with a full set of existing and proposed plans and elevations, Heritage & Townscape Assessment, Basement Impact Assessment and a Daylight/Sunlight Study.

The site has been in the ownership of the applicant's family for two generations and the proposed development to modernise the house is therefore a family led scheme, allowing local connections to continue.

The applicant has sought to engage with the local authority through their pre-application advice service as well as through several discussions as part of earlier planning applications. This submission aligns with comments expressed by Camden in several engagement sessions and the proposal has significantly benefited from that input.

The Site:

The site is located on the north side of Eldon Grove and comprises a two-storey building in active residential use. The site is in single ownership and currently comprises a single planning unit.

The site is located within the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area which spreads across the southern slopes of Hampstead on the descent from Hampstead Village to Swiss Cottage/Finchley Road. No.12 Eldon Grove is identified by the council's Conservation Area Statement as a building that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.

The immediate surroundings are largely characterised by residential development. Both Eldon Grove and the surrounding network of roads are arranged on a grid of perimeter blocks with an eclectic range of architectural styles and the area as a whole, has an over-riding sense of a quiet leafy suburb, as described by the Conservation Area Statement.

The site has a good Public Transport Accessibility Rating of 4 and is currently served by three/four off street vehicular parking spaces.

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The Proposal

This application seeks full (householder) planning permission for extensions and alterations to the existing property. The development can be described as:

'Various alterations and extensions to the existing dwelling including new basement level, rear extension and roof extension.'

For full details of the proposed development please refer to the supporting plans and elevations.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which incorporates three specific strands – economic, environmental, and social. The following sections are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- Section 11 (making effective use of land)
- Section 12 (achieving well designed places)
- Section 16 (conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

Local Planning Policy

For the purposes of this application, the adopted Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden (LB Camden) comprises the London Plan (2021), the Camden Local Plan (2017) and the Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) Documents.

Planning Assessment

Principle of development

Law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site comprises a building in active residential use and no changes are proposed to the established use class. In such locations, there are no development plan or national planning policies that restrict the extension or alteration of residential properties in principle, subject to the consideration of all other detailed matters.

Principle of Basement Extension

Camden Local Plan (CLP) Policy A5 states that the Council will only permit basement development where it is demonstrated that the proposal would not cause harm to neighbouring properties; the structural, ground, or water conditions of the area; the character and amenity of the area; and the significance of heritage assets.

It advises that in determining proposals for basements and other underground development, the Council will require an assessment of the scheme's impact on drainage, flooding, groundwater conditions and structural stability in the form of a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA). Camden's adopted Planning Guidance on basements (CPG Basements) provides further detail on the application of that policy.

In light of those requirements, a full BIA has been prepared in support of the application. This highlights that the proposed basement will comply with CLP Policy A5 and supporting guidance, primarily as the basement will be only one storey and will not result in the loss of garden space or trees of townscape or amenity value.

Consequently, there are no policy objections in principle to basement development subject to the satisfaction of a number of technical matters and detailed considerations which will be considered either in the supporting Basement Impact Assessment and/or below.

Design and Heritage impact

Policy context:

Section 12 of the NPPF refers to well-designed places. Paragraph 130(c) states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

Policy D1 of the local plan provides further detail on local requirements and, importantly, states that the council will require that development respects local character and context, guidance that is consolidated by Camden Planning Guidance on Design.

Policy D2 of the Local Plan states that the Council will preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings. The aims of these policies are further reflected in London Plan Policies D4 (Delivering Good Design) and HC1 (Heritage Conservation and Growth).

Land use:

The proposed development does not depart from the primary residential use of the site and the main issue relating to impact would therefore be limited to design, layout and appearance.

Existing character:

In order to understand impact, consideration must first be given to the significance of the heritage asset and the characteristics of the surroundings.

Eldon Grove is a short street of varied character with a mixture of houses that are varied in age and design. Generally, the larger houses date from the first phase of residential development in the 1860s and comprise semi-detached pairs of grand Italianate villas in yellow / gault brick with stucco dressings, as at nos. 2 to 7 (consecutive) and 10 & 11, or the semi-detached Gothic style villas at nos. 8 & 9. In addition, there is a group of three large turn of the C20 Domestic Revival style houses at nos. 14 to 16. These were built on the site of an earlier house with a plot that ran through to Rosslyn Hill.

The level of variation in the surroundings, including significantly larger properties to the north-west, emphasised further by the increasing topography in a north-westerly direction, all within the same conservation area, are examples of how the conservation area benefits from a variety of roof forms/scale and/or is largely unaffected by such variation. There are of course fine examples of uniformity and indeed a level of architectural coherency throughout but this is clearly not a defining characteristic of the immediate surroundings, as also identified in the CAS.

The surrounding row of built development to the north-west is of significantly greater scale to that of the host building and dwarfs the application site from views from the south-east. Views of the application site are screened from the north-west by the heavier scaled dwellings at 10-11 Eldon Grove and it is clear therefore, that varied scale in the surroundings, by proxy, is a key defining characteristic of the area.



12 and its neighbours Google street view



The houses facing 12 on the opposite side of Eldon Grove, Google street view

Architecture:

Dealing with the proposal is isolation, a small upward extension of the building itself need not unbalance the architecture of the building or that of the wider surroundings. The building has a strong enough architectural composition, as outlined in the accompanying Heritage & Townscape Assessment, to withstand a neatly designed upward extension to accommodate additional headroom and the proposal has been significantly amended in order to replicate the existing proportions and form of the existing roof.

The proposed extension would not be visually prominent, or at the very most, public views would be largely transient as a result of the presence of the larger terrace to the immediate north-west and the set back from the road frontage.

Both the roof extension and the dormer window would maintain the upward linearity of the windows, in order to recreate the simple architectural composition of the building, therefore respecting and reinforcing the statement it makes in the street scene.

The sequence of built form in the immediate surroundings creates a strong sense of enclosure. In a rear garden context, this creates a sense of seclusion as the land is enclosed by residential development on all sides and is not directly visible in the public domain.

The rear extension would be limited in footprint and its single storey proportions ensure it would not unduly compete with the hierarchy of the host dwelling, particularly in light of its isolated location. It would therefore maintain a subservient visual appearance, reflective of both the host site and its surroundings.

In terms of design, the proposed architecture is contemporary and simple in appearance, inspired by the principle of combining modern, sleek lines with the more traditional architecture found over the wider surroundings.

Dormers windows are certainly not out of keeping with the rest of the street: Roof light/windows can be found at 2, 3, 14 and 16; side dormers can be found at 6 and 14; full frontal dormers can be found at 6, 7 10, 14, 16, plus small window dormers at 8 and 9.



The proposed lightwell will be surrounded by a metal balustrade which is a material that heavily defines the character of the area, particularly at front boundary points. Notwithstanding this, the lightwell will be set back from the front site boundary, would be screened from public view by the more intense boundary treatment fronting the site and, in any case, would extend only a small proportion of the front elevation at a limited height. It's impact on the character of the area could therefore only realistically be considered to be neutral.

Scale:

12 Eldon Grove although owned by the applicant under one land title, solely as number 12, is really 12 and 13 Eldon Grove, (the street is numbered sequentially, rather than odd/even, and it skips from 10, 11, 12 to 14, 15, 16 on this side of the road), but for unknown reasons, 13 has never been built upon. For this application, the lower garden plot currently on "13" remains as is and we address only number 12.



From the three images above, it can clearly be seen that no.12 (1 plot) is of the same plot size as all of the other plots on the street. However, the proposed size is far smaller.

Currently the house is spread over two floors: a ground and a first floor, comprising circa 2,000 sq ft, affording 3 bedrooms and 1 office space. Even after the proposed modifications, adding circa 1,000 sq ft below ground and 1,000 sq ft above, the house will only total circa 4,000 sq ft, and will remain smaller than all the other houses on the street. (For example 11 and 15 were recently listed with local estate agents, with a floorplan showing 5 to 6 bedrooms each, totalling 5,000 to 6,000 sq ft).

Furthermore, on this side of the road as you walk from Thurlow Rd to Lyndhurst Rd, it is clearly evident that the host property is sandwiched between a mishmash of larger totally uncoordinated architectural styles. This is visually highlighted below:



10

11

12

14

15

In addition, the same theme occurs on the opposite side of the road, again highlighted in the imagery below:



8&9

7&6

5&4

3&2

Eldon Court

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development represents a high-quality design which is sympathetic to the existing character and appearance of the existing property and neighbouring properties. It is considered that the proposed works will enhance the quality of the host dwelling and consequently the townscape quality of the area. There will be no adverse effect on the setting of the wider Conservation area. The proposed development is therefore considered acceptable with regard to its impact on the designated heritage assets identified locally, in accordance with the development plan and national planning policy guidance.

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy A1 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that standards of amenity are protected. This requires the highest standards of design to ensure the amenities of existing and future occupiers are safeguarded and this is echoed in guidance contained within the NPPF and the London Plan. Further guidance is provided in CPG Amenity which sets specific standards of development.

The host dwelling benefits from a well-proportioned amenity area. The proposed development would not erode that space to an unacceptable extent and the proposal would not therefore represent an overdevelopment of the plot.

The relationship of built development has been carefully considered in the context of the topography and distances between buildings and the absence of clear relationships with sensitive windows that could suffer substantive reductions in outlook means that there are unlikely to be any detrimental effects on levels of sunlight/daylight. This is substantiated in the Daylight & Sunlight Assessment that supports the application.

The single storey height of the rear extension and its limited rear projection ensures it would not lead to an overbearing impact on the neighbouring property and its associated amenity space. By virtue of the size, scale and location of the proposed works, the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity, in accordance with the development plan and national planning policy guidance.

Sustainability

Crucially, it is noted that the proposed development will not result in an uplift of residential accommodation. However, the following measures will nevertheless be incorporated into the proposed development:

- The external lighting strategy shall be designed to minimise light spillage and night time light pollution in line with the Institute of Lighting Professional's (ILP) Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light; low illuminance levels, fittings and controls shall be employed accordingly.
- Good internal air quality will be achieved through the creation of a building envelope with a low air permeability; meaning that the building fabric will reduce the infiltration of pollution from the external environment.
- The developer will also endeavour to avoid the use of materials with a high VOC (volatile organic compound) content; therefore ensuring an improved air quality for the completed development.
- Access to daylight is predominantly from the northern and eastern sides of the proposed development and large windows are proposed on these elevations to improve light levels internally.
- It is intended that the performance of the building fabric will incorporate relatively low U-Values to reduce the rate at which the buildings lose heat, preserving the heat within the space and reducing the requirement for mechanical heating.
- The development will be naturally ventilated with the design intent being that spaces will be capable of cooling naturally.

Summary

As demonstrated within this letter and supporting documents, the proposed works are considered to be modest and sympathetically maintain the existing architectural composition of the host building by virtue of their simple and austere proportions that complement the detail of the existing building. By virtue of this arrangement, and the established variety and scale of roofscapes in the surroundings, the scale of the extension and the lack of subservience is not considered to have a harmful impact on the host property or the surrounding area, rather it is considered it will preserve the character of the area.

The proposals have been developed through a series of engagement sessions with Camden and the applicant has, in line with national planning policy guidance, demonstrated a willingness to adapt his proposals accordingly.

The proposed development accords with the up-to-date development plan and fulfils the three dimensions of sustainable development as defined by the NPPF. The presumption in favour of sustainable development therefore applies and it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

This Planning Statement should be read alongside the other supporting documentation and drawings which have been submitted as part of the Full Planning Application.

I trust this letter and the enclosed documents provide you with sufficient information to determine the application but if you require any points of clarification or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Stuart Minty
Director
SM Planning