

Architecture for London

Design and Access Statement
43 Downshire Hill NW3 NU

March 2022

1.0 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Architecture for London and accompanies the pre-application for the sensitive refurbishment, rear exterior cladding and rear extension of the Grade II listed property 43 Downshire Hill.

The client seeks to refurbish and extend the property to both preserve the designated heritage asset and unify the extensions of the rear elevation.

2.0 Planning History

Sep 2021 - 2021/3937/P

Alterations to the front and rear elevations, including new openings in rear elevation and installation of a new door, installation of garden fencing to the rear elevation, installation of double glazed doors, replacement/refurbishment of the existing single glazed windows to the front and rear elevations with new double glazed windows
Application withdrawn

Nov 2015 - 2015/5978/L

Removal of an existing ensuite shower room, and replacement with a new bathroom internally within a Grade II Listed Building.
Application permitted

3.0 Context

43 Downshire Hill is a designated Grade II listed building (listed on the 14th of May 1974) alongside numbers 41 and 42 (listing entry number 1067414) and is located within the Hampstead Conservation Area, an area principally defined by its topography, built diversity and its historical association with The Heath.

Within the Hampstead Conservation Area, there is an abundance of built assortment and heterogeneity that provides the area with a rich architectural character. Pevsner, the architectural historian stated; "the delightful thing is the preservation of so much, yet no uniformity"

The street pattern of the original village is retained and reflected by the fragmentation of built blocks and the irregular groupings of historical buildings. Whilst the undulating topography gives rise to complex narrow streets and a diverse orientation of elevations, characterised by their diversity of periods and materiality. Decorative stock brickwork and horizontal timber weatherboarding are particularly prevalent.

43 Downshire Hill is located within sub-area 3 (Willoughby Road/Downshire Hill) of the Hampstead Conservation Area, as outlined within the Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal.

There is an abundance of quality and the recurring theme of built diversity along Downshire Hill, ranging from unassuming terraced brick cottages to extensive detached villas, with no. 48 being designated as buildings of specific architectural interest. This assortment of formal and informal terraces comprised of buildings from contrasting periods leads to a miscellaneous streetscape, giving the area a strong identity.

Numbers 41-42 and 43 Downshire Hill compose a terrace of 3 early 19th-century brick cottages, a typical 'micro-climate' of related buildings within the greater area. The cottages are constructed from a stock brick laid in Flemish bond with utilitarian round-arched doorways, decorative patterned fanlights, prostyle porticos and flat gauged brick arches to recessed sashes.



Rear outrigger extension to a listed building at Albion Street, Westminster by Architecture for London

4.0 Existing

The original dwelling at 43 Downshire Hill has undergone extensive development, setting it apart from the neighbouring 42 and 41 Downshire Hill. In two phases, the house has been extended resulting in a convoluted rear elevation that lacks any contextual relationship to the host building and wider context.

These development stages can be summarised as:

Phase 1 (1800's) - Two-story extension above the existing closet wing

A two-storey extension was built to the original outrigger. This comprised a full-depth extension to the first floor rear bedroom and a smaller extension to the second floor rear bedroom. As part of these developments, the outrigger extents were also enlarged to internalise the former external side return passage, spanning the full three-storeys of the revised outrigger.

Phase 2 (Mid 1900's) - Three-storey infill side extension

The later second phase of development at the dwelling comprised extending the depth of the earlier full-height side return infill element alongside the development of a new bathroom at the second-floor level.

This phase of development is evidenced in the external brickwork to the rear of the dwelling, with later brickwork subtly contrasting against the earlier Phase 1 works.

Contemporary timber doors and casement windows were added to the ground floor, Georgian-style timber sash windows were added to the first and second floor rooms and a timber casement window was added to the second-floor bathroom. A rooflight was also added above the existing stair.

Interior

Internally, a number of ad-hoc works have resulted in a patchwork interior that detracts from the integrity of the designated heritage asset.

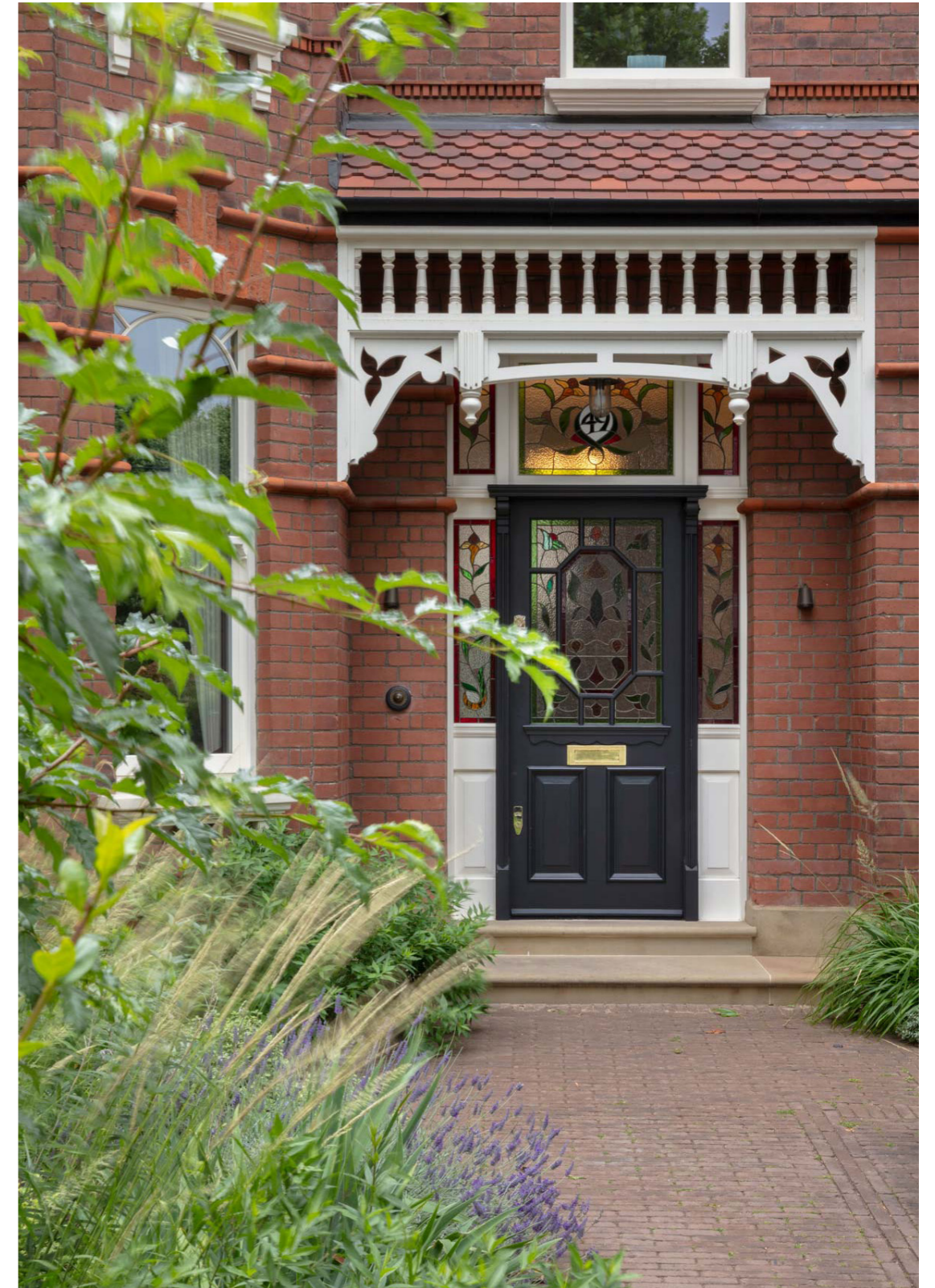
Internal walls are mostly 20th century timber frames with modern plasterboard. There is only a small section of wall in lath and lime plaster on the first-floor surrounding the original landing.

The wall between the service passage and hallway has been removed with structural support added as a result. This comprises two beams supporting the existing joists with a column sited within the living room supporting these beams.

An original ironwork fireplace is extant within the living room but this has been adapted to be fuelled by mains gas supply. The original fireplace to the first-floor front bedroom also remains extant.

The original fireplace and chimney breast to the dining room has been removed. The chimney breast at the first-floor level remains extant but the fireplace has been removed.

A guest toilet was added to the ground floor hallway.



Refurbished Edwardian house at The Avenue, Brent by Architecture for London

General

The property has experienced significant subsidence, with the front elevation exhibiting dropped sections of brickwork, a receding parapet and a structurally compromised portico. Internally, the historical fabric has also been compromised and distorted, with undulating floorboards, uneven floor joists and dropped lintels harming the heritage asset.

It is assumed that the first phase of alterations and extensions to the building may have magnified the subsidence, whilst the second phase may have included structural underpinning as an attempt to correct the foundation instability.

A butterfly roof with a central drainage valley remains extant, albeit with the addition of a rooflight sited within the western slope. The original Welsh slate tiles have been replaced with modern slate tiles.

Internally, large sections of the existing floorboards have been cut out, with replacement pine floorboards installed where works to the services underneath have been undertaken.

As subsequent owners have altered positions of bathrooms, windows have been bricked-up and new foul water drainage pipework, water supply pipework, gas supply pipework and ventilation fans have been installed which adds to the visual clutter on the rear elevation. The original rainwater downpipe has also been replaced with a plastic round pipe that is not compatible with the original hopper.

The property requires urgent sympathetic renovation to conserve and enhance its special historic interest, whilst aligning it with the needs of the owners' family. The previous ad-hoc development has resulted in a built asset that lacks any aesthetic cohesion and requires a comprehensive unification.



Listed Georgian house in Canonbury, Islington by Architecture for London

4.0 Proposal

The applicant seeks to sensitively restore the Grade II listed property to conserve and enhance the character of the heritage asset. The scope of proposed works is predominantly orientated around the preservation of the historical built fabric and will follow the conservation principles set out in Historic England's Conservation Principles Framework.

The proposal will unify the ad-hoc phased development of the rear outrigger (detailed previously) which detracts from the legibility of the building. To unify this collection of extensions into a single, legible element, traditionally detailed timber weatherboarding is proposed to cover the outrigger. This will re-establish the subordinate nature of the outrigger to the main building.

The use of timber weatherboarding can be seen on other period properties in the surrounding area. It is considered to be an appropriate material for the rear of the house, and sympathetic to adjacent materials. Some examples of this cladding extant within the local context are included in the following pages.

External insulation will be installed on the non-original built fabric as a means of improving the thermal performance and sustainability credentials of the heritage asset. Internally, a 15mm thick breathable insulation would be used to allow for the retention of the existing skirtings. There are no existing cornices where internal insulation is proposed.

The existing rooflight opening above the main stair will be adapted and enlarged to allow for more natural daylight into the core of the house.

The existing sash boxes and window frames are to be retained and refurbished, while the glazing will be replaced with Histoglass MONO single glazing.

All built elements of historical significance will be retained and sensitively restored using the notion of 'minimal intervention'. Whilst sensitively installed modern additions will enhance the future sustainability of the designated heritage asset.



Refurbishment of a Georgian House by Architecture for London



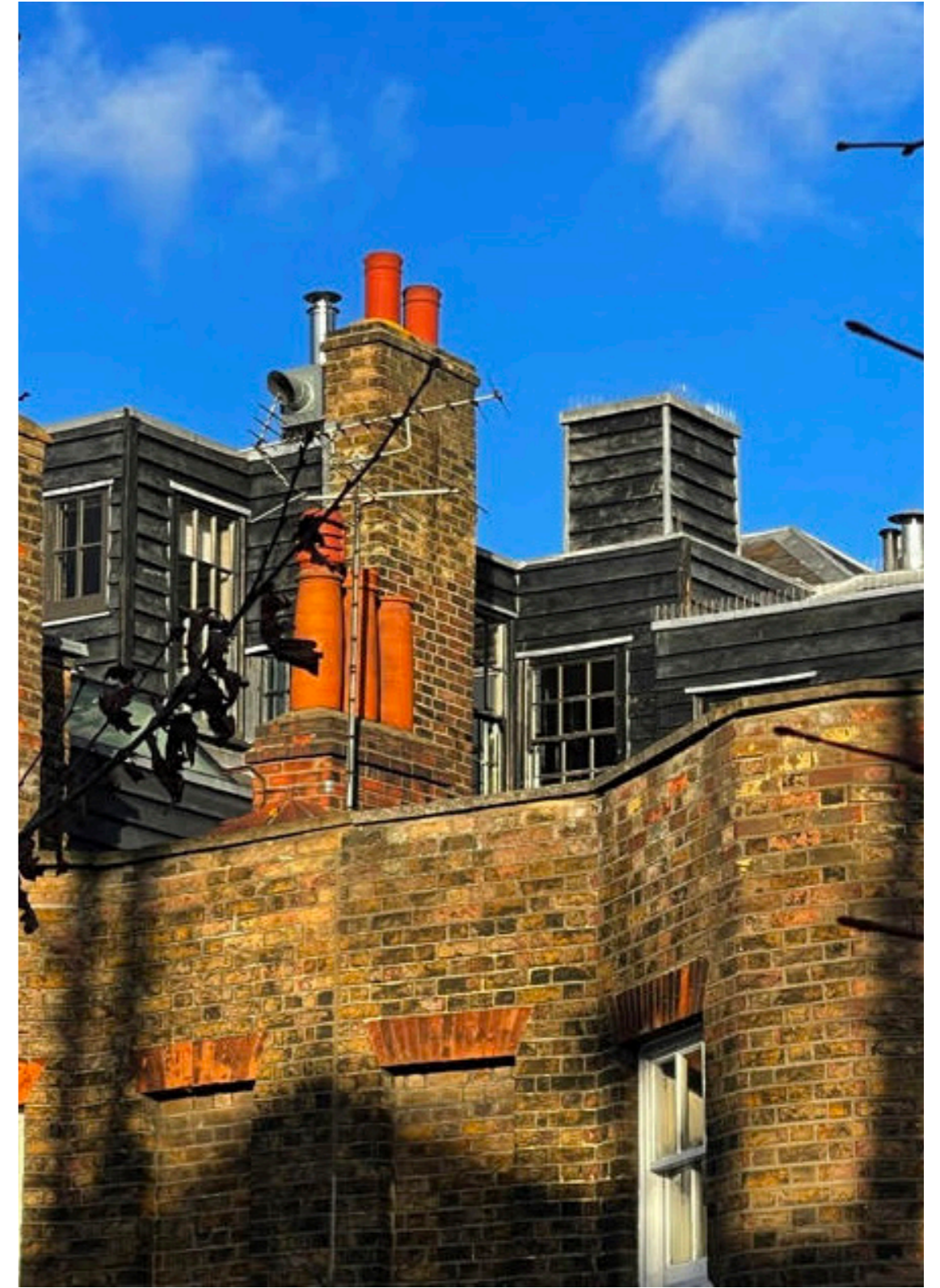
Precedent of traditional painted timber weatherboarding used at Number 10 Church Row, Hampstead.



Precedent of traditional timber weatherboarding used at Romney's House, 5 Holly Bush Hill, Hampstead. As per granted applications 2010/3809/L, 2010/0943/L and 2009/2026/L.



Precedent of traditional painted timber weatherboarding used on an elevation of a property in Hampstead



Precedent of traditional painted timber weatherboarding used on an elevation of a property located on The Mount, Hampstead

5.0 Planning Policy

The proposed restoration and extension of 43 Downshire Hill complies with the Design - Camden Planning Guidance, Energy efficiency and adaptation - Camden Planning Guidance, Home Improvements - Camden Planning Guidance, Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, National Planning Policy Framework and the Historic England Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance. Please see below the relevant policies outlined below:

Design - Camden Planning Guidance

- The Council will only permit developments within conservation areas that preserve and where possible enhance the character and appearance of the area.
- Historic buildings can and should address sustainability

Energy Efficiency and Adaptation - Camden Planning Guidance

- All development in Camden is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by following the energy hierarchy in accordance with Local Plan policy CC1.

Home Improvements - Camden Planning Guidance

- Rear extensions should be subordinate to the building being extended, in relation to its location, form, footprint, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing.

Hampstead Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

- 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.
- The rear extensions should be small in scale and subordinate to the original building and at ground floor level only. The design, scale and materials should be sensitive to the special qualities of the property and not undermine the features of the original building.

NPPF. Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- In the case of buildings, generally, the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed by ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.

Historic England Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance.

Restoration of an asset should be acceptable if:

- The heritage values of the elements restored decisively outweighs the values of those that would be lost.

New work or alteration to a significant asset should be acceptable if:

- The proposal aspires to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future.

Architecture for London

We are award-winning London architects and designers, dedicated to the creation of sustainable buildings and places. Our residential projects include new homes, house extensions and refurbishments at all scales. We work toward Passivhaus and EnerPHit standards of comfort and low energy, creating sustainable homes that bring joy.

Our work includes both new build houses and alterations to existing homes, from house extensions and basements to lofts and garden rooms. Each provides inspiring, light filled spaces for living and entertaining.

We have extensive experience with heritage properties, where there is often a need to balance sensitive refurbishment with carefully considered contemporary extensions. Projects are designed holistically with architecture, landscape, joinery, and interiors each interlocking to form a coherent whole.

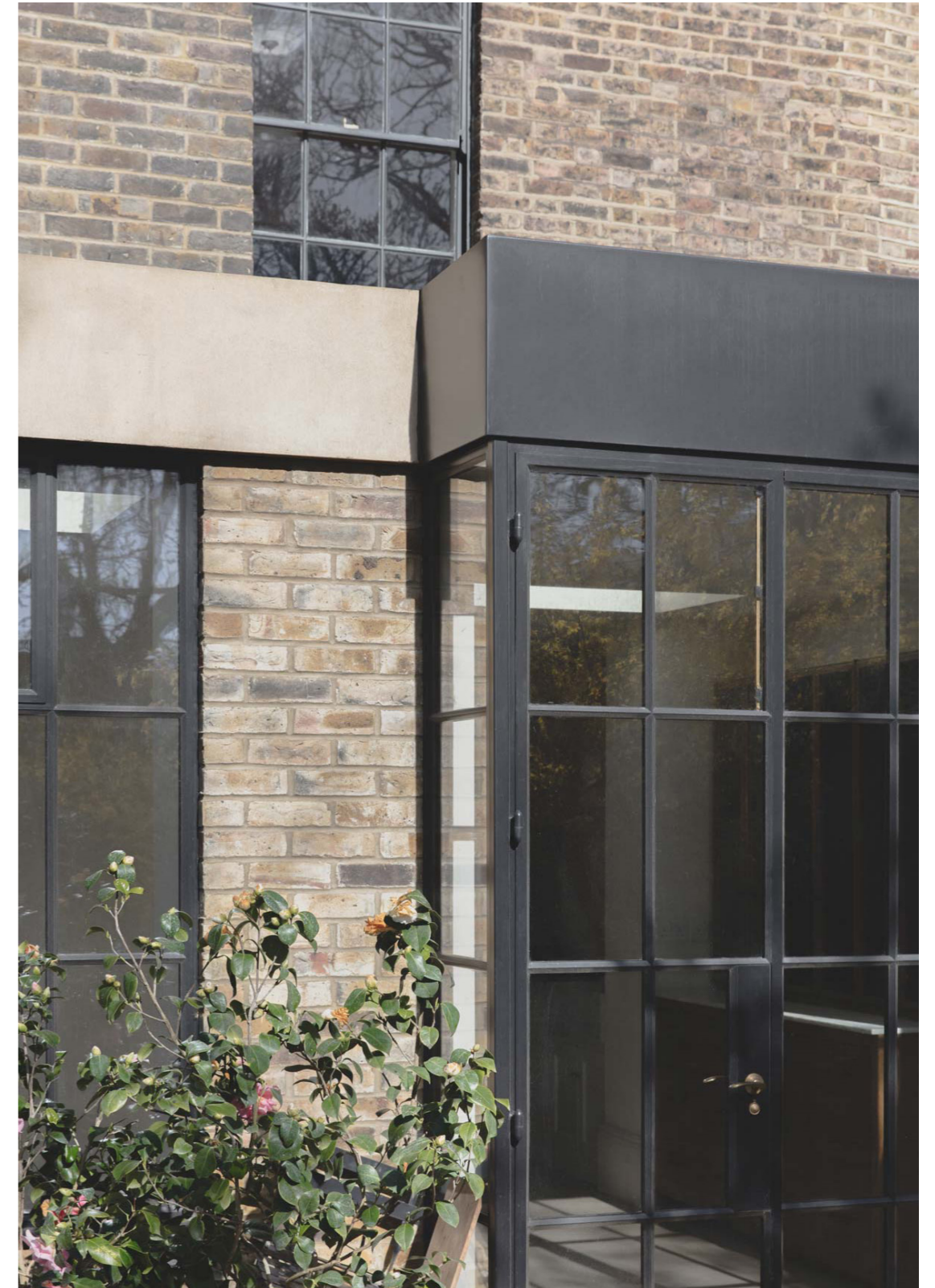
We often work with sensitive historic properties in Conservation Areas in Camden. Our recently completed house in Dartmouth Park is featured on page 58 of Camden's 'Home Improvements Planning Guidance' booklet as a successful example of high quality materials.

Recognition

Selected: RIBA Practice of the Month
Finalist: London Construction Awards
Finalist: Blueprint Awards Best Residential
Finalist: BD Young Architect of the Year Award
Finalist: Dezeen Awards
Winner: RIBA Journal Rising Stars Cohort
Finalist: BD Housing Architect of the Year Award
Finalist: AJ Small Projects Award
Finalist: Architizer A+ Awards
Finalist: AJ Retrofit Award
Finalist: NLA Don't Move Improve Award

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Rear extension to a house in London by Architecture for London