Architecture for London

Design and Access Statement
68 Albert Street NW1 7NR

January 2022

1.0 Introduction

This application seeks Listed Building Consent to refurbish an existing Grade II listed terraced property at 68 Albert Street. The proposal seeks to improve the thermal performance of the building and installing a new heating system avoiding the use of fossil fuels. The kitchen is currently located on the third floor. The proposed design moves the kitchen to the first floor.

2.0 Site

The property lies within the Camden Town Conservation Area. The general character of the immediate area is residential.

3.0 Planning history

Jun 1992 - 9200550
Change of use of basement of 70 Albert Street only from residential use to an under fives nursery
Application permitted

Oct 1985 - 8570070
Conversion of the two basements into one self-contained flat including erection of rear extensions at basement ground and first floor levels
Application withdrawn

Feb 1978 - HB1860
The erection of a roof extension to provide a self-contained flat laterally over Nos. 68-70 Albert Street, NW1 and the erection of a rear extension at 1st floor level to No.70 Albert Street, NW1 to provide a bathroom.
Application permitted

Relevant neighbouring applications:

72 Albert Street
May 2020 - 2020/2323/L
Erection of a replacement mansard roof extension and erection of a replacement double storey rear extension and associated external and internal alterations
Application permitted

70 and 68 Albert Street (1963) photo by Henk Snoek

4.0 Planning policy

Camden Local Plan Adopted July 2017, specifically:
D1 Design
D2 Heritage
CC1 Climate change mitigation
CC2 Adapting to climate change

Supplementary Planning Documents relevant to the application:
Home Improvements SPD (Approved 2021)
The Camden Town Conservation Area appraisal and management strategy (October 2007)

5.0 Heritage statement

68 Albert Street is a Grade II listed property that is located within the Camden Town Conservation Area. The building is listed alongside numbers 9-23, 45-97, 99-139, 22-46 and 50-118 Albert Street. - 'Irregular terrace of 27 houses. 1845. Yellow stock brick and rusticated stucco ground floors.

The residential parts of the Conservation Area are largely homogeneous in scale and character, having been laid out within three decades spanning the years 1820-1850. The western part of the Conservation Area comprises long residential terraces running in a north-south direction on a planned rectilinear grid (Mornington Terrace, Albert Street and Arlington Road) intersected by shorter terraces (Delancey Street and Mornington Street).

Yellow stock brick is the predominant building material, with decoration in the form of rusticated ground floors, stucco mouldings around openings, and stucco parapet cornices. Roofs are mainly covered in natural slate, windows are mainly painted timber box sashes and doors are painted timber with moulded panels. Exceptionally, properties have projecting stucco porticos and arched head windows. Terraces are adorned with various good examples of historic ironwork. Cast-iron boundary railings are a feature of most streets, and cast-iron balcony screens in a variety of patterns accentuate the principal first floors of many residential properties, sometimes bridging two or more windows.

Albert Street has a high-quality streetscape. Lined on both sides almost without interruption by uniform historic terraces. The finely detailed brick and stucco terraces were built in most part by George Bassett, surveyor to the Southampton Estate, in the years 1844-48. However, the terrace on the east side, Nos 50-88, of an equally homogeneous appearance, was the work of seven different builders. The majority of terraces were erected as three-storey buildings raised on basements.

A large proportion of the houses in Albert Street survive as single family dwellings. Although the architectural integrity of the terraces has been retained at the front, glimpses from side streets reveal an array of diverse and piecemeal rear extensions, many of which were constructed under permitted development rights before the statutory listing of properties and the designation of the Conservation Area.

Map c.1870. Site outline highlighted in red

6.0 Client brief

The client wishes to move away from reliance on fossil fuels and insulate the home. The home currently requires an excessive amount of fossil fuel to heat the home to a comfortable level. This is both destructive to the environment and expensive. The client would like the home to reach the net-zero target to avoid the embodied energy required to refurbish the home again before 2050.

The home has previously been used as a house in multiple occupation resulting in an unusual kitchen location on the third floor. The client would like to relocate this kitchen to the first floor to allow normal use.

7.0 Existing

The internal layout consists of five storeys connected by a single staircase from which the outrigger is served. The home has previously been used as a house in multiple occupation, with eight bedrooms.

The lower ground floor is a large open-plan space, probably resulting from the conversion of both this basement and the neighbouring basement at 70 Albert street into a single apartment. This space was later licensed to be a day nursery. A large glass conservatory infill's the side of the original outrigger. The outrigger suffers from oppressively low ceilings (1870mm in the utility). There are 5 openings in the outrigger walls of differing sizes that do not appear to be original (supported by concrete headers).

The ground floor has two principal rooms; currently two reception rooms, with a small study in the outrigger and a WC in the hallway. A balcony leads from the outrigger overlooking the garden, which is constructed from a concrete platform and steel railings. Whilst the current balcony is definitely not original, the map c.1870 shown on p.5 clearly shows the home originally had a balcony and staircase leading off the rear outrigger.

The half-landing leading up to the first floor has a compact bathroom that leads out onto a roof terrace above the outrigger. The first floor consists of what would have been the original living room, connected by double doors to a study.

The second floor of the house is almost identical to the first in plan form except for the double doors connecting the two rooms.

Most of the third floor has been opened up into a single room which has been used as a kitchen. Up a few more steps is a small bathroom with low ceilings (200cm).

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

8.0 Proposals

The following proposals are indicated on drawings GA010, GA099-104, GA200, GA201 and GA300-GA303.

1. Relocating kitchen

The kitchen is currently located on the third floor which is impractical for family use. It is proposed to relocate the kitchen to the 1st floor.

2. New roof light above bathroom

The current ceiling height in the bathroom does not allow for a shower. By inserting a roof light into the modern dormer roof, extra space would allow for showering.

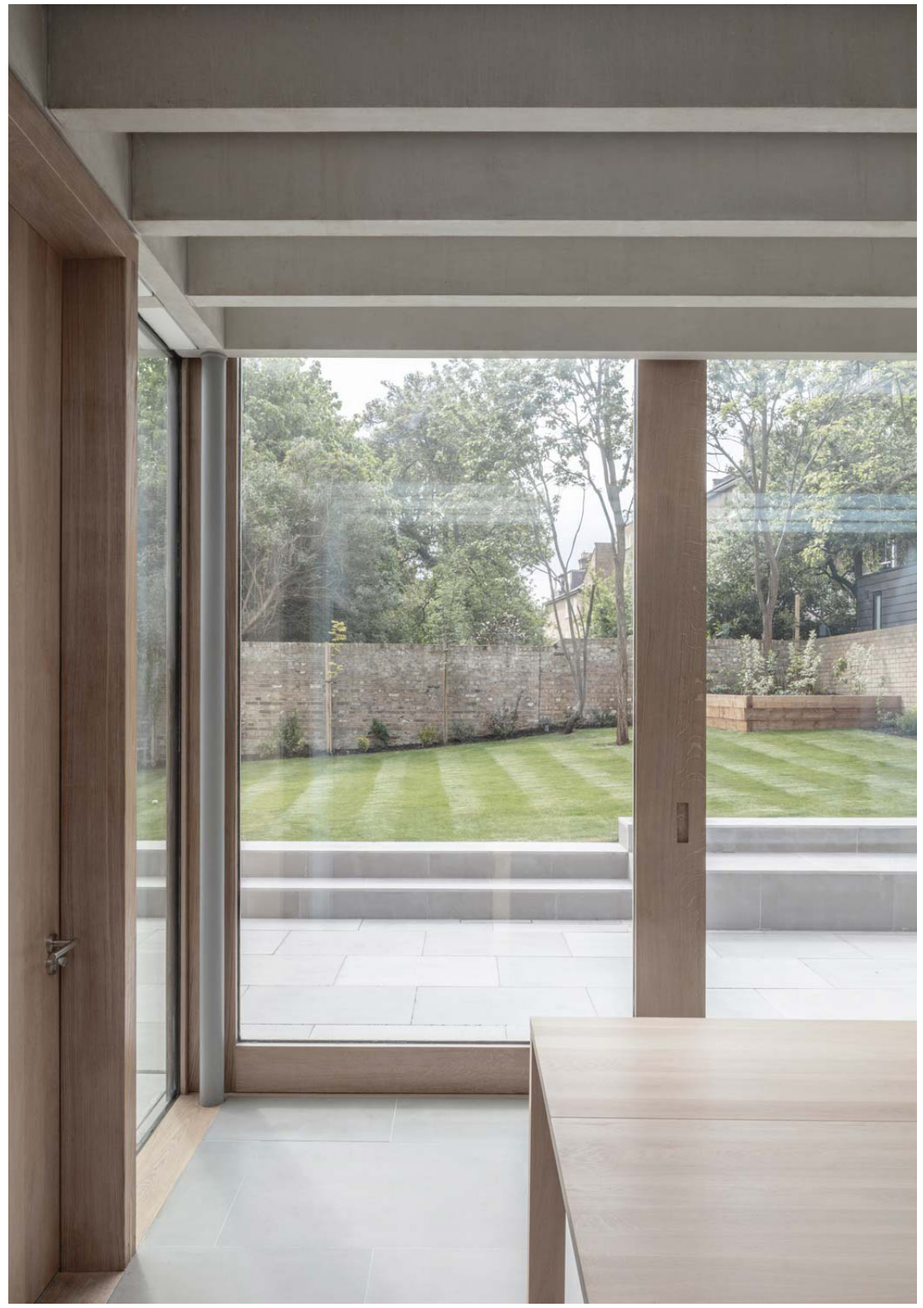
4. Insulating external walls

By using natural and breathable materials to insulate the inside face of all external walls, the building will greatly reduce the amount of energy required to maintain room temprature. Improving the thermal envelope will reduce the amount of gas required to heat the home.

Where period features are still intact, a high performance Aerogel inulation board will be used, with a minimal build-up to avoid interference with the historic fabric.

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

9.0 Access	Unchanged.
10.0 Use	Unchanged.
11.0 Conclusion	This application proposes the careful restoration of a severely neglected listed building. These changes are sympathetic to the historical fabric and form of the original building and have no effect on the external appearance. The amount of fossil fuel required to heat the building as present is unsustainable. By upgrading the thermal performance of the building and reaching net-zero targets, we are ensuring that the heritage asset can continue to function as a family home for the foreseeable. The proposal carefully addresses how the period features of the home can be protected.



A refurbishment and extension of a house at Dartmouth Park, Camden by Architecture for London

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.

Recognition

Selected: RIBA Practice of the Month
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Winner: RIBA Journal Rising Stars Cohort
Finalist: BD Housing Architect of the Year Award
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Finalist: Architizer A+ Awards
Finalist: AJ Retrofit Award
Finalist: NLA Don’t Move Improve Award

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An extension and refurbishment of a house at Calabria Road, Islington by Architecture for London