



Proposed Fenestration – Forecourt Basement Extension

The Heritage Appraisal submitted in support of LB Camden application references 2021/4931/L and 2021/4153/P describes the effect of the proposed basement extension on the significance of the listed building.

The appraisal set out at 3.5 that: *'With regard to the proposed basement, there would be no visual impact on the forecourt or in views of the listed building from the street, the wider conservation area. The basement is located outside of the footprint of the main house and would be connected to an infill beneath the bridge already consented as part of the recent permission (2021/27127/L and 2021/2311/P).'*

Paragraph 3.6 of the appraisal states that *'A basement in this position is not atypical in the context of houses like this and it is commonplace to have useful, useable space at basement level to the front of traditional buildings. Indeed, several of the houses along The Grove have front basements (e.g. no. 4, no 6 and no. 9) and 18th and 19th century houses often have below pavement/forecourt vaults in front of the house, accessed via a lightwell from basement level accommodation in the main building.'*

The Appraisal then concludes at paragraph 3.8 that: *'The only physical manifestation of the proposed basement is to the lightwell where fenestration is required and therefore visible. Again, it would not be atypical for basement windows within a historic house to look out onto basement accommodation at the front of a building. The accommodation in the main house at lower ground floor level would look onto ancillary accommodation within the new basement, an extension of existing lower ground functions. A basement of the kind proposed would not cause harm to the significance of the listed building or to neighbouring listed buildings.'*

LB Camden has however raised concerns about the treatment of the fenestration to the lightwell. The concerns are based on the visual effect of the fenestration as originally submitted and a requirement for such doors to read as more traditionally detailed doors to vault openings.

With this in mind, the proposals as they relate to the fenestration have been revised to include the following:

- Reduction in the size and proportions of the openings to the lightwell elevation in order to make the doors more recessive visually and to increase the solid to void ratio;
- Solid, single leaf timber doors to be introduced to the door openings as per a more traditional vault treatment or arrangement; and,
- Single pane windows set behind the timber doors to open internally.

For the vast majority of time, the outlook from the house and in the limited views of the lightwell will be one of a masonry wall with solid timber doors. When the doors are open, the single pane window behind, set well back in a decent reveal and in shade, the sense of a small single openings to a vault in a more traditional style will be evident. When and as required, for limited periods, the doors will open outwards and sit back against the walls and the windows will open inwards. The arrangement now proposed allows for the environmental efficiency of the basement and for appropriate levels of light for when the rooms are in use. All the doors may not be open at any one time.

It has been suggested that timber doors with glazing panels could be introduced but this is not a typical arrangement and would not allow appropriate light levels of the use of the basement. This would also mean a more obvious manifestation of the basement for the majority of the time.

The amended proposals in relation to the fenestration would also avoid the need for



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rooflights that would reveal the presence of the basement in the forecourt. This should clearly be avoided.

The amendments would allow for a traditional appearance while providing appropriate levels of light for when the building is in use. The visual effect of the fenestration would be very limited in the context of the site as a whole and it would not cause harm to the legibility of the listed building or its significance. The amended proposals would therefore accord with the relevant policy and statutory provision with regards to the historic environment.