

44 Avenue Road, London, NW8 6HS

*"Design Access and Heritage Statement for the removal and replacement of the
Existing front boundary gates and railings."*

Ref: NJ

Project No: 44 Avenue Road, London NW8 6HS

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Design Access and Heritage statement

1.0 Introduction

44 Avenue Road is a 2 storey (plus mansard) double frontage detached house located within the south-western boundary of the Elsworthy Road Conservation Area in the London Borough of Camden. This single household property was built in the mid 1840s in the Italianate Style and is one of a group of three remaining properties (no.'s 42, 44 & 48) which are largely original though have been altered and extended during their lifetime.



Image 1.0:

Aerial View of the site in context (boundary line shown in red)

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44 Avenue Road is currently undergoing renovation and as part of these works it is proposed that the existing gates and railings forming the property boundary to Avenue Road are replaced. This Statement has been prepared to accompany a planning application for approval to carry out the replacement with new metalwork appropriate to the Conservation Area and to the approval of the Planning Authority.

2.0 Site analysis and Evaluation

The properties along Avenue Road that fall within the Elsworth Road Conservation Area are characteristically typical of larger properties in the St John's Wood area as distinct from the rest of the conservation area. The properties are of a larger size and sit in spacious plots with extended rear gardens and are well set back from Avenue Road itself.

The main façade of 44 Avenue Road is set back approximately 10.5 metres from the front boundary and is accessed off Avenue Road by two pairs of inward opening entrance gates connected within the curtilage via a horseshoe driveway. The gates are equidistant from the front entrance to the house which in turn is centred on the front façade.



Image 2.0:
Existing Front Boundary to 44 Avenue Road

The gates are set in to a rendered masonry wall with each pair of gates supported off rendered piers approximately 2 metres in height. The boundary wall itself is set at a reduced height of approximately 1500mm above pavement level but is topped with masonry copings and vertical railings extending the boundary height to match the height of the bottom edge of the pier caps (projecting square edged, flat-topped cappings). The gates themselves are metal railed types composed of circular section vertical rails with decorative “spear head” finials finished in black gloss paint. The rails to the top of the boundary wall are of a contrasting design with spiral section vertical rails and “fleur de lis” finials. Whilst the existing gates and rails are in serviceable condition they are not original.

There are planting beds adjacent to all three front boundary walls within the grounds of the property all of which contain mature shrub planting with a mature tree currently standing adjacent to the boundary within no. 46 Avenue Road. The proposed works to the front boundary will not affect any of these.

3.0 Heritage Statement

44 Avenue Road is one of a group of three properties (42,44 & 48) remaining from an original group of five houses built in the mid-1840s in the Italianate Style and located in the Avenue Road Sub-Area of the Elsworth Road Conservation Area. The property itself is neither listed or noted as a property of special interest but its location within the conservation area and its identification as one of three original properties confirms its importance within the conservation area.



Image 3.0:

42 and 44 Avenue Road. Two of a Group of 3 Original House.

In keeping with the broad architectural description contained in the Appraisal document 44 Avenue Road is distinguished by the extensive use of classical architectural features. The main elevations consist of stucco'ed masonry walls with decorative horizontal coursing to the Ground Floor Storey with a projecting stone band at First Floor level. The slate covered mansard roof sits above First Floor ceiling level forming the Second Floor of the property. The main entrance to the house is located centrally on the front façade facing Avenue Road and is covered by a projecting masonry porch supported on Ionic columns rising off the stairs from driveway level up above the elevated front door. The front façade is symmetrical in design with windows aligned vertically on either side of the front porch and in horizontal alignment above the porch level with an additional vertical row of windows centred on the porch.

The fenestration consists largely of sliding timber sash windows (single sashes to the upper floors and grouped on the Ground Floor) set within decorative stone architraves and projecting sills. The symmetrical arrangement of classical architectural features emphasizes the Italianate references and the formal manner in which the house addresses the street scape.

In keeping with the predominant architecture of the house, the front boundary of 44 Avenue Road consists of masonry boundary walls with piers at approximately 4 metre intervals and all finished in white render to match the house elevations. The house itself is separated from the front boundary by a predominantly paved front “garden” but with well-stocked planting beds adjacent to each boundary wall. The horse-shoe driveway is accessed via a pair of gateways opening on to Avenue Road located at each end of the boundary wall and roughly symmetrical to the main house elevation.



Image 4.0:
44 Avenue Road. Front Boundary Wall, Gates and Railings

The gates and wall-top railings as previously described retain classical referencing but are inconsistent in the choice of motif and style. The railings above the wall are fixed to the piers via brackets rather than fixed down through the wall copings and similarly the gates are mounted on vertical square section steel posts set into the ground and tied back to the piers rather than set directly in to the piers themselves. The square edged, flat-topped wall and pier cappings (possibly painted concrete) are not in period. It is likely that at some point the front boundary has been completely re-built and does not retain any original elements in contrast to the house itself. This appears to be consistent with most of the adjacent properties. It is arguable that the existing front boundary contributes little to the heritage value of the property though broadly conforms to the standards required of the conservation area.

4.0 Planning History and site Context

Although there are records of Planning Applications in respect of extensions to the 44 Avenue Road and for tree removal there are no applications specifically relating to works to the front boundary and no submissions of any kind within the last 20 years:-

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1					
Application Number	Site Address	Development Description	Status	Date Registered	Decision
TP9906216	44 Avenue Road, London NW8	Fell one Lime tree at front of property. (Also ref. TC9906217 fell one Lime tree at front of property).	FINAL DECISION	19-03-1999	
TC9906217	44 Avenue Road, London NW8	Fell one Lime tree at front of property. (Also ref. TP9906216 fell one Lime tree at front of property).	FINAL DECISION	19-03-1999	No objection to works-TCA-Council spec
PE9800436	44 Avenue Road, NW8	Erection of a single storey rear extension at ground floor level. (Plans submitted).	FINAL DECISION	19-11-1998	Withdrawn Application
PE9700182R1	44 Avenue Road, NW8	Demolition of existing side (south) extension, erection of a new single storey extension to the south and garage to the north side elevation, a single storey rear conservatory, alterations to the existing fenestration at ground floor rear and excavation of part front garden area with the creation of a new access at basement level. As shown on drawing Nos AVR X 01, AVR P 100A, AVR X 02 and AVR P101.	FINAL DECISION	10-06-1997	Grant Full Planning Permission (conds)
PE9700182	44 Avenue Road, NW8	Demolition of existing side (south) extension, the erection of a single storey extension to the south elevation, a single storey garage to the north elevation, a single storey rear conservatory, the excavation of part of the front garden area in connection with the creation of a new access at basement level. (Plans submitted)	FINAL DECISION	03-04-1997	Withdrawn Application-revision received
CE9700241	44 Avenue Road, NW8	Demolition of existing side (south) extension, the erection of a single storey extension to the south elevation, a single storey garage to the north elevation, a single storey rear conservatory, the excavation of part of the front garden area in connection with the creation of a new access at basement level. (Plans submitted)	FINAL DECISION	03-04-1997	Withdrawn Application
32507	44 Avenue Road, NW8	Construction of a new enclosed swimming pool.	FINAL DECISION	09-06-1981	Permission
32506	44 Avenue Road, NW8	Reconstruction of existing double garage to form new garage and kitchen. incorporation of covered area at rear to form new ground floor study.	FINAL DECISION	09-06-1981	Conditional

Table 1

Relevant planning history of the site (No:44) – Retrieved from The London Borough of Camden Planning Explorer – July 2022

5.0 Proposed Design

The proposal seeks to replace the existing front boundary metalwork with new gates and railings set on the existing retained boundary walls and piers.

The Elsworthy Road Conservation Area Statement (2009) offers no specific guidance on the design of gates and railings within the conservation area but does state that changes that could impact on the character of the area should be avoided including:-

Interruption or removal of the pattern of boundary treatments along the villa frontages or the addition of unsympathetic boundary treatments or gates;

A review of current boundary treatments adjacent to or within the immediate vicinity on Avenue Road reveals a diverse range of boundary types with no obvious character or pattern predominating the streetscape. On reviewing the three properties specifically mentioned as retaining their original Italianate character (42, 44 & 48) the boundary treatment common to all is confined to the rendered walls and piers which are due to be retained in the proposals for 44 Avenue Road.

Planning permission was granted for front boundary changes at 42 Avenue Road in 2016 (application ref: 2016/7036) replacing the existing pairs of vehicular access gates with new sliding single gates of a more contemporary design incorporating thicker section elements. Whilst the existing width of access was maintained, both gates are now set back from the boundary to enable them to slide behind the wall piers. This also involved the replacement of the shared pier with no. 44 and the replacement of the nearest belonging to no.44.



Image 5.0:
42 Avenue Road Boundary

The boundary of 48 Avenue Road is free of both gates and railings with an increased height variation between the piers and the boundary wall level.

No. 46 Avenue Road has recently undergone extensive renovation / rebuilding works including replacement of the front boundary railings. New railings and gates have been installed which retain some traditional references but utilize them in a non-traditional manner giving greater prominence to the metalwork element of the boundary.



Image 5.0:
46 & 48 (Left) Avenue Road Boundaries

The proposed design for the replacement gates and railings at 44 Avenue Road enhances the privacy and security of the property whilst at the same time retaining the scale and proportion of more traditional railing designs within the area. The largely vertical emphasis provided by the size and spacing of the individual rails is consistent with railings elsewhere on Avenue Road. The section sizes too, are consistent with traditional mid-Victorian designs whilst the street access via two pairs of gates replicates the existing gate arrangement. The introduction of horizontal elements relates well to the horizontal render coursing – a prominent feature of the Front façade of the house at Ground Floor level, and as a consequence complement the host building. The rendered boundary wall retains its dominating presence on Avenue Road with the regular pier spacing helping to maintain a sense of rhythm and continuity along the pavement.

Within the context of the adjacent properties, the proposed designs are not considered disruptive and have less visual impact when compared to no's 42 & 46. It is a more restrained design and observes the requirements of the conservation area.

6.0 Proposed Access

No change to the access of the existing building.

7.0 Conclusion

This statement is submitted in support of the application for approval of proposed alterations to the front boundary of 44 Avenue Road. The additional requirements arising from the property's location within the Elsworthy Conservation Area have been fully recognized and have been influential in the proposals as submitted.

References:

1. Design and Access Statements - How to write, read and use them; published by the Commission for the Built Environment (CABE) 2007
2. London Borough of Camden, Elsworthy Road Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (14 July 2009)
3. Secure by Design, Principles (Version 1); published by the ODPM, 2004
4. Secure by Design, Safer Places; published by the ODPM, 2004
5. Planning and access for disabled people: a good practice guide; published by ODPM, 2003

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15th July 2022