

14 QUEEN'S GROVE LONDON

PLANNING, DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

'EXCAVATION OF A BASEMENT TO THE REAR EXTENDING INTO REAR GARDEN, EXCAVATION BENEATH FRONT GARDEN WITH NEW STAIRCASE TO GARDEN, UNDERPINNING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS TO THE SHARED PARTY WALLS WITH NO. 13 QUEEN'S GROVE AND NO. 15 QUEEN'S GROVE. ERECTION OF A SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL, REBUILDING OF THE CLOSET WING, ERECTION OF SUMMER HOUSE AT REAR GARDEN AND ASSOCIATED WORKS' (ALTERNATIVE SCHEME TO CONSENTS GRANTED BY 18/08788/FULL & 18/08789/LBC)

NOVEMBER 2021

1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the 'Excavation of a basement to the rear extending into rear garden, excavation beneath front garden with new staircase to garden, underpinning and associated works to the shared party walls with no. 13 Queen's Grove and no. 15 Queen's Grove. Erection of a single storey rear extension at ground floor level, rebuilding of the closet wing, erection of summer house at rear garden and associated works' at 14 Queen's Grove was granted on the 5th September 2019 (Reference numbers 18/08788/FULL & 18/08789/LBC).

1.2 The permissions followed extensive pre-application discussions, and the main elements of the consent are as follows:

Basement Level

- A new basement is consented to be constructed beneath the rear (extended / modern) portion of the house and part of the rear garden area.

Lower ground

- An extension is consented at the front of the property beneath part of the garden area.
- An 'infill extension at the rear to the side of the closet wing.
- The demolition and re-construction of the closet wing.
- A minor lowering of the internal lower ground floor level.
- Removal of section of wall between closet wing and proposed infill extension.
- Opening up between stairway hall and kitchen area.
- Installation of underfloor heating system.
- Enclose staircase.

Ground

- Doorway to front room retained but fixed shut.
- Widening of opening between front and rear rooms & reinstatement of fireplace to rear room.
- New window to side of rebuilt closet wing.
- Replace spindles to stairs.
- Installation of underfloor heating system and existing downlights replaced with pendants.

First

- Fixing shut of door to front room. New matching door from hallway to rear room.
- New built in joinery and stud partitions to create master bathroom within rear room.
- Repositioning of door to rebuilt closet wing and widened window to side of rebuilt closet wing.
- Installation of underfloor heating system and some existing downlights replaced with pendants, some retained.

Second

- New built in joinery and reconfiguration of partitions.
- Installation of underfloor heating system and existing downlights replaced with pendants.

External Alterations

- Refurbish and repaint existing windows as required
- New rooflights at lower ground, first and second floor levels.
- New summerhouse

1.4 This application seeks the same consent with very minor changes as follows:

Basement

-Consented Utility/Shower room to be Boot Room/Cloakroom (in the Front Basement Extension)

Lower Ground

-Minor change to floor layout – kitchen and dining room swap location

-No new partition wall to enclose Lower Hall Staircase (Fire curtain proposed to be installed in order to comply with Building Regulations)

-Additional walk-on skylight to rear garden

Ground

-Minor change to floor layout – Study relocated into closet wing (previously consented for Guest Cloaks/Showers) and Study/Library to be a Reception Room

First

-Washer/Dryer Cupboard adjacent to hallway/Master Bathroom (Jib Door to hallway)

Second

-Bedroom 3 -relocated access hatch and fitted wardrobes

1.5 As previously, the application is supported by the following documents in addition to this Planning & Heritage Statement:

- Structural Engineers Report
- Ground Movement Assessment
- Soil Investigation Report

- Flood Risk Assessment
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Arboriculture Report
- Code of Construction Practice

1.5 The purpose of these reports reiterate and demonstrate how the basement and other structural works can be undertaken whilst ensuring the stability of the listed building and its neighbours, minimising construction impacts and ensuring no adverse flooding or drainage impacts. The minor changes proposed by this application do not alter the conclusions of these reports.

1.6 This statement meanwhile reiterates how the proposals comply with all relevant planning policy and supplementary guidelines, are appropriate in terms of their relationship with and impact upon the listed building and wider conservation area and would have no adverse impacts upon the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

1.7 This statement is set out as follows:

- 2.0 : Description of the Heritage Asset
- 3.0 : Relevant History
- 4.0 : Planning Policy
- 5.0 : Analysis
- 6.0 : Conclusions

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE HERITAGE ASSET

- 2.1 No. 14 Queens Grove was added to the statutory list (Grade II) for group value in 1982. The listing description states:

“Nos 2 to 22 G.V. II Terrace of houses. c1830-40 Eyre Estate development. Stock brick with channelled stucco ground floor and stucco dressings; slate roof. Dressed with party wall Ionic pilasters, Nos 2, 3 and 11 to 14 slightly advanced as pavilion and centrepiece. 3 storeys and basement. 2-window wide fronts. Plain pilastered doorways approached by steps to left. Recessed sashes, in architraves, console-corniced on 1st floor, ground floor sashes of nos 2 to 14 tripartite. Plat band over ground floor from which pilaster order rises to damaged entablature with panelled parapet minus inset balustrade. Cast iron 1st floor window guards.”

- 2.2 The property stands within the St Johns Wood Conservation Area. The CA audit notes the prominent sash windows with stucco surrounds and the giant pilasters set between the properties within this part of the terrace as important features. The photograph opposite has been from the audit (Figure 32) and highlights No. 14 by way of example.



Figure 32: Sash windows with stucco surrounds, set between giant pilasters; Queens Grove Terrace

- 2.3 Internally the property broadly retains a fairly traditional plan form, two main rooms to each floor with hallway and stairs to the side and a closet wing beyond to the right hand side of the main front and rear rooms. Whilst this broad form is retained there have clearly been alterations over time in terms of openings between rooms, positions of doorways and installation of downlights



View of property frontage



View of rear of property

- 2.4 English Heritage's (now Historic England) document Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008) provides guidance on how to assess the significance of heritage assets as part of an understanding of a range of heritage values. These values are *evidential*, the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity; *historical*, the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present; *aesthetic*, the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place and *communal*, the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory. Each of the values is considered below.

Evidential Value

- 2.5 No.14 was constructed, as part of the terraced group between 1830 and 1840. Whilst alteration and extension works have taken place over the years much original fabric has been retained. This fabric has potential to tell us about construction techniques and materials in the early Victorian era. The front elevation of the terraced house, the ground floor channelled stucco appearance first floor ironwork and panelled parapet are surviving evidence of that era.

Historical Value

- 2.6 Historical value tends to be illustrative or associative. Illustrative is the historical value that is the perception of a place as a link between past and present people. Queens Grove is an integral part of the wider area and of this part of the Conservation Area. The classical simplicity of the property and its ground floor channelled stucco façade are distinguishing features of earlier Victorian buildings. The well-preserved front elevations of the group of terraced houses illustrate the architectural taste of the time and mark an era of 'elegant simplicity' as it was after 1850's when the style of the houses became more ornate.

Aesthetic Value

- 2.7 The aesthetic value of No.14 derives from the prominent appearance of the house as part of a group of terraced houses constituting an early Victorian Terrace. The ground floor stucco appearance, the decorative classical features such as the first floor ironwork are prominent features of high aesthetic value.
- 2.8 The symmetry of the construction and so uniformity of the terrace creates an even rhythm and contributes to the high quality design.
- 2.9 The rear elevation of the property and generally the rear elevations of the terraced houses are of less significance having been altered over time.

Communal Value

- 2.10 The terrace occupies a reasonably prominent location. It is part of the familiar street scene and contributes to the setting of the surrounding area. It is of distinctive appearance and is an important part of the St Johns Wood Conservation Area.
- 2.11 In summary therefore the majority of the available historic records which have been consulted highlight the key element of the significance of Queens Gove as the frontage, the ground floor stucco appearance and the surprising symmetry that remains despite the passage of time, the undoubted group value of the property as part of the terrace and the contribution it makes to the wider conservation area.

3.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

3.1 The planning records for 14 Queen's Grove have been identified as follows (excluding permissions for works to trees):

95/07883/LBC

Internal refurbishment including alterations and additions to partitions and doors, plumbing, electrical, flooring, decorative works, new window and conversion of glazed door to window at rear.

Approved 11 Jan 1996

96/01619/ADLBC

Approval of details pursuant to 95/07883/LBC (Cond 5) Photographs of new marble fireplace, new plaster cornice to basement and second floors, new timber skirting

Approved 26 February 1996

00/00070/FULL & 00/00071/LBC

Installation of spiral staircase at rear to provide access to garden from upper ground floor level and alteration of window opening to door opening

Approved 31 March 2000

18/08788/FULL & 18/08789/LBC

Excavation of a basement to the rear extending into rear garden, excavation beneath front garden with new staircase to garden, underpinning and associated works to the shared party walls with no. 13 Queen's Grove and no. 15 Queen's Grove. Erection of a single storey rear extension at ground floor level, rebuilding of the closet wing, erection of summer house at rear garden and associated works

Approved 5 September 2019

3.3 As has been discussed, this application seeks the same consents as granted in September 2019 but with very minor changes which have been listed above.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.1 Paragraphs 10 and 11 set out that there is to be a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’, and that applications should be approved where they conform with an up-to-date Local Plan or where the plan is out of date or there are no relevant policies, balanced against the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.2 Section 16 of the NPPF considers the Historic Environment. It advises that:
- Applicants should describe the significance of any heritage asset which may be affected by development proposals – the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets importance. (Paragraph 194)
 - Great weight should be placed on the conservation of a heritage asset. The more important the asset the greater the weight should be. (Paragraph 199)
 - Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. (Paragraph 200)
 - Permission should be refused where there would be substantial harm to or total loss of a designated heritage asset unless there would be substantial public benefits (Paragraph 201)
 - If there would be some harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset but this would be less than substantial this should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal including securing its optimum viable use. (Paragraph 202)

Westminster Council Development Plan

City Plan

- 4.3 Policy 38 sets out that all development is required to be of a high quality, respect the amenity of neighbouring properties and respects the character and context of the area in which it is located.
- 4.4 Policy 39 relates to the historic environment and sets out at sections G-J and K-L, the approach to development involving listed buildings and conservations areas. These state:

Listed Buildings

G. Works to listed buildings will preserve their special interest, relating sensitively to the period and architectural detail of the building and protecting or, where appropriate, restoring original or significant detail and historic fabric

H. Changes of use to listed buildings will be consistent with their long-term conservation and help to restore, retain and maintain buildings, particularly those which have been identified as at risk

I. Development within the settings or affecting views of listed buildings will take opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance

J. Demolition of listed buildings will be regarded as substantial harm and will be resisted in all but exceptional circumstances

Conservation Areas

K. Development will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Westminster's conservation areas. Features that contribute positively to the significance of conservation areas and their settings will be conserved and opportunities taken to enhance conservation areas and their settings, wherever possible

L. There will be a presumption that unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to a conservation area will be conserved, unless it has been demonstrated that the relevant tests in national policy have been met. Buildings which make a negative or neutral contribution may be replaced or refurbished where this will result in a high quality building which will improve their appearance in the context of conservation area and their environmental performance

M. The contribution of existing uses to the character, function and appearance of conservation areas will be considered and changes of use supported where they make a positive contribution to conservation areas and their settings

- 4.5 Policy 40 meanwhile relates to ‘townscape’ and section D sets out how alterations and extensions of buildings will be assessed. This states that:

D. Alterations and extensions will respect the character of the existing and adjoining buildings, avoid adverse visual and amenity impacts and will not obscure important architectural features or disrupt any uniformity, patterns, rhythms or groupings of buildings and spaces that contribute positively to Westminster’s distinctive townscape

- 4.6 Policy 45 relates to the development of basements, and states the following:

A. Basement developments should:

- 1. Incorporate measures recommended in the structural statement or flood risk assessment to safeguard structural stability, and address surface water and sewerage flooding*
- 2. Be designed and constructed to minimise the impact at construction and occupation stages on the surrounding area;*
- 3. Protect heritage assets, and in the case of listed buildings, not unbalance the building’s original hierarchy of spaces where this contributes to its significance; and*

4. *Conserve the character and appearance of the existing building, garden setting and the surrounding area, ensuring lightwells, plant, vents, skylights and means of escape are sensitively designed and discreetly located*

Extent and Depth of Basements

B. Basement developments will be supported where they:

1. *Do not extend beneath more than 50% of the garden land – on small sites where the garden is 8m or less at its longest point, basements may extend up to 4m from the original building in that direction*
2. *Leave a margin of undeveloped garden land proportionate to the scale of the development and the size of the garden around the entire site boundary*
3. *Not comprise more than one storey beneath the lowest original floor level – exceptions may be made on large sites with high levels of accessibility for construction*
4. *Provide a minimum of one metre of soil depth (plus minimum 200mm drainage layer) and adequate overall soil volume above the top cover of the basement; and*
5. *Not encroach more than 1.8m under any part of the adjacent highway and retain a minimum vertical depth below the footway or carriage way of 900mm between the highway surface and vault structure*

5.0 **ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 This application seeks consent for the same works as previously granted by 18/08788/FULL & 18/08789/LBC in September 2019, but with very minor changes. These changes include minor alterations to the layout as well as the provision of an additional skylight in the rear garden.
- 5.2 It is considered that the changes being very minor in nature do not alter the assessment that the proposals are acceptable, and each key element of the development is discussed in the context of relevant planning policy:

Proposed New Rear Basement

- 5.3 As previously, the application proposes a basement beneath the rebuilt closet wing and proposed infill extension and part of the rear garden area. The rear basement is as previously consented but with an additional skylight above the Family/TV Area. The skylight is proposed to be set within a raised planter.
- 5.4 The proposal continues to comply with relevant policy on basements (policy 45). Furthermore, all supporting documents demonstrate the acceptability of the proposal.
- 5.5 The Structural Report demonstrates that the basement structure can be constructed without danger to the stability of the house or neighbouring properties and the Construction Traffic Management Plan highlights how the construction impacts of the basement development will be minimised through careful planning and good working practices.
- 5.6 The Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Report meanwhile confirms that the basement would not give rise to any flooding or adversely impact upon the existing surface water drainage conditions and that internal pumps are provided as required.

- 5.7 The accompanying arboriculture report confirms that the basement has no impact on any trees either on or off site.
- 5.8 The additional skylight is located within the raised planter to ensure that it is well concealed and preserve the setting of the property.

Extension beneath the front garden and lowering of the lower ground floor by 200mm

- 5.9 Again as previously, it is proposed to extend beneath the front garden and to lower the lower ground floor. In supporting the this element of the proposal, officers highlighted that the front vaults do not appear historic and that their enlargement would therefore not be resisted. Further to which, it is also highlighted that within the last 15 years there have been a number of consents granted within the listed group (2 -22 Queens Grove) for extensions beneath the front garden and lowering of lower ground floor levels:

- No. 7 Queens Grove (01/04713/PP & 01/04714/LB) granted 2001
- No. 4 Queens Grove (02/01498/PP & 01/01499/LB) granted 2002
- No. 19 Queens Grove (03/00489/PP & 03/00490/LB) granted 2003
- No. 13 Queens Grove (14/10490/PP & 14/10491/LB) granted 2015.
- No. 14 (18/08788/FULL & 18/08789/LBC) granted 2019

- 5.10 Officers also highlighted that *“The insertion of a window and the relocation of the external steps are acceptable, being in keeping with the host building and wider conservation area”*

- 5.11 In turning to the matter of the lowering of the ground, it is re-iterated that the site investigation work undertaken by Price & Myers Structural Engineers also informed the degree of lowering proposed, as 200mm requires no underpinning of property and no historic fabric would be lost as a result of the works.

Infill Extension

- 5.12 As was the case with the extension under the garden, infills have been granted at other houses within the listed group, including at the directly neighbouring properties No. 13 & No.15.
- 5.13 It was confirmed by officers that the infill extension is of an acceptable *“proposed scale and form”*. The extension remains as previously proposed and continue to comply with the requirements of relevant policy, being clearly subservient and respecting the main building.

Internal Opening Up Works and Internal Alterations at Lower Ground Floor Level

- 5.14 In regards to the lower ground floor, it is proposed to open up between the main rooms and the stair hall and rear room and to provide under floor heating as previously consented. The consented layout is proposed to be slightly altered, with the Dining Room and Kitchen swapping locations and the Lower Hall Staircase (now in the dining room) no longer being enclosed by a partition wall, rather a fire curtain will be installed (to comply with building regulations).
- 5.15 As with other matters, the opening up of the floor has occurred in neighbouring properties and the floor is considered of lesser significance given that it has been subject to historical refurbishment and alteration.

Internal Alterations to Ground Floor Level

- 5.16 The internal alterations to the ground floor, are again as previously consented, but with very minor change to the layout (study relocated into the closet wing and study/library now proposed to be reception room).

- 5.17 The alterations at this floor level are designed to reinstate the original plan form and features. This includes the reinstatement of the door and fireplace to the rear room in the main house as well as replacing downlights with traditional central pendants.
- 5.18 Officers confirmed that they were satisfied that the internal alterations respected the plan form of the property, and it is considered that the now proposed changes to the alterations do not alter this conclusion.

Internal Alterations to First Floor Level

- 5.19 The internal alterations at first floor level are also as consented, but with the provision of a washer/dryer cupboard adjacent to the hallway/master bedroom. The cupboard will be accessed by a new jib door.
- 5.20 Again, it was confirmed that the internal alterations were considered acceptable, and the minor change to the layout is anticipated not to alter this conclusion.

Internal Alterations at Second Floor Level

- 5.21 The internal alterations at second floor level, are also as consented but with the loft hatch and fitted wardrobes repositioned within Bedroom 3.
- 5.22 This minor change to the internal layout is not considered to alter the conclusion, that these alterations are acceptable.

Demolition and Reconstruction of the Closet Wing

- 5.23 As previously, the application proposes the demolition and reconstruction of the rear closet wing. The replacement wing is as previously consented apart from the ground floor level being used as a single space (a study) as opposed to subdivided with a new partition wall to accommodate a guest cloakroom/shower room.
- 5.24 The principle of demolition the closet wing and rebuilding was considered not be contentious, as it was recognised by the council that the existing wing is a later addition to the historic core, and that permission had been granted for replacement wings within the terrace. The submitted Structural Report also confirms the non-original nature of the wing (it has much deeper concrete footings than the main body of the house).

New Rooflights

- 5.25 As consented, the development proposes three conservation rooflights to the main building and a new rooflight within the rebuilt closet wing.
- 5.26 The rooflight on the closet wing is hidden behind a small parapet, so will not be visible from ground level or the upper windows of neighbouring properties.
- 5.27 The rooflights on the main house are a conservation style, so will have minimal upstands from the plane of the roof, and are characteristic on Queen's Grove.

Summerhouse / Garden Store

- 5.28 The summerhouse/garden store remains entirely as previously consented.
- 5.29 Officers stated that *“The erection of a summer house within the rear garden is not contentious in design terms given the presence of garden structures in the immediate setting...it is now considered to be of an appropriate scale and design, also well as being subservient to its setting”*.

Summary

- 5.30 In approving 18/08788/FULL & 18/08789/LBC, officers concluded that *“..the proposed works are considered to be appropriate to the historic and architectural significance of both the grade II listed building and the terrace to which it belongs. The proposal is also considered to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the St John’s Wood Conservation Area.*
- 5.31 Given that the proposed development is the same as the consented with very minor changes, it is anticipated that the same conclusions may be reached, and that it is confirmed that the proposals complies with all relevant planning policy and guidance.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Full planning and listed building consent is sought for 'Excavation of a basement to the rear extending into rear garden, excavation beneath front garden with new staircase to garden, underpinning and associated works to the shared party walls with no. 13 Queen's Grove and no. 15 Queen's Grove. Erection of a single storey rear extension at ground floor level, rebuilding of the closet wing, erection of summer house at rear garden and associated works' at 14 Queen's Grove, London.
- 6.2 The proposal is effectively an 'alternative scheme', to the development which was granted in September 2019 (Reference numbers: 18/08788/FULL & 18/08789/LBC). That is to say, the development is as per the consented scheme but with very minor changes and alterations, which include minor changes to the internal layout and the provision of an additional skylight to serve the rear basement.
- 6.3 The proposals (including the changes) all comply with relevant planning policy and guidance and continue to have clear regard for the heritage significance of the listed building and the conservation area.
- 6.4 Officers support for these proposals is therefore respectfully requested.