

# Design & Access Statement



Prepared by  
**Urbanist Architecture**

## Our Reference

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298 - NW8 OPL

## Report Date

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08/12/2023

## Address

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44 Marlborough Place, London NW8 OPL

## Proposal

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Amalgamation of two self-contained flats into one three-bed flat and erection of infill extension on the upper ground floor level

# Introduction

Urbanist Architecture Ltd. has been appointed by the applicant to prepare the necessary drawings and supplementary documents for pursuing planning consent. The intended development seeks to amalgamate the lower ground and upper ground floor units into one larger family-sized flat. Combining the lower ground floor flat with the upper ground floor flat along with the rear infill extension would make better use of the available space and accommodation and provide for a split-level three-bedroom family dwelling (three-bed, six person).

In order to accommodate the amalgamation of two flats and comply with minimum space standards, a number of internal alterations along with the rear extension to the property have also been proposed, including the creation of a stairway between the floors and a streamlined access. The purpose of this design and access statement is to provide significant justification for the proposed alterations to the property that will help to facilitate the conversion of the two existing units into one self-contained unit.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the relevant set of planning drawings associated with this application.

The proposal has been designed to comply with relevant planning policies at a national, regional and local level. These policies include the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), The London Plan (2021), the Westminster City Plan (2019-2040), and the St. John's Wood Conservation Area SPD (2008).

This document forms part of the planning application for the development of the site and should be read in conjunction with the following supporting information:

- Existing drawing set
- Proposed drawing set



La Residence

Marlborough Pl

Marlborough Pl

Arnold House School (Huxleys)

Marlborough Pl

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48

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## Location & Setting

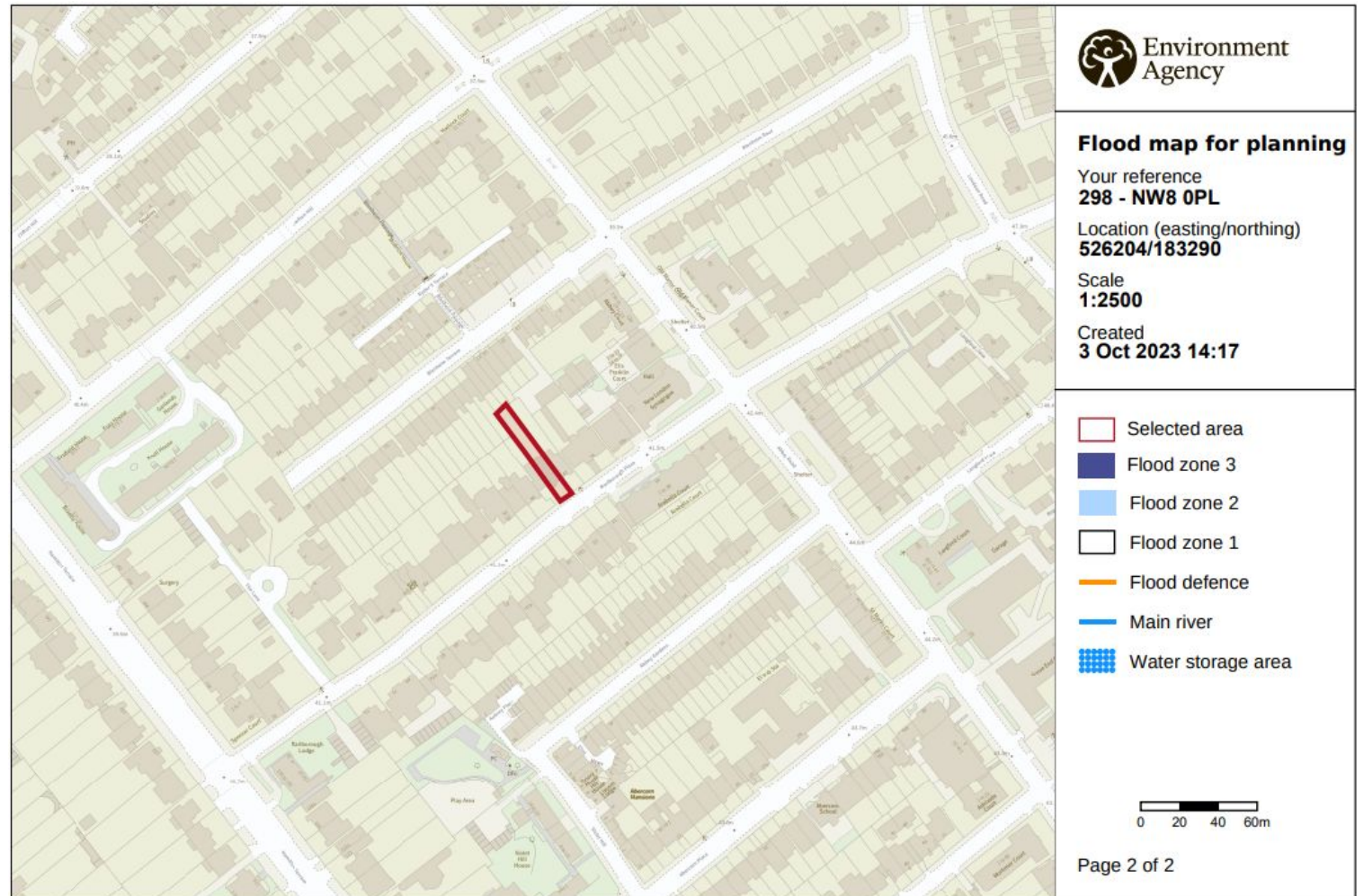
44 Marlborough Place is a semi-detached property located within St. John's Wood in the London borough of Westminster.

The property is on a predominantly residential street in a well-established residential area and is constructed of a beige brick with a hipped roof form. The surrounding area forms part of a mixed-residential urban form.

The application site is not listed, but sits within the St. John's Wood Conservation Area.

# Flood Risk

The site is in flood zone 1 so no detailed assessment of the flood risks is required for this development .



# Existing Site Photos

01

Rear view of the dwelling along with the neighbouring property no 42. The proposal will only be relevant to the lower ground floor flat and the upper ground floor flat.



02

The front elevation of the application side, together with the existing lower ground floor window.





## Use

The units are currently part of a semi-detached property which contains four self-contained flats (C3). The existing lower ground unit accommodates two bedrooms (one with an ensuite), one kitchen and a small living space. The existing raised ground floor unit accommodates one bedroom, one kitchen and a small living/dining area.

The proposal does not seek to change the use of the property, however it does aim to increase the quality of the housing by maximising space through an amalgamation of the units. The proposal will increase the quality of the residential use by providing increased private living, dining and amenity space and a three-bedroom self-contained flat for future occupants.

The amalgamation will provide a new family-sized housing unit, which has been identified as a focus in Westminster's City Plan objectives for housing stock increase. While there will be a loss of a one bedroom housing unit, this loss will be counteracted by increasing the availability of high-quality family-sized housing stock.

There are a number of other small flats which have been amalgamated into family-sized units. These precedents - which have been referenced in the precedents section of this statement - support the value of increasing the amount of high-quality family housing.



# Planning Policy Context

## National Planning Policy Framework

2021

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**Chapter 2** Achieving sustainable development

**Chapter 5** Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

**Chapter 9** Promoting sustainable transport

**Chapter 11** Making effective use of land

**Chapter 16** Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

## The London Plan

2021

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**Policy D1** London's form, character and capacity for growth

**Policy D2** Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach

**Policy D4** Delivering good design

**Policy D6** Housing quality and standards

**Policy H1** Increasing housing supply

**Policy H9** Ensuring the best use of stock

**Policy H10** Housing size mix

**Policy HC1** Heritage conservation and growth

**Policy T2** Healthy streets

**Policy T5** Cycling

**Policy T6** Car parking

## Planning Policy Context

### Westminster City Plan (2019-2040)

2021

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**Policy 8** Housing delivery

**Policy 11** Innovative housing  
delivery

**Policy 24** Sustainable transport

**Policy 27** Parking

**Policy 37** Waste management

**Policy 39** Westminster's heritage

**Policy 40** Townscape and  
architecture

**Policy 45** Basement  
developments

### St.John's Wood Conservation Area SPD

2008

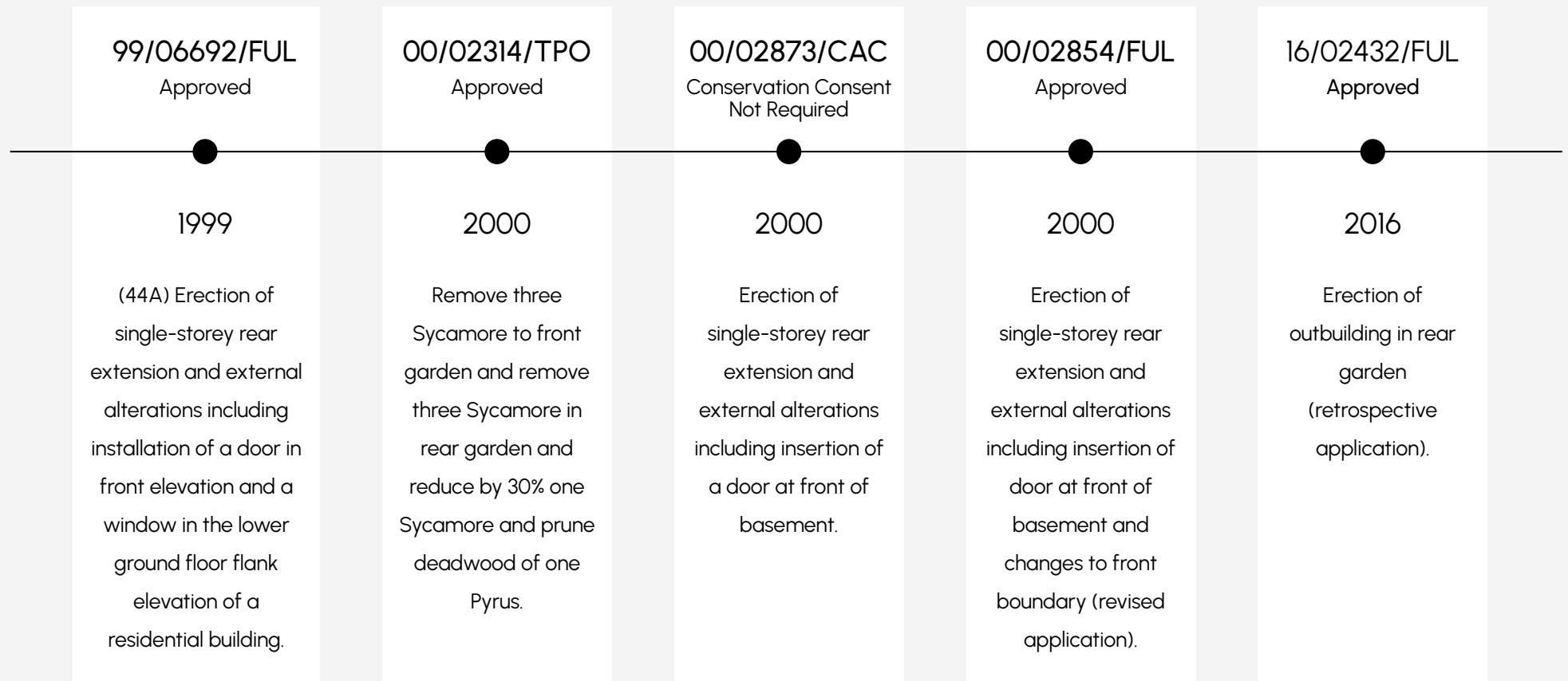
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**Policy 4.1** Character of the  
conservation area

**Policy 4.4** Architecture

**Policy 4.7** Trees and soft  
landscape

# Planning History



## Planning Considerations

The main planning consideration for this proposal is whether it meets Westminster City Plan policy concerning deconversions. Policy 8.9 states that amalgamation of units can be supported if the following criteria are met:

- Only one existing non-family-sized home is lost to achieve the deconversion
- Other options to extend the building for larger units have been explored
- The deconverted flat does not exceed the 200 sqm maximum

The amalgamation of these units will provide a family-sized three-bedroom flat with sufficient daylight and private amenity space.

These considerations will be assessed by the council:

- Meeting minimum space standards for all units
- Layout and density of the building
- Quality of amenity space

## Local Plan Policy 8- Housing Delivery

Part B of Policy 8 of the Westminster City Plan states:

*"B. No new homes in Westminster **will exceed 200** sqm Gross Internal Area (GIA), except where it is necessary to protect a heritage asset.*

Part C considers amalgamations as follows:

*"C. All existing residential units, uses, floorspace and land will be protected, except where: 1. the reconfiguration or redevelopment of supported or affordable housing would better meet need; or 2. **non-family sized housing is being reconfigured to create family sized housing.**"*

The supporting text at paragraph 8.9 states: "8.9 To help meet the continued need for family-sized housing in Westminster, we will allow the **loss of one existing non-family sized home where this is being reconfigured or merged with another to provide larger units...**"

## Local Plan Policy 40- Townscape and architecture

Part D of Policy 40 of the Westminster City Plan states:

*"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."*

Part 40.7 considers alterations and extensions as follows:

*"Works to alter and extend existing buildings will be supported where they are successfully integrated with their surroundings. To achieve this, extensions should be subordinate to the host building,*

*respecting the scale, detailing and materials of both existing buildings and adjoining townscape. Care should always be taken not to disfigure buildings or upset their proportions and to ensure good standards of amenity as set out in Policy 7."*

The supporting text at paragraph 40.6 reads:

*"Given the densely developed character of the city, extensions to existing buildings (both upwards and outwards) have an important role to play in meeting the growth ambitions of this plan. **They can provide room for expanding families, may provide additional housing units, and can allow businesses to grow, as part of single or mixed-use development.**"*

## Principle of Development

The main considerations of relevance to this application are the impact of the proposal on the character of the host dwelling, the streetscene and the land use under loss of housing policy. Detailed guidance on these matters is set out in the Council's City Plan 2019-2040 (April 2021), in accordance with the provisions of St. John's Wood Conservation Area SPD.

### Land Use

Policy 8 of the City Plan 2019-2040 supports the reconfiguration of non-family-sized housing to create family-sized housing. Family-sized housing is considered to be three bedrooms or more. In this case, the lower ground floor flat has two bedrooms, however one bedroom does not have a clear outlook and only receives daylight from the skylight above. This fact is a considerable compromise in terms of living quality. This setup falls short of the standards expected for living accommodation, where each bedroom should ideally have direct access to natural light and external views to ensure a healthy and comfortable living environment.

The overall size of the existing lower ground flat, at 92 sqm GIA, while seemingly ample, is not optimally utilised given the compromised bedroom. This inefficiency in space utilisation does not align well with the policy's intent

The upper level flat's layout - with a separate small kitchen and living and dining areas located at the front of the flat - is not ideal. The separation of the kitchen from the dining area is not conducive to the functional needs of family living, where connectivity between these spaces is preferred for practicality and social interaction. The restricted head height in the kitchen area further diminishes the utility and comfort of the space.

Paragraph 8.9 states "to help meet the continued need for family-sized housing in Westminster, we will allow the loss of one existing non-family-sized home where this is being reconfigured or merged with another to provide larger units (de-conversion), provided other options to extend the building to create larger units have first been explored."

## Principle of Development

Policy 8C.2 of the City Plan 2019-2040 states "all existing residential units, uses, floorspace and land will be protected, except where non-family sized housing is being reconfigured to create family-sized housing." The site is currently in residential use however it's classed as non-family-sized housing and being reconfigured to create a three-bedroom flat (family-sized housing), therefore the proposal is in accordance with the City Plan 2019-2040.

The new flat would be 150.6 sqm, well within the 200 sqm limit for new units within Policy 8. The new size is not considered excessive in terms of optimising housing provision. The nationally described minimum space standard for a two-storey, three-bedroom (six person) unit is 102 sqm.

It's also relevant to note the housing need evidence presented as part of the City Plan examination process highlighted the need for family housing. The following are the relevant extracts from the Housing Topic Paper 2019:

*"3.2.3..... The analysis shows how Westminster has more one and two-bedroom homes than the average in London and **less family-sized homes than other boroughs.***

*The study identifies that **there is a need and demand for family-sized homes in Westminster...***

*Between 2014 and 2019, the number of two-bedroom homes delivered was higher than the number of homes of other sizes, although in 2017/18, the majority were one bedroom homes. Although we are delivering a different mix of units, there is a tendency to build one and two-bedroom homes with both sizes accounting for about 60% of the stock each year. **This shows that there is a need to continue to build family-sized homes to ensure a mix of unit sizes continues to be delivered in Westminster...***

Therefore, in addition to compliance with the wording of the City Plan, Policy 8, the provision of the family-sized unit as proposed also directly responds to the council's clear housing need evidence.



# Principle of Development

## Rear Extension

The depth of the extension is 1.5 m which will enlarge bedroom two and provide better configuration and circulation for occupants. The extension will add 6.33 sqm to the upper ground floor flat to achieve the desired configurations.

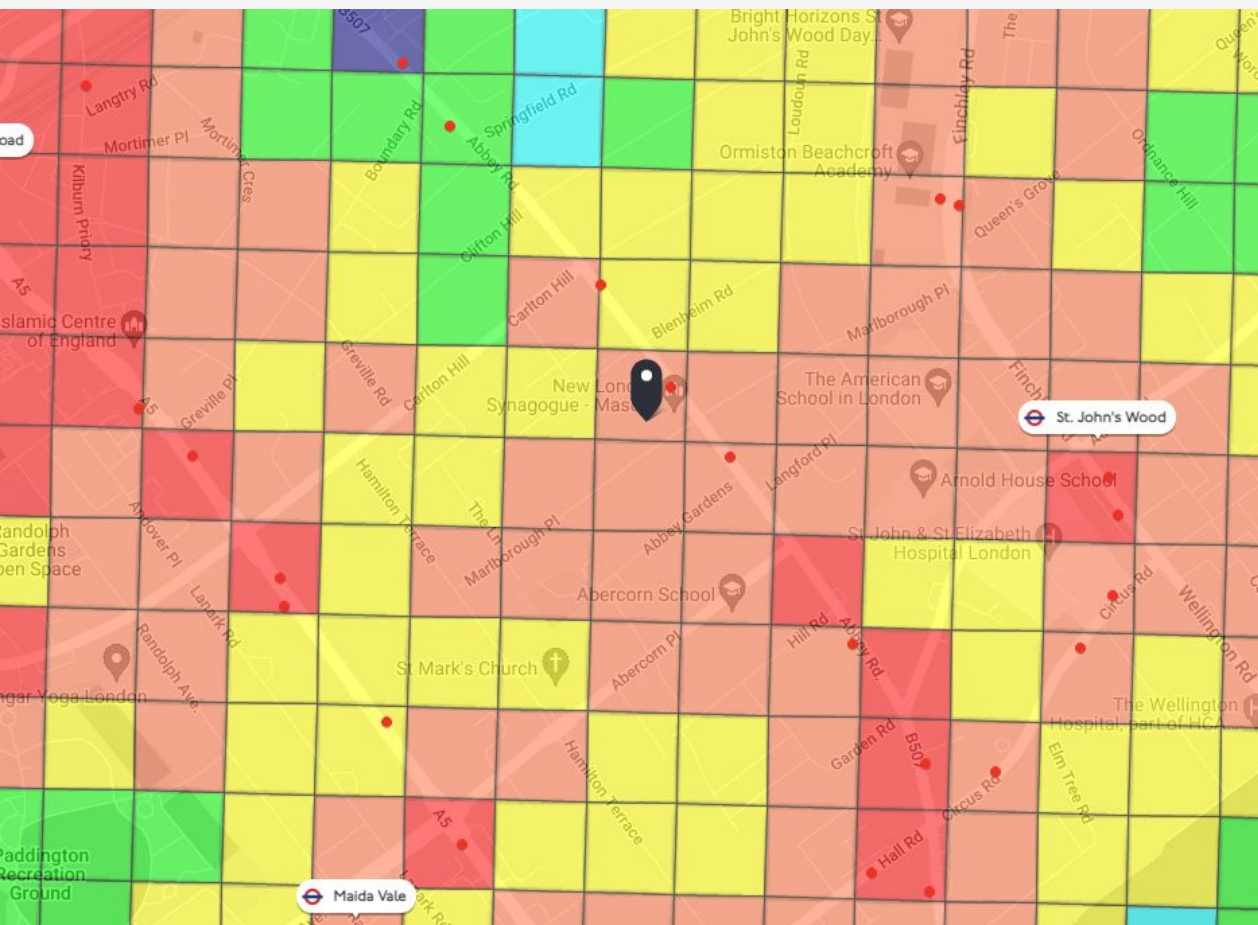
**Proportional Scale and Design:** The depth of the extension, being only 1.5 meters, is modest and proportionate to the scale of the existing building. This limited extension ensures the character of the building and the surrounding area is respected, maintaining the architectural integrity and visual harmony that Policy 40 emphasises.

**Enhancement of Living Space:** The addition of 6.33 sqm to the upper ground floor flat is specifically aimed at improving the configuration and circulation within bedroom two. This enhancement directly contributes to the quality of living for the occupants, providing a more functional and comfortable space without significantly altering the building's external appearance.

**Minimal Impact on Townscape:** The modest depth of the extension implies that it will not disrupt the uniformity, patterns, rhythms, or groupings of buildings that define Westminster's distinctive townscape. The extension is designed to be unobtrusive, preserving the aesthetic and character of the area.

**Consideration of Light and Privacy:** The proposed extension - due to its limited size - is unlikely to significantly impact light, outlook, or increase overlooking for neighbouring properties. This consideration is crucial in densely built urban areas, ensuring that developments maintain neighbourly relations and do not infringe on the amenity of adjacent properties.

In summary, the proposed rear extension is a well-considered development that respects the existing building's character, complies with local planning policies, and provides tangible benefits in terms of improved living space and functionality, without adversely impacting the surrounding townscape or neighbouring properties.



## Transport

44 Marlborough Place, London NW8 0PL has a PTAL rating of 5, which signals excellent transportation connections.

The site is a 10-minute walk from St. John's Wood and Maida Vale stations, which provides connections to the Jubilee and Bakerloo Underground Lines, respectively.

The closest bus stop is Marlborough Place. From this stop services can be accessed that provide connections to Golders Green, Brent Cross, Marble Arch, and Waterloo Station.

# Amount & Layout

The existing gross internal area (GIA) of the property is 150 sqm.

## Upper ground floor level

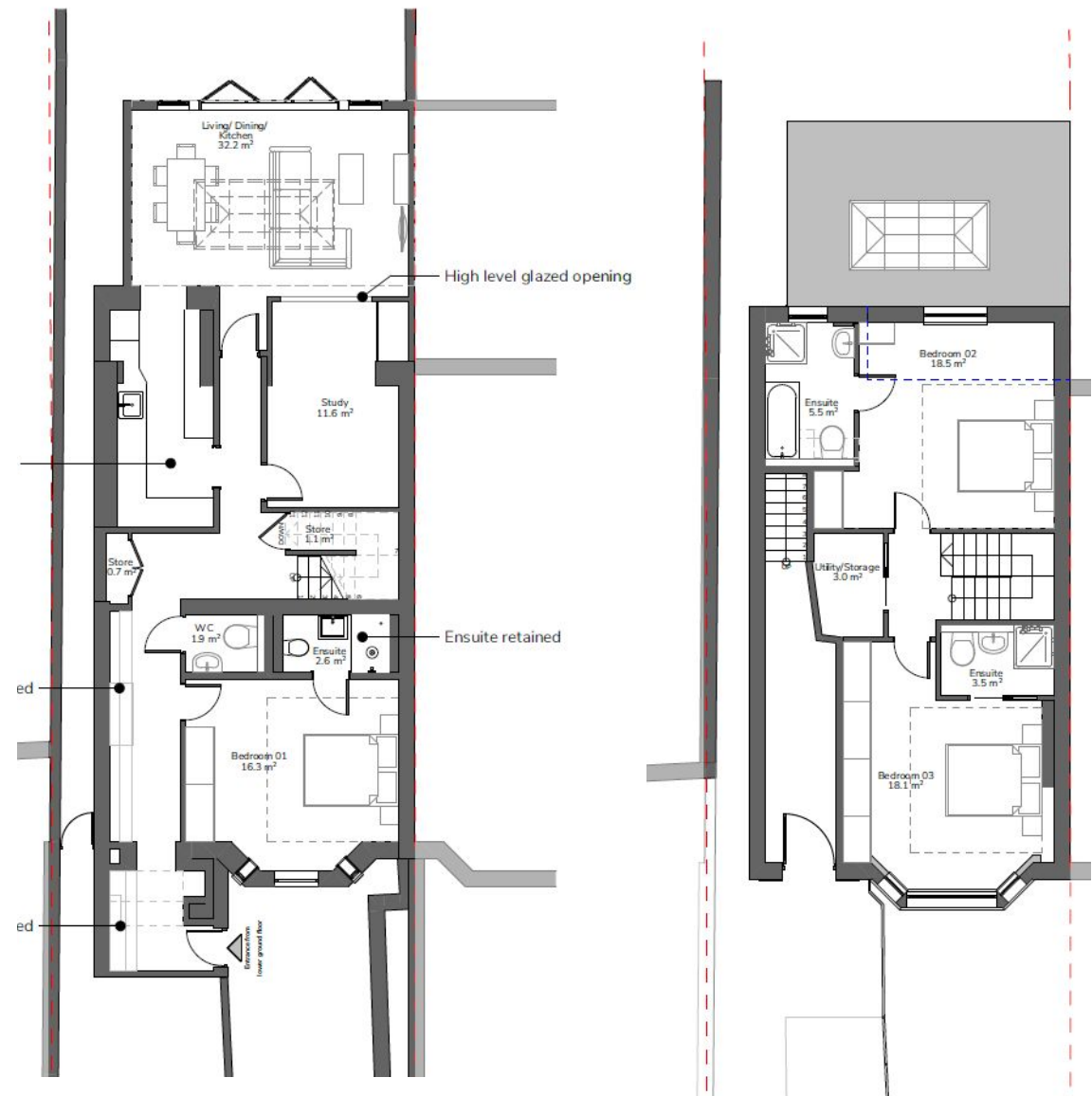
- Existing GIA of the upper ground floor flat is 50.80 sqm
- Proposed GIA of the upper ground floor flat is 57.13 sqm (addition of 6.33sqm)

## Lower ground floor level

- The existing GIA of the lower ground floor is 92.9 sqm
- The proposed GIA of the lower ground floor is 92.9 sqm (no change)

The scheme proposes adding 6.33 sqm GIA to the property resulting in a new GIA of 150.5 sqm. The proposed GIA of the three-bed maisonette flat will be less than the maximum allowance stipulated by Policy 8 which is 200 sqm. The new size is not considered excessive in terms of optimising housing provision. The nationally described minimum space standard for a two-storey, three-bedroom (six person) unit is 102 sqm.

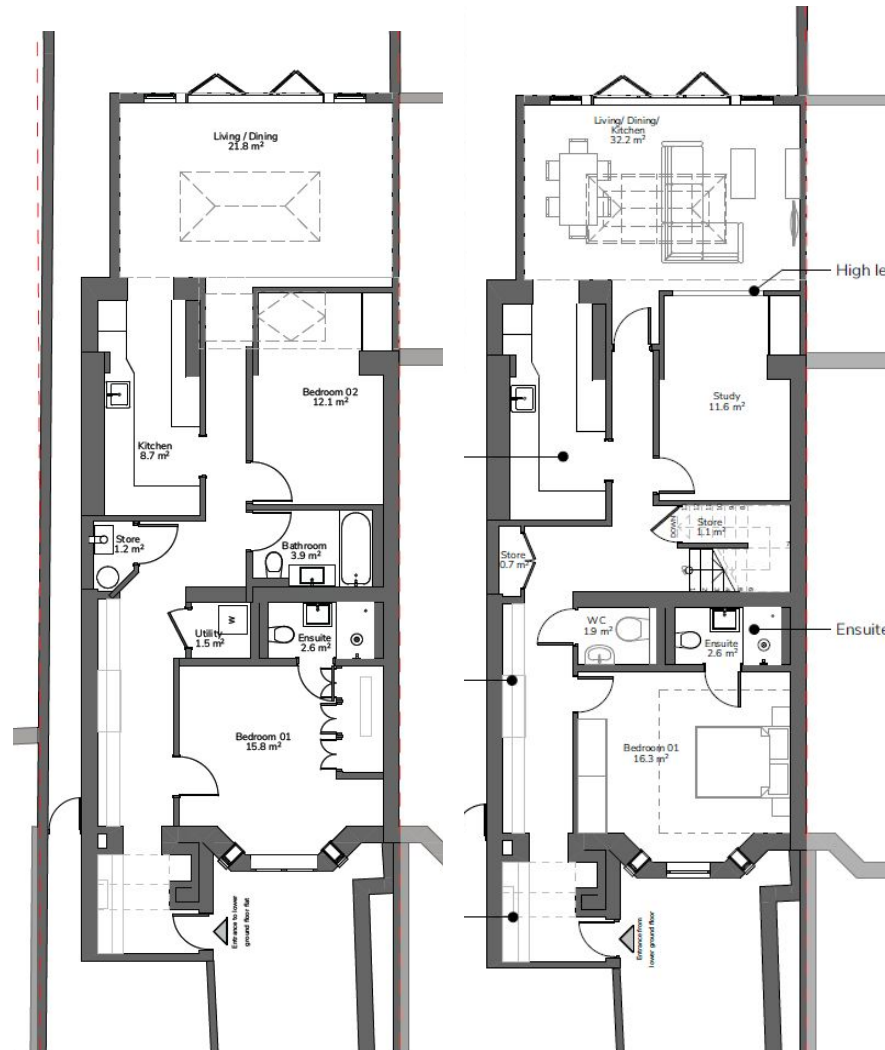
The proposed 1.5 m rear extension will be a seamless addition to enlarge the upstairs bedroom. It will be one-storey in height and subordinate to the host property. This will also mean it won't be visible from the front street elevation.



# Lower Ground Plan

## Existing

The current lower ground floor has a kitchen/living room, a small bedroom, a family bathroom, a master bedroom with an ensuite, a small storage room and a utility room. The main entrance is at the front of the property, entering from the front garden.



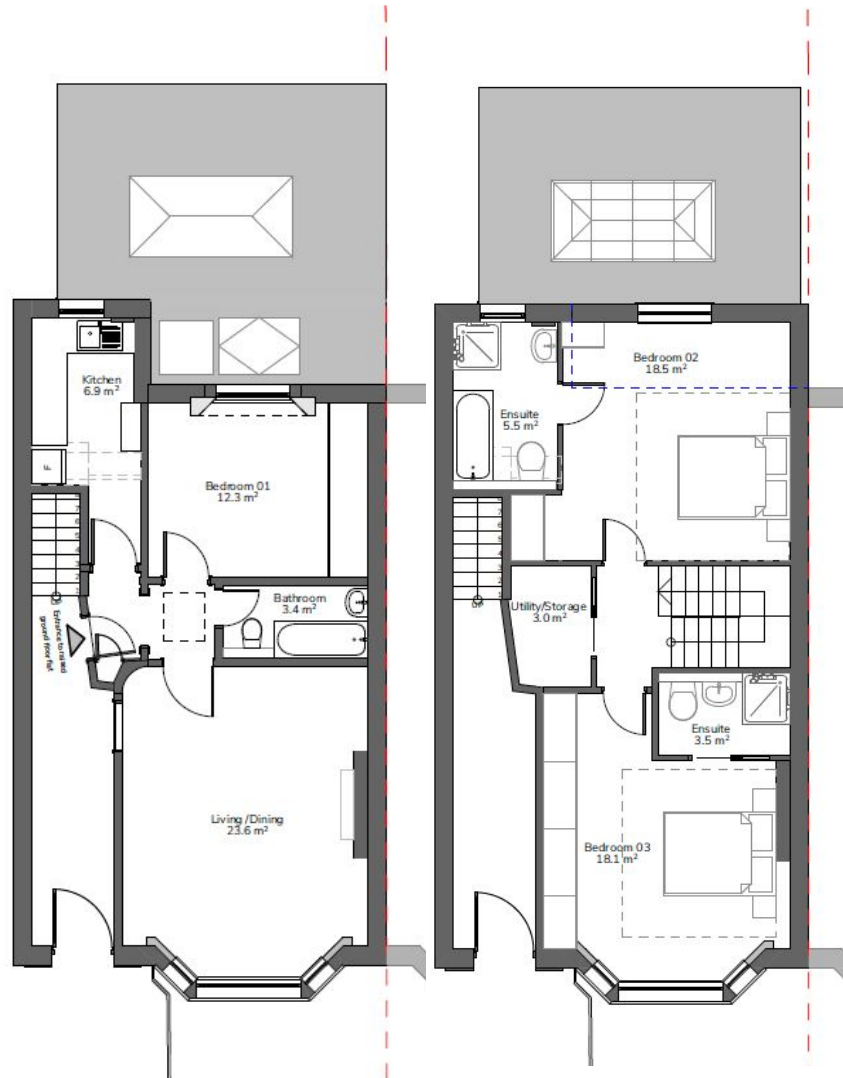
## Proposed

The proposed lower ground floor retains the existing footprint and accommodates a kitchen/living room, a study, a new staircase to the upper ground floor, a new WC, a bedroom with ensuite, a small storage, and a utility room. The existing main entrance is maintained at the front of the property.

# Ground Floor Plan

## Existing

The current upper ground floor has a kitchen, a bedroom, a bathroom and a living/dining room. The main entrance is from the communal corridor.



## Proposed

The proposed upper ground floor will be extended by 1.5 m adding 6.33 sqm. The proposal to amalgamate the lower ground floor apartment with the upper floors would reinstate the staircase. The proposed upper ground floor layout accommodates two bedrooms and utility/storage.



Marlborough

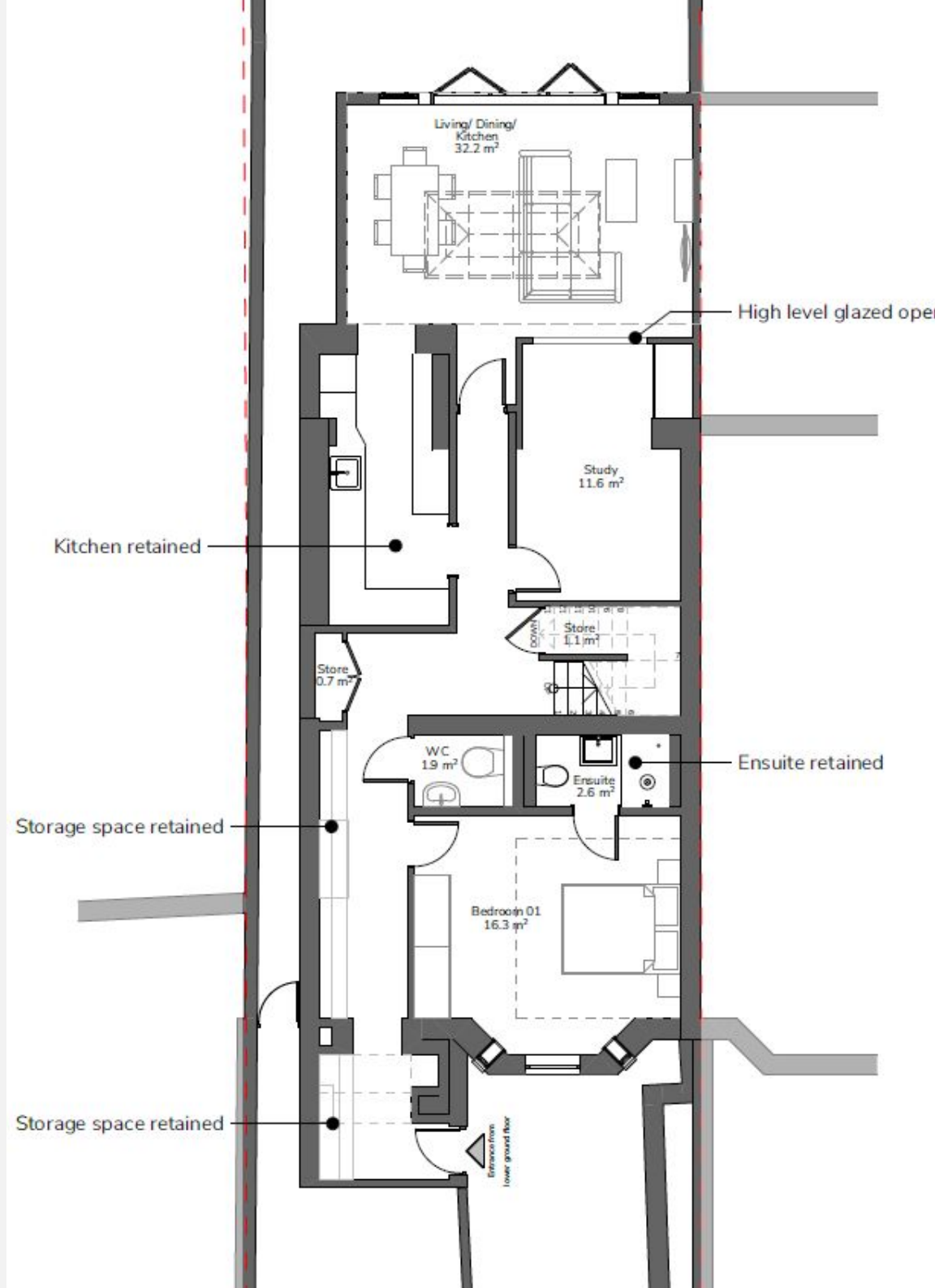
## Proposed Site Plan

The current property has garden space as a private amenity to the lower ground floor flat. The garden to the front of the property will be retained

The proposed maisonette flat will have access to the rear garden as a private amenity.

## Access

The primary access to the proposed amalgamation will be from the lower ground floor flat. The front entrance to the other flats will be the main point of access for first and second-floor flats contained within the property.



## Waste & Recycling

The existing servicing arrangement will remain as it is.

The bins are located to the front of the property.

Three waste bins, three food caddy bins would remain as they are currently. There will be no alteration proposed in regards to the bins.





# Precedents

01

19/02594/FUL



**65 New Park Avenue, London, N13 5ND**

Conversion of a single dwelling into three self-contained flats (1x3 bed, 1x2 bed and 1x Studio)

**Granted with conditions** 24 October 2019

02

21/01033/FUL



**20 Arnos Road, London, N11 1AP**

Conversion of the single family dwellinghouse into 2 self-contained flats involving refuse, recycling and with electric vehicle charging point.

**Granted with Conditions** 25 May 2021

03

21/00604/FUL



**97 Warwick Road, London, N11 2SP**

Conversion of single family dwelling into 2 x self-contained flats comprising 1 x 1 bed and 1 x 3 bed including part single part two storey rear extension and loft conversion with rear dormer and front roof window.

**Granted with conditions** 13 May 2021

## Summary

The proposal seeks to deconvert the two existing self-contained flats into one higher-quality, self-contained property, designed in compliance with the nationally described minimum space standards. The delivery of a family unit will fully optimise the space available within the property and will provide a significant contribution to Westminster's family housing stock and increase their housing supply.

The extension to the property will serve to enhance the new flat and optimise the space available within the existing property. Given that a number of properties in the borough have already been deconverted to family flats, this proposal is considered respectful to the character of the area.

The infill extension will not have an overall impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area or the host building.

Should there be any additional information or clarification required in order to progress this application, please do not hesitate to contact Urbanist Architecture Ltd. We are more than happy to make amendments to the scheme that the planning department may suggest.



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