

CITY OF WESTMINSTER			
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE	Date 14 February 2017	Classification For General Release	
Report of Director of Planning		Ward(s) involved Abbey Road	
Subject of Report	10 Acacia Road, London, NW8 6AB		
Proposal	Excavation of basement; erection of rear extension at rear lower ground floor level; erection of three storey side extension at upper ground, first and second floor levels; extension of front ground floor porch; alteration and replacement of windows and doors; alterations to landscaping including demolition of existing garage; alterations to roof.		
Agent	Mr Richard Abbott		
On behalf of	C/O MD LEGAL SERVICES		
Registered Number	16/10875/FULL	Date amended/ completed	16 December 2016
Date Application Received	15 November 2016		
Historic Building Grade	Unlisted		
Conservation Area	St John's Wood		

1. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse permission – design

2. SUMMARY

This application relates to an unlisted single family dwelling house located within the St John's Wood Conservation Area. Permission was granted for works including the excavation of a basement and erection of rear single storey extension at lower ground floor level in 2016. This application includes all of these works previously approved along with the erection of a three storey side extension at upper ground, first and second floor level.

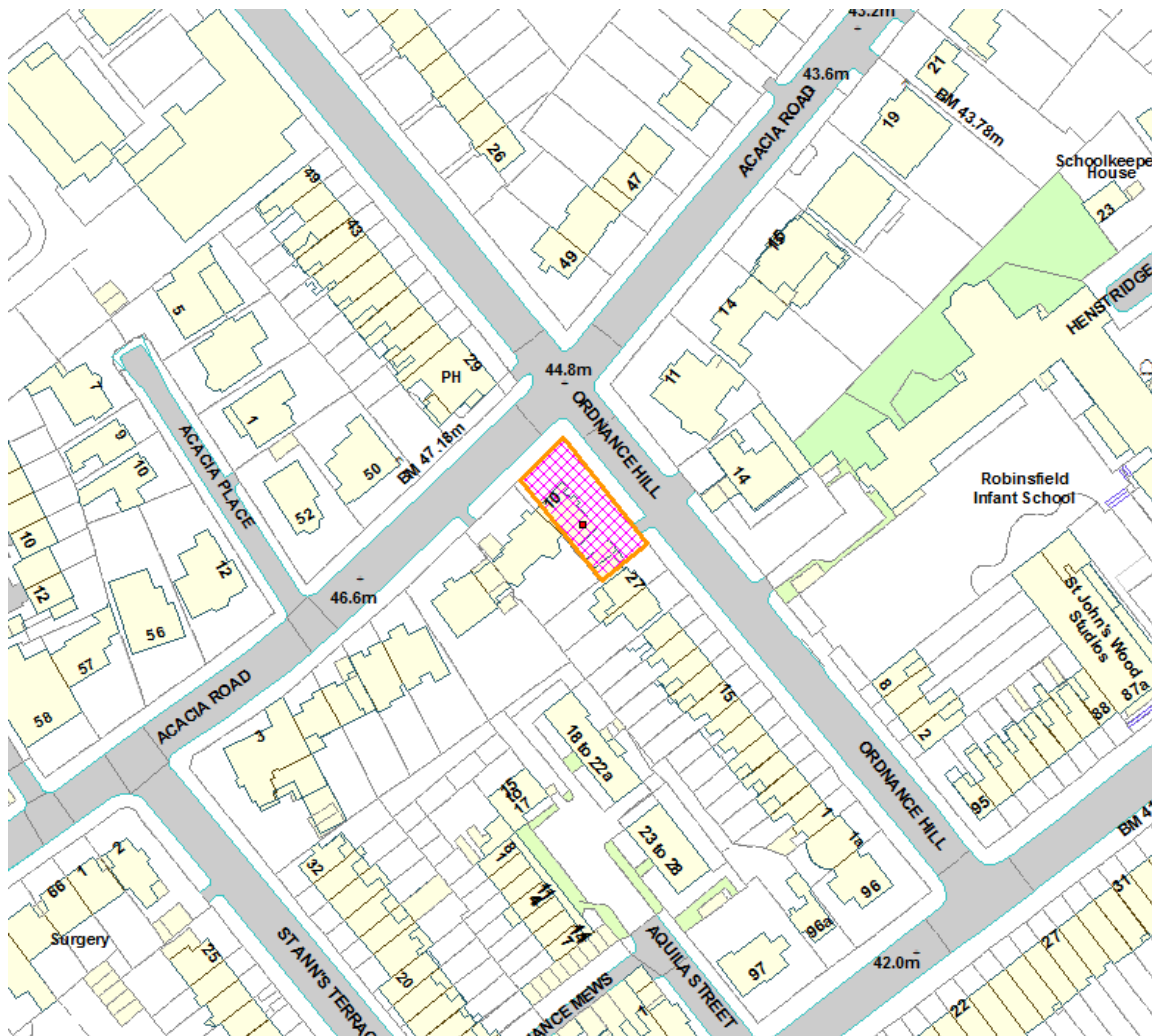
The key issues which relate to this case:

- * The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- * The impact of the development on the amenity of nearby residents.
- * The impact of the development on trees.
- * The impact of the development on the highways network.

The application is considered to be contrary with policies in Westminster's City Plan (City Plan) and the

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and is unacceptable in design and conservation terms and therefore is recommended for refusal.

3. LOCATION PLAN



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4. PHOTOGRAPHS



Acacia Road Frontage



Ordnance Hill rear/side frontage

5. CONSULTATIONS

ST JOHNS WOOD SOCIETY:

Raise objection on the grounds of overdevelopment. Proposals do not respect the building line of the properties on Ordnance Hill. Fenestration on The Acacia Road elevation has a very poor solid to void ratio.

ARBORICULTURAL OFFICER:

Any response to be reported verbally.

BUILDING CONTROL:

Comment that although the structural method statement does describe the way in which a basement may be excavated, there is little or no detail of the sequencing of the underpinning or when and where temporary supports will be provided.

HIGHWAYS PLANNING MANAGER:

No objection raised.

ADJOINING OWNERS/OCCUPIERS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

No. Consulted: 10

Total No. of replies: 0

Any response to be reported verbally

PRESS ADVERTISEMENT / SITE NOTICE:

Yes

6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6.1 The Application Site

The application site is a semi-detached building located on the corner of Acacia Road and Ordnance Hill. The building is not listed but is located within the St John's Wood Conservation Area. The building is a typical example of a St John's Wood Villa which are characterised by their simple classical detailing, shallow pitched roofs with broad overhanging eaves and stuccoed exterior.

The semi-detached buildings, such as the application site, were designed to resemble a single large property, with entrances recessed to create the feeling of one grand house. Typically they are set in large plots, with generous gardens to the front and rear and wide gaps between properties.

6.2 Recent Relevant History

Permission was approved on 12 September 2016 for the excavation of basement; erection of rear extension at rear lower ground floor level; extension of front ground floor porch; alteration and replacement of windows and doors; alterations to landscaping

including demolition of existing garage; alterations to roof. This permission has not been implemented.

7. THE PROPOSAL

This application again seeks permission for all the same works as approved in 2016 (summarised in section 6.2), along with the addition of a three storey side extension at ground, first and second floor levels and includes the extension of the pitched roof over the new side extension.

8. DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Land Use

The proposed alterations and extensions to the single family dwelling are considered acceptable in land use terms.

8.2 Townscape and Design

In September 2016 planning permission was granted for the excavation of a basement, erection of a rear extension at lower ground floor level, the extension of the front ground floor porch and for the replacement of windows. This application includes all the elements previously approved, but with the addition of a three storey side extension at ground, first and second floor levels. Given the acceptability of the works proposed in the 2016 application have already been established, the design and townscape discussion within this report will principally relate to the proposed additional side extension.

As proposed the side extension will be 3.6metres wide and span from the rear elevation of the historic core to the front elevation of the approved lower ground floor level. It will be rendered to match the existing building and have 3no windows on each elevation, with articulated surrounds. The hipped gable roof will tie into the existing roof form, with the eaves line being continued; the ridge is lower than the host building.

Policy DES 5 of the UDP seeks to ensure the highest standards of design in alterations and extensions, specifically noting that permission will be granted where an alteration or extension is confined to the rear of the building, does not visually dominate the existing building and is of a scale and detailed design that reflects the host building. It also states that permission may be refused where an extension rises above the penultimate storey of the existing building and results in the loss of significant gaps.

Paragraph I.10 of Westminster's SPG 'Development and Demolition in Conservation Areas' states that the early 19th century semi-detached villas are common in St Johns Wood and make a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The full height side extension will have a negative impact on the appearance and interpretation of the host building as a typical St John's Wood villa through altering its scale and proportions, particularly in relation to the front elevation, as well as its relationship with the attached property. The local amenity society has raised an objection to the scheme citing the proposals to be an ambitious overdevelopment of the site. They state the proposals do not respect the building line of the properties on

Ordnance Hill and the side extension dominates the original building. As identified the building was consciously designed, with its scale and proportions characteristic of development in the area at this time. The property was designed to be read as part of one building and its scale reflects this; to introduce a full height side extension would be to erode this interpretation due to the resultant building being out of proportion with those in the immediate setting which are of a comparable architectural style and therefore not understood as a villa building. This would be contrary to DES 5 as the extension is not in scale with the host building and will result in a dominant building for the setting.

It is noted that the adjoining property has undergone a series of alterations and extensions historically, resulting in a built form which has departed from the original design principles. There is no planning history relating to this side extension. Westminster's SPG 'Development and Demolition in Conservation Areas' identifies that many works carried out historically have not been sensitive to the architectural integrity of buildings and therefore should not be regarded as setting a precedent for future changes. Therefore further additions and extensions to the building should be considered on their own merits and not in the context of historic unsympathetic development.

As a result of the extension the principal entrance will be located centrally on the front elevation, which is not characteristic of buildings of this architectural style. Typically, in order to reinforce the appearance of the two semi-detached properties being one building, the principal entrances were positioned on the side elevations, leaving the main body of the building central. By adding a full height side extension the principal entrance will be read as being centrally positioned on the front elevation of the property further eroding the original design intention of the building. This is considered to harm the appearance of the building and consequently fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

As previously identified, the setting of the building within a generous plot is also characteristic of villas and buildings in the conservation area; the side extension will result in the built form being set closer to the Ordnance Hill boundary which will result in the loss of a streetscape gap. The application site is more constrained than other buildings in the road in terms of its side elevation due to the buildings positioning on the corner of a crossroads. There is not only a strong built line along Acacia Road, but also along Ordnance Hill, which the building is appreciated in. Presently the side elevation aligns with the front built line of the villas and terrace to the south and therefore a side extension would erode this uniformity and result in a building which is highly dominant in the street scene when viewed from the south. This arrangement will fail to accord with DES 5 and is considered to harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Notwithstanding the impact on built line to Ordnance Hill, the gap between villas is also an important characteristic of the conservation area. Extensions at the side of these villas, partly or wholly infilling the gap between them will often have an adverse impact upon the architectural integrity of the villa and the character and appearance of the conservation area. Such extensions will be unacceptable in many cases. Therefore due to its location and scale the side extension is considered to be contrary to DES 5 and will harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The local amenity society has also noted that the fenestration on the Acacia Road elevation of the extension has a very poor solid to void relationship. It is noted that the

location and scale of the fenestration and their articulation has sought to reflect those present on the host building and this approach would have been welcome in principle. Should the application as a whole been considered to be acceptable a condition would have been recommended requiring the submission of further details.

Due to its location, scale and design the erection of a full height side extension is considered to harm the character and appearance of the building and its setting, including the St John's Wood Conservation Area. The proposals fail to comply with City Plan policies S25 and S28 as well as UDP policies DES 1, DES 5 and DES 9. Furthermore the application is not in accordance with Westminster's adopted SPG's and the St John's Wood Conservation Area Audit.

The identified harm to the St John's Wood Conservation Area is considered to be less than substantial. Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. It is noted that the building has been vacant for a number of years, however it is understood to have been this way intentionally and the owner has not sought to find a tenant, therefore it cannot be argued that the development is required to secure the buildings long term use. The provision of additional accommodation to an existing dwelling is not considered to be a sufficient public benefit to outweigh the harm that would be caused to the heritage asset, the conservation area.

8.3 Residential Amenity

Alike the approved scheme the proposals include the replacement of the single storey rear extension. The replacement extension has the same footprint as the existing structure, but will rise 40cm above the height of the existing party wall. It is not considered that that this small increase in height will have a significant negative impact on the amenity of neighbours.

While the proposed extension on the Ordnance Hill frontage of the building will result in significant additional bulk, given the location of the extension, away from neighbouring windows, it is not considered that it will have any significant negative impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.

The proposals indicate a plant room at basement level, however this is for boilers and water cylinders only and therefore will not have noise implications.

8.4 Transportation/Parking

The proposals include the re-provision of a garage within the new extension. This allows the remainder of the garden to be re-landscaped, which is welcomed. The Highways Planning Manager has not raised objection to the proposals.

8.5 Economic Considerations

No economic considerations are applicable for a development of this size

8.6 Access

Access to the site is to remain as existing.

8.7 Other UDP/Westminster Policy Considerations

Trees:

The arboricultural officer has not commented on this application however did respond to the 2016 application, which was identical in terms of the amount of excavation proposed and therefore remains relevant.

They previously raised no objection subject to clarification in relation to a label on one of the drawings which states that the "existing trees to be protected and retained where possible or replaced with similar size species", which is not considered to be acceptable as it means that protection or removal of trees is optional. They also query if the garden levels are changing as no existing long section is provided. In relation to the first point, while this issue is noted, it is considered that this could be covered by condition for the submission of details in relation to hard and soft landscaping and tree protection. In relation to the level changes the existing and proposed side elevations show them correctly which is considered acceptable.

8.8 London Plan

This application raises no strategic issues.

8.9 National Policy/Guidance Considerations

The City Plan and UDP policies referred to in the consideration of this application are considered to be consistent with the NPPF unless stated otherwise.

8.10 Planning Obligations

Planning obligations are not relevant in the determination of this application.

8.11 Environmental Impact Assessment

The application is of insufficient scale to require the submission of an EIA.

8.12 Other Issues

Basement

The basement is the same to the one approved in 2016. There have been no significant changes to adopted policy since the determination of this application. The proposed basement is considered acceptable and in accordance with supplementary planning guidance and Policy CM28.1 (C) of the City Plan namely:

1a) The basement does not take up more than 50% of the garden land, with the majority of the basement sitting beneath the footprint of the main house.

1b) The basement extends less than 4m towards the boundary.

1c) The basement has been pulled in from the site boundary (where no under the host building).

2) For the small areas of the basement to the front and rear which do not sit under the main house, 1.2m of soil depth are required above, however these areas are taken up by rooflights to provide light down to the basement. As these areas are covered by rooflights, which are considered acceptable in design terms, it would not be possible to provide 1.2m of soil depth, which in this instance, is considered acceptable. Should the basement have projected further out under the garden, then the 1.2m of soil depth would have been required.

3) The basement is only 1 storey deep.

Construction:

With regard to the construction of the basement the applicant has provided a structural engineer's report explaining the likely methodology of excavation. Any report by a member of the relevant professional institution carries a duty of care which should be sufficient to demonstrate that the matter has been properly considered at this early stage.

The purpose of such a report at the planning application stage is to demonstrate that a subterranean development can be constructed on the particular site having regard to the site, existing structural conditions and geology. It does not prescribe the engineering techniques that must be used during construction which may need to be altered once the excavation has occurred. The structural integrity of the development during the construction is not controlled through the planning system but through Building Regulations and the Party Wall Act.

This report has been considered by our Building Control officers who have advised that there is little or no detail of the sequencing of the underpinning or when and where temporary supports will be provided. While these comments are noted, the same information has been submitted as the previously approved application, which was considered acceptable in building control terms, it is therefore not considered that withholding permission on these grounds could be sustained, given that this permission is still extant. It should also be noted that we are not approving the submitted information or conditioning that the works shall necessarily be carried out in accordance with this information, which shall be included on the decision letter for information only. The proposed works will be subject to a separate application for building regulations approval, should the applicant wish to proceed with the proposals.

Construction impact

With regard to the impact of the proposals in terms of noise and disruption during construction, the City Council's standard condition to control hours of building work is recommended which includes specific restrictions for basement excavation work which can only be carried out between 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday and not at all on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays. Should the proposals have been considered acceptable in other terms, a condition would have been recommended to comply with the requirements of the City Councils Code of Construction Practice.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

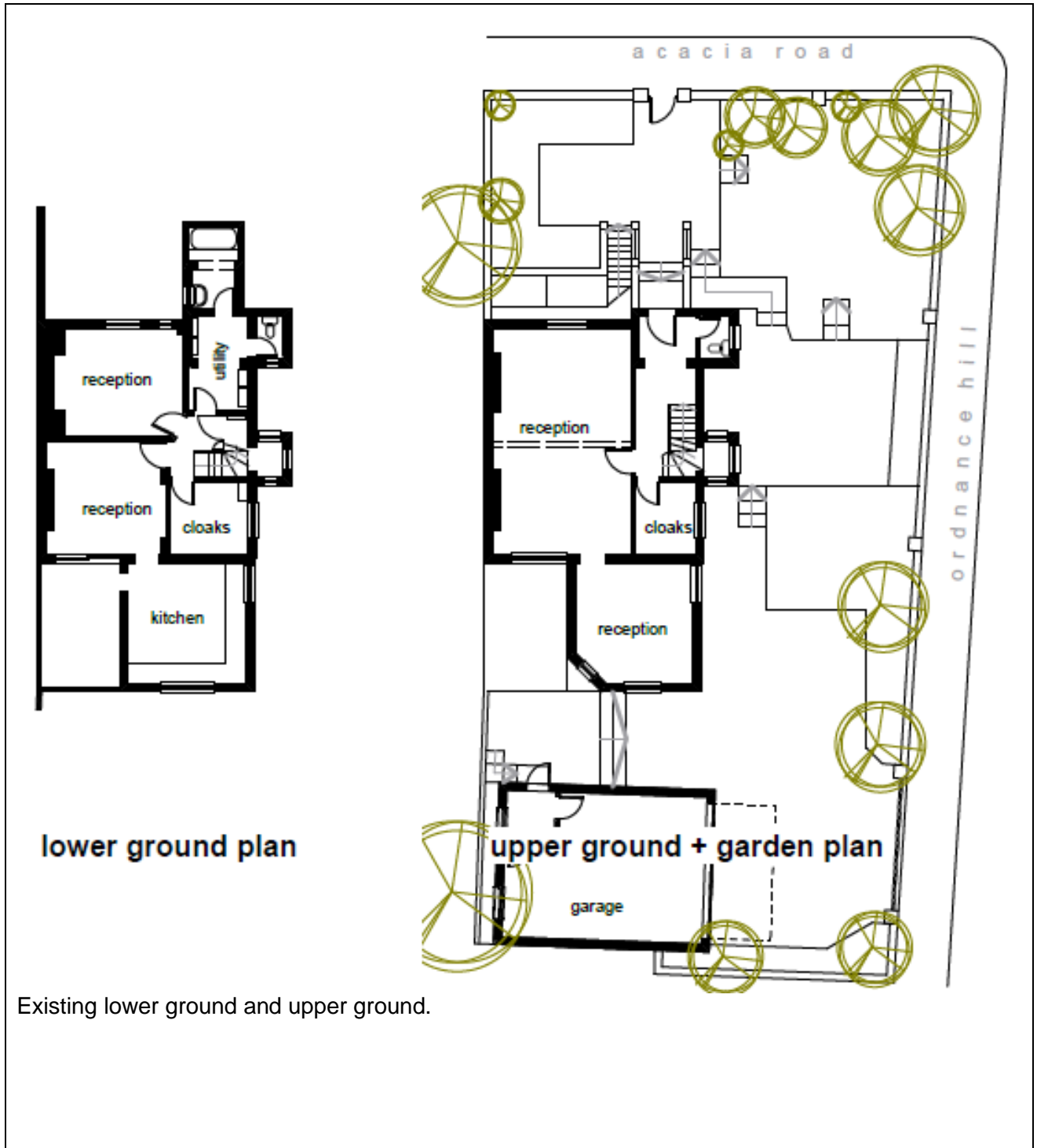
1. Application form
2. Response from St John's Wood Society, dated 16 January 2017
3. Response from Building Control, dated 4 January 2017

4. Memorandum from Highways Planning, dated 11 January 2017

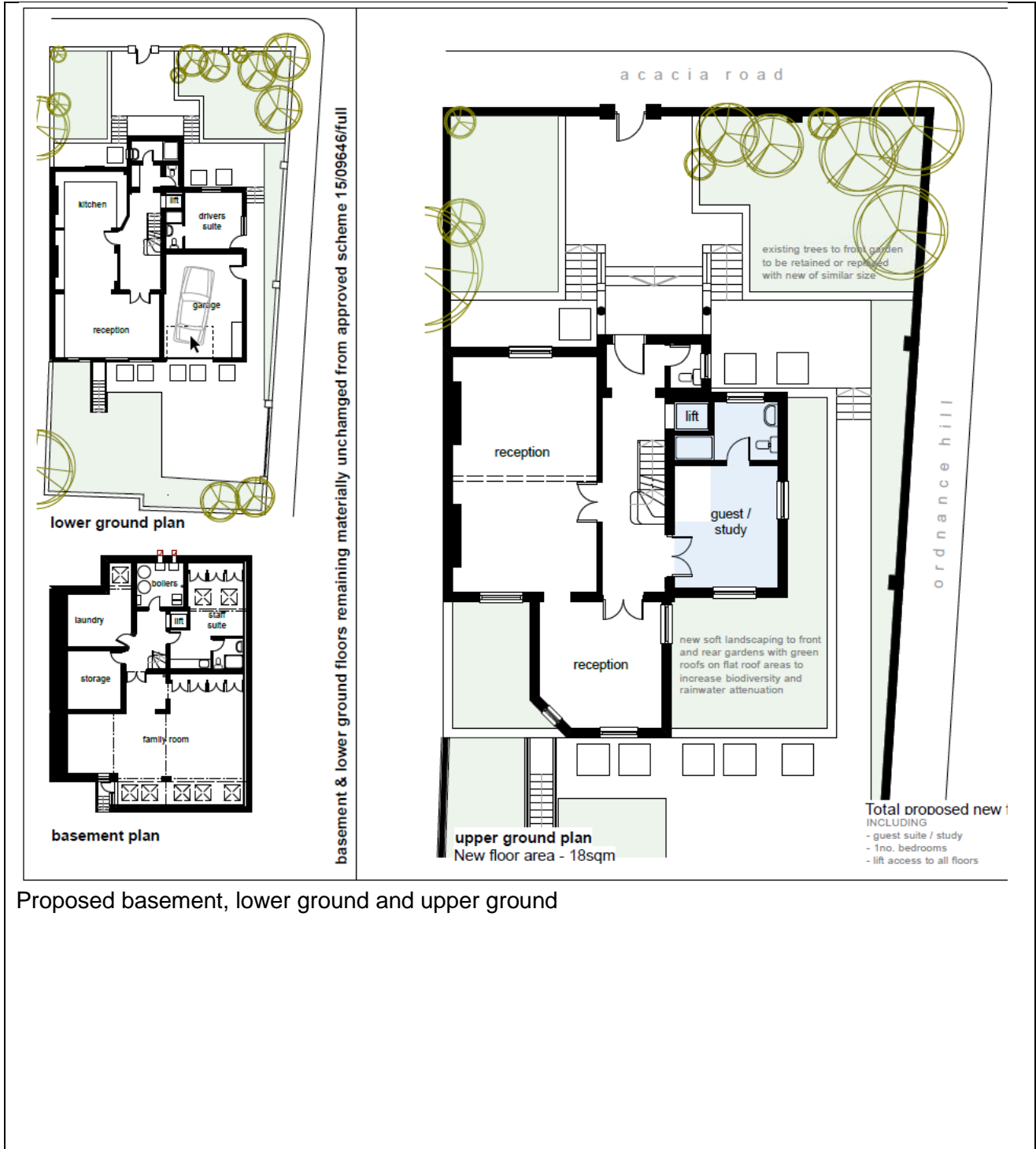
(Please note: All the application drawings and other relevant documents and Background Papers are available to view on the Council's website)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT PLEASE CONTACT THE PRESENTING OFFICER: KIMBERLEY DAVIES BY EMAIL AT kdavies1@westminster.gov.uk .
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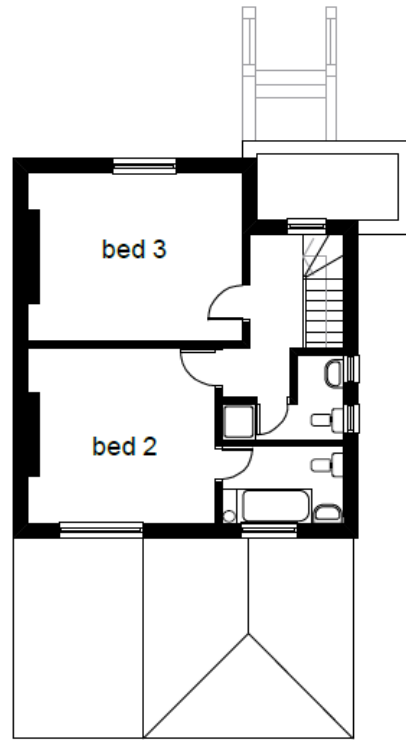
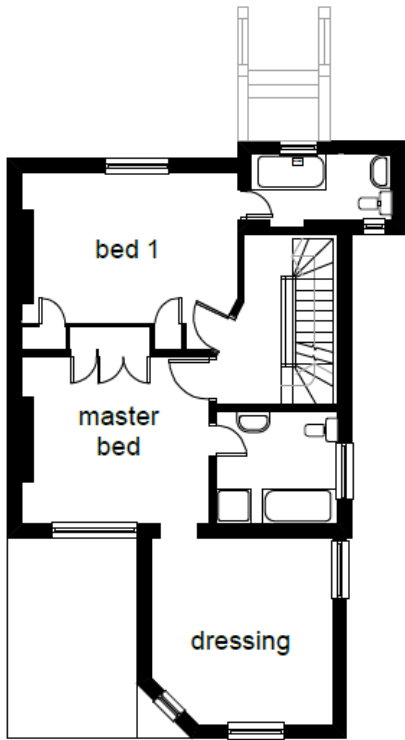
10. KEY DRAWINGS



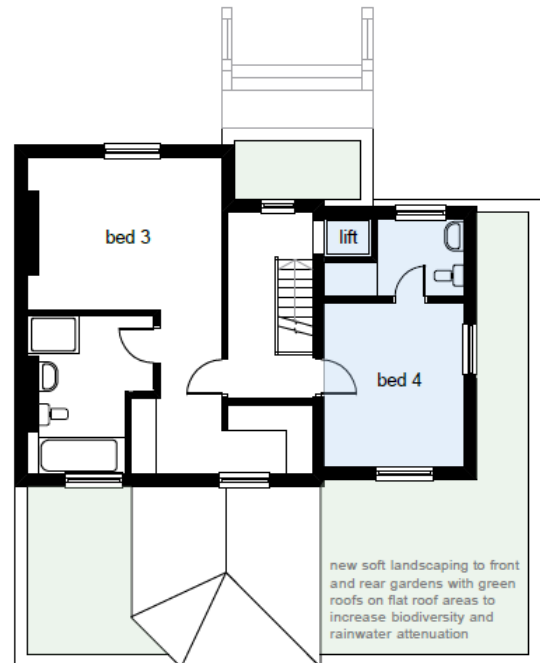
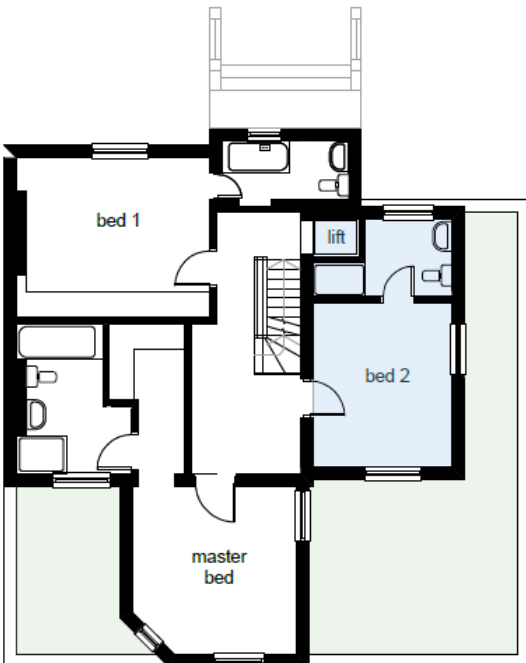
Existing lower ground and upper ground.



Proposed basement, lower ground and upper ground



Existing First and second floor plans



Proposed first and second floor plans

new soft landscaping to front and rear gardens with green roofs on flat roof areas to increase biodiversity and rainwater attenuation



Existing Acacia Road Frontage

side extension defined with break in wall and roof line. extending no more than 3.6m beyond the face of the main house and remaining 3.6m minimum from back of pavement.

new window proportions and details to match existing, including surrounds and cills.

No change to approved lower ground floor elevations or boundary walls



Proposed Acacia Road Frontage



Existing Ordnance Hill Elevation



Proposed Ordnance Hill Elevation

DRAFT DECISION LETTER

Address: 10 Acacia Road, London, NW8 6AB

Proposal: Excavation of basement; erection of rear extension at rear lower ground floor level; erection of three storey side extension at upper ground, first and second floor levels; extension of front ground floor porch; alteration and replacement of windows and doors; alterations to landscaping including demolition of existing garage; alterations to roof.

Reference: 16/10875/FULL

Plan Nos: Site location plan; Tree Survey & Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated July 2016; Design & Access Statement dated November 2016; Document titled 'Commentary on impact of proposed extension' by The Stephen Gray Consultancy; 1608/AA/0200 Rev 1; 1608/AA/0201 Rev 1; 1608/AA/0202 Rev 1; 1608/AA0203 Rev 1; 1608/AA/0204 Rev 1; 1608/AA0205 Rev 1; 1608/AA/0206 Rev 1.

For information only: Construction Method Statement by Concept Consultancy, dated January 2016; Basement Impact Assessment by H Fraser Consulting dated 04/02/2016; 01 A; 0804 A.

Case Officer: Rupert Handley

Direct Tel. No. 020 7641 2497

Recommended Condition(s) and Reason(s) or Reason(s) for Refusal:**Reason:**

Because of its location, scale and design the full height side extension would harm the appearance of this building and fail to maintain or improve (preserve or enhance) the character and appearance of the St John's Wood Conservation Area. This would not meet S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan (July 2016) and DES 1, DES 5 and DES 9 and paras 10.108 to 10.128 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007 and the St John's Wood Conservation Area Audit.

Informative(s):

- 1 In dealing with this application the City Council has implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way so far as practicable. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies in Westminster's City Plan (November 2016), Unitary Development Plan, Supplementary Planning documents, planning briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre application advice service. However, we have been unable to seek solutions to problems as the principle of the proposal is clearly contrary to our statutory policies and negotiation could not overcome the reasons for refusal.

Item No.

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Please note: the full text for informatives can be found in the Council's Conditions, Reasons & Policies handbook, copies of which can be found in the Committee Room whilst the meeting is in progress, and on the Council's website.