

Design and Access Statement

Date: 10th October 2022
Project: Flat A, 72 Coniston Road, N10 2BN

Planning Application for Basement Conversion

1. 72A Coniston Road is in sub area 7 of the Muswell Hill Conservation Area, designated in 1974. The building is one of several houses (nos. 58 to 78 (even) among others) on the eastern side of Coniston Road identified as making a positive contribution in the Muswell Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal (p.61 10.44 and p.83).

Conservation Area Appraisal

2. Coniston Road is noted as having been initially laid out in the 1880s. It is lined with street trees and the houses conform to a constant building line, set back from the road by small front gardens, many of them enclosed with low front walls that separate them from the pavements. The houses themselves are varied in height, scale and style, but are all of two storeys (above street level). Repeated features include, ground floor bays, pyramidal bay roofs, red brick and deep contrasting window heads.
3. The east side of Coniston Road is generally consistent in appearance with a repeated pattern of small red brick family houses with pyramid roofs over two storey bays that are in pairs along the frontage. They have decorative timber porches between and doors and windows have deep stone heads. The front boundary walls reinforce the continuity in the development along this side of the street.
4. The predominant building materials are red brick with red clay tile or slate roofs. Red tiles are commonly used on porches and small roofs over bays. The use of white painted render or brickwork, white painted timber work and mullions creates a distinctive contrast with the red brickwork that is characteristic of this area. No.72 is of this type, with white painted brickwork to its front bay (10.3).
5. The front elevations of many houses have been painted or rendered and about half of them have lost their original front doors and timber sash windows (10.24).

Planning History 72 Coniston Road

6. HGY/1995/0622 FULL PLANNING PERMISSION 72 Coniston Road N10 2BN – **REFUSE**
Excavation of area to front of basement, formation of new window opening to front elevation and conversion of basement into self-contained bed-sit unit and erection of new boundary wall.

Reasons for refusal are not available. The creation of a separate fourth dwelling within this house, possibly poorly lit and not easily accessible, could be the principle factor in the refusal, as clearly elsewhere basements have been permitted (e.g. No.70 next door)?

7. HGY/2017/3166 FULL PLANNING PERMISSION 72C Coniston Road N10 2BN – **GRANTED**
Loft conversion, including updating roof insulation and adding velux window to front roof slope:

Planning Context

8. HGY/2016/0474 DISCHARGE OF CONDITION 48 Coniston Road N10 2BN – **GRANTED**
Approval of details pursuant to condition 3 (provision of waste storage and recycling facilities attached to planning permission HGY/2014/3525

This is a straightforward proposal for storing bins within the front curtilage of the property, perpendicular to the pavement, which we intend to follow. In this way the important low front wall

line is maintained, the bins can be stored under/ within an attractive enclosure, roofed with a planter that further enhances the greenery of the characteristic front gardens.

9. HGY/2015/3212 FULL PLANNING PERMISSION 10 Coniston Road N10 2BN – **GRANTED**
Ground floor infill extension with loft and basement conversions

One among a number of precedents, where properties have sought to create habitable space in their basements. Clearly this involves excavating an area at the front, both for daylighting and alternative access. As here, the basement accommodation proposed at No.72 is an extension of the living rooms of an existing dwelling not the creation of a new dwelling in its own right.

Design Proposal

10. The scheme involves the creation of additional basement accommodation to the split-level ground floor flat at No.72 Coniston Road. This consists of refurbishment of the upper floors, re-organisation of the internal circulation to improve access to the basement, making habitable bed and shower rooms under the front room and hallway of the existing house respectively.
11. The scheme also entails excavating the front garden to create an area patio, to bring daylight to the basement rooms through new full height windows, create external amenity space and to allow for a small study extension to be built on the north side of the area at a lower level with access to the patio.
12. The roof of the study extension also provides a platform for the storage of 4 no. refuse/ recycling bins for the three flats at No.72.

13. Additional floor areas

Basement bedroom	19.4 m ²
Shower Room & Storage	9.3 m ²
Study extension	3.3 m ²

14. Floor level depths below external pavement level

Basement bedroom	2.1 m
Shower Room & Storage	2.1 m
Study extension	2.6 m

15. Note that the floor level of the study extension is 0.5 m below the basement floor level because the bin bay platform overhead is at pavement level, lower than the ground floor level of Flat A.

Access

16. A new bin bay platform is to be provided on the roof of the study extension, for access by occupants of all No.72 flats. This will keep the bins off the pavement and discreetly behind the front planting and boundary walls.
17. A new open tread black painted metal stair, descending from this bin platform, will be installed to access the basement via the area patio. This will provide an alternative exit to the internal stair within flat A, and fire escape from basement to street level as required by Building Regulations Part B1.
18. Services meters (gas, water, electricity) for all No.72 flats, currently mounted in a difficult to access position on the inside of the bay window wall of flat A's basement, can be relocated to the communal front hallway, allowing convenient access for all individual occupants of No.72, or utilities companies as necessary.

Materials

19. The internal vertical surfaces of the patio will be lined in insulated render wall panels in masonry colour and texture, reflecting materials used in the conservation area. Stone paving will be used for the horizontal surfaces in the area, and matching stone to some of the vertical surfaces.
20. Windows with slender sightlines will be used for the new windows to the basement patio area. These will reflect the delicacy and elegance of the glazing bars and muntins of the original windows, whilst also being capable of accommodating environmentally high-performing triple-glazing units.
21. A positive original feature that survives at No.72 is the enclosing lava brick front boundary wall. The pavement section will be preserved and returned along the front door pathway on the south side, and on the north side in front of the bin bay, as an upstand surrounding the new area perimeter. Balustrade height of 1100 mm is achieved by mounting unobtrusive black painted metal railings and handrail on top of this low wall to reflect similar precedents in the vicinity (e.g. Nos.18, 62 & 82) and keep the masonry work to its original height.

Impact on character of Conservation Area

22. Our proposal for the basement works to No.72 Flat A respects and maintains the uniform building line of the Coniston Road house fronts, set back from the boundary line of their front gardens.
23. By maintaining and restoring the low front boundary wall our proposal respects the sense of enclosure these low walls to the front gardens bring to the neighbourhood, and identified as a cherished characteristic in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Moreover the wall is made of 'lava bricks', a material especially typically used for boundary walls of this nature in the original Edwardian residential development of Muswell Hill. Planting along the boundaries and the tops of the low front wall will also be used to enhance the green character of the front garden.
24. The additional work proposed outside the envelope of the existing property respects the domestic scale of its surroundings. Being essentially confined low down and to the basement area, it will have very little impact on the street scene.
25. We have identified a number of basement conversion precedents nearby (see photos attached Nos.4, 10, 18, 28, 62, 68, 82) which have fitted in with the original and established character of the Conservation Area.
26. The facing and visible materials we are proposing to use match those found commonly among neighbouring residential buildings. They are characteristic of the area.
27. The character of existing basement conversions on the street varies from utilitarian, with small windows and cement finishes, to compressed light well 'trenches', to well-planted margins and paved areas, with decorative brick and ironwork. Our proposal creates an attractive patio garden, enhanced with good planting and fine facing materials.

Impact on amenity of neighbours

28. As a proposal to provide basement accommodation, the scheme does not envisage any structures above ground that would impact neighbours' amenity through overbearing or overshadowing, compromising their access or enjoyment of their properties. Excavating the area in front of No.72 would require due care in creating the perimeter retaining walls, with attention paid both to sound underpinning of foundations, structural design and waterproofing.
29. One of the positive outcomes of our proposal would be the purposeful accommodation of the bins off the pavement, housed within a green-roofed shelter, improving the appearance and experience of the street for neighbours and passers-by alike.



No.72

'Lava brick' boundary wall currently obscured by on street bin storage



No.36

Visible 'lava brick' wall

Basement conversion and area precedents in Coniston Road, including examples of the use of black metal railings for enclosure



No.4



No.10



No.18



No.28



No.62



No.68



No.82