



Listed Building Consent (Application: internal alterations)

139 Fortis Green Road, London. N10 0LX

Listed Building Statement

by Lucy Zanetti Architect: September 2023

Heritage Statement

Location and Context

Birchwood Mansions on the west side of Fortis Green Road, Muswell Hill, is a purpose built mansion block of flats by WJ and W Collins in 1907, the style is Arts and Crafts.

It is Listed Building Grade: II.



It is in the centre Muswell Hill in the London Borough of Haringey. It is part of the Muswell Hill Conservation Area, a neighbourhood that has a rare quality of consistency and completeness.

It has distinctive Arts and Crafts characteristics, as set out in the London Borough of Haringey's Conservation Area appraisal, the area is the careful combination of residential, religious and retail throughout, although this building is purely residential.

The building is red brick intercepted with pebble dashing on the front elevation, brick at the back. It is three storeys with a plain tiled roof. The front has three entrances set back within an arched recesses. The window frames are painted green and of a regular fenestration pattern. The building is well maintained externally and helps define the character of the area.

Birchwood Mansions is set within its own private, shared garden.

Flat 139 is on the ground floor in the central bay to the left of the front door. There is a small window set back in the entrance recess that gives onto the first small room within the flat.

Layout

The current layout of the flat is of a traditional configuration, with a private front door off the main entrance lobby that runs through the building to a back door onto the communal garden. The front door to the flat opens onto a tiled hallway, doors off to the left and right, terminating in two doors at 45° angles at the end of the hallway. Each door has a glass fanlight above to bring light into the core of the flat. The first room to the left may be considered as a cloakroom, it is only 1.4m wide so not habitable as it is. This has the small angled window onto the porch at the front of the mansion block. Beyond this is a bedroom with a window to the front, followed by a living room with a square bay facing onto Fortis Green Road. The dividing wall has a large recessed arch within it.

From the entrance and to the right are three more doors, the first is the dining room with small back lobby and a back door onto the communal garden at the behind. The second door is to the bathroom and the last door at 45° is onto the back bedroom.

There is no cornicing in the cloakroom, dining room, bathroom and kitchen, the other rooms have picture rails and cornicing. The dining room ceiling has been strapped to keep it in place. All the original fireplaces will remain, the fireplace in the dining room (not original) will be removed.

Objectives and Strategy

This application seeks to gain optimal energy efficiency by insulating, adding secondary glazing, upgrading mechanical and electrical fittings and making a minor alteration to the layout to adjust to modern living with a space to work from home.

The services (currently surface mounted and irregular) are to be relocated, to be hidden beneath the floor or in the walls where appropriate. Any new skirting and cornice will match the existing where it has been removed, which is of an appropriate style and design for the time of construction.

Design and Layout Proposals

The proposals are summarised below.

- Cloakroom space between existing cloakroom and first bedroom: the wall is partially moved by 50cm to gain habitable space to provide a study for the owners' to use as a small study, a fanlight runs along the top of the wall to allow light to penetrate into this dark spot. The line of the existing wall is indicated on the floor with a trace of it as a brass track inset into the floating timber floor. The wall is constructed of timber studs with plasterboard and plaster.
- The adjacent room loses this small amount of floor area, the matching cornice is added along the ceiling by the top of the new wall.
- Push through the existing recessed arch in the living room to form a double doorway between the two rooms, the doors matching the other internal doors and only 3m sq of the original fabric in the wall is removed.
- New bathroom fittings replace the old, with only a shower, no bath.
- New kitchen fittings are installed in the dining room.
- The back lobby is a utility room.

- Secondary glazing, removable and compatible (leaving the windows clearly visible) with the fenestration pattern is inserted internally.
- The timber floors are made good and even, a thin layer of insulation and engineered parquet flooring is put over this as a floating floor so as not to disturb the original floorboards.
- External back door is overhauled and draft proofed, single glazing removed and replaced with slimline double glazing to improve the insulation.

Planning Statement

Birchwood Mansions is set in Muswell Hill Conservation Area. Planning guidelines are in place for this conservation area. This proposal intends to conform to all applicable guidelines.

Planning and listed building consent applications should be considered in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Council's Local Development Plan.

The NPPF was approved in 2012 and updated in September 2023, and supports sustainable development. It has three roles: an economic role (supporting growth), a social role (including ensuring that the right sort of housing is available for current and future generations) and an environmental role (protecting or enhancing the environment). All three should be considered together.

It considers that promoting sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to):

- making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages;
- moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature;
- replacing poor design with better design;
- improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and
- widening the choice of high quality homes.

The framework has a particular emphasis on housing supply including ensuring there is adequate housing to meet the needs of particular groups and future-proofing housing stock.

With regard to design, the framework seeks high quality design.

In terms of applications involving designated heritage assets (listed buildings and conservation areas), local authorities should use a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The policies in Haringey's adopted Core Strategy and emerging Development Management policies broadly reflect the national guidance. Emphasis is placed on the supply of good quality housing. High quality design is encouraged and applications for alterations and extensions to listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas should conserve or enhance their significance.

It is clear that given the existing alterations in this building, including on the adjacent flats, that in this instance the proposal will not have any impact on the street frontage or effect the building as a whole.

In conclusion, the proposals will ensure the suitability of the flat for long term occupancy by owners. They will address the imbalance within the facilities in the flat and improve it by carefully upgrading it. They will not cause harm to the listed building or the Muswell Hill Conservation Area. The majority of the flats in this building already have upgraded the kitchens, bathrooms, services and flooring, including the adjacent flats. The proposals will be finished to a high quality, using traditional materials.

Parking Provision

This proposal has no impact on parking provision. During construction all appropriate permits will be obtained for any contractors parking or deliveries.

Foul Sewage and utilities Assessment

All waste from the new installations, will be directed into the existing drains.

Site Waste Management Plan

Not Applicable

Ventilation / Extraction Statement

Small domestic extractor fans will be fitted in the kitchen and bathroom, and are to extract through the roof behind the parapet walls. Any external extraction systems will not be visible from the front or the rear.

Photographic Survey

The following photos below show the flat at 139 Fortis Green Road and the exterior view of the rear of the building.