

Application for listed building consent HGY/2026/0368

28 Wood Lane, N6 5UB

Proposed works to a Grade II listed dwelling comprising the construction of a new single-storey rear extension, internal refurbishment and reconfiguration of the existing layout including lowering of the lower ground floor level, installation of a new staircase, associated structural works and redecoration. External works include landscaping of the rear garden and associated works.

The Highgate Conservation Area Advisory Committee objects to this application, which proposes extensive alterations to a Grade II listed building in the Highgate Conservation Area. A planning application (HGY/2025/3586) for these works is currently under consideration, to which the HCAAC has objected.

No further information been provided to address the substantial concerns raised in our earlier objection. Following further consideration and discussion, this objection reiterates those concerns with some additional comments.

Dating from the 1830 -1840s and possibly built in more than one stage, this is one of the most distinctive houses in Highgate, an exemplar of the 'cottage villa' (see JC Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture* (1833)).

Proposed external alterations

Replacement of windows

The Tudor-Gothic style windows, with deep projecting mullions and transoms, are typical of the 'cottage orné' genre of the late-18th and early-19th centuries. There is a prominent double-height canted bay window to the rear elevation. The remainder consist principally of timber cross-frames set within splayed reveals. The lights appear to comprise side-hung casements and fixed lights. There are also some metal-framed casements to the basement area described as 'Crittall' although these may very well be original (and made of wrought or cast iron, rather than steel).

It is essential that a conservation-led approach is taken, with the aim to repair and adapt existing historic windows wherever possible, as advised in Historic England's guidance *Traditional windows: their care, repair and upgrading* <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/>

The DAS Part 1 4.6 states dismissively that the windows are of 'mixed significance' and *while contributing to overall character, are mostly simple casements with varying ages and conditions*. No information is provided in the supporting documentation regarding the extent of survival of original windows, including any historic ironmongery (of which there is some evidence in photographs of 1974 – see link below). This should be the starting point. Although far from explicit in the description of works or application drawings, it is evident in the DAS Part 3 Section 7.4 that complete window replacement (including the timber mullions and transoms, and shutters to the bay window) is being proposed in order to accommodate double glazing. We are far from convinced from the condition survey submitted with the planning application (but not the LBC application), that this is necessary. It is uncommon that window decay is comprehensive, particularly where the building has been well maintained as appears to be the case here. The option of secondary glazing seems to have been disregarded.

Lowering of rear windows to create new entrances The square-paned casements of the two windows may be original (and most likely the stable-type door adjacent to the left-hand window), providing access to the former service rooms (hence, perhaps, their 'vernacular' style). The Heritage Statement does not mention these features. Dropping the cills to create new entrances (and the attendant loss of the existing joinery) would be highly regrettable, and unnecessary since there is already access to the proposed conservatory.

Conservatory We do not object in principal to this addition (and there is a precedent for a verandah here). We are concerned however about the depth of the proposed extension. This should be given further consideration.

Proposed Internal alterations

Dwellings of the cottage orné genre are often idiosyncratic in their style, layout and fixtures, combining 'rustic' and 'polite' features, and do not always (as in this instance) follow conventional plan forms. Stairs may be quite modest. Incremental changes have clearly taken place to the interior of this house, notably the stair with its c1900 balustrade and awkward relationship with the window, and most recently in 2014.

As stated in our objection to the planning application, the significance (and likely date) of the unusual cross-braced timber stair enclosure, which is mentioned only in passing in the Heritage Statement, merit further consideration and a strong justification for its removal. A matching door to this enclosure, which may have been the entrance to the original basement flight, is shown in a 1974 photo in the London Picture Archive (see link below); it is unclear whether this still exists. The inner face of the entrance door, illustrated on p33 of the DAS Part 1, has very similar details, suggesting that the stair enclosure could be contemporary.

<https://www.londonpicturearchive.org.uk/view-item?key=WnsiUCI6eyJrZXI3b3JkcyI6Indvb2QgbGFuZSBoaWdoZ2F0ZSImltleXdvcmRzTW9kZSI6MX19&pg=29&WINID=1770478206907#/171065>

Lowering of basement floor The basement floor level was raised to its present level in 2014. The eastern bay is stated in the DAS Part 2 6.15 to retain some original fittings, including vertical sliding shutters, which would be retained. Here (and generally) the application drawings should indicate clearly where historic joinery, fittings (including windows) and partitions are proposed for retention or for removal/alteration, including the ceiling to the eastern bedroom where it is proposed to open up the roofspace. This information is currently somewhat dispersed

Conclusion The proposed alterations would potentially incur further loss of original and significant historic fabric, which would diminish the special interest of this Grade II listed building. This would be contrary to national and local policy and guidance. Listed building consent and planning permission should therefore be refused at this stage.