



Highgate 1869 - 1880



Highgate 2023

17B North Grove, Highgate London N6 4SH
Single-storey Rear Extension to replace existing Conservatory

Context and Local Character

From its humble origins as a mediaeval hermitage, Highgate grew to become the largest centre in Hornsey & St Pancras, valued for its air, scenery and well-lit streets. In the 1680s, William Blake started building a series of villas on the Grove to raise money for an orphanage. Development continued up the hill, extending across Hampstead Lane to form the first three villas of North Grove (see front cover maps). By 1919, the number doubled to six houses with extensive gardens (see adjacent historical map overlays).

17 North Grove (outlined red) is not part of the original six villas on the west side, but built or extended over part of the villa grounds, with its building footprint still absent in 1896 but clearly established by 1939.

The east side of the road used to provide rear service access to properties along North Road. As a result of this backland development and post-war building/rebuilding, North Grove has an interesting collection of many periods and styles:

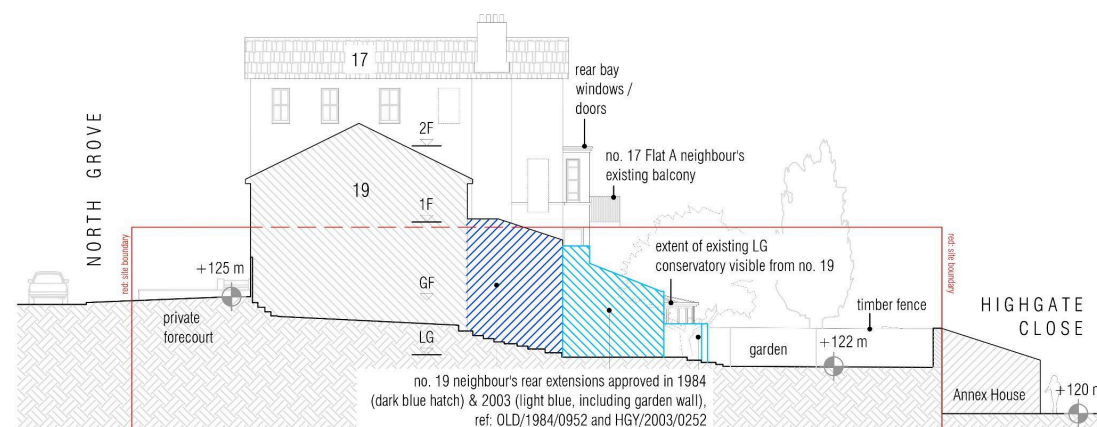
The quiet nature of this cul-de-sac, the interest formed by the variety of architectural styles and the presence of tall trees, all positively contribute to the character of its streetscene.

*Highgate Conservation Area
- Character Appraisal and Management Plan, Dec 2013*

Terrace Block and Extensions

No. 17 is a neo-Georgian terrace of four levels topped by a distinctive gable roof, and bookended by houses of different heights (see site photos, lower row). The property is divided into two self-contained units (Flat A and Flat B), each with its own front door and rear balcony. 17B, in addition, has a private garden with a 4.5 m deep conservatory at the lower ground level.

The entire block is within the Highgate Conservation Area, but not listed and not affected by Article 4. A series of extensions/conservatories have been approved and built along the terrace (see next page). Making good use of the sloping site and screening trees (see Side View below), overlooking is avoided and the additions remain subordinate to the main block, with single-storey extensions reaching 3.25 m high and even higher two-/three- storey extensions.



Side View showing sloping terrain. No. 17 has three storeys above street level along North Grove, and one Lower Ground concealed by the 3 m drop to the rear garden. The existing conservatory is largely obscured by the neighbour's extension in light blue, and cannot be seen from Annexe House at all, as Highgate Close is lower by 2 m



Historical Map Overlays with no. 17 North Grove (site) outlined in red over Ordnance Surveys 1869 (left), 1919 (middle) and 1939 (right). Text records indicate a girls' school was founded on North Grove from 1925, but so far no drawings can be traced to determine whether or how it was connected to the 1970s *Davies' School of English* at no. 17 (Source: 1975 Post Office Directory London)



Site Photographs (taken on 19 Jan 2024) showing front facade along North Grove (left) and rear facade (right)



Existing Rear Block View showing heights and extent of extensions/conservatories along terrace and neighbouring blocks (details in drawing 0-012 submitted)

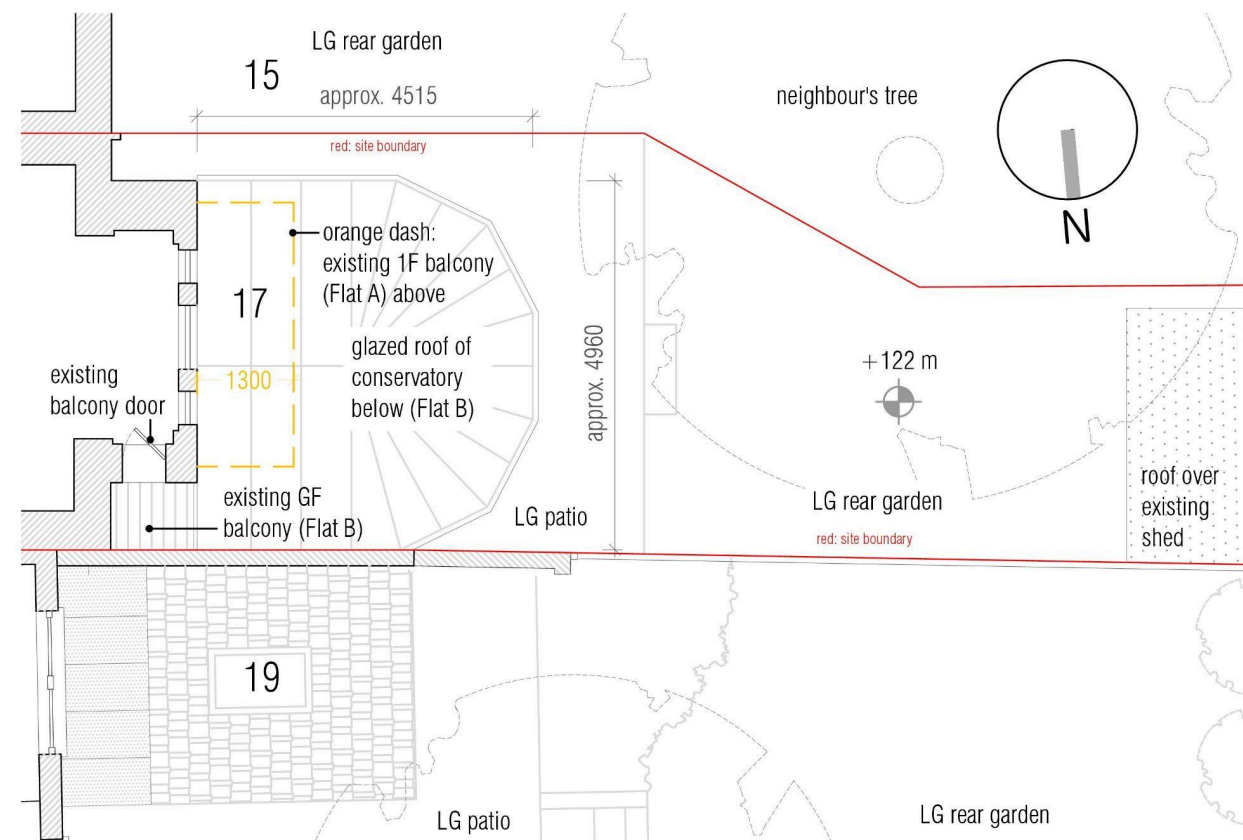


Proposed Rear Block View showing conservatory replaced with single-storey rear extension, whose height matches the 3.25 m approved and built at no. 13 (details in drawing 1-012 submitted).

Existing and Proposed Footprints

The existing footprint has been established since the conservatory was built more than ten years ago. It is setback from the south boundary shared with no. 15, but adjoins no. 19's brick extension to the north (see Existing Roof Plan, below left). The prow of the conservatory goes beyond the neighbour's extension, measuring 4.5 m in its entirety.

The proposed footprint maintains the south setback. Like its predecessor, the extension adjoins no. 19's extension (see Proposed Plan, below right) but it recedes from the prow (pink dash) and is setback from the north boundary. At 3.86 m on the furthest edge, the replacement extension is shorter than the existing conservatory and smaller in terms of overall area

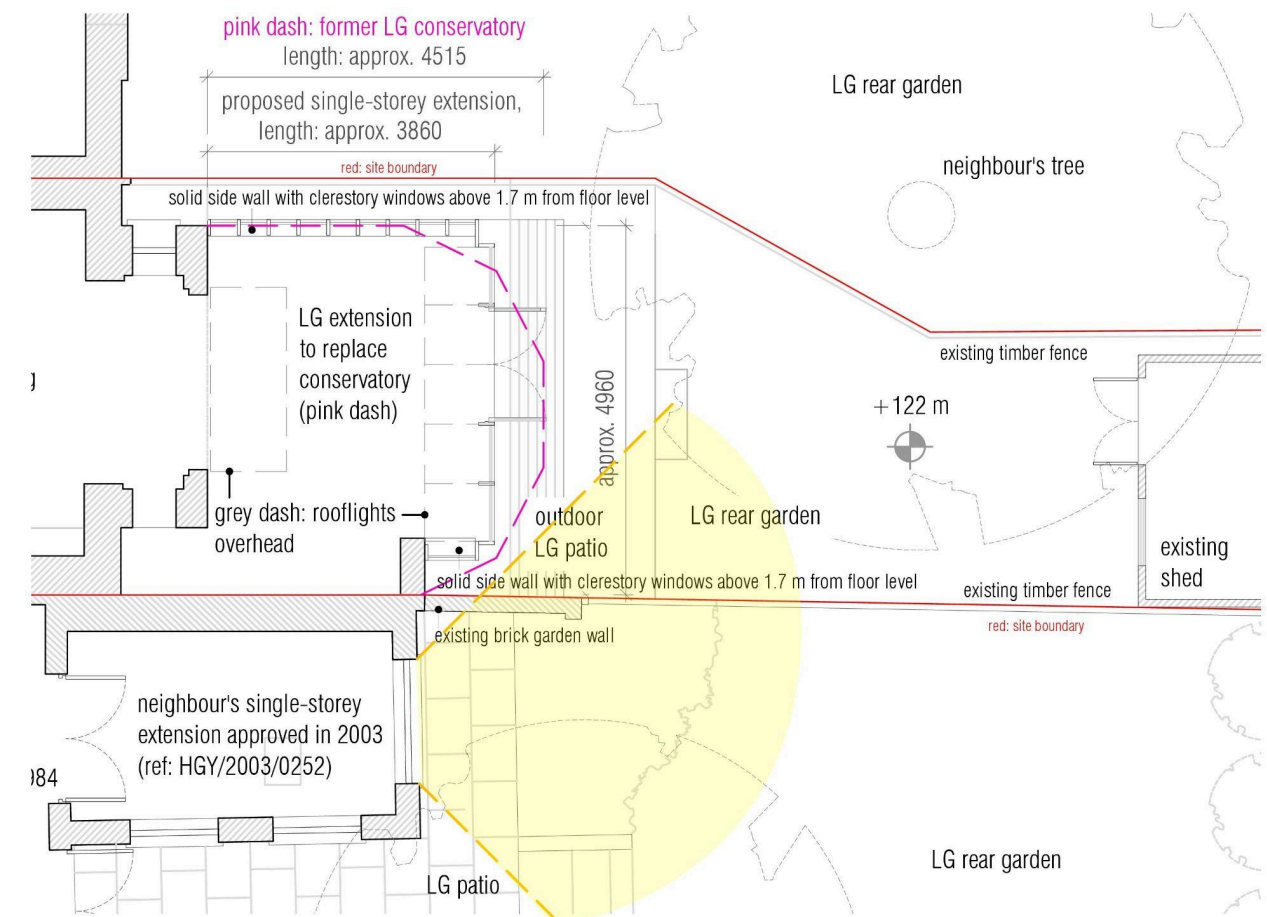


Existing Roof Plan shows how the existing 4.5 m long conservatory is setback from the south boundary and partly adjoins no. 19 neighbour's brick extension along the north boundary

Privacy, Daylight/Sunlight and Outlook

Privacy between neighbours is maintained with the above setbacks working together with the existing garden wall and fencing.

As shown by 45° yellow cone (Proposed Plan, below right), the view out from the neighbour's existing extension is unaffected by the replacement extension proposed for 17B. More daylight and sunlight reaches neighbour no. 19's property as the replacement is setback, and smaller than the existing conservatory.



Lower Ground Proposed Plan shows extension's setbacks and footprint smaller than the former conservatory (pink dash) and how no. 19 neighbour's outlook (yellow cone) is unaffected

Existing and Proposed Roof Heights

The roof of the existing conservatory is fully glazed, and pitched with a ridge height of approx. 3.55m (pink dash in Rear Elevation, right) measured from the existing patio. The replacement is flat, with at least 40% area designated for rooftop planting and landscaping (green roof) including pebble borders serving as firebreaks and drainage. To remain subordinate to the main building, the highest point of the replacement/green roof is 3.25 m (see right), matching the height of the rear extension approved and built at no. 13 (see Block Views, page 3).

Green Roof planting, irrigation and maintenance

A combination of wildflower, sedum and other species will be carefully selected by the 17B’s owner-applicant who is a landscape designer. Factors such as roof orientation, exposure and biodiversity will be considered, as well as provision for a quiet pump (< 30dB) and drip-feed irrigation system on the roof (on standby in case of prolonged hot summers). Regular maintenance helps green roofs thrive, and it is fortunate that essential service access can be taken via 17B’s existing balcony.

Roof Perimeter and Proposed Rooflights

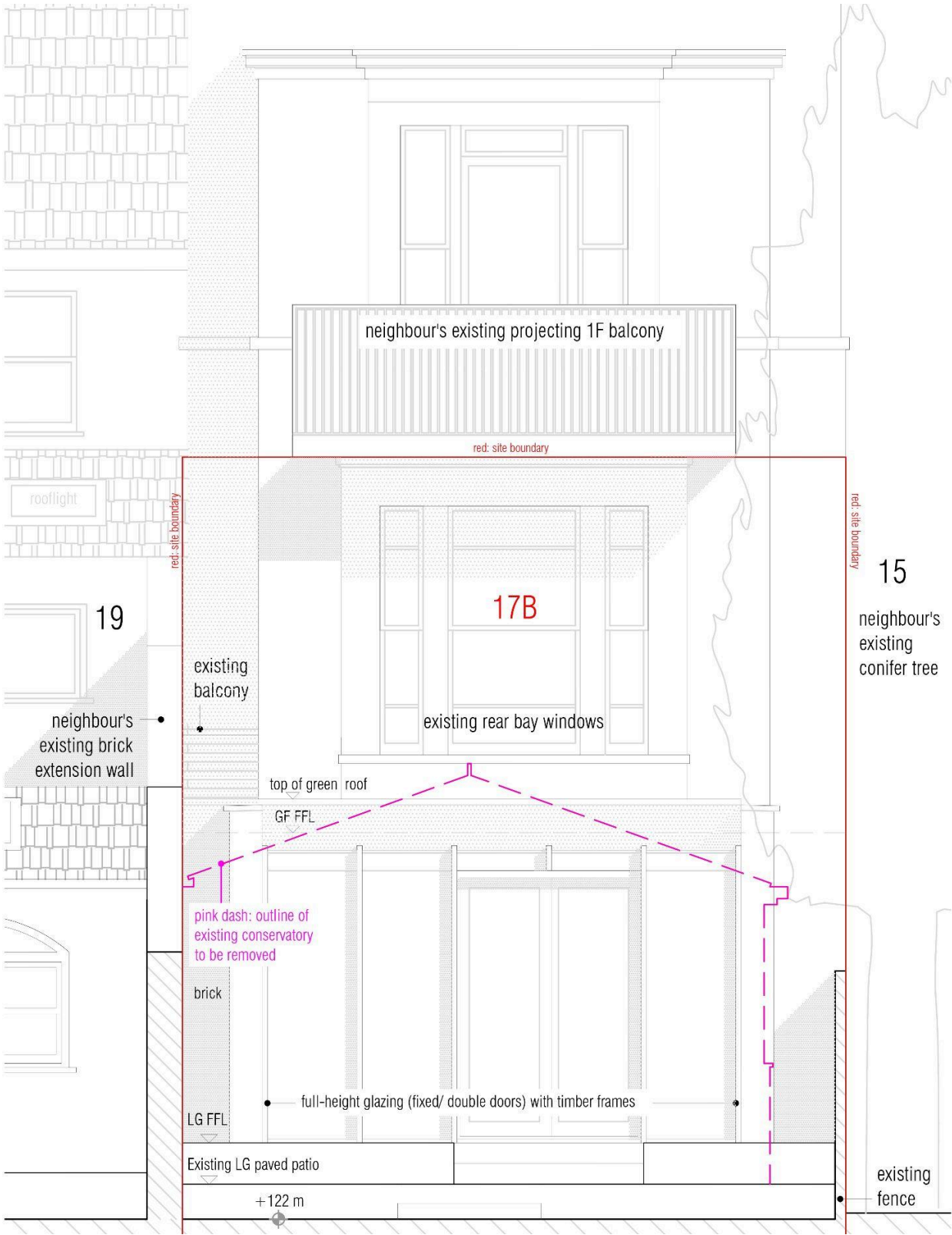
Metal cappings will be fitted atop the perimeter, leading to a concealed gutter at the lower end of the green roof. The remaining roof area will be fitted with rooflights, to optimise daylight entering the lower ground kitchen interior and dining area below.

Timber Frame and Facade with infill glazing

As the mid-terrace conservatory is located to the rear and on the lower ground level, its removal and replacement will involve moving materials through the flat interior and up/down one floor.

Designing a lightweight timber frame will make the above manoeuvres easier, and result in a lighter new structure that could sit on existing foundations (potentially saving time and the expense of digging and laying new foundations). If the existing floor slab and conservatory base walls are also found to be structurally sound, they too will be reused to reduce construction waste.

As shown on the Rear Elevation (right), the timber framework is set back from both sides and expressed as 5 bays infilled with full-height glazing, including double doors for access and view out to the lower ground garden. The regular division facilitates construction and allows the new glazing to be sized to the scale of existing windows/door on floors above, in keeping with neo-Georgian proportions of the entire rear bay.



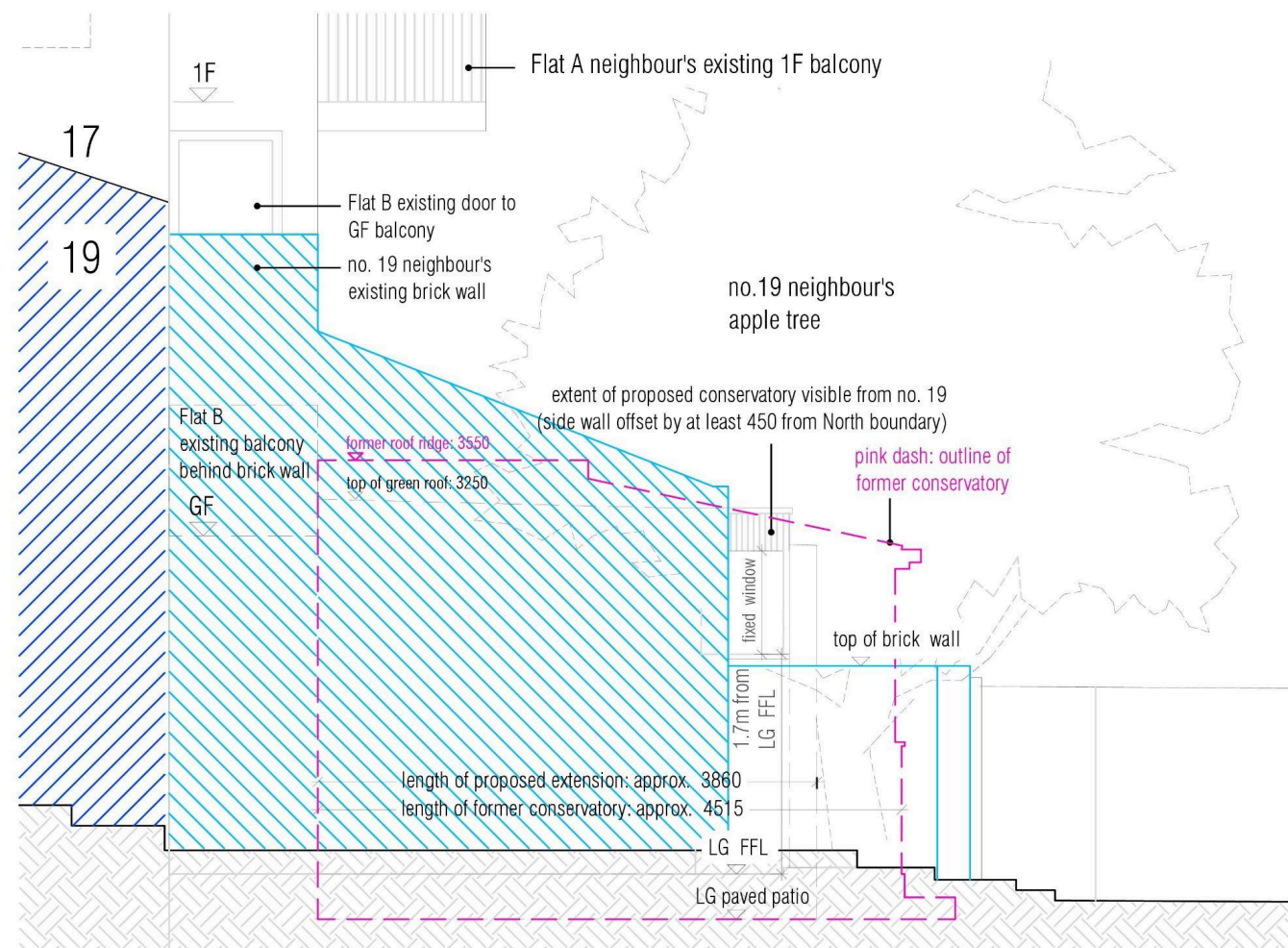
Rear Elevation shows proposed extension in relation to conservatory roof (pink dash), balconies, windows/door on floors above, and the entire projecting bay (details in drawing 1-012 submitted)

Side Elevations

In contrast to the transparency of the rear facade, the sides are designed as muted backdrops set back from the boundary lines, with solid walls for privacy between neighbours and clerestory windows only at above viewing height, i.e. 1.7 m and higher from the finished floor level (FFL, as marked on drawings below).

This provides respite and channels attention inwards into the top-lit interior. It also allows insulation to be packed between timber frames on the north and south flanks for overall thermal comfort, and finished with vertical timber cladding on the external faces.

As shown in the North Side Elevation (below left), only the top part of the proposed extension can be seen above no. 19's existing garden wall. The visible extent will be less than the existing conservatory (pink dash).



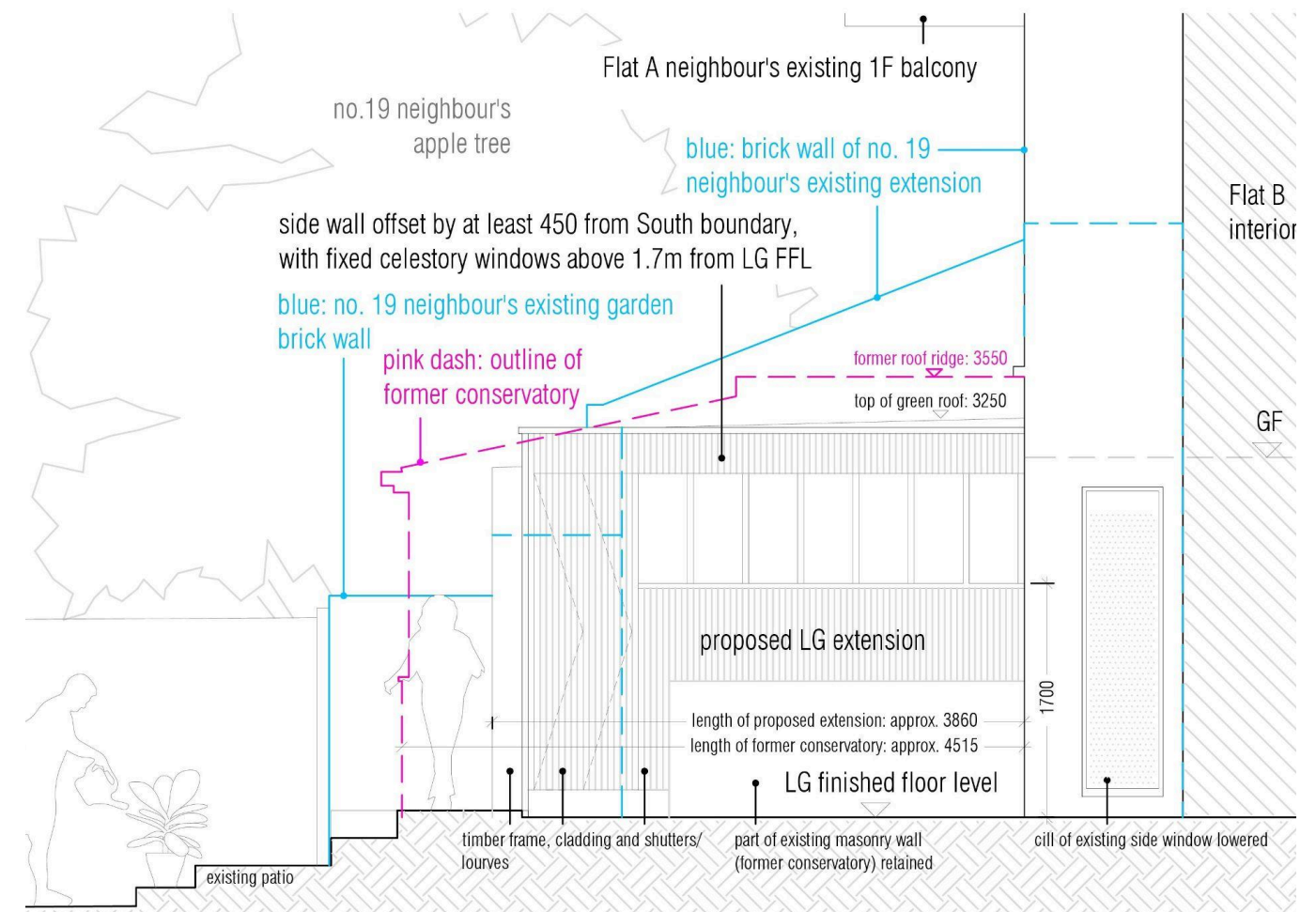
Side Elevation from North shows the view from neighbour no. 19 - how the replacement extension is shorter than the existing conservatory (pink dash) - and largely obscured by the neighbour's existing extension and brick garden wall (light blue, details in drawing 1-011 submitted)

From the opposite side (South Elevation, below right), the entire prow of the existing conservatory will be removed. If the dwarf walls of its straight section can be reused, new timber frames will sit on the retained masonry base and continue in a straight line to meet the rear facade.

Of the nine timber frames on the south side, at least two will be fitted as open-able timber shutters so that the extension does not overheat in summer. Their opening direction and extent will be restricted, to eliminate any overlooking between no.s 15 and 17B. The remaining frames will have clerestory windows from 1.7 m above FFL, using the same facade treatment (i.e. same details, materials and finishes) as the North Side Elevation.

The external changes proposed so far affect only the conservatory, which is not an original feature. The only alteration to the period facade is to the lowest side window in the rear bay (below right), To allow more daylight into the interior, the window cill is proposed to be lowered so that the opening becomes longer (existing width retained). The entire pane will be fixed and fitted with obscure/frosted glazing for privacy.

The lengthened window and replacement extension are not visible from North Grove (principal/front elevation).



Side Elevation from South compares the replacement extension against the conservatory (pink dash) and shows how timber frames can be trimmed to sit on any length of retained base wall, with openable shutters in full-height frames (details in drawing 1-010 submitted)

Air source heat pump

In line with national policy to lower carbon emissions by phasing out gas boilers, air source heat pumps (ASHP) can be installed in existing residences, but the application process may differ for houses and flats. House-owners are entitled to install ASHP within Permitted Development (PD) limits, or they can opt to apply for planning permission (e.g. if selected ASHP volume exceeds PD limit of 0.6 m³).

Flat-owners, on the other hand, need to submit planning applications as they do not have PD rights at all. Nonetheless, in making this planning application Flat B, it is useful to refer to how PD requires ASHP to be positioned at least 1 m from the property boundary.

17B has a sunken air well at Lower Ground, approx. 2.3 m below street level and therefore not visible from North Grove. As shown on Plan 1-003 and Section 1-010 with the airwell, the proposed space for ASHP is at least 1 m from the property boundary and more than 1 m away from neighbours' front entrance doors and windows (no.s 17A and 19).

Access and other amenity

In terms of public transport, the site is rated Good (PTAL: 2), within 8 - 12 mins' walk to nearby bus stops (four bus routes) and closest London Underground station.

Within the property, the proposal does not change the existing front door access or internal stairs. At the rear, provision is made for level or nearly-level access between the extension floor and lower-ground outdoor decking (to be laid over part of the existing patio).

Further away at the uncovered part of the patio, the existing step down to the lower ground garden is retained to reduce localised flash flood risk.

There is no reduction in private outdoor space provision, which includes the existing rear balcony and garden at the lower ground level.

The existing rear balcony also serves as cleaning and maintenance access to windows, gutters, green roof re-sowing, roofing and other repairs etc.

Refuse/recycling bin storage and collection remains the same.

Summary

Although the original flat at 17B is in good condition, the rear conservatory added by previous owner/s is showing signs of wear and tear after more than ten years in use. It tends to be too cold in winter and too hot in summer.

Following positive discussions with neighbours, 17B's current owner would like to replace the conservatory with a kitchen/dining extension nested under a green roof.

The single-storey extension will be open towards the rear garden, but setback and enclosed on both sides in consideration of the terrace and neighbouring extensions/conservatories. Working with current building standards and ASHP, the replacement will provide better thermal comfort and ventilation for year-round use.

A light-touch is adopted towards its design and construction (e.g. benchmarking heights, scaling down footprint and reusing existing structure where possible). Like its predecessor, timber is used as main structure but the extent/positions of glazed infills are more selective and sensitively integrated with the landscape and conservation area.



3D Rear View showing extension (highlighted yellow) in relation to terrace block and landscape