

131 Nell Lane – Heritage Statement

Two Storey Rear Extension

The residential property of 131 Nell Lane in West Didsbury, is located at the end of a private driveway on the western edge of the Albert Park Conservation Area. The proposed 2 storey extension is situated to the rear of the property, which is screened from the neighbours by a number of mature trees. The extension is secluded & will not be visible from the public highway on any side, or the private driveway.

The historical setting of 131 Nell Lane has it sandwiched between the Chorlton Union Workhouse which was built in 1855 (later named Withington Hospital) & Drayton Lodge. By 1905 Drayton Lodge had made way for a further expansion of West Didsbury's housing stock with the early Edwardian terraces of Tintern & Arley Avenue. The Victorian map from 1893 which pre-dates Tintern Avenue shows house numbers 131-145 Nell Lane, they are located to the east of the Mortuary (later A&E) & separated from the hospital by a long & high brick wall. From pre-1893 until the mid to late fifties on the land to the north & east of 131, the owners (the Brundrett family) grew dahlias under the name of 'Nell Lane Nurseries' & had an extensive area of large glass houses that they used for this purpose. The Brundrett's also ran the florist shop on the corner of Nell Lane & Tintern Avenue until 1965, when it was bought by Winifred Hayes who ran a successful florist shop on the site until she retired in 2006.



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The setting of 131 Nell Lane has changed over time. The glasshouses of Nell Lane Nurseries lasted until the mid 1960's when they were demolished to make way for the residential development of Tintern Court, which is made up of a series of 3 storey blocks of flats. By the 1980's the last of the nursery had been sold, this fronted Tintern Avenue & was a perfect plot for a pair of semi-detached houses to be built (Nos.1&3). The florist shop closed in 2006 & is now the very popular Thyme Out, a café run by the florist's grandson. Withington Hospital, which at its height was the largest teaching hospital in Europe, closed in 2002 & a new community hospital built in 2007 on the corner of Nell Lane & Burton Road. The old hospital was converted into flats & the surrounding grounds being developed for new build housing (including the mortuary site just over the wall) & completed around 2011.

On a micro level, the properties that are accessed from our private driveway have changed quite dramatically too. On first inspection they form a traditional Victorian terrace setting with a ginnel through to the rear of three of the properties & a stand-alone dwelling on the boundary wall. Located on the driveway, our outbuildings were the original stand-alone structure, but were structurally unsafe. Therefore they were demolished & in 2013 replaced with a dwelling (129) on the same footprint, which in combination with the high boundary wall visually completes the courtyard facing Nell Lane with 137, 139 & the gable of 141. In 2006 both 133 & 131 were extensively remodeled internally, with 133 gaining an additional 2 rooms taken from 131 to create a more sensible layout for a family to use & resolve structural compromises that had been introduced over time. Similarly to its neighbour, 131 Nell Lane had been butchered & botched many times in its history & after giving 2 rooms to

133, the remodeling & extension of 2006 was essential in creating a family home while still retaining the garden. This was achieved by removing the lean-to attached to the gable & extending the terrace over 2 storeys keeping to roughly the same footprint. Also, removing the bay window on the rear elevation & replacing it with a modern 2 storey flat roofed extension, which was separated from the existing building by a glazed link. The rear of 139 Nell Lane, which can be accessed on foot is not original. In 1982 the property had a 2 storey extension built to form a kitchen & a bedroom.

The proposals are for a small set back flat roofed 2 storey extension which will add an en-suite to the guest bedroom at the first floor & at ground floor a much needed backdoor / cleaning-storage area for our loveable, but mucky dog! The extension is subservient in height to the adjacent flat roofed block with extended eaves & being set back can be easily connected into 131's existing drainage manhole, water system & heating runs.

The heritage asset & setting of the Albert Park Conservation Area will remain unaffected, since the extension is to the rear of all the surrounding properties & therefore cannot be seen from any public highway, or even our private driveway. The surrounding properties do not make a contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area, being blocks of flats dating from the 1960's & a pair of 1980's semi-detached houses. Even the rear of 139 Nell Lane is not original, being a 2 storey extension dating from 1982.

The proposals will have the most minimal impact on the surrounding properties. The orientation & modest height of the proposal, combined with the existing high fences & screening trees (pine tree in the garden of 3 Tintern Avenue, acer & bay trees in the garden of 133), should ensure that there is no loss of amenity for any of the neighbouring properties. Additionally, there are no windows to the south elevation, thus avoiding any possibility of overlooking. Both of the new rooms are non-habitable & the proposed windows look directly towards the adjacent trees of Tintern Court. The trees & planting that surround our property are an effective screen to the extension, they are mature & all but the two closest & smallest are to be retained. These are of low quality (one is dead) & will be removed (see aboricultural report). However, the remaining screening is so dense that their removal will have a negligible impact.

Our justification for the proposed extension to 131 is to add the two rooms we feel the house has always lacked & would have if the layout hadn't needed to be redesigned to solve the structural problems found in 133 with their associated cost. Also, due to the design of 131's glazed doors, these have no external handles, while this is wonderful for security, we do miss having a back door for direct access from the garden & driveway without always having to go through the front door. The extension also offers us the potential to introduce a sustainable heat source that due to its location can easily connect into the existing system in combination or as a complete alternative.

In mitigation & as a replacement of the tree to be removed, we will be planting further screening along the line of the existing curved boundary wall between 131 & 133, making any gaps found in the encircling line/screen of vegetation complete.

To be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Surrounding Context Images;

Historic Maps (1);

Historic Maps (2);

Aboricultural Impact Assessment;

Aboricultural Method Statement.