



Planning Solutions Team
Planning and Regeneration
Culture & Environment
Directorate
London Borough of Camden
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Dear Louis,

www.camden.gov.uk/planning

2022/2914/PRE – 1a Belsize Park Gardens London NW3 4LB

I refer to your pre-planning application enquiry 2022/2914/PRE at 1a Belsize Park Gardens London NW3 4LB. Thank you for sending the pre-application pack and for the meetings held virtually and on site.

Development Description

Erection of a two rear ground floor extensions, one infill to rear of main house with sedum roof and one to rear of existing side wing, plus a roof extension with raised ridge height and two possible designs for side dormers to accommodate further residential living space. The proposal will incorporate glazing to the ground floor as well as associated rooflights and internal alterations.

Planning History

Please refer to Appendix 1.

Site Description

The application site is a semi-detached house built in the mid-19th century. It is a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area. It is not within the setting of any listed buildings, but virtually the entire street is composed of positive contributors. Originally the house had no extensions, but in the early 2000s the existing single storey extension with a hipped roof and chimney was allowed on appeal. No 1a, to which this pre-application proposal relates, is contained within part of the rear ground floor of the main house plus its single storey rear extension.

Assessment

The main issues for consideration are:

- Design and Heritage
- Amenity
- Quality of accommodation

Design and Heritage

Policies D1 and D2 from the Local Plan are relevant as the site is located within a Conservation Area. The site is listed as a positive contributor in the Belsize Conservation Area Statement 2002.

This pre-application has been discussed with a Council Conservation Officer who attended the site visit and has provided observations on the proposals.

The proposal for the rear extensions, both the sedum-roofed infill extension and the increased length of the existing side wing, is likely to be acceptable subject to detail.

In respect of the roof extension, if the sole matter was the increase in the ridge height of the roof, then it is likely that some increase could be supported, providing the roof still reads in a similar manner to the existing (i.e. slate and slopes unbroken by dormers when seen from the street).

However, the proposed roof accommodation appears unable to function at adequate head-height internally without the use of dormers (be they functional or blind). This results in a much less subservient arrangement between the extension and the main house than the existing arrangement, making it impossible to argue that it either preserves or enhances the contribution that the site makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

While there would be no objection in principle to some form of roof accommodation on the site, it is difficult to see how this can be achieved without the roof becoming more bulky in profile, i.e. being legibly more than two storeys when seen from the public realm. Adding dormers to an extension is problematic under a number of the guidelines within Belsize Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy. In addition, planning permission for a two-storey side extension in this location was refused and upheld at appeal in part due to the visual impact on the locality and conservation area (please refer to appendix 1). Any roof accommodation therefore needs to be designed in such a way so as not to give the appearance of a two-storey structure.

The creation of dormers, be they solid-faced top-lit or conventionally side-lit, adds to the bulk and mass of the proposed alterations at roof level and results in a less subservient side extension than the existing arrangement. They also create a structure that reads less as an ancillary extension and more as an independent dwelling, which the site is not. Unless the publicly visible roof slopes of the proposal can be kept unbroken (without deleteriously affecting the form and ridge height of the roof), it is difficult to see how the proposals could preserve or enhance the positive contribution of the main house and its garden setting when read against the existing condition. It appears that the main issue which needs to be resolved is the issue of head-height and how it can be accommodated without resulting in extrusions on the western slope of the roof, while also not creating something which resembles a building of two full storeys. A more contemporary approach is less likely to be supported given the almost intact Victorian character of this entire street.

It is also noted that the proposals seem likely to require a considerable quantity of translucent/opaque glazing on the upper level of the extension, which is not generally supported.

Amenity

It is considered that the proposed increased in height of the side extension and the proposed dormers would not lead to any significant daylight/sunlight impacts on neighbouring occupiers. However, the increase in height will impact upon the outlook from the rear of the properties on Belsize Park, and so any roof extension will need to be sympathetically designed in the context of the rear gardens in the conservation area. Any windows would need to be located away from the boundary with the rear gardens on the west elevation, as excessive opaque glazing is not encouraged in the conservation area.

The proposed infill rear extension is not considered to harm daylight/sunlight to the ground floor rear windows at no. 3 as the extension would be within the 45-degree angle.

The installation of a green roof and bird and bat boxes are encouraged.

Quality of Accommodation

It is considered that the proposals would provide acceptable standards of accommodation and would meet the Nationally Described Space Standards. The rooflights would allow for an acceptable amount of daylight and sunlight; however, any revised plans should allow for a number of clear glazed windows located such that they do not cause any overlooking issues into neighbouring properties.

Summary

The proposed increase in the footprint of the rear extension from the main house, and the increase in the footprint of the side extension is acceptable subject to detail. An increase in the height of the side extension may be acceptable in principle; however this needs to be carefully designed given the constraints of the site. It is considered that the current proposals would not be supported in design and heritage terms and further design consideration is required. Further pre-application discussion is strongly encouraged before a full planning application is submitted. Any additional storey will need to provide acceptable living conditions while also being subordinate and sympathetic to its context and further consideration is needed in order to achieve this. Other options to increase floorspace without giving the appearance of a two-storey side extension could be explored.

Further pre-application discussion is encouraged. However, if you are minded to submit a planning application, I would advise you to submit the following for a valid planning application:

- Completed form (full planning application)
- An ordnance survey based location plan at 1:1250 scale denoting the application site in red.
- Floor plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled 'existing' and 'proposed'
- Design and access statement (making specific reference to the conservation area)
- Arboriculture Report
- The appropriate fee

We are legally required to consult on applications with individuals who may be affected by the proposals. We would notify neighbours by putting up a notice on or near the site. We would also place an advertisement in the local press. The Council must allow 21 days from the consultation start date for responses to be received.

It is likely that that a proposal of this size would be determined under delegated powers, however, if more than 3 objections from neighbours or an objection from a local amenity group is received the application will be referred to the Members Briefing Panel should it be recommended for approval by officers.

This document represents an initial informal officer view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and would not be binding upon the Council, nor prejudice any future planning application decisions made by the Council.

If you have any queries about the above letter or the attached document please do not hesitate to contact me on Edward.Hodgson@camden.gov.uk.

Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Hodgson

Planning Officer

Planning Solutions Team

Appendix 1:

Relevant Planning History:

Application Site

PWX0103555 - Erection of a single storey rear extension at lower ground floor level. As shown on drawing numbers 001-006. **Allowed on appeal – 20/11/2002**

8400377 - Erection of new single storey dwelling to side and rear of existing house and to include part of the basement level of the existing house as shown on drawing No. BPG1A as revised on 16th April 1984 and 13th June 1984. **Granted – 20/06/1984**

18223 - The erection of a 2-storey side extension to form an additional dwelling unit. **Refused and appeal dismissed 18/01/1984**

Reasons for refusal:

- 1. The proposed development would result in a total density in excess of that indicated as appropriate in the Greater London Development Plan and the District Plan.*
- 2. The proposed extension would have an adverse effect on the appearance of the building and the visual amenity of the area generally and would be contrary to the Council's Policy for the control of extensions within the Belsize Conservation Area.*

Neighbouring Properties:

Flat A 7 Belsize Park Gardens

2011/2181/P- Erection of a single-storey side and rear extension to existing lower ground floor flat (Class C3). **Granted - 22/06/2011**

Relevant Policies:

National Planning Policy Framework – 2021

London Plan – 2021

London Borough of Camden Local Plan – 2017

A1 Managing the impact of development

D1 Design

D2 Heritage

Belsize Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2002

Camden Planning Guidance

Design 2021

Home Improvements 2021