

3.0 History

History

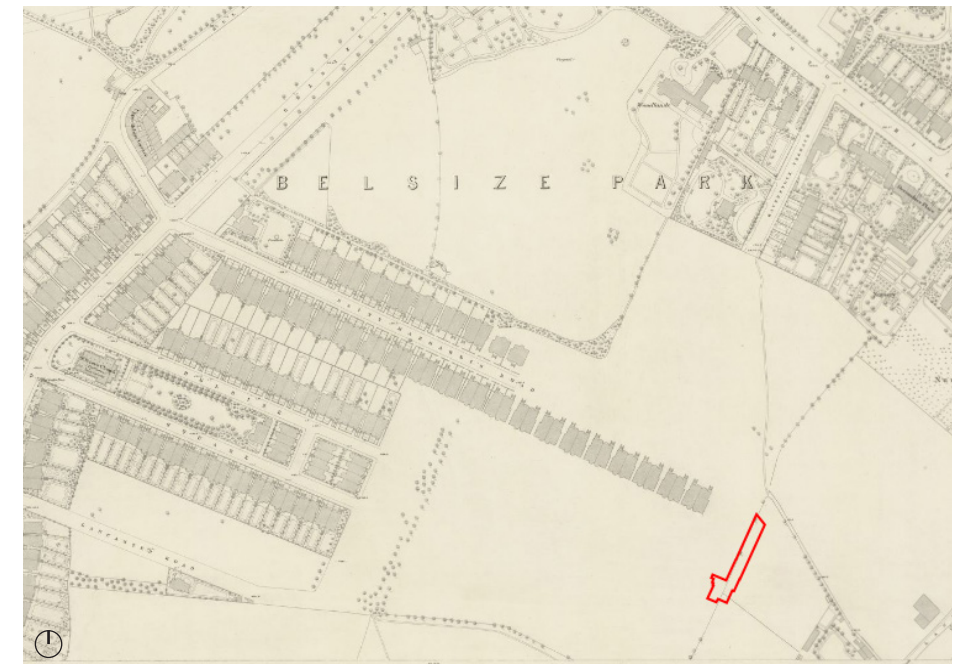
3.1 History of the Area

The Estate of Belsize was first mentioned as part of the manor of Hampstead, through time the area kept developing and by the 19th century houses for wealthy merchants started appearing near Haverstock Hill.

In the late 1850s and 60s major redevelopment took place in the area of the original Belsize House and many classical semi detached houses were built to attract the middle class. Since then more houses were built and Belsize became a neighbourhood chosen by many famous artists such as Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson.



1862



1866



1915



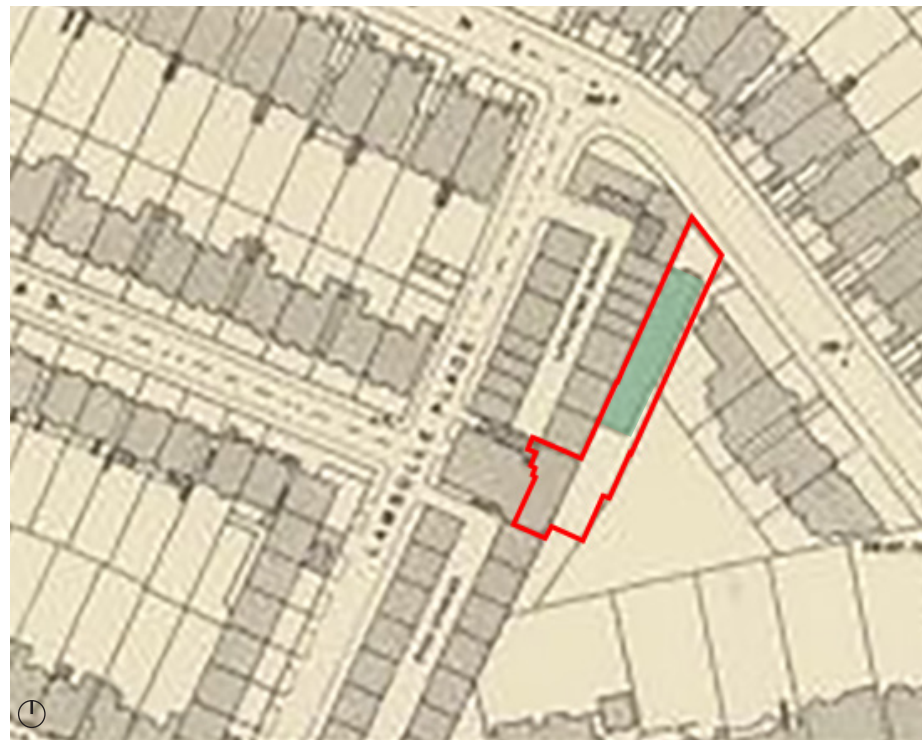
2023

History

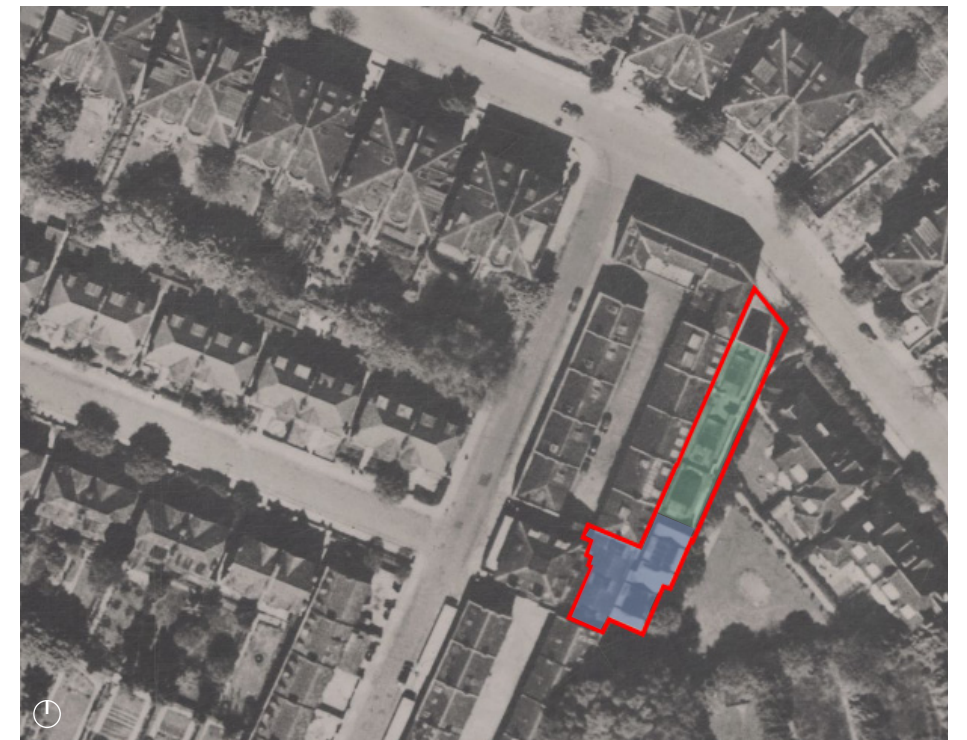
3.2 History of the Building :1930's

According to the historical maps, the first part of the building was built in the 1930s for the Hampstead Squash and Rugby Fives Club. Initially it consisted of two double height squash courts and social facilities.

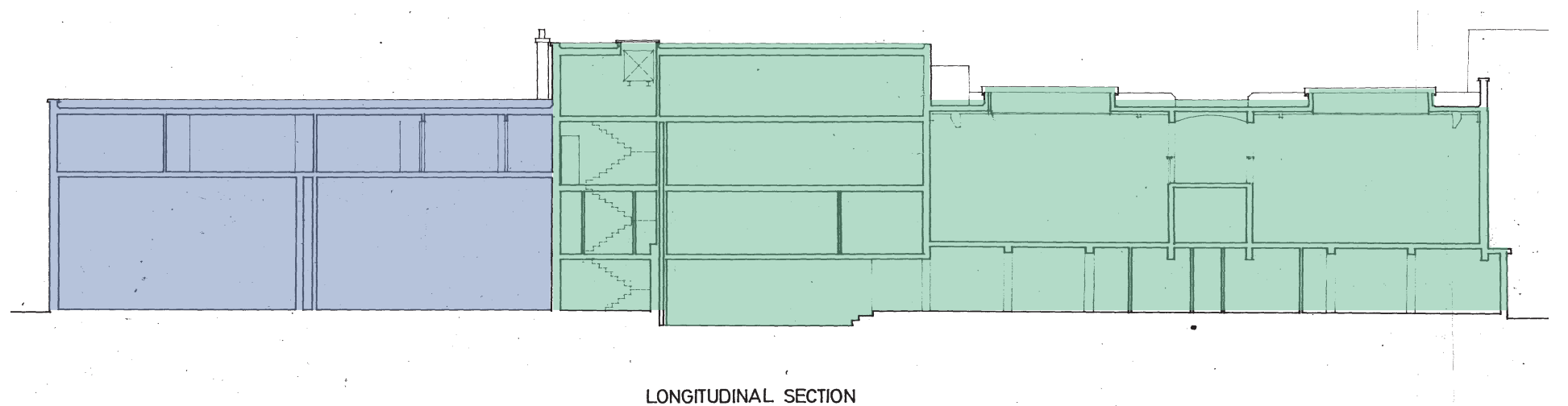
Two additional squash courts were added before 1946.



Belsize in 1935 - first part of the Gym building built



Belsize in 1946 - Gym building in its current shape



1973 long section

part of the building built around 1930s
part of the building built after 1935

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3.4 History of the Building - 1933- 1936 Photographs

The photographs on this page were dated 1933-1936, and it is assumed they show the original building shortly after completion.

Fig 1. Belsize Park Gardens elevation.

This photo shows the entrance walkway that runs along the side of the building. It also shows the concrete horizontal band around the building which has subsequently been covered up. There is also a low wall to the pavement.

Fig.2 Ground floor bar.

Behind the bay window (see fig 1) is the bar, with natural light entering via the glazing to the south.

Fig 3. Squash court

The building had originally two squash courts, two additional courts were added to the rear of the building. Each court had roof lanterns and no glazing.

Fig 4. Squash Court viewing gallery

Positioned between the two squash courts was the viewing gallery.

Fig 5. Changing rooms

We have limited information on the changing rooms, but from the shape of the window, we believe this could be on the ground floor.



Fig 1. Belsize Park Garden elevation.



Fig.2 Ground floor bar.



Fig 3. Squash court



Fig 4. Squash Court viewing gallery



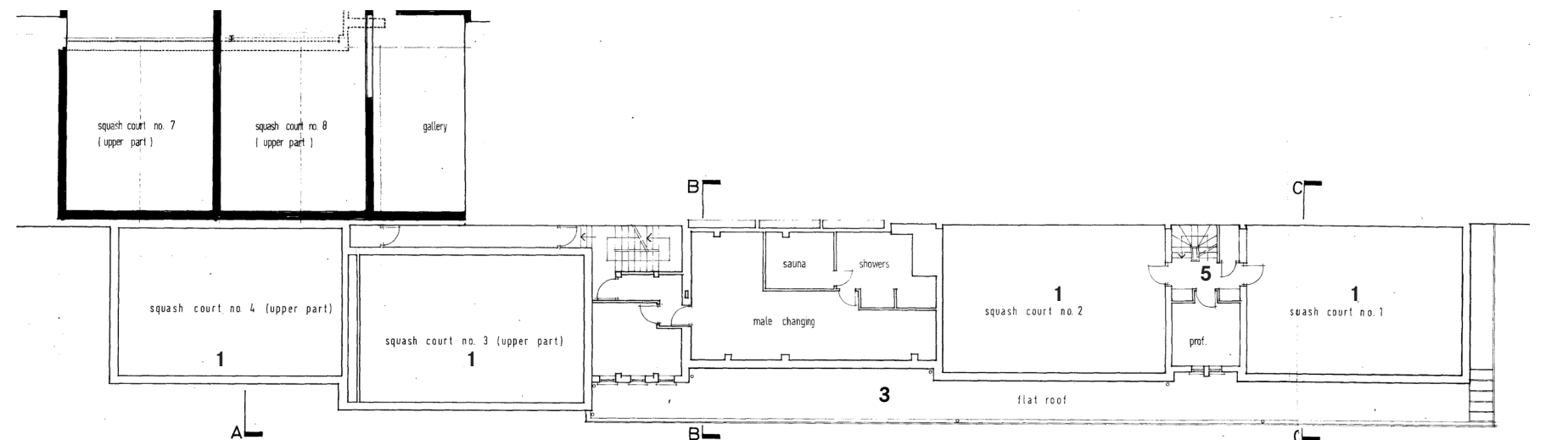
Fig 5. Changing rooms

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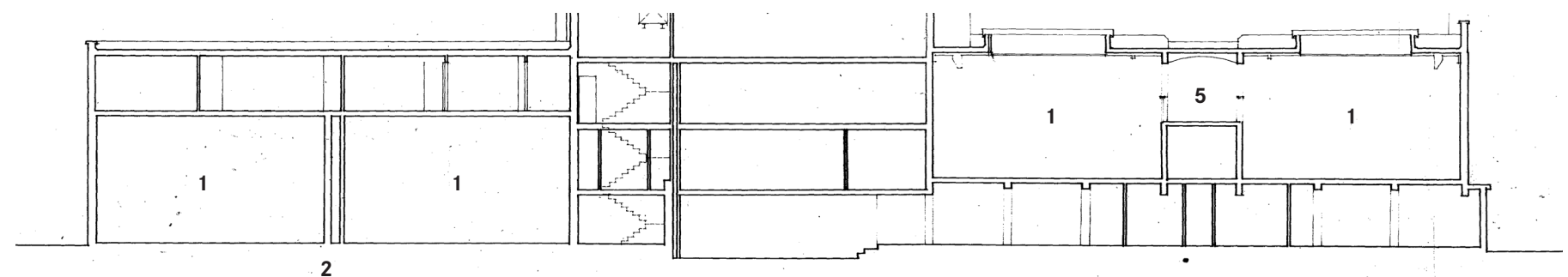
3.3 History of the Building - drawings

Historic drawings reveal a previous layout for 81 Belsize Gardens that includes a number of double height squash courts. Floor infill have subsequently been added to produce the current layout of the building. The structural form of the building revealed in these drawings shows a number of clear open spaces with little intervening structural walls or columns.

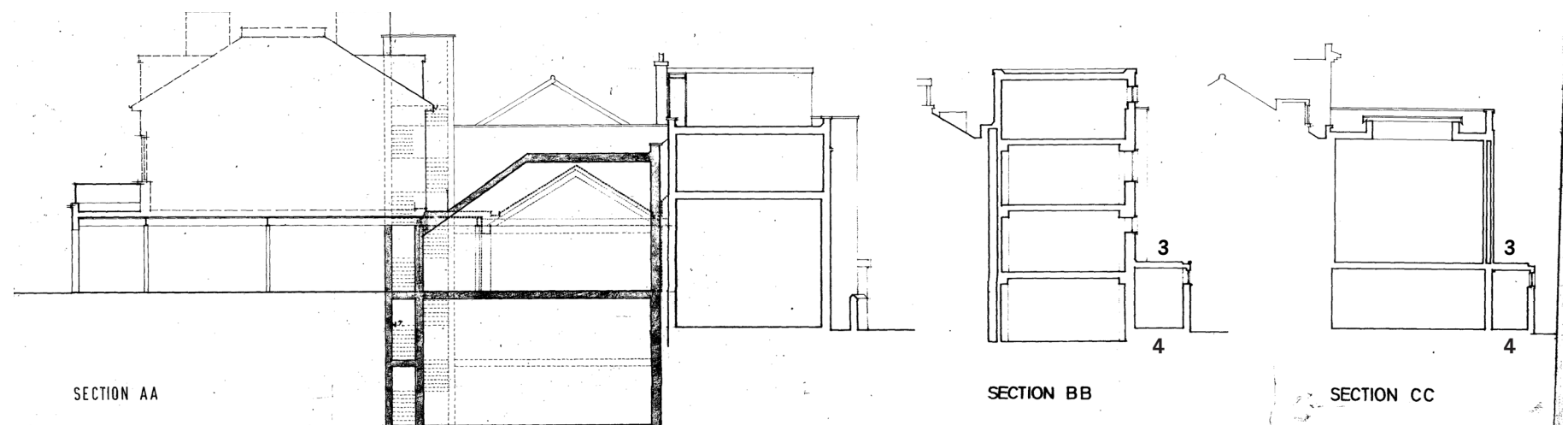
Also revealed in these drawings is that the ground floor single story structure that sits along the south eastern boundary is likely a later addition to the building. Rainwater downpipes and drainage access covers are shown within this internal space indicating that this part of the site was originally external and the single story structure added later. (Full set of historic drawings contained in appendix)



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



LONGITUDINAL SECTION



Key:

- 1. Double Height Squash court
- 2 Double wall to provide service void for changing rooms above
- 3 Later single story addition to building
- 4 Drainage run shown under later single story addition
- 5 Mezzanine viewing level

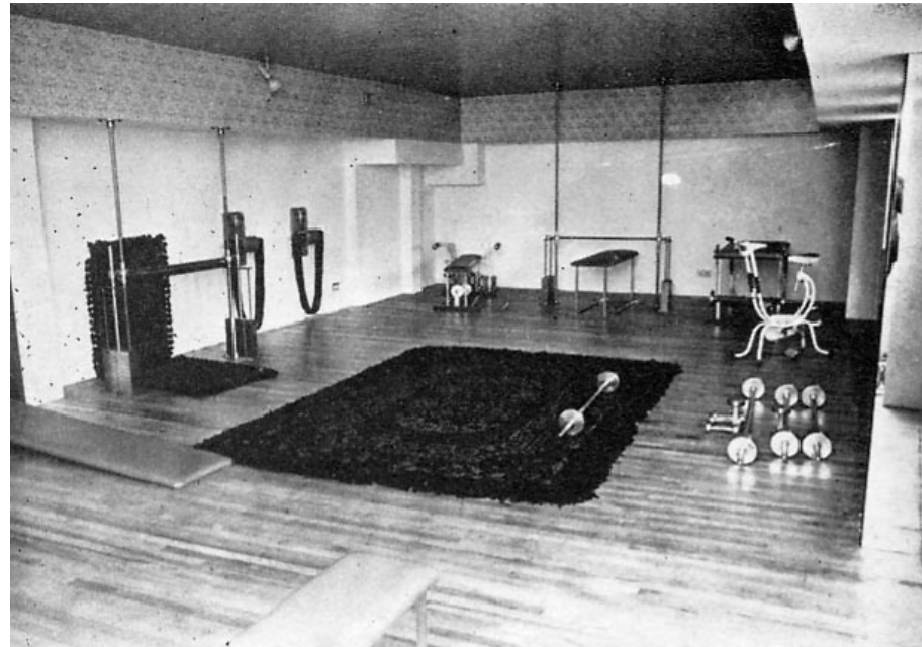
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3.4 History of the Building - 1960's onwards

In 1969 the Hampstead Squash Club was transformed into Abraxas Club. Double height squash courts were converted into gymnasiums and a restaurant and performance space was opened for a theatre group.

Subsequent to this, the building was transformed into a dedicated leisure/gym building, with exercise studios and a swimming pool. Springheath Leisure Club occupied the site for 25 years.

The building has been vacant since 2017 when the leisure center closed.



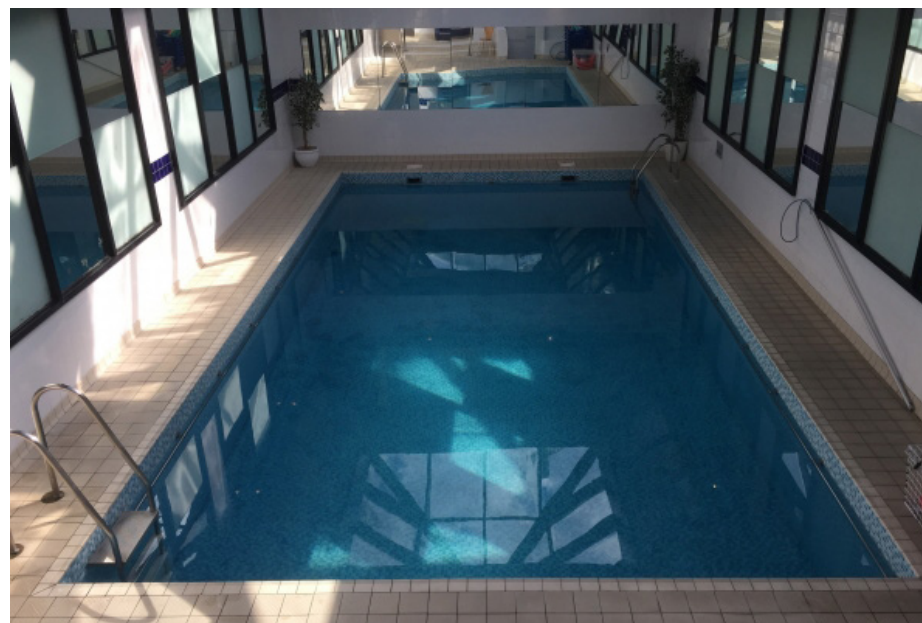
1960s Abraxas Club



1960s Abraxas Club



1960s Abraxas Club



Springheath Leisure Club



Springheath Leisure Club

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3.5 Previous Planning Applications

Below is an extract of the Planning History for 81 Belsize Park Garden. Please refer to DWD Planning Statement and Heritage Assessment for more details.

23.03.2021

Granted certificate of lawfulness for use of property as nursery (2020/4338/P)

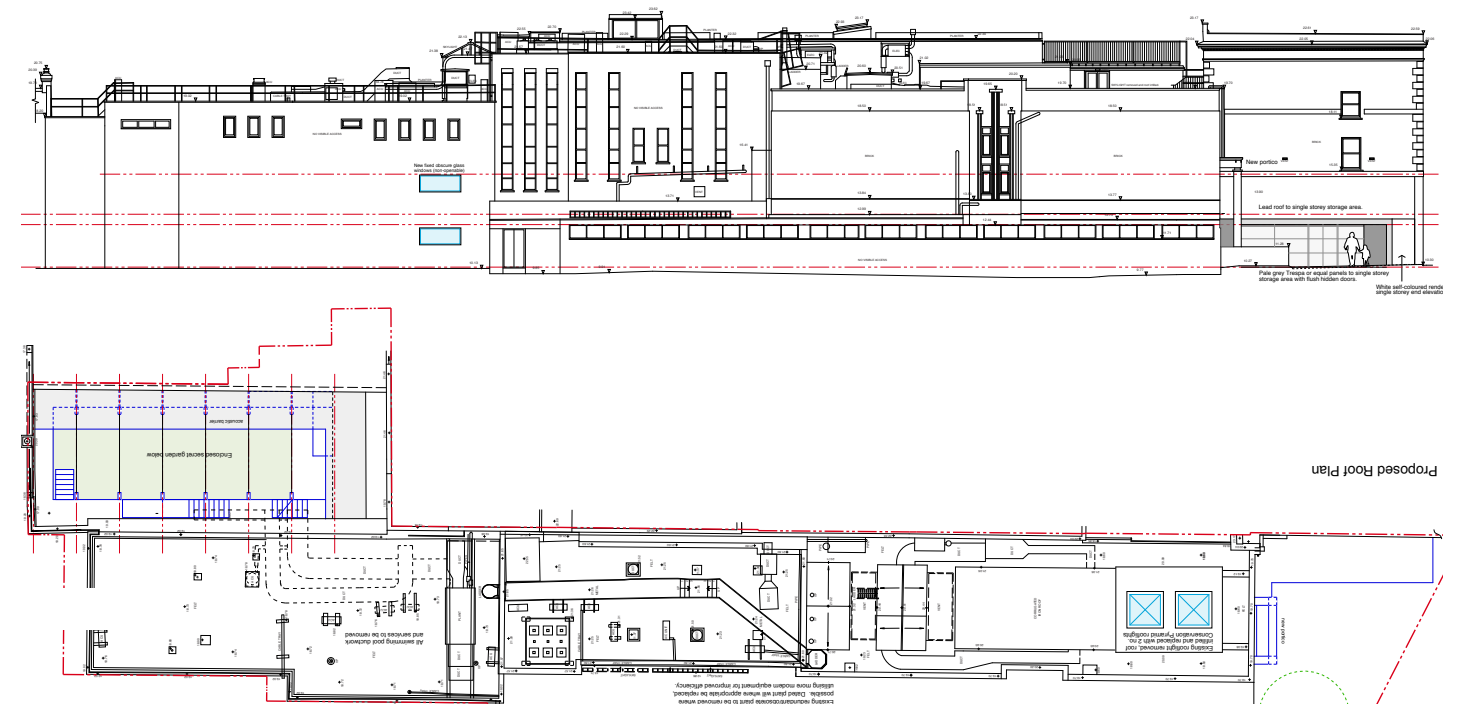
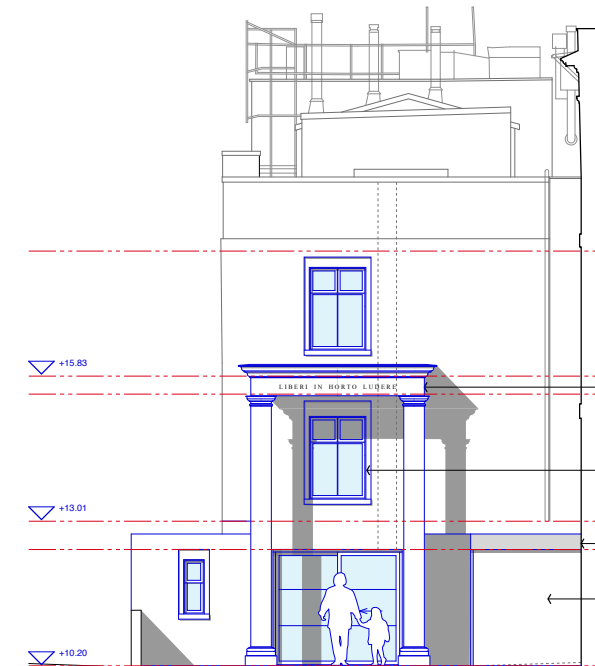
18.05.2021

Granted application for a new portico, replacement rooflights and enclosed garden (2020/4336/P)

- new windows on front facade
- new windows on SE elevation
- replacement rooflights

09.03.2022

Prior approval granted to convert existing building into 3x duplex residential units (2021/4743/P)



18.05.2021 - granted application for a new portico, replacement rooflights and enclosed garden (2020/4336/P)