



Planning Statement and Heritage Assessment

81 Belsize Park Gardens,
London, NW3 4NJ

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 DWD has been instructed, on behalf of Belsize Park Property Ltd and Dukes Education Group Ltd (“Dukes”), to submit this full planning application to the London Borough of Camden (“Council”) for development at 81 Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4NJ (“the Site”).

1.2 The Proposed Development is as follows:

“Change of use from leisure club use (gym/ swimming pool) (Use Class E) to education use (Use Class F1) together with external alterations, introduction of additional window openings, removal of single storey structure providing covered walkway, demolition and rebuilding of wall, works to roof including raising parapet wall, installation of roof plant, introduction of boundary wall and railings along site frontage, cycling parking and bin stores and associated hard and soft landscaping works.”

1.3 The Fine Arts College was established in 1978 and is an independent school specialising in the arts and humanities. It is located at 41-43 England’s Lane, NW3 4YD. Further space is currently leased by the school at No. 81b Belsize Park Gardens, 24 Lambolle Place and Lancaster Stables, which are located next door to No. 81.

1.4 No. 81 and has been vacant for the last few years, following the closure of the Springhealth Leisure Club in early 2017. The lawful use of the property is Use Class E.

1.5 The Proposed Development would allow the Fine Arts College to consolidate its facilities and expand the College.

1.6 This Planning and Heritage Statement will set out the context of the Site; provide a detailed description of the Proposed Development; provide an assessment of the proposal against the relevant Planning policy and also provide a heritage assessment.

Submission Documents

1.7 In addition to this document, this submission is also accompanied by the following plans and documents:

- Application Form;
- CIL Form;
- Drawings prepared by CDC Studio including a full drawing schedule;
 - Full drawing schedule is attached in Appendix 1;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by CDC Studio;

- Marketing Report, prepared by DWD;
- School Management Plan, prepared by DWD and the Fine Arts College;
- Energy and Statement, prepared by Max Fordham;
- Completed Camden Sustainability Proforma, prepared by Max Fordham
- BREEAM Pre Assessment, prepared by Eight Versa;
- Air Quality Assessment, prepared by Phlorum;
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement including SuDs Proforma, prepared by MHA Structural Design;
- Noise Impact Assessment, prepared by Max Fordham;
- Fire Safety Strategy, prepared by Osborn Associates;
- Transport Assessment, prepared by Robert West;
- Construction Environmental Management and Construction Logistics Plan, prepared by Robert West;
- School Travel Plan, prepared by Robert West;
- Delivery, Servicing & Refuse Management Plan, prepared by Robert West;
- Tree Survey and Impact Report, Method Statement and Tree Protection, prepared by Marcus Foster;
- Daylight and Sunlight Assessment prepared by T16 Design;
- Preliminary Ecology Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment prepared by MKA Ecology;
- Nocturnal Bat Survey prepared by MKA Ecology;
- Biodiversity Net Gain and Urban Greening Factor Report prepared by MKA Ecology;
- Urban Greening Factor Calculation prepared by MKA Ecology; and
- Biodiversity Net Gain Metric prepared by MKA Ecology (in Excel format).

2.0 SITE AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 No. 81 is situated on the south side of Belsize Park Gardens. It is located in the Belsize Ward within the London Borough of Camden and are situated within the Belsize Park Conservation Area.
- 2.2 Immediately to the north-west of No. 81 is No.81b and 24 Lambolle Place, which are part of the same building, located on the corner, at the junction of Belsize Park Gardens and Lambolle Place. Part of this property is also occupied by the Fine Arts College. To the north-east on the opposite side of Belsize Park Gardens are a pair of stand-alone semi-detached and 2 storey residential dwellings. To the south-east of No. 81 is a large red brick part 1, part 3 storey residential dwelling(83 Belsize Park Gardens); and to the south is a small triangular-shaped private garden enclosed by residential dwellings along Lancaster Stables, Belsize Park Gardens, Eton Avenue and Eton Garages. To the south west are 3 storey properties located within Lancaster Stables.
- 2.3 No. 81 is located approximately 650 m on foot from Belsize Park Station, 950 m on foot from Swiss Cottage Station and 990 m on foot from Chalk Farm Tube Station. The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 3, representing a good level of public transport. No. 81 is located 750 m from the Swiss Cottage Town Centre and approximately 150 m from England's Lane Neighbourhood Centre.
- 2.4 The site is not situated within the setting of a listed building. The nearest heritage asset is a Grade II Listed Washington Public House located 140 m south on England's Lane.
- 2.5 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 and thus at a low flood risk from both fluvial and pluvial sources on the site.

Site Description

- 2.6 No. 81 comprises a 4 storey building which was formerly a Health and Leisure Club, known as Springhealth Leisure Club. No. 81 is a later addition to Belsize Park Gardens which is predominantly characterised by buildings built in circa the 1850s. The building is understood to have been constructed in the 1930s and extended to the rear in the 1970s.
- 2.7 The building on site is rectangular in shape, extending approximately 65 m south-west from Belsize Park Gardens. The building comprises of ground, first, second and a small third floor with approximately 1,411 sqm of gross internal floorspace.
- 2.8 No. 81 is set slightly back from Belsize Park Gardens, which has created a small concrete forecourt fronting the main entrance. Within the forecourt and adjacent to the entrance are 2 single storey outbuildings which were used for refuse storage and dryers by the gym. There was previously a

cherry tree positioned to the east of the main entrance to No. 81, however it was removed in 2010 under application reference 2010/3390/T for safety reasons due to excessive deadwood. The front elevation has a grey coloured façade with a black pitched roof above the entranceway which extends across the width of building and a red brick façade on the south elevation.

Ownership

- 2.9 The freehold interest in the application site was acquired in 2022 by Belsize Park Property Ltd, this company is part of the Dukes Education Group Ltd. The application has been submitted in the name of both these companies, they are the joint applicants.
- 2.10 Dukes Education Group Ltd is a family of nurseries, schools and college. The organisation was founded in 2015 and now provides independent schooling with 26 sites across London, Kent, Cambridge and Cardiff. One of the schools within the family is the Fine Arts College in Belsize Park and the building has been acquired for use by the Fine Arts College.
- 2.11 The blue line shown on the submitted Site Location Plan shows the extent of Belsize Park Property Ltd's ownership.
- 2.12 A strip of land that falls within the ownership of 83 Belsize Park Garden falls within the application red line and therefore notice has been served on the owners of this property. The strip of land that is in the rear garden of No. 83 and included in the application site will remain in the ownership of No.83. Tree pruning works are proposed on this land and the land is also expected to be used during the construction phase, to help facilitate the works. Other than this no works are proposed on the land in No. 83's rear garden. At the front of the site, there is a small triangle of land that currently forms part of the forecourt of No. 81 but the Land Registry title shows this as within No. 83s ownership. The intension as part of this application is to make good this area and hand the land back to No. 83. This land is also included in the application red line.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 An online search of the planning history for No. 81 yielded several results and are set out in the table below.

Reference	Description of Development	Decision	Decision Date
2022/1280/P	Application for Prior Approval under Part 3 (Change of Use) Class MA (commercial, business and service uses to dwellinghouses) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015 (as amended) to convert existing building into 18x residential units	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
2022/1270/P	Localised demolition in eight areas across site, new single storey glazed extension and bin and bike store to front elevation, insertion of new windows and rooflights, replacement of existing windows, removal of plant from roof level, formation of roof terraces on flat roof.	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
2021/4828/NEW	Change of use from commercial (Class E) to 3x self-contained flats (Class C3). Replacement of side door with a louvered door and insertion of 2x AOVs at roof level	Withdrawn	Withdrawn
2021/4743/P	Application for Prior Approval under Part 3 (Change of Use) Class MA (commercial, business and service uses to dwellinghouses) of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015 (as amended) to convert existing building into 3 x Duplex residential units.	Granted	09/03/2022
2020/4338/P	Use of the property as a nursery (Use Class E) – Certificate of Lawfulness	Granted	03/11/2020
2020/4336/P	Alterations to front and side (south east) elevations incorporating new windows and entrance portico; replacement rooflights and installation of plant; removal of roof to form enclosed garden including acoustic barrier; and replacement store at front of site.	Granted	30/10/2020
2020/0929/P	Change of use from gym (Class D2) to nursery (Class D1) including the addition of windows to front and side (south east) elevation, 2 rooflights (following	Withdrawn	05/06/2020

Reference	Description of Development	Decision	Decision Date
	removal of existing skylight) and front canopy.		
2010/3390/T	Notification for Emergency Works to Protected Tree(s) under TPO: DDD - FRONT GARDEN - 1 x Cherry - Remove - DDD.	Approve Emergency Works (TPO)	07/07/2010
PWX0002218	Variation of condition 02 of the planning consent dated 12th April 1999 (Ref: PW9802976) to allow noise from the approved air handling plant to not exceed 45.9dBA LA 90 when measured or predicted one metre from the nearest residential premises.	Refuse	02/05/2000
PW9802976	Retention of two air handling units and their housing at roof level, as shown on drawing numbers; 457/1 and photographs marked A & B.	Grant Full Planning Permission	12/04/1999
PW9802739	Retention of the existing air handling unit. (Plans submitted).	Withdrawn	31/01/1999
PW9802221	Retention of the existing air handling unit. (Plans submitted).	Withdrawn	14/10/1998
9160163	Demolition (within a Conservation Area) of flat roof in connection with an application to replace this with a vaulted glazed roof as shown on drawing no LHC/PP/ 001-002A.	Granted	04/06/1992
9101301	Replacement of existing flat roof with vaulted roof together with small plant and raising of parapet wall. as shown on drawing numbers LHC/PP/001 LHC/PP/002A and LHC/PP/003 and as revised by letter dated 2nd April 1992.	Granted	04/06/1992
9101004	The erection of a roof extension to the existing Health Club. as shown on drawing numbers AP/01 02 03 21 22 23.	Refused	25/10/1991
9101088	Retention of enlarged roof plant room as shown on drawing no(s) 91/020 and 021.	Granted	07/05/1992
9005697	The erection of a roof extension to existing Health Club as shown on drawings nos. AP/01 02 03 21 22A and 23A as revised by letter dated 20.03.91. Appeal received against refusal of permission.	Refused at Appeal	18/06/1991
9005696	The erection of a conservatory extension to existing Health Club as shown on drawings nos. AP/01 02 03 11 12 and 13.	Refused	18/06/1991

Reference	Description of Development	Decision	Decision Date
8401144	Erection of a new extraction duct on the Southern elevation as shown on drawing Nos.E1187/2 & 3 and un-numbered.	Granted	27/06/1984
8400060	Change of use of squash court 3 by constructing mezzanine floor to give dance studio below solarium session rooms office and staff rest rooms on mezzanine including the formation of windows in the exterior boundary wall to light the mezzanine as shown on drawing.	Refused	06/03/1984

- 3.2 It is noted the above table does not include applications submitted before 1984 as these are not considered pertinent to the proposed development.
- 3.3 Since 1984, there have been a number of applications for works relating to building maintenance, enlargement and change of use. Where applications for alterations have been refused, the reason for refusal was typically the adverse impact of proposed works to the character of the Conservation Area and to the amenity of neighbouring properties, including obstruction to light and overlooking.
- 3.4 The site was previously occupied by Springhealth Leisure Club who were present at the site for over 25 years. However, the Club went into liquidation in early 2017 and the site has consequently been vacant since 2017. In late 2020, a Certificate of Lawfulness application confirmed that the site could be lawfully used as a children's nursery, without the need to secure planning permission (ref. 2020/4338/P). This is a result of changes to the use classes order in 2020 meaning that indoor leisure and children's nursery uses both fall within Class E. The site has not been used as a nursery.
- 3.5 Also in 2020 under application reference 2020/4336/P permission was granted for alterations to front and side (south east) elevations incorporating new windows and entrance portico; replacement rooflights and installation of plant; removal of roof to form enclosed garden including acoustic barrier; and replacement store at front of site. These works were proposed when it was expected a nursery occupier would utilise the site. This consent was not implemented but it illustrates that acceptability of alterations to the existing building to enable it to be adapted for an alternative no leisure centre use.
- 3.6 In 2022 Prior Approval was granted under application reference 2021/4743/P for the conversion of the existing property to 3 duplex residential units. This consent has not been implemented.

Pre- Application Advice

- 3.7 Dukes Education and the Fine Arts College previously looked at acquiring the site in 2018. At that time, pre-application advice was sought on the change of use. The written advice (ref. 2018/0972/PRE dated 12 April 2018) advised that:
- Subject to the provision of details of a marketing exercise which demonstrates there is no demand for the existing floorspace for alternative cultural and leisure uses, there is no objection in principle to the loss of the D2 floorspace.
 - Belsize Park has a very high concentration of schools where significant issues already exist concerning the school run. In order for the change of use to be supported, you would need to demonstrate the transport impacts would be acceptable and that the number of traffic movements would not increase.
- 3.8 Discussions to acquire the site ceased in 2018 as the total cost of bringing the site in to use was financially unviable. This was focussed on a leasehold arrangement with the owners at the time. It is understood that the Site was subsequently disposed of to another party.
- 3.9 The property came back to the market and the freehold interest was acquired by Dukes Education in 2022. Further details of the marketing of the site are included in the submitted Marketing Report prepared by DWD.

4.0 FINE ARTS COLLEGE AND NEEDS CASE

The Fine Arts College

- 4.1 The Fine Arts College is part of the Dukes Education Group and the school's main campus is located at 41-43 England's Lane, NW3 4YD. The Fine Arts College was established as a specialist college for art and art history in 1978, and introduced the full arts and humanities curriculum in 1982. A GCSE programme followed in the early 1990s, offering a wide-range and balanced curriculum, preparing pupils for the specialised study of the Sixth Form years.
- 4.2 The Fine Arts College caters for children and young learners aged 13- 19 years, within years 9 - 11 and Sixth Form. It also offers a Portfolio Course which is designed for post-A Level students wishing to apply for an Art Foundation course, or for direct entry to an Art degree course at a university or art school.
- 4.3 The Fine Arts prides itself on providing an outstanding education in an engaging, stimulating and holistic environment. The school understands that students are individuals with their own specific needs, challenges and goals. Class sizes are limited in order to give all pupils maximum individual attention and support by a team of teachers.
- 4.4 The school's aims are to:
- Strive to develop our pupils into confident young people with open, questioning, independent minds with a lifelong love of learning.
 - To ensure that each pupil's talents are discovered and nurtured and they achieve their potential in terms of academic achievement and aesthetic appreciation.
 - To ensure that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and a range of extra-curricular activities.
 - To equip their pupils with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable them to grow into responsible and positive members of society, making informed decisions about their education and personal lives.
- 4.5 The main campus is at 41-43 England's Lane, NW3 4YD but the College also currently utilises space at 81b Belsize Park Gardens, 24 Lambolle Place and Lancaster Stables.
- 4.6 The College currently has capacity for approximately 240 students, with approximately 230 students currently on the pupil roll. Approximately 180 can be accommodated at 41- 43 England's Lane (with approximately 175 pupils currently accommodated in this building) and approximately

60 can be accommodated at 81b Belsize Park, 24 Lambolle Place and Lancaster Stables (with approximately 55 pupils currently accommodated in these buildings). Pupils move between the sites during the school day. The college currently employs 40 FTE staff, of which approximately 31 are based at England's Lane and 9 at 81b Belsize Park, 24 Lambolle Place and Lancaster Stables.

Proposed Expansion

- 4.7 The Fine Arts College propose to increase their facilities through expanding into space at No. 81. Currently the College does not have a gallery where students art and work can be showcased. At No. 81 they propose to create a gallery space where fellow students, families and friends can come and visit the art work on display. The gallery will provide the opportunity for the College to offer art shows, which will help pupil's learning experiences and development. An on site café for use by students will also be provided in the building, providing a space for students to socialise during the school day and also to eat lunch.
- 4.8 No. 81b and 24 Lambolle Place is situated within a building which is predominately residential with flats on the first and second floors and therefore it is not an ideal location to hold lessons. It is small with a total floor area of circa 268 sq.m (GIA) and the school has expanded since 1988, when the Fine Arts first occupied the site. Further accommodation is also used in Lancaster Stables. More floorspace is now required by the College and the opportunity to acquire No.81 allows the College to rationalise its existing space at the same time. When the Fine Arts re-locate to No. 81 and increasing the provision of education facilities, they will vacate 81b Belsize Park Gardens, 24 Lambolle Place and Lancaster Stables. All of these buildings are currently leased by the College. This would free up these buildings to be used for alternative uses. These buildings do not form part of the current planning application and any proposed changes to these buildings will be dealt with via separate planning applications.
- 4.9 It is proposed that the use of No.81 will result in the total number of students at the College increasing from 240 students to 400 students. Approximately 200 students will be based at 81 Belsize Park Gardens and a further 200 will be located at England's Lane. Approximately 30 FTE staff will be based at each site.
- 4.10 Initially when the new site opens it is expected that there will be 120 students at No. 81, with a further 120 based at England's Lane. The further growth at the College will happen over approximately five years period, with the College taking on circa 15 additional pupils at each site, each academic year until they reach a total of 200 students at each site.

- 4.11 Students currently move between the various buildings during the school day on foot. The “consolidation” of the College across only two sites will make the overall movements of the College more efficient. 81 Belsize Park Gardens will primarily be used by sixth form students, who will be based at the site for the majority of their lessons. England’s Lane will then be the main campus for the younger students. However, the bespoke facilities will also be used by the younger students who will move between England’s Lane and Belsize Park Gardens.
- 4.12 Depending upon the subject, staff will be less or more likely to be primarily based in a single building where they will teach the majority of their lessons. There will however be the need to travel between the two College buildings during the school day, on foot, to teach classes or use facilities in the building that they are not primarily based in.
- 4.13 No. 81 is long and narrow and therefore careful consideration by CDC Studio, in close collaboration with the College, has been given to how the space can be best utilised.
- 4.14 The site is in close proximity to the main school site and provides an excellent opportunity for the school to improve the facilities that it can offer its pupils. The site will also enable the Fine Arts to secure their future in the local area, as they would be the freehold owners of the site.

5.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 The proposed development is for the change of use from Class E (indoor leisure use) to Class F1 (education use), together with alterations to facilitate the day school use and meet modern standards.

5.2 The proposed development comprises of:

- Change of use of the property from Class E (indoor leisure use) to Class F1 (education use) to be used by the Fine Arts College.
- Alterations to the front elevation and hardstanding area, including removal of existing render finish to expose brickwork, installation of bin and bike stores at the front of property, hard and soft landscaping and introduction of a boundary wall and railings.
- Works to the external elevations to remove the render and expose the brick and introduction of additional window openings to improve natural light to the proposed classrooms.
- Removal of single storey structure that provides a covered walkway and rebuilding of party wall along eastern site boundary with No. 83.
- Roof plant associated with the ventilation strategy.
- Introduction of rooflights to provide additional natural light to the building.
- Introduction of green roof and PVS across the roofscape.
- Roofscape to be repaired and replaced in places, with insulation to be added to improve thermal performance.
- Proposed parapet wall (to be raised by 375 mm, raised height of 600mm) and new roof over the south west section of the building.
- Rebuilding of existing boundary wall.
- Works to trees including the removal of one tree, in accordance with Arboricultural Survey Impact Assessment & Method Statement, prepared by Marcus Foster.

5.3 The removal of the existing single storey structure at the side of the building and the demolition and replacement of the existing bin store enclosure at the front of the Site, will result in a small overall decrease in the building's overall GIA from 1,441 sqm to 1,311 sqm.

- 5.4 The swimming pool will be filled in to allow this space to be utilised by the school. Alterations to the internal layout are proposed to ensure the building can be laid out to provide good quality teaching accommodation, with natural light provided to rooms that require natural light.
- 5.5 The building will be laid out to provide both general classrooms and classrooms for specific subjects including drama/ dance, photography, and music.
- 5.6 There will be a multi-use hall and a café/ canteen space at ground floor that will be used by students at the College. This space will also be able to be used for art displays of the students' work. There will also be ancillary office accommodation for staff of the College, WC facilities and shower/ changing facilities.
- 5.7 Full details of the proposed internal layout of the building are set out in CDC Studios Design and Access Statement.
- 5.8 Externally, works will be undertaken to improve the buildings visual appearance. This will include alterations to the front elevation, including exposing the original red brick work finish, introducing new window openings and reintroducing the horizontal brick banding that was originally in place. Consideration has been given to the building's original 1930s appearance as part of the design development.
- 5.9 There was original a low brick wall that fronted the site, and this will also be reinstated. Furthermore, the existing hardstanding area at the front of the site will be enhanced to provide hard and soft landscaping and also a bin and bike store.
- 5.10 Additional window openings along the side elevation are proposed, with obscure glazing used where appropriate to prevent overlooking. The roof is to be repaired and replaced in parts and the existing parapet wall serving the southern section of the roof is proposed to be raised by 375 mm.
- 5.11 Opportunities to increase greenery at the Site include the introduction of a large areas of green roof and bio solar PV panels will increase biodiversity on Site and improve energy efficiency. A new planting area is located to the front forecourt with replacement tree and vertical planting is proposed on the site elevation.
- 5.12 The College already operate adult evening classes for the local community and they intend to continue this offering at the new building. They also hope to offer further programmes for the community, for example, opportunities to hold additional evening art classes and Easter and Summer art courses. Further opportunities to provide access to the facilities for the local

community can also be considered, outside of school hours, at weekends and during school holidays.

- 5.13 The site will allow the Fine Arts College to expand, and it is expected that the College's pupil role will increase to 400 students. 200 of these students will be based at 81 Belsize Park Gardens with all remaining students at the England's Lane site. This growth will enable the school to meet growing demand from parents who wish to send their children to the Fine Arts College. The new building will also allow the College to provide a greater breadth of learning choice and more facilities for the current pupils.
- 5.14 It is currently anticipated that No. 81 will be open to pupils from September 2025. With the total numbers of pupils using the building initially being approximately 120 when the site opens. Annual growth of approximately 15 additional pupils at the site is proposed until the building reaches capacity at 200 pupils. This growth is expected to take place over a 5 year period following opening.

6.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 This section considers the relevant planning policy framework for the Site and surrounding area, having regard to the development proposals. It considers the statutory development plan, any supplementary planning guidance, and existing and emerging national policy.
- 6.2 In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted Development Plan for the Site is:
- Camden Local Plan 2017 (“**CLP**”); and
 - The London Plan 2021 (“**London Plan**”);
- 6.3 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (“**NPPF**”), the policies contained in the NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 6.4 Also of relevance are any Camden Planning Guidance Documents (CPGs) such as:
- Belsize Conservation Area Statement (2003)
 - Community uses, Leisure facilities and Pubs (2018)
 - Transport (2021)
 - Energy efficiency and adaptation (2021)
 - Biodiversity (2018)

Principle of F1 Education Use

- 6.5 The NPPF recognises that the Government attaches great importance to ensuring that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Paragraph 95 asserts that local planning authorities should take a proactive and positive approach to meeting this requirement and should “*give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools*”.
- 6.6 London Plan Policy S3 (Education and Childcare Facilities) states that Boroughs should “*ensure there is a sufficient supply of good quality education and childcare facilities to meet demand and offer educational choice*”.
- 6.7 Explanatory paragraph 5.3.1 of the London Plan states that “*Every child, young person and adult should be given the best possible chance for success and be equipped to make the most of the economic opportunities the capital has to offer. High quality education and training provision,*

including the allocation of sufficient sites and the development of childcare facilities, schools, colleges and universities in appropriate places, will not only help to provide greater educational choice but will also improve skills, which is critical in tackling disadvantage. Good quality education and training are vital for supporting people into sustainable employment, which is also essential to London's continued economic success."

- 6.8 CLP Policy C2 (Community Facilities) promotes the development of community facilities including education and states that the Council will *"support the investment plans of educational....bodies to expand and enhance their operations, taking into account the social and economic benefits they generate"*.
- 6.9 The Fine Arts is at capacity in the current buildings that it occupies and there is significant interest from parents who wish to send their children to the school. The school has outgrown No. 81b Belsize Park Garden / 24 Lambolle Place/ Lancaster Stables and requires more space to ensure high quality education facilities and to accommodate a larger number students and staff in future.
- 6.10 Expanding into No. 81 will allow the Fine Arts to enhance their operations and provide high quality education facilities. It will enable the school to accept a greater number of students, help combat the shortage of secondary school places in the Borough; and provide pupils with education choice.
- 6.11 No. 81 will also provide sufficient space for the Fine Arts to hold art classes in the evening, expanding on the current adult evening classes they offer. These would be open to the public and will be a valuable addition to the amenities available to the local community. There could also be further opportunities for the College to run further classes during school holidays and at weekends.
- 6.12 The provision of further education space in Belsize Park is therefore in line with NPPF Paragraph 71, London Plan Policy 3.18 and LP Policy C2.

Loss of Class E Indoor Leisure Use

- 6.13 This section should be read in conjunction with the submitted Marketing Report, prepared by DWD. CLP Policy C3 (Cultural and Leisure Facilities) seeks to protect leisure facilities in the borough. The policy states that:
- 6.14 *"Where there is a proposal involving the loss of a leisure facility, the policy states that it must be demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction there is no longer a demand. When assessing such applications, we will take into account:*

Whether the premises are able to support alternative cultural and leisure uses which would make a positive contribution to the range of cultural and leisure facilities in the borough;

The size, layout and design of the existing facility;

Proposals for the re-provision elsewhere;

The impact of the proposal on the range of cultural and leisure facilities; and

The mix of uses in the area”.

6.15 The Community uses, Leisure facilities and Pubs CPG was adopted by the Council on 26 March 2018. Within this it is identified that there is a range of indoor sports facilities in the Borough. The 2018 document references the ‘Camden Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study 2014’ which indicates there is no surplus provision. However, it is not considered that the subject site was factored into this assessment. This was confirmed by officers in the previous pre-application advice sought by Dukes Education for this site (dated April 2018), which advised that:

- *“It is also noted that swimming pools smaller than 100sqm were excluded from the Camden Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study as they would not meet Sport England criteria. Indoor Sports Hall facilities were only included if they met the Sport England criteria.”*
- *“Sport England defines a large indoor sports hall as being greater than 3 badminton courts (or 440sqm), or if the hall has clearance for badminton. The existing building here is cellular in nature and does not include any single space of 440sqm or greater. Given this criteria it is unlikely that the existing swimming pool and gym provision was included in the assessment of indoor sports facilities and their loss would therefore not affect the overall findings of the Open Space, Sport and Leisure Study 2014.”*

6.16 No. 81 is currently vacant and neglected. The site has been vacant since 2017, following the closure of the Springhealth Leisure Club. Previous employees have either set up their own businesses or moved to alternative health clubs.

6.17 There are also a number of alternative health clubs in the local area. Health clubs and gyms within a 1km radius of the site are shown on the map within the submitted Marketing Report, prepared by DWD. This demonstrates that local residents have a range of alternative options, that they can travel on foot to, within the local area. These provide a range of leisure facilities and many provide more modern facilities, that better meet customers needs. Therefore, the proposed loss of the Class E Leisure Use at the site should be acceptable and in accordance with CLP Policy C3.

6.18 The internal layout of No. 81 is specifically tailored to the needs of a leisure club and includes a swimming pool, which therefore restricts alternative cultural and leisure uses that could take place

at the site without significant alterations. The narrow shape of the building also restricts how the space could be used.

- 6.19 The site has previously been marketed by a number of agents, and as explained in the submitted Marketing Report that includes supporting information from the marketing agents, the building has not been successfully let or acquired by an alternative leisure user. The evidence included within the Marketing Report is considered to address the requirements of CLP Policy C3.
- 6.20 Following the changes to the Use Classes Order in 2020, the current lawful use of the property falls within Class E, meaning that it could be used for other Class E uses without planning permission. This could include retail, café, restaurant, children's nursery, doctor's surgery or other medical use or an office. Changes of use to these uses would also result in the loss of the leisure club use. These uses would also be constrained by the building's layout and shape, limiting the building's suitability for some of these potential alternative uses.
- 6.21 Furthermore, it is also noted that prior approval for conversion of the building has also been granted at the Site. Therefore the leisure club use could also be lost through the conversion of the property to residential.

Design

- 6.22 Policy D1 (Design) of the CLP requires all development to be of the highest standard of design with consideration to; character and proportions of the existing building, preserving or enhancing the historic environment, details and materials that are of high quality, and, high quality landscape design. Paragraph 7.4 notes *"Careful consideration of the characteristics of a site, features of local distinctiveness and the wider context is needed in order to achieve high quality development"* and *"How places have evolved historically and the functions they support are key to understanding character....In addition, memory and association are also a component of how people understand a place"*.
- 6.23 The London Plan supports high quality and inclusive design throughout Chapter 3 (Design). Policies D3 (Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach) and D4 (Delivering good design) seek to enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness, and respond to the existing character of a place by identifying the special and valued features and characteristics that are unique to the locality
- 6.24 The proposal seeks to restore the building back to its original footprint by removing the single storey infill side extension. This would reopen the passageway between the building and the party garden wall, and allow for improved circulation and light to enter the building.

- 6.25 At the front elevation, the proposals aim is to restore the buildings façade to its former architectural style by removing the white paint from the façade, restoring the red brick to a high quality and re-introduce the profiled horizontal concrete banding. The full sized window at ground floor seeks to recreate the original design proportions of the historic bay window in a contemporary way, allowing views onto the landscaping forecourt and public highway from the café at the front, and the front boundary brick wall continues the strong ‘front garden’ character of the Belsize Conservation Area.
- 6.26 When considering the proposal in the context of the surrounding development, the Site differs from the stucco terraces of the surrounding residential development. The aim of the proposal is to restore the unique character and design features of the Site which contribute to the local distinctiveness. As such, it is considered that the development accords with Policies D1 of the CLP, and Chapter 3 of the London Plan. The development will restore original features of character to the area and wider Conservation Area (discussed further in the Heritage Assessment section below).
- 6.27 Please refer to the submitted Design and Access Statement and technical drawings for full details on design.

Transport

- 6.28 CLP Policy A1 (Managing the impact of development) confirms that the Council will resist development that fails to adequately assess and address transport impacts affecting communities, occupiers, neighbours and the existing transport network.
- 6.29 CLP Policy T2 (Parking and car-free development) confirms that the Council will limit the availability of parking and require all new developments in the borough to be car-free.
- 6.30 CLP Policy T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) promotes sustainable transport and confirms that development should provide for accessible, secure cycle parking facilities exceeding minimum standards outlined in the London Plan. Table 6.3 in the London Plan sets out the cycle parking standards for each type of development, which are as follows:
- F1 – 1 space per 8 staff + 1 space per 8 students and 1 visitor space per 100 students
- 6.31 There is currently no on-site parking provided at No. 81. nor is there any parking at the existing space at No. 81b/ 24 Lambolle Place. No car parking is proposed at No. 81 which should be considered acceptable in line with CLP Policy 1.

- 6.32 Given the on-site constraints, no disabled car parking can be provided. There are two disabled on-street car parking spaces available within 50m distance from the Site, which is considered sufficient to accommodate any parking demand from staff or visitors as a result of the proposals.
- 6.33 Cycle parking has been provided at No. 81 to support pupils and staff that cycle and to encourage further pupils and staff to cycle. A secure and covered two-tier cycle rack for 30no. standard cycles is provided to the front forecourt, as well as a Sheffield stand for 2no. visitor cycles. The is shown on drawing ref: 4279 CDC XX ZZ DR A (81) 100 REV: C. The cycle parking provision is in line with the requirement of Table 6.3 in the London Plan.
- 6.34 Paragraph 4.33 of the Local Plan identifies that *“Hampstead and Belsize Park have a very high concentration of schools where significant issues exist concerning the ‘school run’. We will refuse applications for new schools or the expansion of existing schools in these areas, unless it can be demonstrated the number of traffic movements will not increase.”*
- 6.35 An updated travel survey was undertaken of students attending the Fine Arts College. This was undertaken in May 2023 by the staff at the school. Students were asked to confirm how they travelled prior to and from the Fine Arts College. The survey was undertaken soon after children returned to classroom learning from remote learning.
- 6.36 The May 2023 survey identified that existing students modes of transport to the Fine Arts College can be broken down as:
- 7 pupils arrived by public bus (12.31%)
 - 4 pupils arrived on foot (7.69%)
 - 2 pupils arrived by bike (3.08%)
 - 37 pupils arrived by rail / underground (66.16%)
 - 6 pupils arrived by car/ van with their own private guardian (10.77%)
- 6.37 The survey identifies that the majority of pupils are travelling by sustainable modes of transport (91%) and few pupils are reliant on travelling by private car.
- 6.38 A survey was also undertaken of staff. The May 2023 survey identified that staff’s modes of transport can be broken down as:
- 1 staff member arrived on foot (13.64%)
 - 1 staff member arrived by bike (9.09%)

- 6 staff members arrived by rail / underground (68.19%)
- 1 staff member arrived by motorcycle (9.09%)

6.39 The survey identifies that the majority of staff are travelling by sustainable modes of transport (90%), with the highest proportion travelling by rail/ underground.

6.40 Following the expansion of the school, all new and existing staff, pupils and parents will be encouraged to travel to the Fine Arts College using non car modes.

6.41 In order to promote public transport, walking and cycling to the Site, and to align with the policy requirements, a School Development Travel Plan has been submitted. The Plan has identified a range of transport issues and possible solutions to promoting sustainable behaviours, Example of measures to be set out in the School Development Travel Plan include:

- Promoting awareness of the School Development Travel Plan to staff and parents;
- Staff will not be permitted to park on-street within local parking bays, so as to ensure the school does not materially impact the occupancy levels of local on-street parking bays;
- Cycle awareness training;
- Providing advice on safe walking routes; and
- Initiatives for walking to reduce reliance on private vehicles and public transport as well as promoting a healthier lifestyle.

6.42 The Council can secure the Travel Plan through a planning condition or section 106 agreement.

6.43 Through careful management and mitigation, and through the adoption of the School Travel Plan, it is considered that the use of the site as a day school is expected to have no significant impact on the free flow of traffic and road safety and to comply with local policy requirements.

6.44 The existing travel surveys undertaken, identify that the vast majority of pupils and staff travel by sustainable modes of transport. Any increase in car usage at the site would be expected to be nominal and therefore the number of traffic movements will not increase.

Neighbours Amenity

6.45 Policy A1 (Managing the impact of development) of the CLP seeks to ensure that standards of amenity are protected for existing and future occupiers and nearby properties. This factors that comprise of amenity include, but not limited to;

- visual privacy, outlook;

- sunlight, daylight and overshadowing;
- artificial lighting levels;
- transport impacts, including the use of Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Delivery and Servicing Management Plans;
- impacts of the construction phase, including the use of Construction Management Plans;
- noise and vibration levels;
- odour, fumes and dust;
- microclimate;
- contaminated land; and
- impact upon water and wastewater infrastructure.

6.46 Policy A4 (Noise and vibration) of the CLP seeks to manage the impact of noise and vibration, including any plant and machinery.

6.47 The site is located in a residential area. There are existing pupil and staff arrivals and departures on Belsize Park Gardens as a result of the College's current occupation of 81b Belsize Park Gardens/ 24 Lambolle Place/ Lancaster Stables. It is however recognised that there will be an increase in the number of pupils arriving and departing. The College will ensure good management to ensure that when pupils arrive and depart they are well behaved and do not cause noise that could disturb neighbours. Having a member of staff present outside the entrance door, the mornings and at the end of the day, will ensure pupil behaviour is monitored and that action can be taken if an issue arises.

6.48 A School Management Plan, prepared with Dukes Education, accompanies the submission and sets out how the school will be managed, this will include the management of pupil arrivals and departures.

6.49 A Noise Impact Report, produced by Max Fordham, accompanies the submission. The report assesses the background noise levels and ambient noise levels, as well as noise breakout to adjoining properties. The report concludes that the Site is suitable for educational use. As a result of the orientation of the rooms, party wall upgrades and induct attenuators, the Proposed Development would have no significant impact on the noise levels currently experienced by neighbouring residents.

- 6.50 A Construction Environmental Management and Construction Logistics Plan, completed by Robert West, accompanies the submission. This plan will be further updated prior to construction commencing by the appointed contractor, to set out the final construction arrangements and to ensure impact on neighbours is mitigated.
- 6.51 Following discussion with local residents during the consultation process, all upper floor windows on the side elevation will be fitted with translucent glazing to eliminate the risk of overlooking. Detail of the design principal of the side elevation can be found in the Design and Access Statement.
- 6.52 A Daylight and Sunlight Assessment, prepared by T16 Design, accompanies the submission. This has been undertaken as a result of the parapet that is proposed on the rear element of the building, on the west elevation. The report demonstrates that the proposal would create no adverse impact on neighbouring residential properties in terms of daylight. In addition, all proposed windows would retain 80% of the annual sunlight hours and during winter months. Therefore, the proposal is considered to be BRE compliant in regard to daylight and sunlight. Full details are contained in the report.
- 6.53 Overall, the proposal would not present an unacceptable adverse impact on the current amenity levels of future and existing occupiers, and nearby properties. As such, the proposal would accord with Policies A1 and A4 of the CLP.

Air Quality

- 6.54 The proposed development is located in the LBC Air Quality Management Area, which is defined to cover the whole borough for annual mean NO₂ and daily average PM₁₀ concentrations.
- 6.55 CLP Policy CC4 (Air Quality) seeks to ensure that the impact of development on air quality is mitigated, and that exposure to poor air quality is reduced in the borough.
- 6.56 An Air Quality Assessment, produced by Phlorum, accompanies the application and considers the air quality impact of the Proposed Development during the construction and operational phase. Full details are contained in the report.
- 6.57 It is noted that the acceptability of the site for school use, should be considered in the context of the directly comparable location occupied by the school next door. The air quality at 81b Belsize Park Gardens/ 24 Lambolle Place/ Lancaster Stables will be much the same as at No. 81 and the route pupils take on foot from the train station will also be the same.

6.58 Subject to mitigation measures during the construction phase the Air Quality Assessment demonstrates the impacts on local air quality and future occupants would be acceptable during both construction and implementation phases of the development.

6.59 As such, the Proposed Development would accord with Policy CC4 of the CLP and national requirements in regard to air quality.

Energy, Sustainability and Ecology

6.60 London Plan Policies S1 (Improving Air Quality) and S2 (Minimising Greenhouse Emissions) define the strategy set out to reduce carbon emissions in London and improve air quality. Developments should be as a minimum Air Quality Neutral, follow the design hierarchy; Be lean; Be Clean; Be Green; and met a minimum on-site reduction of at least 35 per cent beyond Building Regulations is required for major development.

6.61 London Plan Policies G5 (Urban greening) and G6 (Biodiversity and access to nature) sets out the inclusion of urban greening measures and net biodiversity gain in development proposals. An Urban Greening Factor target score of 0.3 is recommended for predominately commercial development.

6.62 CLP Policies CC1 (Climate Change Mitigation) and CC2 (Adapting to climate change) require all major development to minimise the effect of climate change through the energy hierarchy, use of green infrastructure and sustainable design and construction. All development should adopt appropriate climate change adaptation measures such as:

- a) the protection of existing green spaces and promoting new appropriate green infrastructure;
- b) not increasing, and wherever possible reducing, surface water runoff through increasing permeable surfaces and use of Sustainable Drainage Systems;
- c) incorporating bio-diverse roofs, combination green and blue roofs and green walls where appropriate; and
- d) measures to reduce the impact of urban and dwelling overheating, including application of the cooling hierarchy.

6.63 Policy A3 (Biodiversity) of the CLP seeks to minimise any adverse impacts from development and expects proposals to consider opportunities to improve biodiversity on site such as; retention of trees and vegetation of significant amenity, historic, cultural or ecological value and incorporating additional trees and vegetation where possible.

- 6.64 An Energy and Sustainability Statement, prepared by Max Fordham, accompanies the submission. This explains how the project considers measures to improve the building's CO2 emissions and explain how the project responds to local, regional, and national planning policies relating to sustainability.
- 6.65 The existing building is to be retained and improved as part of the refurbishment. The use of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and Photovoltaic Panels (PV) help to reduce heating and energy demands, as well as the removal of fossil fuel burning equipment from the building. In addition, the introduction of green roofs provides direct and ambient cooling effects. A total of 33.4% reduction in carbon over the Part L Building Regulations are a result of the energy strategy for the refurbished building. A completed Camden Sustainability and Energy pro forma is included as part of the submission, in line with Policies CC1 and CC2, as well as the CPG on Energy efficiency and adaptation.
- 6.66 The existing Site is dominated by hardstanding and buildings, with some vegetation and semi-mature trees on the walls and roof. The proposal would significantly improve the ecological value of the Site but the introduction of green infrastructure including green roofs and living green walls.
- 6.67 A tree survey, prepared by Marcus Foster, accompanies the submission which inspected the condition of the existing trees, including existing trees that fall within the garden of No.83. One Category A tree (London plane), two Category B trees (Bay Laurel and Cockspur thorn) and two Category C trees/shrubs (Cherry and Privet/Ivy) were identified.
- 6.68 An Arboricultural Survey Impact Assessment & Method Statement, prepared by Marcus Foster, accompanies the submission. This provides details of the tree protection fencing and tree works to facilitate the development. It is proposed that the Category C Cherry tree is to be removed due to its poor location on the eastern boundary line. Tree replacement is proposed at 1:1 ration and additional landscaping is provided within the communal amenity area to the front of the Site. Please refer to the submitted report and technical drawings for full details. Approval is sought for the works recommended by Marcus Foster as part of this planning application.
- 6.69 In addition to landscaping to the front of the Site, large areas of the roof are to include green roofs and bio solar roof system areas, measuring a total of 282 sqm of the roof space. A roof plan is included in drawing ref: 4279 CDC XX RL DR A (GA) 140 REV: I.
- 6.70 The London Plan requires that predominantly residential developments achieve an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) score of 0.4 and that predominantly commercial developments achieve a UGF score of 0.3. The Urban Greening Factor for the proposed development is 0.32. Accordingly, it can be

seen that the current development proposals meet this target. The proposed soft landscaping scheme is shown on drawing ref: 4279 CDC XX GF DR A (97) 100 REV: D.

Fire

- 6.71 Policy D12 (Fire safety) of the London Plan requires that all major development proposals should be submitted with a Fire Statement. Policy D5 (B5)(Inclusive design) of the London Plan notes that development proposals should achieve the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design and incorporate safe and dignified emergency evacuation for all building users.
- 6.72 A Fire Statement, prepared by Osborn Associates, accompanies the submission. The report concludes that the fire safety and the fire safety information of the proposed development would accord with the requirements of the London Plan policies D12 and D4. Please refer to the submitted report for full details.

Refuse, Servicing and Deliveries

- 6.73 Policy CC5 (Waste) of the CLP seeks to ensure that developments include facilities for the storage and collection of waste and recycling.
- 6.74 The School Management Plan, provided by the Fine Arts College, details the waste and recycling strategy,
- 6.75 A bin storage unit is located to the front courtyard of the Site. This is shown in drawing ref: 4279 CDC XX ZZ DR A (81) 100 REV: C. Waste will be collected by staff and stored at this location. A staff member at the College will be responsible for transporting the waste from the bin store to kerb side on Belsize Park Gardens. Waste collection will then take place on the street by council services, as per the existing operation at the College's other buildings.
- 6.76 In regard to deliveries and servicing, delivery and servicing to the site will be from Belsize Park Gardens. Delivery vehicles will stop briefly on Belsize Park Gardens outside of the site to undertake deliveries.
- 6.77 Deliveries are expected to be limited and will comprise of College supplies and supplies for the café. The deliveries will be undertaken by small box vans or similar. The College will schedule these deliveries, where possible, within College hours.

Flood Risk

- 6.78 Policies CC2 (Adapting to climate change) and CC3 (Water and flooding) seeks to ensure that developments are water efficient and wherever possible reducing, surface water runoff through increasing permeable surfaces and use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

- 6.79 The proposed roof and external hardstanding areas are proposed to remain the same, except for the introduction of green roofs, porous paving and a rainwater garden will be provided. These are considered the only feasible SuDS measures, given the site constraints.
- 6.80 It is noted that for major applications, the Council expect a SuDS pro forma to be submitted. A copy of the SuDS pro forma is included in Appendix C4 of the Flood Risk Assessment. It is noted the proposed development results in the change of use only, with existing building being re-used and no built development proposed.
- 6.81 Due to the existing site layout restrictions and because the proposed development comprises of the conversion of an existing building, resulting in the footprint which covers the majority of the site, it is infeasible to provide a complete separate drainage system for the surface water. Therefore, the proposal is to follow the current philosophy of discharging the surface water via the combined drainage system with SuDS measures introduced where feasible to manage surface water runoff.

7.0 STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 This section should be read in conjunction with the heritage chapter of CDC Studio's Design and Access Statement, which provides a further overview of the site's history, as well as a number of historic photographs and maps.

Heritage Policy

- 7.2 Any decisions relating to listed buildings and their settings and conservation areas must address the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (see in particular sections 16, 66 and 72) as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.
- 7.3 Section 16 and 66 requires that local planning authorities shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72 requires local planning authorities to ensure that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 7.4 Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) states that:
- "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation."*
- 7.5 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that:
- "Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."*
- 7.6 London Plan Policy HC1 (Heritage Conservation and Growth) confirms that development affecting heritage assets, including conservation areas, and their settings should conserve their significance by being sympathetic to their significance and appreciation within their surroundings.

- 7.7 CLP Policy D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) reflect the London Plan Policy H1 and confirms that the Council will require development within conservation areas to preserve, or where possible, enhance the character or appearance of the area.

History of Belsize Park and 81 Belsize Park Gardens

- 7.8 The Belsize Conservation Area Statement (003) notes:

“...Belsize Park is an area of large scale, imposing semi-detached Victorian Villas of distinct yet uniform appearance. They show elaborate and consistent architectural detail and within the designated boundary there is little to detract from the unity of appearance. Belsize Village is also an area of considerable charm, the particular character of the village being one of the main justifications for designation...”

- 7.9 Within the conservation area there are six sub areas of varying character and appearance. These differences are caused by a combination of the following: land use, the density of development, the scale and style of buildings, their construction materials, the period of development, local topography and the predominance of gardens and trees.

- 7.10 The site falls within the Belsize Park area of the conservation area, which is characterised by the core development of repeated forms of stucco villas, undertaken by Daniel Tidey, whose design gives a strong identity and unity of appearance to the area The Belsize Conservation Area Statement (2003) notes *“The closely spaced villas maintain a continuous building line and their repeated forms with narrow gaps between give a uniform rhythm to the streets and provide important, glimpsed views. Belsize Park Gardens is a long, straight and consistent street to its junction with Lambolle Place where the slight bend in its alignment reflects the later development of the southern part of the street. The impact of the continuous line of villa development on the street is significantly softened by mature trees and vegetation in the front gardens. This filtering effect on the views from the street is also notable along Belsize Park.”*

- 7.11 The Belsize Conservation Area Statement (2003) advises that *“Tidey initially leased land for building from Palmer and began constructing Buckland Crescent in 1856, moving on to Belsize Square and Belsize Park Gardens (then St Margaret’s Road) in the early 1860’s”.*

- 7.12 The Belsize Society¹ provide further guidance on the history of the Belsize Park area. Their website advises that *“Tidey aimed to bring the fashionable styles of Kensington and Bayswater to Belsize.*

¹ <https://www.belsize.org.uk/belsizewp/wp-content/uploads/Belsize-Park-History-rvsd-21.pdf>

He built conventional classically styled 8-10 bedroomed semi- detached houses with large porticos and lavish stucco to attract the wealthy middle classes. During the 1850s and 60s he completed about 250 houses in Buckland Crescent, Belsize Square, Belsize Park Gardens, Belsize Crescent and Belsize Terrace. By 1870 tastes had changed and Tidey went bankrupt.”

- 7.13 Belsize Park Gardens and Lancaster Stables are evident on historic maps dating back to 1900, which echoes the information provided in the Conservation Area Statement and by the Belsize Society that the area was developed in the 1850s and 1860s. However, the building at 81 Belsize Park Gardens is not in situ by 1900, as the map extract dated 1900 below denotes.

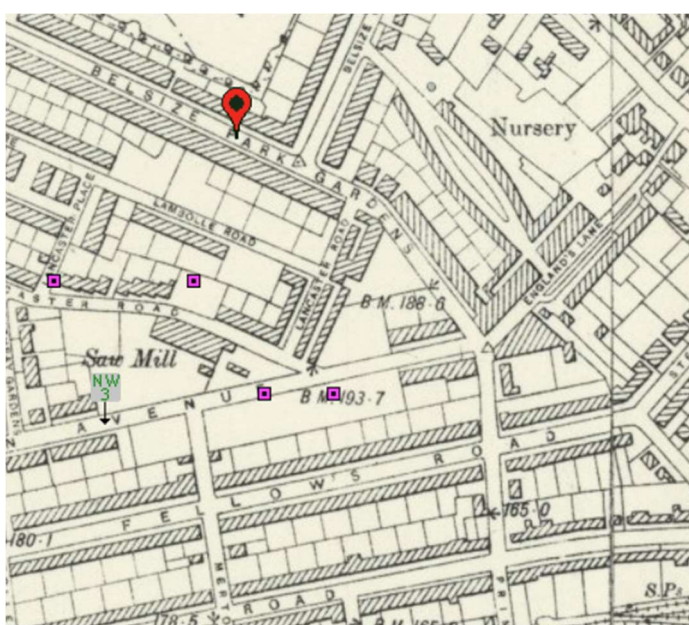


Figure 1: Map of Belsize Park Gardens dated 1900 from The Underground Map website².



Figure 2: Map dated 1950 of Belsize Park Gardens showing 'Hampstead Squash and Rugby Fives Club' located at 81 Belsize Park Gardens from The Underground Map website.

² <https://www.theundergroundmap.com/article.html?id=12167&zoom=16&annum=1860>

- 7.14 It is understood that 81 Belsize Park Gardens was built in the 1930s. A History of the County of Middlesex (Volume 9, Hampstead, Paddington. Originally published by Victoria County History, London, 1989³) identifies that *"Hampstead squash and rugby fives club opened c. 1933 at no. 81 Belsize Park Gardens, in purpose-built premises, with social facilities, which were taken over in 1967, 1983, and by Ragdale health club in 1985"*. The extract of the 1950s map shows the 'Hampstead Squash and Rugby Fives Club' at 81 Belsize Park Gardens in situ.
- 7.15 The Roy Hart Theatre bought the 'Hampstead Squash Club' in 1969. The Roy Hart⁴ website advises that *"after the purchase, the theatre virtually rebuilt the club and greatly extended the building by adding another two floors above courts three and four. When the new club was opened, it was renamed the "Abraxas Club" by Roy Hart."* It goes on to state that *"The original club was called the "Hampstead Squash Club". It had four squash courts, (now all converted into low ceilinged gymnasiums)"*. The Theatre introduced a large restaurant dining room in which "Cabarets" were performed and a bar. It is understood from the website that the theatre invested a great deal of its money on improving the clubs facilities.
- 7.16 In the early 1970s a number of factors, primarily economic factors, led to the Roy Hart Theatre looking for alternative premises outside of London, first elsewhere in England but then the search moved to France where a suitable property was secured. The majority of performances taking place at the time were in mainland Europe. The move to the new home for the theatre in southern France was a gradual process, until by March 1975 all of the theatre had moved there⁵.
- 7.17 During the 1980s 81 Belsize Park Gardens reopened as a leisure centre. A History of the County of Middlesex advises that the premises were taken over in 1983, and by Ragdale health club in 1985⁶. The leisure centre closes in early 2017, following its operator at the time Springhealth going into administration. The property has been closed since this time.

Heritage Significance

- 7.18 The Site's significance in the conservation area is considered to primarily relate to views of its front elevation on to Belsize Park Garden. Unlike the residential houses in the surrounding area built by Tidey in the 1850s and 1860s, with large porticos and lavish stucco to attract the wealthy middle

³ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol9/pp81-91>

⁴ <http://www.roy-hart.com/cab.htm>

⁵ [Why Roy Hart Theatre moved to France \(roy-hart.com\)](http://www.roy-hart.com/why-roy-hart-theatre-moved-to-france)

⁶ <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol9/pp81-91>

classes the subject property was built in the 1930s and extended in the late 1960s/ early 1970s. It is a classic 1930s style building, of modern design with art deco influences. The front elevation fronting on to Belsize Park Gardens has been altered over time, but it is of a simplistic design with no window openings currently at upper floors. Photographs included in the Design and Access Statement show that when the property was first built the brick work was exposed, there was exposed concrete banding and a bay window at ground floor.

- 7.19 The Site's significance also relates to its historical uses, which have changed over time with it first being built as a squash club, then being used as a theatre and then converting to a leisure centre.

Heritage Assessment

- 7.20 In October 2020, planning permission was secured at the property for *"Alterations to front and side (south east) elevations incorporating new windows and entrance portico; replacement rooflights and installation of plant; removal of roof to form enclosed garden including acoustic barrier; and replacement store at front of site."* (ref. 2020/4336/P).
- 7.21 The recent planning history for No. 81 demonstrates that the Council consider alternations to the exterior to the building to be acceptable. Some of the elements of this previous consent have been carried through to the current proposals such as the introduction of additional window openings and a bin store. Whilst the 2020 application sought to introduce a portico entrance, which mimics the design of neighbouring properties, the current proposals put forward by CDC Studio seek to have regard to the original 1930s design.
- 7.22 The external works proposed for No. 81 comprises of the introduction of new window openings to the front and side elevation, introduction of a new entrance to the building, works to enclose the hardstanding area at the front of the site and to introduce bin and bike stores in this area, works to the roof including replacement roof plant and introduction of a green roof and PV panels.
- 7.23 A lack of investment and maintenance at the property by previous owners means that the Site looks unkept and in contrast to the smart residential properties that surround it. The investment proposed at the property by the applicant therefore seeks to tidy up and enhance the property, ensuring it does not detract from the street scene, which is welcomed from a heritage perspective.
- 7.24 The proposed development removes the existing rendered finish on the front elevation and part of the side elevation to expose the brick finish. It also reintroduces the concrete banding that was in place when the property was first built and a window at ground floor level. Furthermore, a low height boundary wall at the front of the site is proposed, and there was originally a boundary wall

in place at the property. These alterations are considered to have a positive heritage impact, and to enhance the part of the Conservation Area where the property is located.

- 7.25 Additional window openings are proposed at first floor level on the front elevation. Whilst these are a new additions, that weren't part of the original construction the size and position of these is considered to be in proportion to the host building and is therefore not considered to result in any harm. Similarly the side elevation additional openings are also considered appropriate.
- 7.26 The front hardstanding area is currently an eye sore and the works to this area will improve the visual appearance of the site's frontage. A high quality bin and bike store will replace the existing wooden enclosure which is in a poor condition.
- 7.27 Overall, it is considered that the proposed works will positively contribute to the property's visual appearance on the street, which will preserve and enhance the Conservation Area and no harm to the Conservation Area will arise. The proposed development is considered to be respectful to the local context and character in accordance with London Plan Policy H1 and CLP Policies D1 and D2.
- 7.28 Furthermore, the Fine Arts College is a college for students specialising in the Arts and Humanities. The building will have specialist teaching spaces for drama/ dance, photography, and music as well as a space to display students art work. This re-provision of creative arts and humanities at the property provides a link to the building's historic use as a theatre and training club for the performers who were part of the "Abraxas Club".
- 7.29 It is considered that paragraph 202 of the NPPF is not engaged, because no harm is considered to arise to the Conservation Area, as a result of the proposed development. However, in the event that paragraph 202 was engaged and less than substantial harm was identified, it is considered that this harm would be considerably outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal including, bringing the property back into beneficial use for education use, re-providing a creative arts use at the site which was used as a theatre in the 1960s/ 70s, investment into restoring and refurbishing the property and securing its optimum viable use.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed change of use from Class E (Indoor Leisure Use) to Class F1 (Educational Use) at 81 Belsize Park Gardens will enable the Fine Arts College to expand to meet increasing demand for school places. It will also enable the school to provide a higher quality learning environment, a wider range of facilities and more space for existing students, including providing an art gallery to display pupils works.
- 8.2 The proposal has taken into consideration the site's context and surrounding conservation area, and, is mindful of the neighbouring site's current amenity levels. Engagement has taken place with local residents and the feedback has been considered and incorporated into the development proposal where appropriate. Guidance received from Camden when pre-application advice was sought in 2018, has also been considered as part of the design development. The resulting design, reflects the comments and recommendations received in-line with the consultation process.
- 8.3 The Proposed Development fully aligns with local and national planning policies, it will provide a contemporary high quality Fine Arts College, whilst restoring the aesthetic heritage value of the building. Further, the Proposed Development introduces urban greening, enhances the biodiversity value and energy efficiency of the Site.
- 8.4 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It is considered that the Proposed Development provides a sustainable form of development, utilising an unused small site and would deliver a high quality educational facility, which will contribute to the Borough's educational needs.

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