



PLANNING STATEMENT

15 Belsize Park Mews, Belsize Park, London, NW3 5BL | August 2023

Alterations and extensions to existing dwelling including roof extension and new basement with associated works.

On behalf of Papa Architects Ltd

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This planning statement supports a planning application and outlines the proposed alterations and extensions to an existing property at no.15 Belsize Park Mews, Belsize Park, London, NW3 5BL. The project aims to enhance the existing property by introducing a roof extension and constructing a new basement to provide additional family living accommodation with associated works.
- 1.2 The planning application includes the following information;
- Planning Application Forms;
 - CIL Forms;
 - Site Plan;
 - Existing Drawings;
 - Proposed Drawings Package;
 - Design & Access Statement;
 - Planning Statement;
 - Basement Impact Assessment
 - Daylight and Sunlight Report
 - Application fee.
- 1.3 This statement sets out the local planning policy situation and the proposals compliance with the key relevant policy tests as well as relevant planning history and other material considerations relevant to this case.

2.0 The Site & Proposed Development

- 2.1 The site encompasses a two-storey mews building situated on the southern side of Belsize Park Mews. It forms part of a terrace of properties within the Belsize Conservation Area, which is renowned for its historical and architectural significance. The proposed development area is currently identified as making a neutral contribution to the conservation area within the Belsize Character Area.
- 2.2 The existing structure is a mews building that presently serves as a two-bedroom single dwelling. The ground floor accommodates a living kitchen and dining area, while the first-floor features two bedrooms.. The current elevation of the building is rendered and lacks significant historical importance.
- 2.3 It is noteworthy that many buildings within the mews have undergone modifications over time, often without due consideration for their aesthetic and historical context. The appearance of the existing structure, though potentially predating the 1960s and 70s, resembles a garage typology more than that of stables.



Figure 1: Photograph of 15 Belsize Park Mews and adjacent buildings



Figure 2: Aerial view showing the site's location and its context



Figure 3: Neighbouring examples of roof level extensions and alterations that have occurred at Belsize Park Mews



Figure 4: Neighbouring examples of roof level extensions and alterations that have occurred at Belsize Park Mews

2.4 The design statement accompanying this application outlines a comprehensive vision for the transformation of the property. The plan to extend the roof and create a new basement is not just about adding space, but about carefully reimagining the flow of the house to ensure both comfort and safety. By expanding upward and downward, the aim is to enhance the overall living space.

3.0 Planning History & Pre-Application Discussions

- 3.1 The proposed development at 15 Belsize Park Mews benefits from a context of similar successful approvals within the street. Notably, multiple applications (ref: 2021/5690/P, 2020/5574/P, 2020/5034/P, 2017/6198/P) in the vicinity have been granted approval for similar works that have contributed positively to the neighbourhood. These approvals demonstrate the local planning authority's willingness to support projects that enhance the functionality and quality of residential properties while maintaining the character of the area.
- 3.2 The application sought collaborative pre-application dialogue with the local planning authority prior to the submission of this application. This engagement sought to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the potential developments scope and implications. As a result, we submitted a pre-application in February 2023 (ref: 2023/1005//PRE), seeking the Council's informed evaluation and guidance.
- 3.3 In response to our pre-application submission, the planning officer provided the following key guidance:
- Concept of a roof extension is acceptable, with an emphasis on sensitivity to mews-style character.
 - Proposed roof extension design should align with the modest two-story scale typical of the mews.
 - Proposed basement requires a comprehensive Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) to assess impacts on neighbouring properties, structural and environmental conditions, and architectural character.
 - Proposed alterations to the façade, including folding glass and screening, were deemed acceptable improvements over existing fenestration.
- 3.4 Further to this, further discussions were held with the officers to discuss more specifically the proposed form of the roof extension in July 2023. The proposed development outlined in this planning application has been thoughtfully shaped by the guidance provided by the planning officer through two pre-application stages. Taking into careful consideration the advice received, the design has been adjusted to align with the specified requirements and recommendations.
- 3.5 In particular, the concerns raised regarding the roof-level extension have been addressed to ensure that it harmoniously integrates with the mews-style character of

the street. Efforts have been made to alleviate the perceived bulkiness and dominance of the initial proposal, with a focus on preserving the modest two-story scale characteristic of the mews.

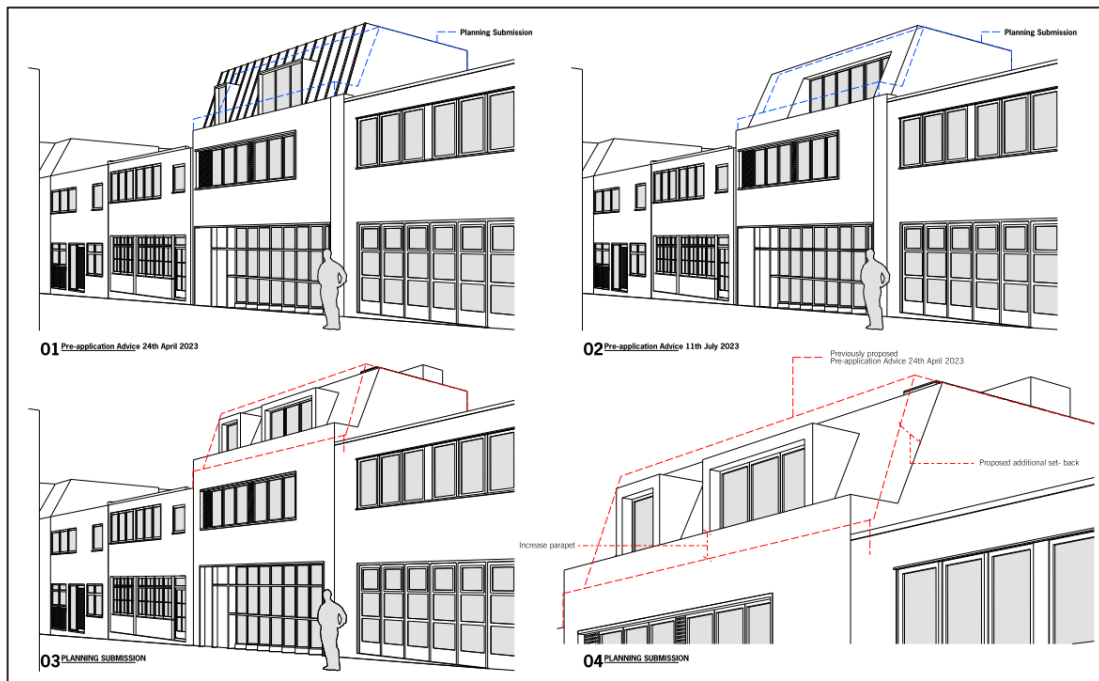


Figure 5: Amendments in Response to Pre-Application Advice

- 3.6 With regards to the proposed basement, a comprehensive Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) has been submitted alongside this application. This assessment has rigorously evaluated the potential impacts of the basement on neighbouring properties, the structural and environmental conditions of the area, and the overall architectural character.
- 3.7 Building upon the pre-application dialogue and the insights shared by the planning officer, this planning application represents our commitment to a design that respects the historical significance of the area while improving the accommodation within the existing building.

4.0 Relevant Planning Policies

4.1 This section of the statement identifies the relevant national and local planning policies considered to be of relevance to the determination of the application. The applicant has sought to ensure that the development proposals accord with all the relevant planning policy guidance relating to the application site.

- ***National Planning Policy Framework (2021)***

4.2 At a national level there is a clear stance to promote housing delivery. Paragraph 10 and 11 of the NPPF states that; *"At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking."*

4.3 For decision-taking this means approving development where it accords with the development plan or where there are no relevant development plan policies or where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Housing development is a key component of economic growth. Whilst this proposal does not propose a new dwelling it does enable through a modest extension creating additional habitable space and allowing flexible working practice.

4.4 The following chapters of the NPPF have also been considered:

4.5 Paragraph 120 (e) states that decisions should: *"Support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards) and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers."*

4.6 The development proposal specifically meets the policy objective of paragraph 120 (e) by virtue of:

- *uses the airspace above the existing residential property to create flexible living and recreational spaces;*

- *designed to appear subordinate whilst also respecting the prevailing height and form of other properties on the northern side of the mews, reflecting the overall street scene; and*
 - *complementing and maintaining the existing urban form of neighbouring properties and the overall appearance of the street scene, whilst providing additional living spaces.*
- 4.7 The revised 2023 consultation version of the NPPF also proposed to add to paragraph 120 (e): *"They should also allow mansard roof extensions where their external appearance harmonises with the original building, including extensions to terraces where one or more of the terraced houses already has a mansard. Where there was a tradition of mansard construction locally at the time of the building's construction, the extension should emulate it with respect to external appearance. A condition of simultaneous development should not be imposed on an application for multiple mansard extensions unless there is an exceptional justification."*
- 4.8 It is clear the Government's direction of travel is to promote upward extensions to existing buildings and these proposals are therefore in line with emerging policy in this regard.
- 4.9 Paragraph 130 makes clear that decisions should ensure developments:
- "a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
 - c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);"*
- 4.10 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states: *"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."*
- 4.11 The proposal positively meets the criteria (a-c) in paragraph 130 by creating a well-designed development, sympathetic to the character of the area whilst also improving the overall appearance of the host building. The proposed development makes use of the existing underutilised roof space which did originally have a roof structure in the

position proposed. Sympathetic and innovative design solutions are incorporated to enhance the appearance of the wider building and functional use of the existing house to create additional living spaces.

- 4.12 This statement and the accompanying design and access statement concludes that there is no harm caused by the proposed extension, or basement development, and given the external improvements proposed to the wider building, the scheme will enhance the conservation area in accordance with Paragraph 202.

- **The London Plan**

- 4.13 The London Plan includes design policies in Chapter 3. Policy D4 Delivering Good Design states:

"The design quality of development should be retained through to completion by:

1) ensuring maximum detail appropriate for the design stage is provided to avoid the need for later design amendments and to ensure scheme quality is not adversely affected by later decisions on construction, materials, landscaping details or minor alterations to layout or form of the development."

- 4.14 The proposal positively addresses this criterion. This is demonstrated through the detailed plans, sections and elevations together with supporting design justification. Similarly, the proposed materials and detailing are all clearly marked on the plans submitted.
- 4.15 The London Plan includes Heritage policies in Chapter 7.
- 4.16 Policy HC1(c) states: *"Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings."*
- 4.17 This application seeks to create a development that is similar in form, scale, and type to that which has already been undertaken for other properties within the mews.
- 4.18 Policy D10 relating to basement development identifies the value of small-scale basement excavation. In paragraph 3.10.6, the Mayor considers that smaller-scale basement excavations, where they are appropriately designed and constructed, can contribute to the efficient use of land, and provide extra living space without the

costs of moving house. The proposed basement will provide residents with additional living space as well as contributing significantly to the efficient use of land.

- **Camden Local Plan (2017)**

- 4.19 Policy A1 Managing the impact of development protects the amenity of occupiers and neighbours. The policy lists the factors that will be considered in accessing any development proposal, some of which are relevant here.
- 4.20 A comprehensive daylight and sunlight assessment has been conducted for the proposed rooftop extension at the application site. The results demonstrate that the development does not introduce any adverse effects on daylight and sunlight availability for neighbouring properties' relevant windows and rooms. It is therefore in clear alignment with the provisions outlined in the Policy A1.
- 4.21 Policy D1 Design deals with various aspects of design, context and character and cross references to Policy D2 Heritage. Paragraph 7.2 adds more detail for extensions, referring to: *"the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed."*
- 4.22 Policy D2 Heritage includes specific requirements for conservation areas: *"In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas... The Council will: require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area."*
- 4.23 The extension preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The extension would not be prominent and compliments similar, previous extensions to other properties in the mews. There are no identified archaeological sites within the proposed development.
- 4.24 Policy A5 Basements refers to basement development this includes basements, lightwells and other underground development: *"The Council will not permit basement schemes which include habitable rooms and other sensitive uses in areas prone to flooding."*
- 4.25 With a shortage of development land and high land values in the borough, the development of basements is a good way of gaining additional space in homes. The proposed basement development is not a habitable bedroom, and it is not prone to flooding. A full basement impact assessment accompanies this application which

showcasing the strategic utilisation of space that enriches the property's functionality. The design strictly adheres to Camden Planning Guidance for Basements.

- **Camden Planning Guidance: Basement (2021)**

4.26 The guidance sets out standards for basement development in Camden. Particular relevance to this application includes:

Basement development must not cause harm to:

- *neighbouring properties;*
- *the structural, ground, or water conditions of the area;*
- *the character and amenity of the area; and*
- *the architectural character and heritage significance of the building and area.*

4.27 The proposed basement development has been designed with these factors in mind and will not cause any harm to neighbouring properties or the surrounding area. The development has been planned to be sympathetic to the architectural character of the building and area, while also ensuring that the character and amenity of the area are not compromised. More detailed work on the structural and construction impact side of things has been undertaken as set out in the accompanying basement impact assessment to support this full application.

- **Camden Planning Guidance: Design (2021)**

4.28 The Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) on design provides principles for roof alterations, stating that alterations are likely to be acceptable if good quality materials and details are used and if the visual prominence, scale, and bulk are appropriate to the local context. Roof alterations may also be acceptable if they continue an established form of roof addition or alteration to a group of similar buildings or if they are architecturally sympathetic to the building's age and character.

4.29 The proposal seeks to use good quality materials and details, while ensuring the visual prominence, scale and bulk are appropriate for the local context. In addition, there is already an established form of roof addition or alteration to a group of similar buildings in the mews, and continuing this pattern of development would be a positive design solution. Furthermore, the scheme, which has been reduced and refined from the pre-application stage, underscores its architectural harmony with the building's historic context, reflecting a respectful approach to the age and character of the structure.

- **Camden Planning Guidance: Home Improvements (2021)**

- 4.30 The information provided in the Camden Planning Guidance, specifically section 2.2.2, provides a strong policy justification for the proposed home improvements in the form of a roof extension to the existing property. The guidance highlights the benefits of extending properties with a new storey at roof level, including increased usable space while retaining more ground level space for greenery, garden storage and outdoor activities.
- 4.31 The guidance also notes that if a similar extension has already been undertaken by neighbours in terraced buildings, it is likely that a similar extension would be an acceptable development.
- 4.32 By seeking to create a similar form, scale, and type of roof level development to that already undertaken for other properties within the mews, the proposed development complies with this policy. Additionally, the proposal seeks to increase the usable space, allowing the property owner to make better use of the available space, as highlighted by the policy.

5.0 Planning Considerations

- ***Design and Layout***

- 5.1 The Design and Access Statement by PAPA Architects outlines the principles of the project, featuring both a basement and a refined roof extension. Guided by a strong set of design principles, the proposal seeks inspiration from the historical evolution of mews typology, the local context, and Camden's design guidance.
- 5.2 The design development is shaped by pre-application advice and input from the case officer. Notable refinements include a reduction in the scale and height of the roof extension, a choice of slate and zinc materials for enhanced aesthetic appeal, and a creative reinterpretation of the folding garage door, now featuring glass elements. These adjustments reflect a commitment to optimising the design's integration within the surroundings.
- 5.3 For a comprehensive understanding of the updated design and layout details of the proposed development, please refer to the Design and Access Statement submitted alongside this application.

- ***Impact on Neighbours***

- 5.4 The daylight and sunlight report evaluates the potential impact of a proposed rooftop extension at the application site on neighbouring residential buildings in terms of daylight and sunlight availability.
- 5.5 The results of the analysis for each neighbouring building demonstrate that the proposed development would not have an adverse effect on the daylight and sunlight levels of relevant windows and rooms.
- 5.6 The presentation of daylight and sunlight results further confirms that the proposed development aligns with the BRE criteria and local planning policy, ensuring no adverse effect on diffused daylight or direct sunlight levels of the relevant windows and rooms in neighbouring buildings.
- 5.7 For a detailed overview of findings and methodologies, please refer to the full daylight and sunlight assessment report submitted with the planning application.

- **Basement Impact**

- 5.8 Jomas Associates Ltd has completed a comprehensive Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) in conjunction with this planning application, providing a thorough evaluation of the potential impacts associated with the proposed basement development.
- 5.9 The BIA encompasses a range of crucial considerations that collectively ensure the compatibility and sustainability of the proposed project within its environmental context. This involved an intricate examination of the site's geological setting, considering solid and drift geology, as well as potential hazards such as shrink swell clays, sulphate attack, and ground movement. Moreover, the assessment encompassed an evaluation of aquifer designations, flood zones, groundwater flooding, surface water flooding, and sewer flooding, ensuring a holistic understanding of the hydrological dynamics of the area. The BIA also considered historical information and site settings, drawing insights from walkover surveys, historical maps, and database research.
- 5.10 The BIA further delved into the flood resilience measures incorporated into the proposed development. These measures, in alignment with NPPF Technical Guidance, contribute to the projects overall sustainability and capacity to withstand potential flooding scenarios, while also ensuring compliance with the Camden Basement Development Guide.
- 5.11 The BIA's comprehensive findings validate that the proposed basement development is not only in compliance with regulatory standards but also incorporates flood-resilient strategies to mitigate adverse effects. This thorough and detailed BIA underscores the careful consideration and planning undertaken to ensure that the proposed basement development integrates harmoniously with the existing site conditions, preserving environmental integrity and adhering to established standards.
- 5.12 For a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts and flood resilience strategies associated with the proposed basement development, please see the Basement Impact Assessment (BIA) submitted alongside this application.
- 5.13 A Structural Engineering Report, prepared by AMA Consulting Engineers Ltd, serves as a supplemental document accompanying the planning application for the envisioned basement construction and refurbishment of the site.
- 5.14 The report offers a comprehensive assessment of various aspects crucial to the project's feasibility and structural integrity. It delves into the existing condition of the

site, meticulously detailing the two-storey mews building's characteristics, including its construction elements such as shallow foundations, concrete ground floor, timber first floor, flat roof, and solid brick external and party walls. Additionally, the report addresses the site's current drainage system, which relies on gravity-fed connections to combined foul and surface water public sewers.

5.15 Further details can be found within the attached Structural Engineering Report.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 In essence, the proposed development stands as a testament to meticulous planning and thoughtful design, with a keen emphasis on harmonising modern living with the historical and contextual fabric of the Belsize Park Mews area. Through a rigorous and all-encompassing design, it is evident that the proposed development has been carefully tailored to align with the Camden Local Plan, the London Plan, and National Planning Policy guidelines. Notably, the design approach adheres closely to the directives outlined in the Camden Planning Guidance, particularly concerning basement and roof extensions.
- 6.2 Crucially, the proposed development has been thoughtfully adjusted based on pre-application advice and feedback, leading to a design that reduces bulk and height, incorporates visually appealing materials, and creatively reimagines architectural elements. This approach ensures that the proposed development not only enhances the character of the conservation area but also creates an attractive, functional, and harmonious family dwelling.
- 6.3 In conclusion, the proposed development not only avoids adverse impacts but also represents a commendable synthesis of innovative design, sustainable considerations, and regulatory compliance. By adhering to established planning policies and expertly addressing potential concerns, this proposal stands poised to contribute positively to the Belsize Park Mews area while providing a superior quality of living for its occupants.



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