



134 Belsize Road
London NW6 4BG

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

September 2023

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1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of a Planning application at **134 BELSIZE Road**.

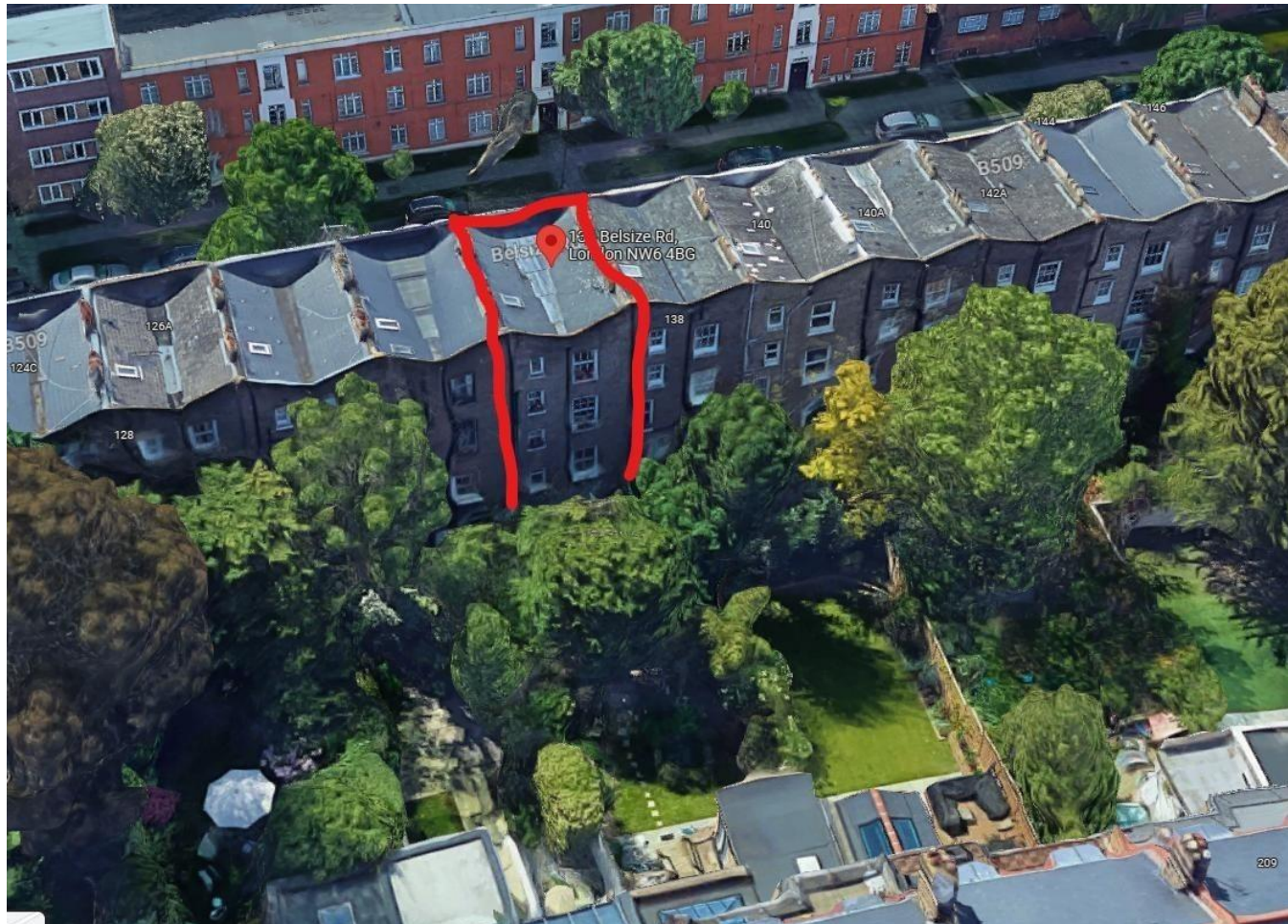
2. Context and History

134 BELSIZE RD is situated in the Swiss Cottage Conservation Area within the London Borough of Camden. The building is not listed.

134 BELSIZE RD is situated in the middle of the terrace. The terrace houses on the north side are slightly older than majority of the property in a conservation area.

Over recent years the former single-family dwelling that constitutes the terrace has been divided into sub-flats. Rear extensions are not uncommon.

The application is for the construction of a front extension with a lightwell at lower ground floor level and adding roof lights to the existing butterfly roof.





Rear Existing Garden

Front Existing Facade

4. Proposal

Proposed Use

The proposed development seeks to expand and improve the quality of the residential home, whilst preserving the character of the building.

Lower Ground floor

Our Client would like to extend to the rear at the lower ground floor for which we recently got approval. This type of extension mimics those of other properties along Belsize Road, with a recently approved rear extension at 140 Belsize Road mimicking the depth of this extension. Extending at the lower ground floor level shall allow new larger openings to be formed to bring light and air deeper into the dark lower ground floor.

Lower Ground Floor Front Extension

Flood background at Belsize Road – “The street of life-threatening floods”

I trust that you are fully aware of the harrowing, life-threatening floods that have plagued Belsize Road, or as it has sadly become known, “The Street of Life-Threatening Floods”. It is of utmost importance that we convey the gravity of the situation at hand, as the implications of our proposal are nothing short of a matter of life and death.

In the span of a mere two years, Belsize Road has been besieged by no less than three cataclysmic floods, each of which captured the nation’s attention through sensational headlines. Notable inundations were witnessed in 1975, 2002, and most recently, the calamitous year of 2021. These floods, wrought by merciless, extreme rainstorms, have laid waste to the lower ground floors of properties that line this ill-fated street.

Adding to this litany of destruction, Belsize Road suffered two further catastrophic inundations in December 2022 and September 2023, owing to a catastrophic Thames Water burst pipe incident. The ramifications of these events have been nothing short of devastating, leaving the community in a state of perpetual distress.

<https://www.hamhigh.co.uk/news/23764268.burst-thames-water-main-closes-belsize-road-second-time/>

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/water-main-burst-camden-belsize-road-london-fire-brigade-b1047913.html>

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/20785888/camden-flooding-burst-water-mains/>

<https://youtu.be/-we6TxCgn4Q?si=crmpD6wmVcSY2O4q>

https://youtu.be/wS_3ZXGngcl?si=84X-oJi496VV3Xyb

<https://youtu.be/dBOI0fJoabQ?si=hizeuALnUfC9VpdP>

The repercussions of these relentless floods are manifestly dire:

1. Water, relentless in its onslaught, forcibly breaches the lower ground floor through the main entrance door and windows, rendering the very foundations of our properties susceptible to ruin. Such repeated tragedies have rendered it nigh impossible to secure reasonably priced flood insurance for these structures and their contents. We find ourselves in dire need of a comprehensive redesign to minimize flood-impact on our properties.

2. The most recent deluge in December 2022 presented a chilling tableau of imminent peril. The lower ground floors were submerged to waist height, akin to a midnight nightmare. The sheer ferocity of the flood had shattered windows, resulting in a frantic rescue operation, notably including the heart-wrenching salvation of a pregnant woman via a life raft under the shroud of midnight. The threat to both mother and unborn child was palpable, and it serves as an ominous reminder of the stakes involved here.

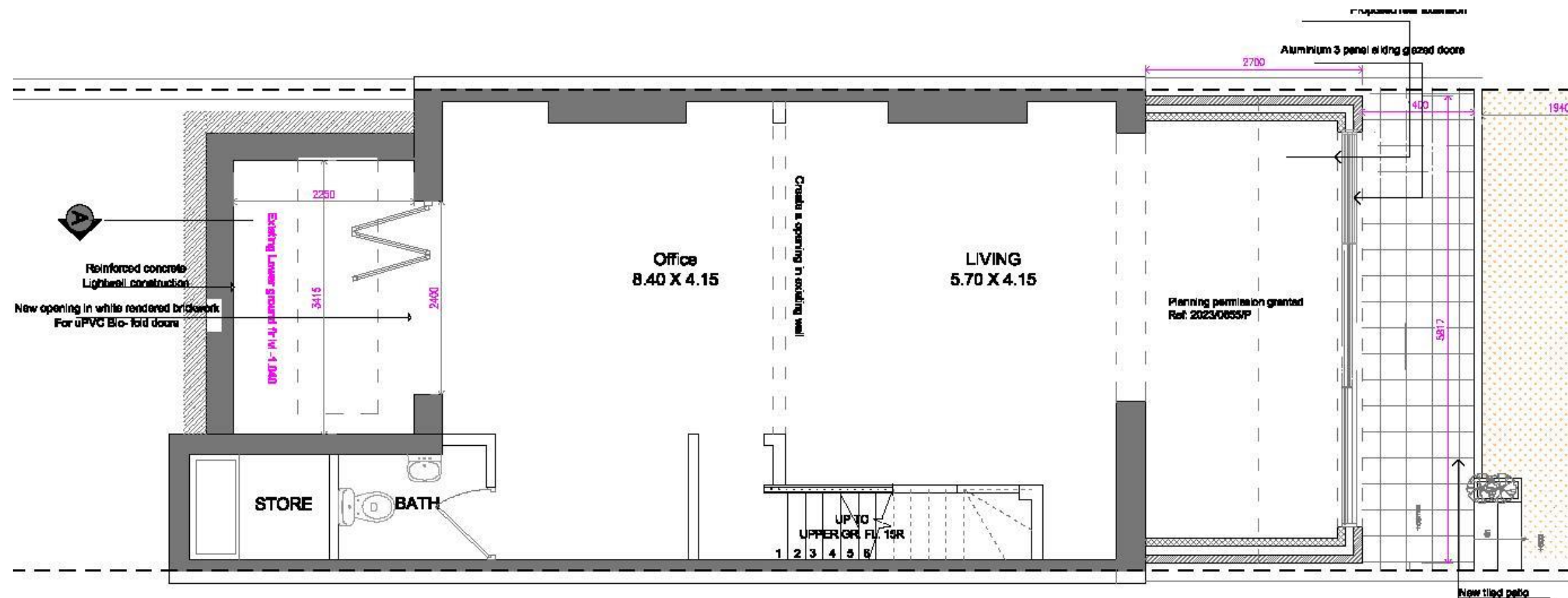
The rationale for our vulnerability to such catastrophic events is multifaceted:

- Geographically, our properties are situated at the nadir of a topographical incline descending from one of London's highest points, Whitestone Pond.
- The railway line serves as a formidable impediment to the natural drainage of excess water.
- The local soil, comprised predominantly of impermeable clay, exacerbates the drainage issue.
- Further compounding our plight is the incessant rise of groundwater levels within our locality.
- On top careless Thames-water and council add to the peril

Let it be known that our primary objective is to fortify these premises against water's relentless incursion, regardless of the pressure it exerts. To elucidate, the current ingress of water manifests in the alleyway nestled between lower ground floor doors/windows and the ascending stairs leading to the front garden. The catastrophic events of December 2022 saw the water pressure breach doors and windows, submerging the entire lower ground floor. While one expedient solution would involve replacing windows and doors with impermeable walls, the resultant darkness within the lower ground floor front portion is a compromise too grim to contemplate.

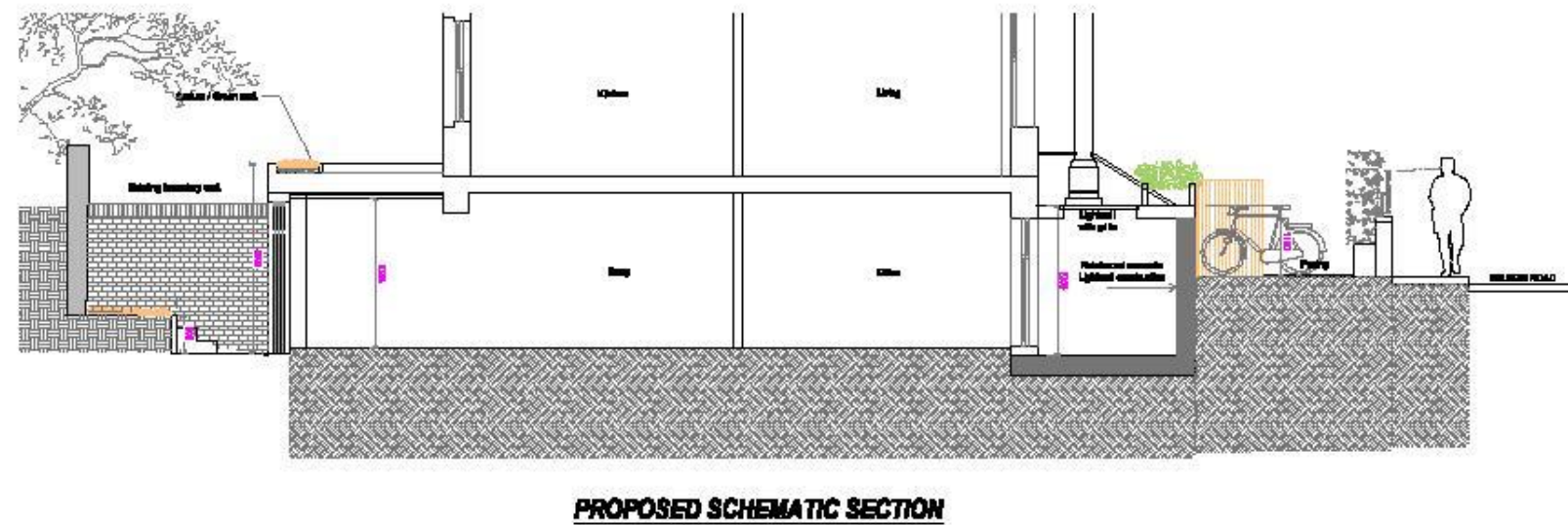
In conclusion, the urgency of our proposal cannot be overstated. We implore you to recognize the gravity of the situation and understand that we stand on the precipice of a potentially cataclysmic event. The proposed redesign is our only defence against the relentless fury of the floods that threaten our very existence.

We have proposed the front extension with a lightwell (for natural light) and closing down the doors and windows and making a water-tight structure to make lower ground space more usable for the cinema /game room which is part of one whole dwelling and access to this room is through the internal stair. No sleeping accommodation has been provided at the lower ground level. We can submit a flood assessment upon request. The front garden depth is approximately 5.20m and the depth of the proposed extended basement will be 2.6m (roughly half of the width of the garden). The planters, new paving and hedges will enhance the front façade and the characteristics of the building which is completely barren and neglected at the moment.



BB005050 LOWER GROUND FLOOR PLAN

We have made the sure that the hedges on the street wall will be tall enough to avoid any direct possible overlooking from the street.



Sample photo of lightwell from Totus construction at Clapham

The design includes new planters, new slatted timber bin storage, and space for mounted bike. These look to improve the levels and accessibility throughout the entrance patio whilst replacing all tiling for porous York stone paving and black porcelain for steps.

Main pedestrian access to the building will remain same through the ground floor. All new corridors and spaces will comply with UK building regulations.

In terms of the new glazing proposed, we intend to use energy-efficient glazing that exceeds the building regulations with internal shading to prevent overheating. This development aims to achieve high environmental performance standards. Where possible, Locally and responsibly sourced materials shall be used within the building structure and fabric. All timber shall be FSC certified. All building fabric and glazing U values shall aim to have as high as thermal performance as possible, contributing to an increase in the energy efficiency of the building. The building will aim to maximise the use of the existing materials and fabric, reusing as much waste material as possible.

6. Conclusion

Referring to the above policy, which is in favour of sustainable development, we would argue that the positive benefits of the scheme outweigh any minor amenity issues neighbours may suffer, particularly as there are no direct overlooking issues on this site.

The proposals will improve the overall quality of the surrounding area by improving the aesthetic of the building and most importantly save lives from future flood incidents which have become a recurrent phenomenon in this area in light of climate change.

I would like to highlight that we submitted above life saving proposal in pre app in May2023, but no one picked it up for 2 months. We figured that saving lives cannot wait and hence we are going through the direct route of planning application so that council is obliged to respond to this game changing proposal.

Thank you...