

2nd October 2023
Flat 11, Oak Hill Lodge, NW3 7LN

Dear sir/ madam,

REF: Planning request for replacing window frames for double glazed aluminum frames

We would like to apply for permission to replace the existing single-glazed aluminum frames of our apartment by double-glazed aluminum frames. We would also like to replace the wooden balcony doors by double-glazed aluminum frames - as was done in several neighbouring apartments. While most of the flats of the building were already modernised and replaced their original frames, our apartment still maintains the existing windows and doors which are now over 60 years old.

Key reasons for changing include:

- Comfort - even with regular maintenance, the windows are far from being airtight and do not retain temperatures of the internal spaces. There is also a constant draft through most rooms of the apartment.
- Energy efficiency and climate change - with ever increasing energy and gas prices, double-glazed windows would help improve the energy performance of the apartment and reduce heating-related emissions.
- Safety - the old aluminum frames and lock mechanism of the wooden balcony doors are fragile and insecure. The apartment sits on the first floor and the balconies are easily accessible from the front garden of the building. Recently, the apartment was broken into (December 2022) and we feel the new double-glazed frames would offer much more security.
- Noise - located on the first floor, we are vulnerable to delivery / servicing noises. Modernising the windows would offer noise reduction and increase privacy in our apartment.
- Appearance - while neighbours have updated their windows, our flat is the only one with the original frames on the south-facing facade. The proposed double-glazed frames follow the same design as the apartments above and would ensure a more consistent building facade.

Site location:

Oak Hill Lodge sits at the end of Oak Hill Park. Our apartment, Flat 11, sits on the first floor with most windows facing south towards the access road. We also have one window facing west towards Oak Hill House and two windows facing west towards Branch Hill woods.

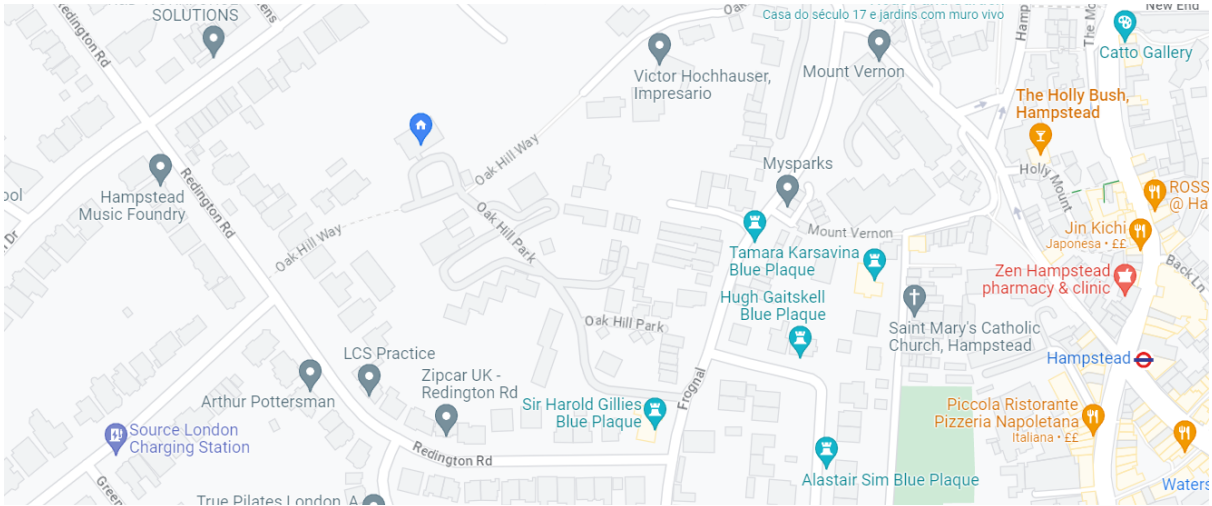


Image 1. Site Location - blue circle, house icon, facing Oak Hill Park.



Image 2. View from the front garden, with apartment windows and balcony doors highlighted in blue.



Images 3 & 4. Eastern facade, with damage from break in, and western facade

The estate sits within the Hampstead Conservation Area (sub area Branch Hill/Oak Hill). Oak Hill Lodge is not a listed building nor highlighted as a building which makes a positive contribution to the character area. Description of the estate in full below:

Oak Hill Park was developed around 1850 with an informal layout of plain but substantial Italianate villas. Only No. 1 and Oak Hill House remain; the rest were replaced in 1960 by a grouping of flats, of no great quality in themselves but pleasantly arranged among the grassy slopes and mature trees of the older gardens (Won Civic Trust Award in 1961). Two blocks are seven storey, with strong horizontal brick banding and balconies at the corners. Another group of four connected blocks are three storey with a greater use of brick and concrete string course between floors.

Proposed Changes and Design Considerations:

Please find enclosed Appendix A (parts 1-4) including technical drawings of the proposed windows and balcony doors. Description as below:

1. Aluminum windows: The apartment currently has 7 aluminum windows, as per original building design. Windows have a slender silver aluminum frame and a sliding opening system. All windows have an upper tipper casement. There is a wooden beam between the sliding panes and upper casement which will be maintained. (see below picture of existing window frame for reference).



Image 5. Existing frames, from inside - sliding panes with upper tipper casement.

The proposed design will be consistent with the original windows and maintain the sliding opening system and upper casement in similar dimensions. The windows will be aluminum frames with a silver anodize finish, matching the existing. The profile will be slightly larger than the original frames due to availability of suppliers. The upper casement will now be fixed, also due to availability of mechanisms and suppliers. Two trickle vents are proposed to prevent condensation.

The above design seeks not only to preserve the original design of the building but also to respond to alterations done by other flats for consistency. The below picture shows the front facade of the building, with its variations, highlighting windows similar to our proposed design. We note our chosen window supplier, Southern Windows, undertook most of the alterations in the building and will be using similar specifications for our apartment.



Image 6. Design proposals aligned with upper flats, seeking to align the look and feel of the proposed window frames.

2. Balcony Doors: There are 2 small balconies in the apartment. Access is through large, floor-to-ceiling wooden frames. The balcony doors are divided into 4 panes. The two middle panes open inwards. There is a fixed casement upper window running along the entire width of the opening. Like the windows, there is a wooden beam running between the doors and the upper casement, which will have to be removed for the installation of the aluminum frames. The frames are painted white on the internal spaces and have an earth brown colour on the external side, consistent across the entire facade of the building. (see below picture of existing window frame for reference).



Image 7. Existing wooden balcony doors, from inside.



Image 8. Existing (fragile) lock mechanism and external colour of the balcony doors, to be maintained.

We are proposing to replace the wooden doors by an aluminum frame system, as was done by other apartments in the building. The design will be similar to the original frame, with the lower doors divided into 4 panes. The two middle panes will be sliding instead of opening inwards. The design will preserve the upper casement window, which will be divided into 4 panes aligned with the lower doors. This will allow for the wider upper casement windows to open ensuring ventilation in the warmer months.

Aluminum frames are not only more durable than wooden frames, but also provide a better airtightness, insulation and increased security.

The frames will be powder coated in RAL 8014 matt finish, matching the existing earth brown colour of the building facade. This is the same specification used by Southern Windows in other apartments.



Image 9. Existing balcony doors below and aluminum frames of neighbours above.

In short, the proposed windows and balcony doors seek to preserve the original design of the building facade while adopting the same modernisation features as the neighbour flats for consistency. It is our understanding the impacts to the Hampstead Character Area to be negligible or even positive, given the new frames would align better with the rest of the building.

I trust all the above is in order. Please do not hesitate to contact should you need any additional information when considering the application.

With kind regards,
Matias Piazza