A R C H I T E C T S
DONALD SHEARER CHARTERED ARCHITECTS

Scholars' House, Shottery Brook Office Park, Timothys Bridge Road, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire CV37 9NR
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Our Ref. 1680BA001 Date: 22nd April, 2024

PLANNING STATEMENT

PROPERTY: 49 BELSIZE LANE, LONDON

DESCRIPTION: The rear façade wall is to be upgraded to achieve an improved u-value using rendered insulation board. Two new conservation roof lights are to be added to the rear roof slope and the detailed design of the balcony balustrading is to be altered to a more traditional black painted metalwork design

1.0. Location

1.1 The property has its frontage on the south private side of Belsize Lane and its rear façade faces private garden space Belsize Lane is a tertiary largely residential access road.

1.2 The property is in the Belsize Park Conservation Area and only 50 yards from the Belsize Park Local commercial centre.

1.3 The property is set directly onto the pavement on Belsize Lane and has a secure private south facing garden to the rear.

1.4 The existing property has a basement, Ground & 1st floor.

1.5 The original 2 storey terraced Mews building with a basement area had a planning approval for minor fenestration changes to the windows both front and rear together with adjustments to the basement and garden space.

1.6 There is a school 100 yards to the South West Hall Junior school and 500 yards from the Swiss Cottage Tube Stations, with the main transport route of Finchley Road and the swiss Cottage Commercial centre also @ 500 yards to the south west.

2.0. Topography

2.1 The site has the traditional Mews terrace property topography, with the road and pavement on the same level adjacent to the ground floor with the 1st and second floor above, the garden is lower than the ground floor and the basement is a further half level lower than the garden meaning it is more easily described as a lower ground floor.

2.2 Belsize Lane slopes very gently from north east to south west.

3.0 Character of Surrounding Properties

3.1 The surrounding properties have generally been built in the 19th Century although they are a very diverse mix of styles. Over the years the terraces of Belsize Lane have featured many alterations although most of these are mainly subservient to the host properties, the south side where this demise lies has even greater style diversity, however the appearance has an overall cohesion through most properties being consistently two stories facades with parapets which means that the predominantly pitched roof (to the east of this demise) remain largely hidden from public views due to their low pitch.

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3.2 The Mews terrace that the proposals are included in has been the subject of several applications that have been granted for are for a large range of visually diverse applications that are similar in terms of subservience to the host property.

3.3 The essential policy aspect consistent with these granted applications is for the proposals adhering to the prevailing parapet heights and retaining the pre-existing ridge heights that similarly have informed the proposals the subject of this application.

3.4 The Mews is characterised by the density of the tight urban grain. With all neighbouring properties to the west having fully rendered front facades and those to the east continuing with rendered ground floor facades

3.5 The essential character of the original Mews remains from most public views, with progressive enhancement through the earlier referred permissions for alterations to adjoining properties.

3.6 On this application the visual continuity of the front facades remains balanced and consistent through the visual hierarchy of the regular window proportions that remain unaltered in the proposals, with the only changes being limited to the location of the rooflights which are hidden from public views behind the front parapet.

4.0 Planning Policy

4.1 Approval was granted 2019/4411/P, 24-12-2020. This approval slightly increased the useable internal floor at basement level. This was followed by approval 2023/0341/P for a low pitched roof to create a more sustainable amenity for the demise occupier. This application is for changes limited to the location of rear façade rooflights and rear façade changes to incorporate additional external insulation and changes to the balcony baluster design.

4.2 The proposals for the rear façade insulation are designed to resolve the patchwork of historic brick finishes with enhanced sustainability credentials through external insulation assisting the thermal stability of the dwellings environmental amenity. The render finish proposal is visually sympathetic with previous approvals on this Mews, they also reference render details on the period properties to the south of the demise and are subservient to the host building.

4.3 Para 117 of the NPPF encourages proposals to maximise use of previously developed land which the proposals achieve as noted in para 4.1 &4.2 above.

4.4 The July 2021 NPPF para 8 which seeks to ensure that development is sustainable

4.5 Where land is in short supply existing properties are to ensure they achieve the optimal potential. The application can be considered to achieve this as the proposal improves the thermal performance and reduces the carbon emissions of the dwelling.

4.6 N/A

4.7 In accordance with paras 8, 10 & 11 of the NPPF (July 2021) the proposal will conform to the latest sustainability requirements.

4.8 In accordance with the sustainable credentials of this proposal Para 38 of the NPPF (July 2021) empowers the Planning officers to approach decisions on this type of application in a positive and creative way at every level to seek approval of this type of sustainable development.

4.9 N/A

4.10 The proposals sought to effectively embrace LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies 2010 CS1 (Distribution of Growth) CS5 (Manage impact of growth) CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage) DP24 (Securing high quality design) DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage) Camden Planning Guidance 2013 - CPG 1 (design) & CPG 6 (amenity). All these policies remain relevant to the latest policy documents.

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5.0 Condition Report on Existing Building

5.1 The existing building was the subject of a comprehensive upgrade which the contractor Wishbone Build Ltd confirmed was largely completed in early 2022.

5.2 In August 2022 many construction issues came to light and nearly all the work carried out by Wishbone was subsequently discovered to not comply with their contractual obligations or regulations and had to be removed and then remedied.

5.3 As part of the Wishbone works instructed by Ensoul there were a number of fundamental design issues then uncovered, that were subsequently addressed in part with the approval noted in 4.1 above for a pitched roof. This application enhances further the U values and design issues such as cold bridging, together with fenestration compromises that the wishbone work had inappropriately imposed on the rear façade. In turn this will materially further reduce the carbon footprint (as noted in 4.9 above) of all the existing accommodation.

6.0 Design Objectives

6.1 To respond creatively (through embedded detailed design refinements) to the very compromised thermal amenity, imposed on the property by Wishbone Build Ltd due to their unprofessional work to this property prior to August 2022.

6.2 To enhance still further the amenity value of the existing residential unit through reducing further the U value and further enhancing the temperature stability within the accommodation.

6.3 To ensure that the strategy embraces emphatically Government policy to reduce pressure on the Green Belt by maximising the potential of previously developed land & brown field sites, whilst respecting primary characteristics of the surrounding area and creating a design that enhances and improves the adjoining area.

7.0 Design Solution

7.1 Taking all government directives and initiatives into account it is clear that a well-balanced proposals that are subservient in the context of the host property and its surroundings.

7.2 The most visually significant features of Belsize Lane are its front facades up to the parapet lines. Our design retains this features dominance with the proposals set behind the parapet to ensure subservience to the originating host buildings dominating form.

7.3 The proposals also create continuity between the front and rear facades with both now being rendered.

8.0 Access

8.1 The site lies on Belsize Lane close to the Belsize Park local Centre affording access by foot to these facilities, together with the associated bus, car, tube and pedestrian links.

8.2 The proposed accommodation will all be accessed by the existing ground floor entrance doors and common hallway. The private internal staircases are up to present day width requirements to facilitate ease of access to the upper floors.

8.3 The principle habitable rooms have been located in the heart of the internal arrangement on the Ground floor to maximise accessibility from the level external pavement access through the front door.

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9.0 Landscaping

9.1 The proposals include changes to the balustrade materials creating a more literal visual connection to the materials used in the balconies of the period properties that sit to the south of the dwelling.

9.2 The proposals include minor changes to the planting bed detailed design.

CONCLUSION

This application addresses the need for the highest standards in the design of facades, together with improvements to the amenity and sustainability of the pre-existing accommodation. The application responds positively to the climate crisis by further enhancing the U value of the dwelling.

Donald Shearer