



Emailed: planning@camden.gov.uk

17 June 2024

Dear Miriam Baptist,

SITE: 34 Belsize Lane, Camden, London

REF: 2024/1219/P

The Twentieth Century Society has been alerted to the householder application for planning permission for the restoration, alteration and extension of the Grade II listed 34 Belsize Lane. The Society's Caseworker, myself, and Director, Catherine Croft, met the new owner and project team on site on 22 March and the case was reviewed by our advisory Casework Committee on 8 April. We provided a pre-application response to the project team on 17 April. Overall, the Society is broadly supportive of the proposals although we have reservations about the proposed 'link'.

Background

34 Belsize Lane was designed by the architect Georgie Wolton for herself and her family and was built between 1975 and 1976, with a studio/study added in 1983. Wolton's brief was for a three bedroom house with two bathrooms and a studio in which she could work. The house is largely concealed from the street by a boundary wall to Belsize Lane, and is accessed via an entrance in the wall (to the east of the house). Rooms are arranged in a Z-like plan, composed of a north-south range accommodating the entrance hall, kitchen and living area, a bedroom wing to the northern end extending westward, and a studio to the south running eastward. A second studio/study space was added to the southern end of the north-south range by Wolton in the 1980s. The house's plan serves to divide the walled-in site to create three separate gardens. Generous glazing and timber sliding shutters enable clear views and easy access out to these garden spaces.

Policy

34 Belsize Lane was Grade II listed in October 2023, with the support of the Twentieth Century Society. As a Grade II listed building, the applicant and council should be mindful of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which state that, in the decision-making process on applications affecting listed buildings, "the local planning authority [...] 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."

The Twentieth Century Society is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England no 05330664

Registered office: 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ
Registered Charity no 1110244

The house is also located within the Belsize Conservation Area and as such section 72(1) of the Planning Act also applies: "In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area [...] special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

The proposals need to be assessed in relation to paragraph 205 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) which requires that "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation..."

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF requires that "Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification..."

Paragraph 208 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."

Assessment

As a result of a period of lack of maintenance and vacancy, the house has some quite major issues which need to be addressed – these include issues with damp, mould and fabric decay, and the bowing of the retaining wall to the bedroom wing. We therefore very much welcome the proposals to restore the house to habitable condition. We also appreciate the desire to improve the house's thermal performance to improve both its energy efficiency and the comfort of future occupants.

The applicant seeks to make the house their permanent family dwelling, which we welcome. This would allow the building to fulfil its original intended use and would secure its future conservation. As part of this, the applicant proposes to reconfigure the bathrooms and to open-up the southern kitchen wall to the living space, to build a timber and glass rooftop bedroom extension over the existing end bedroom, and to bring the house's east elevation forward into the courtyard garden to introduce a 'gallery link'. The Society does not take issue with the proposed internal alterations and extension – the proposed changes are relatively minor and the extension has been carefully sited and designed to limit its impact on the house's historic fabric, ground floor plan and on views of the house. However, we have some reservations about the proposed 'link' structure. We are concerned that the proposed link—which would involve the repositioning and reconstruction of the east wall—could compromise Wolton's original plan. We encourage the applicant to reconsider this aspect of the scheme and to revise their design to omit this specific proposal.

Overall we are broadly supportive of the proposals but encourage this specific amendment to the scheme.

We hope that these comments are of use to you.

The Twentieth Century Society, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ – Tel 020 7250 3857

coco@c20society.org.uk
www.c20society.org.uk

Yours sincerely,



Coco Whittaker

Head of Casework

The Twentieth Century Society
70 Cowcross Street
London, EC1M 6EJ



Remit: The Twentieth Century Society was founded in 1979 and is the national amenity society concerned with the protection, appreciation, and study of post-1914 architecture, townscape and design. The Society is acknowledged in national planning guidance as the key organisation concerned with the modern period and is a constituent member of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies. Under the procedures set out in the *Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications – Notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021*, all English local planning authorities must inform the Twentieth Century Society when an application for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition is received, and they must notify us of the decisions taken on these applications.

The Twentieth Century Society, 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ –

