



Ms Miriam Baptist  
London Borough of Camden  
Development Management  
Town Hall, Judd Street  
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Our ref: L01576940

5 June 2024

Dear Ms Baptist

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2021  
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015  
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**34 BELSIZE LANE LONDON NW3 5AE  
Application Nos 2024/1759/L & 2024/1219/P**

Thank you for your letters of 9 May 2024 and 03 May 2024 regarding the above applications for listed building consent and planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

**Historic England Advice**

Significance of the building

34 Belsize Lane is a meticulously conceived studio house of single-story height, creatively integrated into its sensitive urban setting. Built in 1975-1976 by Georgie Wolton as her own residence and working space, its design captures many of the ideas which influenced her practice. The building is listed at Grade II and lies within the Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area.

The building is spread over the site in distinct ranges, articulating the separation of living, sleeping, and working spaces. The floorplan is kept relatively simple, designed to keep circulation spaces to a minimum, with the studio space accessed directly from the living room. The front door opens into a generous entrance hall which extends into the bedroom wing. The building footprint comes up to the surrounding boundary wall and divides the external space into three discrete courtyard gardens.

The studio spaces are linked to the main building by conservatory-like antechambers, in which Wolton explored her interest in spaces that are neither inside nor outside, 'pause' spaces separating the living and working parts of the house. In a play between interior and exterior, they are top lit by triangular prism skylights and their walls glazed



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with sliding doors, which provide axial vistas directly through the building from one courtyard garden to another.

The building's interior is characterised by an elegant, understated quality, with a subtle handling of spatial proportion and natural light and a simplicity and high quality details. It features a straightforward palette of natural materials and fittings, including bespoke joinery built to Wolton's designs. Full height internal timber sliding shutters control the flow of space and the views through the site. The master bedroom is accessed via folding doors opening to the full width of the hallway and all bedrooms feature original fitted storage units.

### Impact of the proposals

The proposals are for the extension and alteration of the building for continued use as a single dwelling.

A '**link**' **extension** would be added to the east elevation within the entrance courtyard. This would require the demolition of the original elevation, causing the loss of historic fabric, including fenestration. The original design would be replicated and bricks re-used, though it is unclear from the documents if the historic interior sliding shutters would be reinstated. While of the same design, the new elevation would merely be a copy of the historic one. The loss of original fabric and authenticity would cause harm.

Externally, the new link would sit in front of the conservatory, requiring the demolition of the latter's full height glazed doors towards the entrance courtyard to provide an internal doorway to the link. The loss of fenestration to the garden would alter the character of the conservatory and eliminate the intervisibility between the two courtyards, causing harm.

The link would also cause harm by eroding the original floor plan, spatial separation, and circulation arrangements. It would change the experience of entering the building, as the entrance would open into the link instead of the entrance hall. While a downstand would mark the original location of the external wall, the integration of the living space and new link would distort the carefully conceived spatial arrangement and volume. Additionally, the deliberate separation of studio and living space would be eroded. Designed to be simple and with minimum circulation space, an additional corridor, accessed from three separate areas of the building, would further reduce the legibility of the original plan.

A predominantly glazed **first-floor extension**, based on Wolton's Fieldhouse building in Surrey, would be added to the bedroom wing. The extension would create a notable increase in the building's overall massing, undermining its carefully conceived design and modest scale, resulting in harm.





Internally, the folding doors to the master bedroom would be removed to accommodate the stairs to the proposed extension. The loss of this feature, which is specifically identified in the list description, would cause harm. Whilst limited information has been provided, structural columns proposed to support the extension would likely require localised demolition within the bedroom and entrance areas. This has the potential to cause additional harm, subject to further information.

As set out in the structural report, the proposed thermal improvements would require significant **internal rebuilding** (although again the extent of demolition is unclear). This would result in further loss of original fabric, adding to the harm caused.

Various additional works proposing the **replacement** of fenestration, fittings, and finishes have the potential to cause harm subject to further details.

### Relevant law and policy

When determining applications affecting listed buildings or a conservation areas, your Authority must have regard to the duties under sections 16, 66 and 72 of the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**. These require that local authorities must give special regard to preserving a listed building and any of its architectural or historic features, and to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Chapter 16 of the **National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)** sets out heritage-related planning policies. Applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, with the level of detail proportionate to an asset's importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal (para. 200). Any conflict with the conservation of a heritage asset should be avoided or minimised (para. 201). When considering the impact of a proposed development on a heritage asset, local planning authorities should give 'great weight' to preserving the asset's significance (para. 205). Any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification (para. 206) and be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (para. 208).

### Historic England's position and recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the applications due to the extent of harmful internal and external alterations. We also have concerns about the lack of detail regarding the extent of demolition required and reinstatement of features of interest.



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We recommend that design changes are considered, or that stronger justification for these works are provided in order to reflect the heritage policies set out in the NPPF.

Should your Council be minded to determine the applications on the basis of the current plans, the harm we have identified should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals. We recognise that the condition of the building is relatively poor, and acknowledge that there are some heritage benefits associated with its careful restoration.

If your Authority is minded to approve the application, we recommend that conditions are imposed to secure like-for-like replacement of fabric to be replaced, and to ensure the reinstatement of temporarily removed items.

## **Recommendation**

Historic England has concerns regarding the applications on heritage grounds.

Your Authority should take these representations in account and determine the application in accordance with national and local planning policy and in consultation with your specialist conservation advice. We have drafted the necessary letter of authorisation for your Authority to determine the application as you see fit and have referred this to the National Planning Casework Unit (NPCU) (copy attached). You will be able to issue a formal decision once the NPCU have returned the letter of authorisation to you, unless the Secretary of State directs the application to be referred to them.

This response relates to designated heritage assets only. If the proposals meet the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service's published consultation criteria we recommend that you seek their view as specialist archaeological adviser to the local planning authority.

The full GLAAS consultation criteria are on our webpage at the following link:

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/greater-london-archaeology-advisory-service/our-advice/>

Yours sincerely

## **Nina Dierks**

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