

# Design & Access Statement

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## Heritage Statement

Extensions, Alterations and Change of Use from HMO to Two Apartments

Anese Investments Ltd.

15 Howitt Road  
Belsize Park  
London  
NW3 4LT

Project no. IHR-226

May 2023

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access Statement forms part of our Planning Application for 15 Howitt Road and should be read in conjunction with all drawings and supporting documentation submitted.

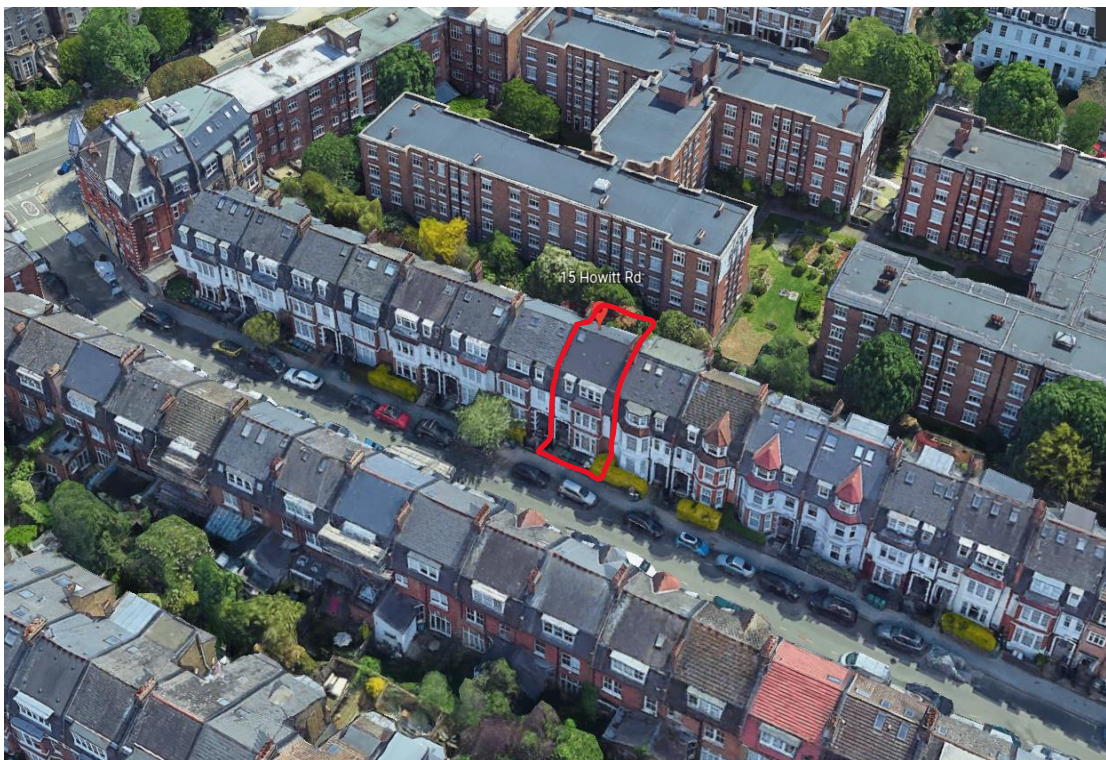
## 2. SITE ANALYSIS & CONTEXT

### Existing Property Description

- The site sits in a residential area of Belsize Park, close to the high street with excellent transport links and local amenities within walking distance.
- It lies within Belsize Conservation Area.
- 15 Howitt Road is a mid-terraced Edwardian House in a row of similar three storey houses.
- The house has undergone multiple alterations over the years and is currently used as a House in Multiple Occupation with some unit sizes below the minimum standard. It retains some original features, in particular the period entrance door.
- Original windows have been replaced with modern UPVC windows.
- The basement currently accommodates a boiler room and is used mainly for storage.

### Context

- A number of properties in Howitt Road have extended basements with front and rear lightwells and roof conversions with rear dormer windows. Most recently property at No 23 received planning permission to enlarge the basement, add double dormer window to the rear and convert the HMO (without license) into two flats in 2013. This permission has been successfully implemented.



Aerial view of the site and the surrounding area

### 3. PHOTOGRAPHS



Google Street view



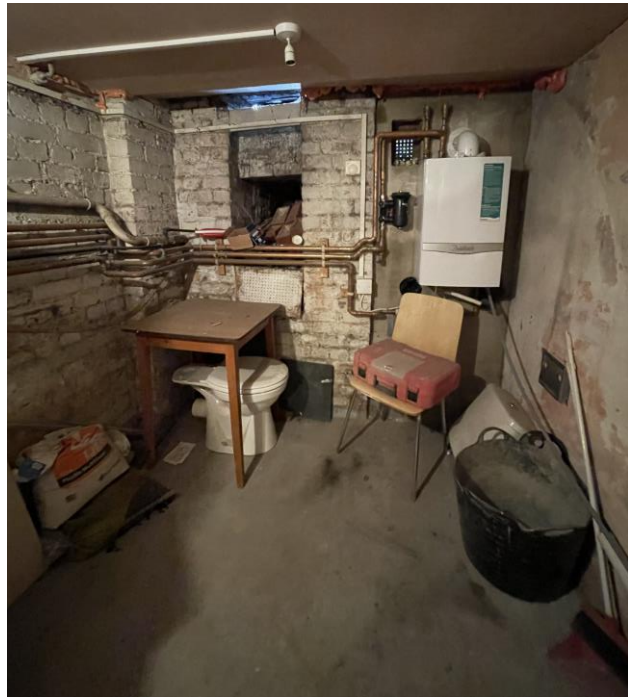
Front Elevation



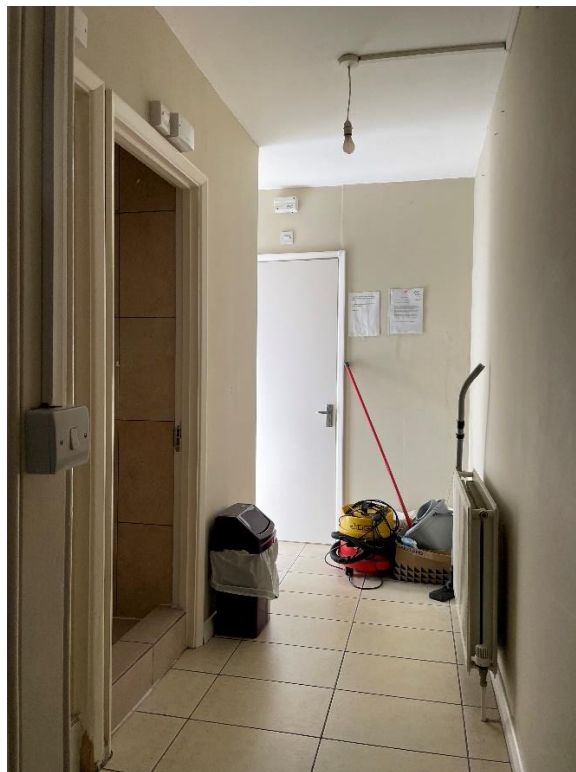
Rear elevation



Entrance hall and front door



Existing basement



Interior views

#### 4. DESIGN

- The owners would like to extend and convert the building to accommodate two well designed and comfortable family sized apartments.
- The existing building has been neglected over the years and needs maintenance and repair.
- The ten HMO units are generally very small, some of them below the legal minimum size. They do not provide good quality accommodation.
- The owners propose a basement extension to match the footprint of the building, small single storey rear extension with use of its flat roof as a terrace, new dormer window to the rear and loft conversion.
- The proposed layouts and architectural style follow the recently approved local precedents, in particular No 23 Howitt Road.

- They include reinstating original features of the property and replacing the unsightly UPVC front windows with timber windows to match the original ones, which are still preserved on some properties in the terrace.
- The existing entrance hall will be retained and used by both apartments.
- Flat 1 will span over the basement and ground floor levels with gardens on both levels.
- Flat 2 will have an entrance on the ground floor and accommodation on the first, second, and loft levels with a terrace on the first floor providing a beautiful outdoor space. The roof terrace will have suitable privacy screening.
- The light-well to the proposed en suite bedroom at the rear would allow access onto the paved area with planting and flowerbeds.
- The front light well will have white grille cover, to conceal its presence and create a neat flush finish without compromising light penetration to the windows.
- The extensions will use traditional materials and detailing in keeping with Howitt Road.
- Both dwellings will exceed the National Space Requirements.
- Private gardens will exceed the minimum requirements.

#### Scale & Massing

- The existing massing of the property will remain unchanged, apart from a small single storey extension to the rear.
- The new dormer to the rear will match the width of the dormer below and it will be slightly lower than the roof ridge.
- The new basement will match the footprint of the ground floor, with lightwells to front and rear to allow ample light into the accommodation.

## 5. PLANNING POLICY

- The proposal has been carefully designed to comply with the relevant planning policies, in particular the NPPF and Camden Local Plan.
- **Policy H3 Protecting existing homes states:** *The Council will aim to ensure that existing housing continues to meet the needs of existing and future households by: .....*
  - c. resisting development that would involve the net loss of two or more homes (from individual or cumulative proposals), unless they: ....*
    - *enable sub-standard units to be enlarged to meet residential space standards. and to complement and improve the local area.*
- There was a number of successful planning applications for similar proposals, such as 23 Howitt Road which included conversion of HMO into two apartments, and it was agreed that a loss of sub-standard units is acceptable where they are replaced with high quality family accommodation.
- **Policy A5 Basements states:** *The Council will only permit basement development where it is demonstrated to its satisfaction that the proposal would not cause harm to:*
  - a. neighbouring properties;*
  - b. the structural, ground, or water conditions of the area;*
  - c. the character and amenity of the area;*
  - d. the architectural character of the building; and*
  - e. the significance of heritage assets.*
- The proposed basement fully complies with these and further stipulations of this policy. The full details are covered in enclosed the Basement Impact Assessment.
- **Policy D1 Design states:** *The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development.*
- The proposals will comply with this policy in terms of respect for local context and character; preserving and enhancing the historic environment; is of sustainable and durable construction ; comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character; integrates well with the surrounding streets; promotes health; is secure and designed to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour; incorporates outdoor amenity space; and provides a high standard of accommodation.

- **Policy D2 Heritage states:** *The Council will:*
- *e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;*
- *f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;*
- *g. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and*
- *h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.*
- The requirements of this policy will be fully complied with. The proposals will enhance the character and appearance of the area by replacing the existing UPVC windows with new timber ones to match the original and refurbishing the original entrance door.
- The local precedents have influenced the overall design. There were a number of successful planning applications for similar proposals, such as 23 Howitt Road which also included a basement extension, new dormer window, loft conversion and conversion of HMO into two apartments.

## **6. PRIVACY, SUNLIGHT AND DAYLIGHT**

- Sunlight and daylight to the neighbouring properties were carefully considered and it was concluded the proposals will have no adverse effect.
- The proposed first floor rear terrace will have 1800mm high privacy screen along the boundary to prevent overlooking of No 13 Howitt Road.
- View of No 17 would be similar to that from the existing windows. However, a privacy screen of frosted glass can be added here if required.
- There would therefore be no adverse effect on the privacy of neighbouring buildings.
- The size and proportion of the front & rear light-wells were designed to allow sufficient light into the rooms. The sizes of the proposed windows were defined by existing windows on upper floors.
- **The guidance in Camden Planning Guidance – Amenity - January 2021 states:** *'Levels of reported daylight and sunlight will be considered flexibly taking into account site-specific circumstances and context.'* Taking into account the limitations of the existing building and curtilage, the fact that basement accommodates only bedrooms, which require less light, and the fact there are numerous similar approvals in Howitt Road, it is considered that sufficient daylight will be enjoyed by proposed dwellings.

## **7. ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT**

- The existing building was erected in Edwardian era and has not been much improved in terms of building fabric.
- The existing accommodation in the roof is poorly insulated and the existing ground floor has no insulation at all.
- The proposals would include a well insulation new basement and loft conversion, providing great improvement to the building envelope.
- The existing windows will be replaced with good quality double glazed units. This will significantly reduce the energy consumption.
- Dwellings would be naturally lit and ventilated.
- Smart Metering would help the occupants to identify any wastage and to promote more environmentally friendly lifestyle. Further details of the sustainable technologies and reduction in CO2 emissions will be developed at the detailed design stage.



## **8. ACCESSIBILITY AND PARKING**

- It is intended to improve the accessibility of the proposed dwellings within the limitations on the existing building.
- The existing HMO units have communal bathrooms on the first floor, making them completely unsuitable for disabled tenants and visitors.
- The proposed ground / lower ground dwelling will have an accessible toilet on the ground floor.
- Only two of the ten existing units currently have access to the garden. The proposed scheme will provide access to a private external space for both new dwellings.
- Further improvements will be made to comply with as many provisions of the Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing as possible:
  - New staircase to be wider and have less winders to improve accessibility
  - Circulation space to be improved
  - Entrance level living space to be provided
  - Open plan spaces to provide high level of daylight
  - All switches sockets and handles would be within a height band of 450mm-1200mm for ease of use by all.
- The property is located minutes walking distance from Belsize Park tube station and local buses. It is also within very short walking distance of all amenities of Belsize Park.
- There is no opportunity to provide off street parking.
- Cycle storage provision is not included within the design proposal as it would be impractical considering the limited space availability. With such accessibility to public transport, it is considered that this outweighs the need for cycling provision on site.

## **9. LANDSCAPE, WASTE STRATEGY AND DRAINAGE**

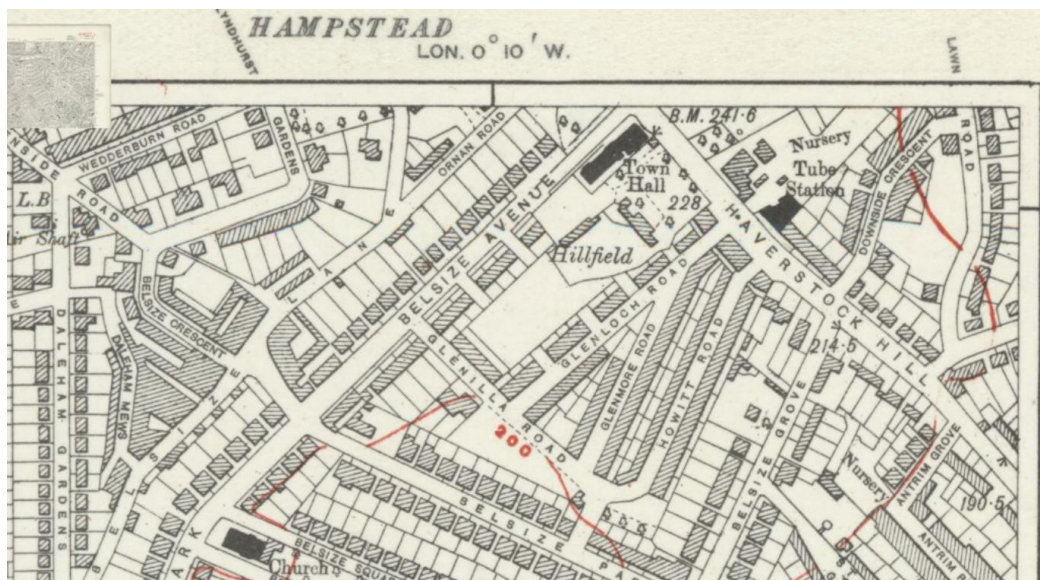
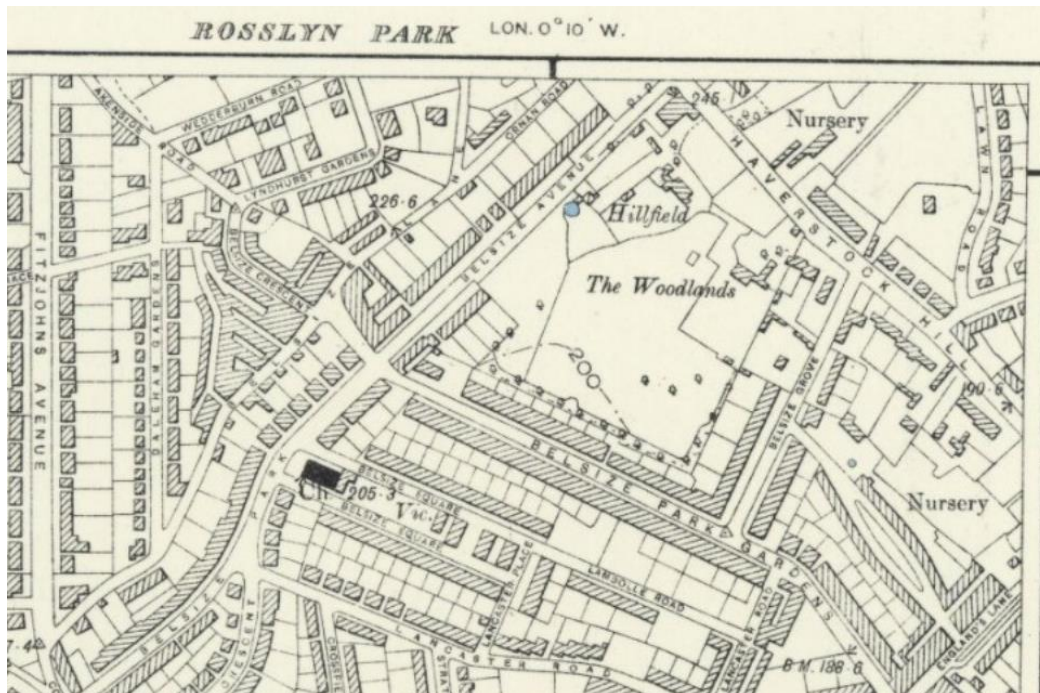
- The front garden is currently covered in concrete and used for waste bins. The rear garden is a combination of broken paving, bare earth and waste.
- The proposals include landscaped garden to the rear, with new trees, flower borders and lawn.
- The front garden will be partially taken up by the lightwell, which will have permeable paving and a white painted grille above to make it invisible from the road.
- Drainage is covered in the enclosed Basement Impact assessment.
- Waste bins will be accommodated in a well-designed timber enclosure positioned to the side of the entrance. This will enable easy collection of refuse and recycling and improve the visual quality of the building.

## **10. CRIME PREVENTION AND SECURITY**

- Due to the setting of the site within a Conservation area, the existing boundary treatment will be largely retained.
- The site borders adjacent private properties and the street so there will be no hidden corners.
- All windows and external doors shall be fitted with high security ironmongery.
- Consideration will be given to the installation of passive infrared (PIR) security detectors within all ground floor rooms, in which event all external doors would be fitted with contacts integrated within the security system. The security system would be connected to remote monitoring.

## 11. HERITAGE STATEMENT

The existing building appears on historic maps between the years 1894 and 1914.



It is a part of an Edwardian terrace of houses with elegant proportions and tradition detailing. The house was somewhat neglected over the years, both internally and externally. It would benefit from some repairs and reinstatement of the original features.

The building is set within Belsize Conservation Area and contributes to the character and appearance of the area.

The proposed reinstatement of the original timber windows to the front, refurbishment of the original entrance door with stained glass panel, and removal of the non-original rooflight will improve the appearance of the building and the Conservation Area.

The rear of the building is visible only from the residential block opposite and it is felt that more freedom can be applied to the design proposals here. The neighbouring properties have been extended and amended and present a combination of contemporary and traditional styles. The existing mishmash of windows and doors will be replaced with UPVC windows and metal patio doors of the same, simple and timeless style. The extensions will be finished in traditional materials to match existing, with simple and elegant detailing.

The interior of the building does not retain many original features. As the building is not listed, there is no need to preserve anything. However, the main room sizes and general layout will be preserved as a sign of respect for the history of the building.