

Design and Access Statement

December 2024

Flat 1st Floor,
7 Belsize Avenue
London
NW3 4BL



1. Introduction

This Design and Access / Planning / Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of the application for 'FULL' planning permission for proposed railings to external elevations at Flat 3, 7 Belsize Avenue, London. This Statement should be read in conjunction with other drawings and documents accompanying the planning application.

This statement will describe and explain our approach towards the design and the way in which the proposals will comply with local planning guidance.

2. Property and Surrounding Area

The existing property is a 'mid terrace' three storey Victorian townhouse located to the west side of Belsize Park, built in traditional materials of London stock brick work, natural slate roof coverings, and 'stucco' decorative features to front facing sash window and door apertures.

The property is divided into flats, of which Flat 3 is situated on the 1st floor level. Properties to either side of No. 7 are of similar scale and form. Several properties along the street have railings to front terraces including neighbouring No's 9 and 11.

The application site is located within a predominantly residential character area. There is a wide variety of building scale, style, and architectural detailing in the immediate area. The application site is located within the boundaries of the 'Belsize Park Conservation Area' but is not a listed building.

3. Design Proposal

The proposed works consist of the following:

Addition of railings to existing front external terrace area accessed from kitchen. The railings would be black-painted metal railings to match those at No's 9 and 11. These railings are required for safety reasons.

Preservation of the parapet at its original height sees that a new guarding to the proposed terrace will project less than 0.5m above in order to provide

adequate 'protection from falling' in accordance with Approved Document K (1100mm above terrace level). In line with guidance, guard rails are set in from the external surface of the wall, and on the innermost edge of the parapet.

New railings proposed will be in black painted metal with cylindrical spindles and 'flat bar' tops. The material selections are sympathetic and in fact complementary to the style and appearance of the local area.

4. Planning Context & Policy

Located within the boundaries of the 'Belsize Park Conservation Area', the property is subject to additional constraints, and does not benefit from Permitted Development Rights. There is no recent / relevant planning permission for No's 9 and 11 according to Camden online planning records.

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

Policy seeks to ensure a high quality of design in new developments, and in particular seeks to ensure developments that:

"are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change."

The proposed development would be entirely compatible with the surrounding area where there are many types of similar works.

4.2 Camden Plan (2017)

The site is within a conservation area. No other adverse designations apply.

4.3 Policy D1 of the Local Plan deals with design and states:

"The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:

- respects local context and character;
- preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage;
- is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation;

- is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;
- comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;
- integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces, improving movement through the site and wider area with direct, accessible and easily recognisable routes and contributes positively to the street frontage;
- is inclusive and accessible for all;
- promotes health;
- is secure and designed to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour;
- responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;
- incorporates high quality landscape design (including public art, where appropriate) and maximises opportunities for greening for example through planting of trees and other soft landscaping,
- incorporates outdoor amenity space;
- preserves strategic and local views;
- for housing, provides a high standard of accommodation; and
- carefully integrates building services equipment.

The Council will resist development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.”

The proposed are typical additions / alterations to a property. There are many examples nearby of similar railings. The works are befitting of the Conservation Area.

4.4 Policy D2 deals with heritage issues and states:

“In order to maintain the character of Camden’s conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas.

The Council will:

- require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;

- resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;
- resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and
- 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".

It is not considered the proposed works would not have a material adverse impact on the character of the Conservation Area. Many neighbouring properties in the conservation area have similar railings. The proposed development would be consistent with the established character in the area, and proposed materials are high quality and appropriate to the area.

4.5 Belsize Conservation Area

According to the Belsize Conservation Area Statement (2003), the special character of the area is multi-faceted but in large part derived from mid-19th century Italianate villas, and number of distinct areas of varying character and appearance. The property in question is located in the Belsize Park sub-area which is a distinct and substantial area of mid 19th century villa development that has strong consistency in the heights of its buildings, their relationship to the streets with front gardens set behind boundary walls, and their Italianate styling.

4.6 The Conservation Area Statement

The Statement notes that the addition of roof terraces or balconies (with inappropriate prominent railings) can on a cumulative basis have an impact on elements that contribute to the character and appearance of the buildings. The terrace will remain irrespective of the outcome of the application however it is in the interests of safety that it be bounded by railings. The proposed railings are neither considered inappropriate or prominent.

As noted many properties along the street have railings to front terraces including No's 9 and 11. Terraces and railings are an established feature of the area. The development is not seeking to introduce a form of development that is not already part of the urban fabric.

5. Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with NPPF policies, as well as the Camden Local Plan and associated design / conservation guidance.

The proposed alteration has been carefully considered and can be justified in the local site context. It is not considered there would be any adverse visual impacts or adverse impacts to the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. There is precedent in the area for similar type works.

It is sought to have railings which are sympathetic to the property and in keeping with existing railings on neighbouring properties – in terms of appearance and materials. However the applicant is happy to consider alternative railing designs should the Planning Authority consider this necessary.