

## GROUNDS OF APPEAL STATEMENT

### 56 HOWITT ROAD LONDON NW3 4LJ

#### THE APPEAL PROPERTY

- The appeal property is a three storey, mid-terrace property comprising two storeys and an attic storey within a slate faced mansard. It has dormer windows to the front and rear roof slopes. The property is located on the west side of Howitt Road. It is in use as a single family dwellinghouse.
- The property is an attractive Edwardian red brick house with a two storey bay utilising decorated render and white painted timber frames. The elevational details are consistent with the other properties in the terrace, providing a strong rhythm and consistency to the street scene.
- The building is not listed but it is located within the Belsize Conservation Area. It is part Sub Area Four of the conservation area. This is a distinct area of Edwardian terraced housing, comprising Glenloch, Glenmore, Glenilla and Howitt Roads. The terraces comprising Howitt Road are identified as making a positive contribution to the appearance and character of the conservation area.
- On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 an Article 4(1) Direction was introduced on most properties in the Belsize Conservation Area. The Article 4(1) Direction applies only to the fronts of houses, and the sides of houses which face the street. It stated aim is to prevent harmful works taking place and to ensure that Belsize Conservation Area keeps its historic character and appearance and remains an attractive and desirable place to live into the future. By implication this recognises that work to the rear of the houses has no real impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area.

#### THE APPEAL APPLICATION

- On the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 a planning application was submitted seeking planning permission for the installation of a rear roof dormer and downpipe and one rooflight to the front roof slope.
- The local planning authority (LPA) carried out a consultation process appropriate to application relating to properties located within conservation areas. A site notice was displayed at the site and an advertisement was displayed in the local press.
- One response was received from a neighbouring property, which was in favour of the proposal. The Belsize CAAC responded stating that they had no comment on the application. No objections were made to the proposed development.
- On 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024 the LPA refused planning permission for the following reason:-

*The proposed rear dormer, by virtue of its scale, design and location, would result in an incongruous addition that would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Belsize Park Conservation Area, contrary to policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.*

- No objection was raised to the proposed rooflight in the front roofslope.

## GROUNDS OF APPEAL

- The Belsize Conservation Area Statement sets out the significance of the buildings that comprise Sub Area Four: Glenloch Area. Howitt Road is part of a distinct area of Edwardian housing developed by the Glenloch Insurance Company. Entering the area from both Belsize Avenue and Belsize Park Gardens there is a clear change in character from larger, grander villa development to more modest family housing of a much smaller scale and tighter grain.
- The houses along Glenloch, Glenmore and Howitt Roads are terraced and two storey with an attic floor within a slate mansard roof. They have original dormer windows in the front and rear roof slopes.
- The terraces are of a similar design with two storey bays and dormers. They are red brick and utilise render and white painted timber window frames to provide contrast.
- The description of the properties in Howitt Road contained in the Belsize Conservation Area Statement, relates to the character of their front elevations, their front gardens and front boundaries. No reference is made to the rear elevations or the rear mansard roofs.
- The Belsize Conservation Area Statement provides design guidance with respect to roof extensions. At BE26 the statement advises that planning permission is required for extensions and alterations at roof level.
- BE26 states that roof extensions and alterations which change the shape and form of the roof, can have a harmful impact on the Conservation Area and are unlikely to be acceptable where:

*It would be detrimental to the form and character of the existing building,*

*The property forms part of a group or terrace which remains largely, but not completely unimpaired,*

*The property forms part of a symmetrical composition, the balance of which would be upset*

*The roof is prominent, particularly in long views.*

- However at BE27 the guidance confirms that further dormers of ‘velux’ type windows at the rear will normally be allowed if sensitively designed in relation to the building and other adjacent roofs. Dormers at the front, side and prominent rear elevations will not be allowed where a cluster of roofs remain largely, but not necessarily completely, impaired.
- This advice is augmented by the assessment of the most noticeable changes within the area within the Current Issues, New Development section of the Belsize Conservation Area Statement. Roof extensions are identified as among the more common type of extensions to existing dwellings. However, roof extensions are not regarded as unacceptable per se. They are considered to have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of buildings, streets and areas as a whole if they are overly large, inappropriately proportioned dormers or mansard roofs.
- The proposed rear dormer will have three timber sash windows to match those of the existing rear dormer. It is modest in size and compatible with the character and appearance of the existing building. Its form and materials will match those of the existing rear dormer.
- The proposed rear dormer will not therefore be detrimental to the form and character of the existing building. Furthermore, it will have no material impact on the street scene or the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- A significant number of rear dormers have been approved and built at other properties in Howitt Road, including Nos. 3, 21, 29, 35, 39, 47 and at No.58, adjacent to the appeal property. The appeal scheme has been modelled on the rear dormer window granted planning permission at No.21 Howitt Road in August 2013 (ref. 2013/2661/P). A copy of the planning permission and approved drawings for No.21 are attached as Appendix A.
- Copies of the planning permissions and related planning officer's reports for Nos. 3 and 29 Howitt Road are attached as Appendix B.
- With respect to the appeal decision which permitted the rear dormer at No.58 Howitt Road, it has been suggested by the LPA that this has no relevance because the property was not at that time within a designed conservation area.
- However, at paragraph 7 of the appeal decision the Inspector stated:-

*I find that, although not in a conservation area, this terrace has retained much of its original character and appearance, whose retention should be safeguarded. However, since your proposal would be at the rear and has been sensitively designed below the ridge line and inset from the rear wall to fit in with the building itself, I consider that it would not spoil the appearance of the building, or create any precedent for unsympathetic additions elsewhere in the terrace. It would be visible only from the rear and, with the relationship between the height of the buildings and the shortness of the intervening rear gardens (with their foliage) would not be seen from many viewpoints, particularly as Nos. 60 and 62 turn the corner and close off most of any possible view from the street. Furthermore, in any rear view I noted the variations in roof treatments, and do not consider that your alterations would be obtrusive.*

A copy of the appeal decision is attached as Appendix C.

- The LPA cites Local Plan policies D1 and D2 in support of the refusal of planning permission.
- Policy D1- Design is a broad statement of the LPA's aim to achieve the highest standard of design in all developments. It indicates that development should respect local context and character; comprise details and materials that are of high quality and compliment the local character; and respond to natural features. The proposed rear dormer complies with this guidance. The dormer is of a modest scale with the greater part of the upper roof slope of the mansard being retained. It is to be completed in materials that match the existing dormer and are sympathetic to the existing building. The development will not therefore harm the character of the conservation area.
- Policy D2 – Heritage states that the Council will not permit development within conservation areas that fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that conservation area. The term 'preserve' has been determined at appeal to mean 'not harm'. The proposed rear dormer has been carefully designed to respect the character of the host building and to reflect the location, size and scale of other rear dormers which have been granted planning permission and erected at properties on Howitt Road.
- The LPA has failed to demonstrate sound planning reasons why planning permission should be withheld. The Inspector is respectfully requested to uphold this appeal and to grant planning permission for the proposed development.