

Delegated Report (Refusal)		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	13/02/2025
		N/A	Consultation Expiry Date:	26/01/2025
Officer				
Connie Marinetto		2024/5454/P		
Application Address				
1st Floor Flat 7 Belsize Avenue London NW3 4BL		See draft decision notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Installation of black metal railings on flat roof of front portico and replacement of existing window with double doors.				
Recommendation(s)	Refuse planning permission			
Application Type:	Full Planning Application			

Informatives:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice			
Consultations				
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. of responses	1	No. of objections	1
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A site notice was displayed on 24/12/2024, which expired on 17/01/2025. A press advert was published 02/01/2025 which expired 26/01/2025.</p> <p>One objection was received from a resident and can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant does not provide supporting evidence, including planning history, for existence of similar railings. • Most houses in this part of the Conservation Area do not have railings above their pillared porches. • In this terraced row, porch roofs are directly adjacent to the living room windows of neighbouring properties, so there may be an amenity impact in terms of privacy and overlooking. 			
CAAC / Local Groups comments:	<p>The Belsize CAAC objected to the application, and their concerns can be summarised as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed balustrade should match exactly the one next door at no.9 and be fixed to the back face of the parapet. 			

Site Description

The application site comprises a mid terrace three storey Victorian townhouse with a stucco front façade and decorative features, traditional sash windows and panelled doors. The property has been divided into flats and the application relates to flat 3 located on the 1st floor. The property is located to the west side of Belsize Avenue, just north of the junction with Belsize Terrace.

The site is within the Belsize Conservation Area and whilst not listed, the property and the terrace within which it is located are identified as making a positive contribution to the Belsize Conservation Area.

Relevant History

Application Site:

9201122 – Change of use and works of conversion to provide 5 self contained flats. **Granted 29/10/1992.**

Flat C, 9 Belsize Avenue

2010/2990/P – Replacement of existing front windows with French doors and installation of railings associated with provision of roof terrace above existing front bay windows at first floor level to existing residential unit (Class C3). **Refused 17/08/2010.**

Reasons for refusal:

- 1) The proposed railings and French doors, by reason of their location, size, design and detailing, would appear as an incongruous and unsympathetic alteration to the existing front elevation, unbalancing the architectural composition of the building to the detriment of the appearance and character of the building and the conservation area.

2010/2890/P – Replacement of front window with French doors and installation of railings associated with provision of first floor roof terrace above existing portico structure to residential unit (Class C3). **Refused 17/08/2010.**

Reasons for refusal:

- 1) The proposed railings and French doors, by reason of their location, size, design and detailing, would appear as an incongruous and unsympathetic alteration to the existing front elevation, unbalancing the architectural composition of the building to the detriment of the appearance and character of the building and the conservation area.

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

The London Plan 2021

Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 – Managing the impact of development

D1 – Design

D2 – Heritage

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG – Amenity

CPG – Design

CPG – Home Improvements

Assessment

1.0. Proposal

1.1 Planning permission is sought for the installation of black metal railings to the flat roof of the front portico and replacement of the existing window with double doors, in order to form a small roof terrace to the front elevation.

1.1 The main planning considerations for the proposal are:

- Design and Conservation
- Residential Amenity

2. Design and Conservation

2.1 Local Plan Policy D1 of the Camden Local Plan 2017 (Design) is aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. Policy D1 requires development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality, which improves the function, appearance and character of the area and development should respect local context and character. Policy D2 (Heritage) states that in order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will not permit development within conservation area that fails to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of that Conservation Area. Policy D2 also advises that 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 application within conservation areas.

2.2 Guidance contained within CPG 'Home Improvements' 2021, states that proposals for balconies and roof terraces should 'appreciate the impact of this alteration on the roof form, host building, wider area and neighbouring amenity and depending on their size, balconies could generate harmful noise disturbance to your neighbours when in use'. It is also recommended for balconies to be located at the rear of properties to ensure no impact on the street scene and wider area (page 55).

2.3 The Belsize Conservation Area Statement (2003) identifies the creation of roof terraces or balconies as an issue, with the key issue being inappropriate railings that are prominent in the street scene (page 36).

2.4 The application proposes the installation of black metal railings on the flat roof of the front portico and the replacement of the existing window with double doors to create a terrace area. The proposal is out of character with the appearance of the Victorian terrace, where railings above porticos are not a traditional feature. The railings, by reason of their location and appearance, would be an incongruous addition to the front elevation which would detract from the stuccoed frontage of the property and harm the symmetry of the terrace. The proposed railings would harm the wider street scene and introduce a visually detrimental element as well as potentially creating an undesirable precedent for alterations to front elevations in the area. The proposed wooden double doors are acceptable in terms of design and material and

appear to have been in place for some time. While doors in this position are not historically characteristic on terraces such as this, this alteration would be minor, would use materials that are appropriate for the site context, and would be considered not to have a harmful impact on the character or appearance of the property or wider conservation area.

- 2.5 Of the group of four terraces to which the property sits within (Nos. 5-11), Nos. 9 and 11 have installed railings to convert the roofs of the front door porticos into terraces. In 2010 two applications were submitted (ref 2010/2890/P and 2010/2990/P) to create roof terraces at no.9 on the portico roof and bay window roof, respectively. Both applications were refused. Despite the refusals French doors (in place of the window) and railings were installed on the parapet of the portico anyway. Had this work been undertaken recently then enforcement action would have been taken and the changes reversed.
- 2.6 A review of the planning records for No.11 shows that between 1980 (ref 29964) and 1987 (ref 8701100) railings on the parapet of the portico were installed without consent. Should an application have been submitted then this intervention would not have been supported.
- 2.7 Whilst there are two examples of metal railings on the neighbouring properties at number 9 and 11 Belsize Avenue, as detailed above, they were erected without consent, with the scheme at No. 9 specifically refused (ref 2010/2890/P). Neither example can be taken as a precedent. The remainder of Victorian properties along Belsize Avenue retain their original character and do not have railings installed above the front porticos, with front elevations remaining largely unaltered.
- 2.8 The proposal has been reviewed by the Council's Conservation Officer who noted the proposal would set an unwelcome precedent and would further compromise the character and appearance of the streetscape / significance of the Conservation Area. The Officer noted that the conversion of the portico roof to a roof terrace introduces details that are alien to the Italianate palette of detailing and therefore considered harmful to the architectural integrity and significance of the terrace of houses as well as the contribution made by the individual properties to both the terrace as well as the contribution this group of houses makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The erection of railings on the porticos at Nos.9 and 11 predates the current raft of guidance and policies protecting the built heritage and were both without consent, and therefore cannot be taken as a precedent.
- 2.9 In summary, the proposed installation of black metal railings on flat roof of front portico would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building, the street scene, and the Belsize Conservation Area, and would potentially create a harmful precedent for similar development in the area. As such, the proposal would be contrary to policy D1 (Design) and policy D2 (Heritage) of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

3. Amenity

- 3.1 Policy A1 seeks to ensure that the amenity of neighbouring properties is protected. It states that planning permission will not be granted for development that causes harm to the amenity of occupiers and neighbours in terms of loss of daylight, sunlight, outlook and privacy.
- 3.2 Although a neighbouring objection noted potential impacts upon privacy and overlooking, it is considered that the proposal would not cause significant amenity issues in terms of loss of daylight, sunlight, privacy, or outlook for neighbouring properties. Due to the narrow depth of the proposed first floor balcony and the tight angled views to the first-floor front windows of

the adjoining properties, the proposal would unlikely result in unacceptable overlooking to the front habitable rooms of the adjoining properties.

4. Recommendation:

Refuse Planning Permission for the following reason:

1. The proposed railings, by reason of their location, size, design and detailing, would appear as an incongruous and unsympathetic alteration to the existing front elevation and would therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building, the street scene, and wider Belsize Conservation Area, contrary to policies D1 (Design) and D2 (Heritage) of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017.