

Design & Access Statement

42-25 Belsize Park

PREPARED FOR: Belsize Park Developments Ltd
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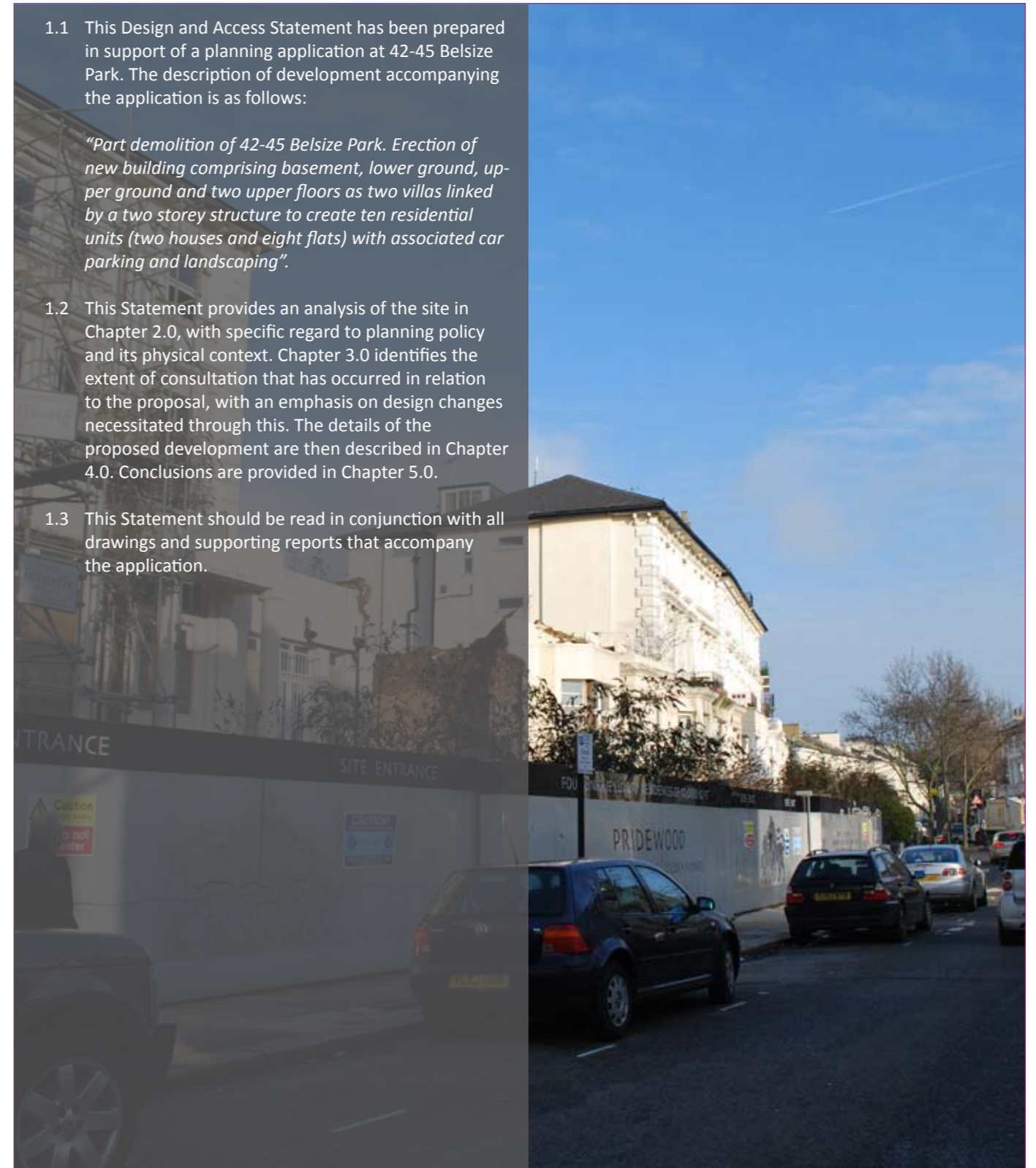
1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application at 42-45 Belsize Park. The description of development accompanying the application is as follows:

“Part demolition of 42-45 Belsize Park. Erection of new building comprising basement, lower ground, upper ground and two upper floors as two villas linked by a two storey structure to create ten residential units (two houses and eight flats) with associated car parking and landscaping”.

1.2 This Statement provides an analysis of the site in Chapter 2.0, with specific regard to planning policy and its physical context. Chapter 3.0 identifies the extent of consultation that has occurred in relation to the proposal, with an emphasis on design changes necessitated through this. The details of the proposed development are then described in Chapter 4.0. Conclusions are provided in Chapter 5.0.

1.3 This Statement should be read in conjunction with all drawings and supporting reports that accompany the application.



2.0 Site Context

2.1 Site Location

2.1.1 The application site is 42-45 Belsize Park and land to the rear adjoining 79 Belsize Lane. 42-45 Belsize Park originally comprised two pairs of large semi-detached villas linked by two rather unsympathetic extensions at lower/ upper ground and second floor level. The buildings were last used as a hotel (Class C1). The open land to the rear formed part of the curtilage of these buildings and was accessible via a vehicular entrance off Belsize Lane.



Plan 1 - Site Location

Accessibility

2.1.2 Pedestrian access into the site is via Belsize Park to the south also from the existing vehicular access point into the site from Belsize Lane, to the north.

2.1.3 In terms of wider public transport accessibility issues, the site is well connected to the public transportation network with a number of bus routes running along Finchley Road to the west. In addition, Finchley Road Underground Station (Jubilee and Metropolitan Lines), is 300 m to the west, Swiss Cottage (Jubilee Line) is 400 m to the south west and Belsize Park (Northern Line) is 600 m to the east.

2.2 Site Description

42-43 Belsize Park

2.2.1 Only part of the ground floor front elevation to Numbers 42-43 remains. The stairs and portico also remain, although are in particularly poor condition. The building is structurally unsound and is being artificially supported. The majority of the building collapsed in October 2008.

44-45 Belsize Park

2.2.2 Numbers 44-45 is vacant and in a poor state of repair. The front elevation of the building to Belsize Park is being supported by scaffolding, whilst the remainder of the building is structurally unsound.

Land to rear

2.2.3 The land to the rear of the site is at present unused and contains rubble from the partial collapse of 42-43. The land has no amenity value. This land was previously landscaped with gravel and used as a car park for the hotel.

Neighbouring buildings

2.2.4 Semi-detached villas are located to the north-east and south-west of the site, and are representative of the type of building that stretch along Belsize Park. Surrounding properties are all in a good state of repair. Numbers 42 and 45 retain their ground floor 'link' building to neighbouring properties, if only in elevation form in the case of 42.

2.2.5 A modern residential development of three townhouses is located to the north-east at 77 Belsize Lane. These properties include an underground car park, accessed from Belsize Lane. The row of terraces to the south at 79-93 Belsize Lane is listed, the rear garden to 79 Belsize Lane forms part of the south west boundary of the site.



Looking south-west along Belsize Park



The rear of 44 Belsize Park, looking north with 41 in the distance



The rear of 44-45 Belsize Park, looking south

2.3 Urban Context

Location and Land Uses

2.3.1 42-45 Belsize Park is located within the Belsize Park Conservation Area and is surrounded by residential properties, the majority of which were constructed between 1850 and 1870. A primary school is located opposite the site, on the corner of Belsize Park and Buckland Crescent. The Tavistock Centre (in health use) is located across Belsize Lane to the west of the site. Plan 2 shows the surrounding land uses.



Plan 2 - Land Use

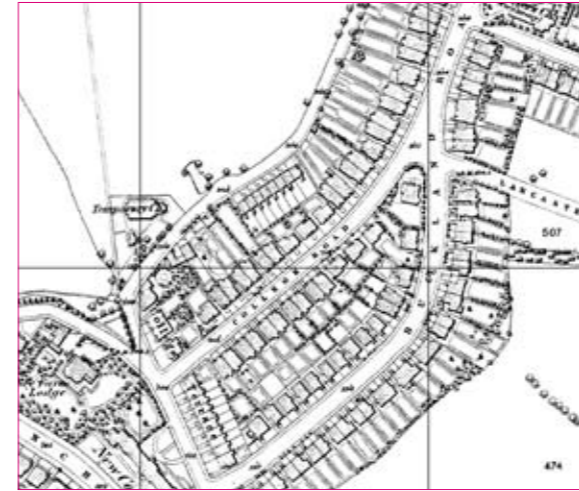
- Residential
- School
- Health
- Church

Landscape and Topography

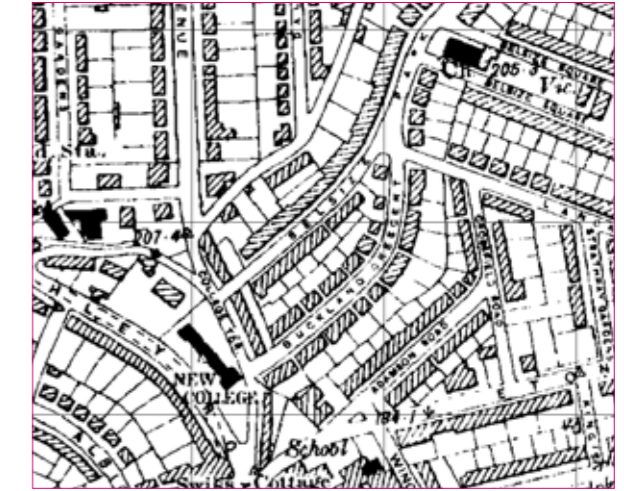
2.3.2 The site and surroundings are generally level, although land typically slopes to the south and west, down towards Finchley Road. There are numerous mature trees neighbouring the site (although none on the site) that contribute to its character. There are a number of street trees along Belsize Park and neighbouring streets, together with numerous mature trees located within the rear gardens to neighbouring properties.

Historic Development

- 2.3.3 The plans below indicate the historic development of the site and its surroundings. It is clear that number 42-45 and neighbouring villas along Belsize Park and south along Buckland Crescent were constructed prior to 1871. Land to the north of Belsize Lane had yet to be developed at this time.
- 2.3.4 The 1896 historic map clearly shows that by the turn of the Century, the majority of land to the north of Belsize Park had been developed for residential use, in addition to land to the south of Buckland Crescent. Following the turn of the century, development within the area comprised of minor in-fill development.



1871 Historic Map



1896 Historic Map

Views

2.3.5 There are no long distance views into or from the site. The site is clearly visible from the east and west along Belsize Park, which given the present vacant nature of the site results in a significant and prominent 'gap' in the streetscene. There are limited views into the rear of the site from Belsize Lane, given the single access point being located between existing residential properties that front the street.

Buildings and structures

2.3.6 The surrounding area exhibits a high quality of built form, which is at present compromised by the vacant and derelict nature of the site. The neighbouring villas are in good condition, retaining their residential use.

Continuity and Enclosure

2.3.7 The surrounding area retains a strong appearance, with strong building lines



View looking north along Belsize Park

2.4 Planning Policy Context

2.4.1 The accompanying Planning Statement provides a full assessment of relevant planning policies associated with the development proposal. Policies related purely to the design and access of the proposal are identified below:

Camden Development Policies 2010-2025 ('DPD')

Housing

2.4.2 Policy DP3 relates to contributions to the supply of affordable housing and states that the Council expect "all developments with a capacity for 10 or more additional dwellings to make a contribution to the supply of affordable housing".

2.4.3 Policy DP5 relates to the provision of homes of different sizes. In relation to market housing, the Council states that there is a 'very high' demand for the provision of 2 bedroom units and medium demand for 3 and 4 bedroom units.

2.4.4 Policy DP6 states that all housing development should meet lifetime homes standards. 10% of homes developed should either meet wheelchair housing standards, or be easily adapted to meet them.

Car Parking and Access

2.4.5 DP18 relates to parking standards. The adopted car parking standards are a maximum of 1 space per dwelling. 1 cycle storage or parking space should also be provided per residential unit.

2.4.6 DP29 comments that the Council will "expect all buildings and places meet the highest practicable standards of access and inclusion".

Basements and Lightwells

2.4.7 Policy DP27 relates to the provision of basements and lightwells and states that an Impact Assessment is submitted in support of this type of development.

Sustainable Design and Construction

2.4.8 Policy DP22 relates to the promotion of sustainable design and construction and includes the following criteria:

2.4.9 expecting new build housing to meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3 by 2010 and Code Level 4 by 2013.

2.4.10 Expecting new residential developments of 500 sq m or above floorspace to achieve "very good" in EcoHomes assessments prior to 2013.

Design Quality

2.4.11 Policy DP24 expects the highest standard of design and the Council will expect developments to consider:

a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;

b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;

c) the quality of materials to be used;

d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;

e) the appropriate location for building services equipment;

f) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;

g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;

h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and

i) accessibility.

2.4.12 Policy DP26 relates to managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours. Development that does not cause harm to amenity will only be permitted. Factors the Council will consider are as follows:

- a) visual privacy and overlooking;
- b) overshadowing and outlook;
- c) sunlight, daylight and artificial light levels;
- d) noise and vibration levels;
- e) odour, fumes and dust;
- f) microclimate;
- g) the inclusion of appropriate attenuation measures.

2.4.13 In addition, the Council will require new development to have:

- h) an acceptable standard of accommodation in terms of internal arrangements, dwelling and room sizes and amenity space;
- i) facilities for the storage, recycling and disposal of waste;
- j) facilities for bicycle storage; and
- k) outdoor space for private or communal amenity space, wherever practical.

Heritage

2.4.14 Policy DP25 relates to conserving Camden's heritage and includes criteria stating that the Council will only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area; and will prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention (see Plan 3).

Supplementary Planning Guidance

CPG1: Design in Camden

2.4.15 With regard to good building design, the draft SPD includes criteria stating that development should:

- ensure buildings do not significantly overshadow existing/proposed outdoor spaces (especially designated open spaces) or amenity areas.
- consider the extent to which developments may overlook the windows or private garden area of another dwelling;
- consider views, both local and London wide.
- consider the degree of openness of an area and of open spaces, including gardens including views in an out of these spaces
- contributions to the character of certain parts of the borough;
- provide visual interest for onlookers, from all aspects and distances. This will involve attention to be given to both form and detail; and
- consider opportunities for overlooking of the street and, where appropriate, provide windows, doors and other 'active' features at ground floor.

Waste and Recycling Storage

2.4.16 The draft SPD goes on to provide guidance on the standards for waste and recycling storage. Figure 14 states that between 0.15 and 0.4 m3 of internal storage space should be provided (depending on the size of the unit) and that suitable external storage space should be provided in accordance with the requirements contained within Figure 15 of the document.