


<b>Pre-application letter</b> <b>15/01/2012</b>	<b>Meeting Date: 07/12/2012</b>  <b>Camden</b>
<b>Planning officer for Camden:</b> <b>Aysegul Olcar-Chamberlin Planner (West Area)</b>	
<b>Consultant name:</b>	<b>Site address:</b>
Square Feet Architects	47 Belsize Square, NW3 4HN
<b>Proposal</b>	
Conversion of 9 x self-contained one-bed /studio flats into 2/3 bed residential flats on first, second and third floor levels, alterations to existing front and rear dormers to include roof terraces, new dormer windows and rooflights on side roofslope and insertion of a new window on side elevation.	

#### **Site and surroundings:**

The application site is a three storey plus semi-basement level and attic level semi-detached property on the north-east side of Belsize Square in the Belsize Conservation Area. The property is identified as a positive contributor to the appearance and character of the Conservation Area. The subject property forms a pair with no. 48 Belsize Square and is very similar in design to other buildings in the vicinity, many of which have been modified at roof level to accommodate dormer extensions.

The property has been divided into self-contained flats.

#### **Relevant Planning History:**

Application property:

**2010/6749/P** – Certificate of lawfulness (existing use) was granted on 08/02/2011 for the continued use of first, second and third floors as 9 self-contained studio flats (Class C3).

**9501874** - Change of use of first, second and third floors from bedsits to form three self-contained residential units. Permission was *refused and dismissed on appeal 10/03/1997 on the grounds that the loss of HMO space would conflict with Council policy.*

**33126** – Planning permission was granted on *08/12/1981 for the* change of use and works of Conversion to form one self-contained flat on the ground floor.

**32345** – Permission was granted on *17/07/1981 for the* conversion of basement to one self-contained flat.

45 Belsize Square:

**CTP/G7/18/16/35671** – Planning permission was refused on 10/05/1983 for the enlargement of existing loft room including the formation of an enlarged dormer at the rear and side and the formation of a roof terrace. Reason for refusal:

*“The proposed dormer would by virtue of its excessive size and architecturally unsympathetic position have an adverse effect on the appearance of the building and the visual amenity of*

*the area and would be contrary to the Council's policy for the control of additions at roof level within the Belsize Conservation Area."*

**CTP/G7/18/13/36282** – Planning permission was granted on 02/08/1983 for the enlargement of loft room including the formation of an enlarged dormer at the rear and a balcony.

46 Belsize Square:

**8600047**- Planning permission was granted on 19/03/1986 for the works of conversion to form a self-contained upper flat with the erection of front side and rear dormers as shown on drawings No.621/3B and 4A revised on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1986.

48 Belsize Square:

**2007/2596/P** – Planning permission was granted on 13/07/2007 for the erection of dormer window to front and side elevations and inset roof terrace to rear elevation, all in association with enlargement of self-contained flat at second floor; as a revision to planning permission (reference 2004/2555/P) granted on 01/03/2005, for the change of use of the first and second floors from a House in Multiple Occupation and a self-contained studio flat, to 2x self-contained flats.

49 Belsize Square:

**PW9902883** – Planning permission was granted on 07/03/2000 for the conversion of the building from 4 self-contained flats to a single dwelling house together with a rear extension at lower and upper ground floor levels and associated external alterations,

8803509 – Planning permission was granted on 21/07/1988 for the erection of an additional storey plus roof to form a two-bedroomed self-contained maisonette including the insertion of dormer windows to the front and side and a recessed roof terrace at the rear roof.

### **Relevant Policies:**

National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 (NPPF):

*"Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably." (pg 32 NPPF).*

The aims of the current LDF policies concerning design and conservation areas do not contradict the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

### LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

#### **Core Strategy:**

CS1 – Distribution of growth

CS5 - Managing the impact of growth and development

CS6 – Providing quality homes

CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

#### **Development Policies:**

DP2 – Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing

DP5 – Homes of different sizes

DP6 – Lifetime homes and wheelchair homes

DP24 - Securing high quality design

DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage

DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Camden Planning Guidance 2011

CPG1 (Design)

CPG2 (Housing)

CPG6 (Amenity)

CPG7 (Transport)

Belsize Conservation Area Statement (2003)

**Land use:**

The main issue in terms land use is the loss of more than one residential unit. The proposed scheme would result in the loss of 6-7 self-contained units in the building.

Policy CS1 states that the Council will promote the most efficient use of land and buildings in Camden by expecting high density development in Central London, town centres and other locations well served by public transport. Policy CS1 also considers the housing as the priority land use.

Policy CS6 aims to make full use of Camden's capacity for housing by maximising the supply of additional housing and minimising the net loss of existing homes. More specifically, according to policy DP2 the Council will resist developments that would involve the net loss of two or more homes, unless they:

- create large homes in an area with a low proportion of large dwellings;
- enable substandard units to be enlarged to meet residential space standards, or
- enable existing affordable homes to be adapted to provide the affordable dwelling-sizes that are most needed.

Only two out of the existing nine one-bed/studio flats are above the Council's minimum space standard for a self-contained one person occupancy unit (as set out on page 54 of CPG2). The rest of the studio flats are substandard in accordance with the Council's space standards. Although the proposal would result in loss of more than one self-contained unit in the existing mixture of the units the proposed self-contained units would comfortably meet the Council's minimum space standards. Therefore, the loss of more than one unit in order to provide less number of units which are up to the standards in the mixture is considered to be acceptable in principle. The mixture of the proposed units is expected to comply with policy DP5 and some proportion of small units as far as practically possible should also be retained.

The other important considerations concerning mix of units, design and amenity aspects of the proposed development are explored below.

**Mix of units:**

Policy DP5 sets the Council's priorities for homes of different sizes and resists development proposals that contain only one-bedroom and studio flats. According to "Dwelling Size Priorities" Table of policy DP5 there is a high need for supplying three and two bedroom flats in private developments (page 38 of LDF Development Policies). The table gives the lowest priority to one bedroom or studio flats aims for 40% of 2 bed units in developments.

The existing mix is 2 x 2-3 beds and 9 x one-bed/studio units. The existing self-contained flats on the basement and ground floor levels would not be affected by the proposal.

Two options were proposed for the proposed mix. Option 1 is the conversion of the existing 9 one-bed/studio flats into 1x3 bed and 2x2 bed units (including new side dormer extension). Option 2 is the conversion of the existing 9 one-bed/studio flats into 1x3 bed and 1x4 bed units. Although option 1 would provide a better mix of medium and large size units it would

have more impact on the appearance and character of the host building due to the proposed side dormer extension. The major disadvantage of the option 2 is that the proposed scheme would not provide any additional medium size units.

Another alternative for the mix of units could be the provision of 2x1 bed units on the first floor level and medium and large units on the upper floor levels in order to minimise the number of units which would be lost.

### **Standard of accommodation and Access:**

The minimum unit sizes of self-contained residential flats in relation to the number occupancies are set out on page 54 of CPG2. It appears from the proposed layouts that each of the new units would be spacious and receive adequate daylight. The proposed units would be capable of meeting the Council's residential standards and would provide good living standards for the future occupiers.

No Lifetime Homes Statement referring to all 16 criteria has been submitted. Given the site constrains it would be unreasonable to expect the proposed units to meet all Lifetime Homes criteria. However the proposed scheme should not worsen the existing accessibility throughout the building. Any future application should be accompanied with a Lifetime Homes Statement in order to address policy DP6.

### **Design and Appearance:**

The paired villa type of properties which are symmetrically designed form the character of Belsize Square. Many of the properties on the north-east side of Belsize Square have dormer windows, some of which are oversized. Belsize Conservation Area Statement considers the large unsympathetic dormer extensions on north-east side of Belsize Square to be negative features.

#### Alterations and extensions to roof:

Section 5 of CPG1 for dormer extensions state that they should be sensitive changes which maintain the overall structure of the existing roof form and should also be sufficiently below the ridge of the roof in order to avoid projecting into the roofline when viewed from a distance. Usually a 500mm gap is required between the dormer and the ridge or hip to maintain this separation. The dormer windows should also relate to the façade below and the surface area of the roof in terms of in number, form, scale and pane size. Materials should complement the main building and the wider townscape and the use of traditional materials such as timber, lead and hanging tiles are preferred.

According to CPG1 a terrace which is provided within the slope of a pitch as proposed within the front and rear roof slopes the adjacent tiles or slates should be kept unbroken above the eaves.

Replacement of front and rear dormer windows to provide roof terraces is considered to be acceptable in principle. However the detailing of the proposed front and rear dormers should be revised to achieve a better subordinate relationship with the existing roof profile and respect the hierarchy of the windows below. The height of the proposed dormer windows should be reduced and the balustrade detailing should be revised. Ideally the height of the parapet behind the retained roof apron should be 1.1m in order to preclude the need for a balustrade in order to minimise the impact on the appearance and character of the host building and wider conservation area. A small section of hand railing above the roof apron may be acceptable.

A modestly scaled side dormer with a sufficient set back from the eaves is considered to be acceptable in principle. The proposed side dormer extension would be larger and closer to the front building line than the approved side dormer extension to the other pair (no 47) and

would be visible from the streetscenes. The proposed side dormer extension should be reduced in size and further set back from the front building line and it should also be similarly detailed to the one approved to no 47.

The existing chimneys on the side elevation should also be retained.

Other alterations:

The proposed rooflights and new bathroom window on the side elevation would minimally alter the appearance and character of the host building and therefore they are acceptable in design terms.

**Impact on Neighbouring Amenity:**

Policies CS5 and DP26 safeguard the amenities of the occupiers and neighbours in terms of overlooking, daylight and privacy.

There might be overlooking issues raised from the proposed side dormer extension and new bathroom window on the side elevation to the windows on the side elevation of no 46. The privacy of this neighbouring property could be protected by obscuring the proposed windows on the side elevation of the application property.

**CIL:**

This proposal will not be liable for the Mayor of London's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

**Conclusion:**

If you choose to an option which would result in fewer units in favour of provision of large units I advice you to provide a justification for your proposed mix in accordance with the criteria set out in policy DP2.

The proposed dormer windows and roof terraces in terms of their detailing, size and form should be amended in accordance with the advice given above.

Please refer to the website below for guidance on submitting an application:

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/planning-applications/making-an-application/supporting-documentation--requirements-/>

This response represents the Council's initial view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage. It should not be interpreted as formal confirmation that your emerging proposals will be acceptable nor can it be held to prejudice formal determination of any planning application we receive from you on this proposal.

If you have any queries in relation to the above matters do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Aysegul

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