

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990  
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act  
1990**

**Planning Impact Statement**

De-conversion of nine self-contained studio units on the first, second and third floors to form two 2-bed and one 3-bed self-contained dwellings; refurbishment of existing dormer windows at front and rear and reduction in extent of front roof terrace; installation of two rooflights in flank roof and one window in flank elevation; restoration of period details to existing portico and general refurbishment of front and rear elevations.

47 Belsize Square  
London  
NW3 4HN

Prepared for Belsize Square Assets Ltd  
By Grainger Planning Associates Ltd  
11 Ashcombe Road  
Carshalton  
SM5 3ET



**RTPI**

mediation of space · making of place

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T 0208 401 1143  
E [simongrainger@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:simongrainger@blueyonder.co.uk)

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared to support the re-submission of a planning application lodged by Square Feet Architects on behalf of the freeholder of the site, Belsize Square Assets Ltd. Planning permission is sought to convert the upper floors of this building into two 2-bed flats and one 3-bed flat involving minor material alterations to the front, side and rear elevations.
- 1.2 The site comprises a four storey building with attic currently arranged as eleven flats. The basement and ground floor levels are laid out as 3-bed self-contained flats. These are not part of the application. This application relates to the first-third floors which comprise nine self-contained flats. The site lies within the Belsize Conservation Area. As such, in addition to the requirement for a Design and Access statement, the application should be accompanied by a Heritage Impact Statement that assesses the impact of any external changes proposed upon the designated heritage asset (which is the conservation area). This report fulfils that requirement.
- 1.3 The current planning application follows the submission of an earlier scheme yet to be determined but where the case officer has raised a number of concerns notwithstanding a pre-submission meeting with officers in December 2012 followed up by written advice in January 2013. This revised application has been modified to reflect the further advice received from officers.
- 1.4 The purposes of this Statement is to describe the development for which planning permission is sought; to demonstrate the development will have no adverse impact upon the character or appearance of the conservation area; to demonstrate the development will have no adverse impact upon the amenities

of existing neighbouring occupiers; and to demonstrate that the proposed development will meet the objectives of the development plan.

1.5 The proposed development has been guided by the following documents:

- Camden Core Strategy
- Camden Development Policies DPD
- Camden Planning Guidance
- Conservation Area Statement 9 - Belsize

1.6 The application comprises the following documents:

- Design and Access Statement (Square Feet Architects)
- Planning Impact Statement (Grainger Planning Associates Ltd)
- Drawing Nos.

1225	P	001	LOCATION and SITE PLAN & AERIAL	1:1250	A3	*	*
1225	P	003	EXISTING BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN	1:50	A3	*	*
1225	P	004	EXISTING RAISED GROUND FLOOR PLAN	1:50	A3	*	*
1225	P	005	EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN	1:50	A3	*	*
1225	P	006	EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN	1:50	A3	*	*
1225	P	007	EXISTING THIRD FLOOR PLAN	1:50	A3	*	*
1225	P	008	EXISTING ROOF PLAN	1:50	A3	*	*
1225	P	009	EXISTING FRONT + REAR ELEVATION	1:100	A3	*	*
1225	P	010	EXISTING SIDE ELEVATION	1:100	A3	*	*
1225	P	011	EXISTING SECTIONS AA + BB	1:100	A3	*	*
1225	P	021	PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN	1:50	A3	*	A
1225	P	022	PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN	1:50	A3	*	A
1225	P	023	PROPOSED THIRD FLOOR PLAN	1:50	A3	*	A
1125	P	024	PROPOSED ROOF PLAN	1:50	A3	*	A
1225	P	025	PROPOSED FRONT + REAR ELEVATION	1:100	A3	*	A
1225	P	026	PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION	1:100	A3	*	A
1225	P	027	PROPOSED SECTION AA + BB	1:100	A3	*	A

- Lifetime Homes Checklist (included within Design and Access Statement)

## 2. The Site and Its Location

- 2.1 The application site comprises one half of a pair of symmetrical villas. The building comprises five levels with a basement, ground, first and second floors, with a third floor within the roof and lit by existing front and rear dormer windows.
- 2.2 The basement and ground floors comprise a 3-bed self-contained flat on each level. These were granted planning permission in 1981. The upper three levels (and which are the subject of this application) were laid out as an HMO. However, in 2010, a lawful development certificate was granted by the Council confirming the use of these three floors as nine self-contained studio dwellings.
- 2.3 There are three studio units at first floor level, four on the second floor and two on the third floor. All of the units are self-contained but with one exception, they are all very small in floor area.



Application site

- 2.4 The basement and ground floor flats have access to the rear garden which is demised to the respective occupiers in their leaseholds. One of the flats on the third floor has access to a small terrace area formed in front of the dormer window. Bin storage for the whole development is arranged at the front of the building.
- 2.5 The building was erected in the mid-nineteenth century and in external appearance, it has the characteristics of an Italianate villa. It stands in a street of near-identical buildings with a very distinctive character. Pairs of buildings sit tight to their side boundaries in common with their neighbours. This produces a clear street rhythm.



2.6 The site lies within the Belsize Conservation Area. The Council's Conservation Area Statement notes that the Belsize area was developed as a residential suburb between 1840 and 1870. The Italianate villas are characteristic of the area and are likely to have been developed by Daniel Tidey. The Statement further notes that the large villas were built with attic and basement space for servants and were aimed at the "carriage classes" to entice them from Bayswater and Kensington.

2.7 The application site lies within character sub-area 1 – Belsize Park – being one of six sub-areas identified within the Statement. The special character of Belsize Park is defined as a:

**"distinct and substantial area of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century villa development that has strong consistency in the heights of its buildings, which are mostly three storeys with lower ground and sometimes an attic level, their relationship to the streets with front gardens set behind boundary walls, and their Italianate styling."**

2.8 The Statement further subdivides the Belsize Park character sub-area. The site is identified as lying within the core area of the part of Belsize Park developed by Tidey:

**"The streets are predominantly residential, characterised by the repeated forms of the stucco villas, whose design gives a strong identity and unity of appearance to the area.**

**In....Belsize Square, the predominant type is the paired villa. The villas are symmetrical about their slab chimney stacks, have hipped slate roofs with overhanging eaves which are supported on brackets, the elevations have large rusticated quoins, recessed sash windows, diminishing in size on successive upper floors with classically detailed surrounds, canted three-light bays on the ground floor and steps up to porticoes....**

**The closely spaced villas maintain a continuous building line and their repeated forms with narrow gaps between give a**

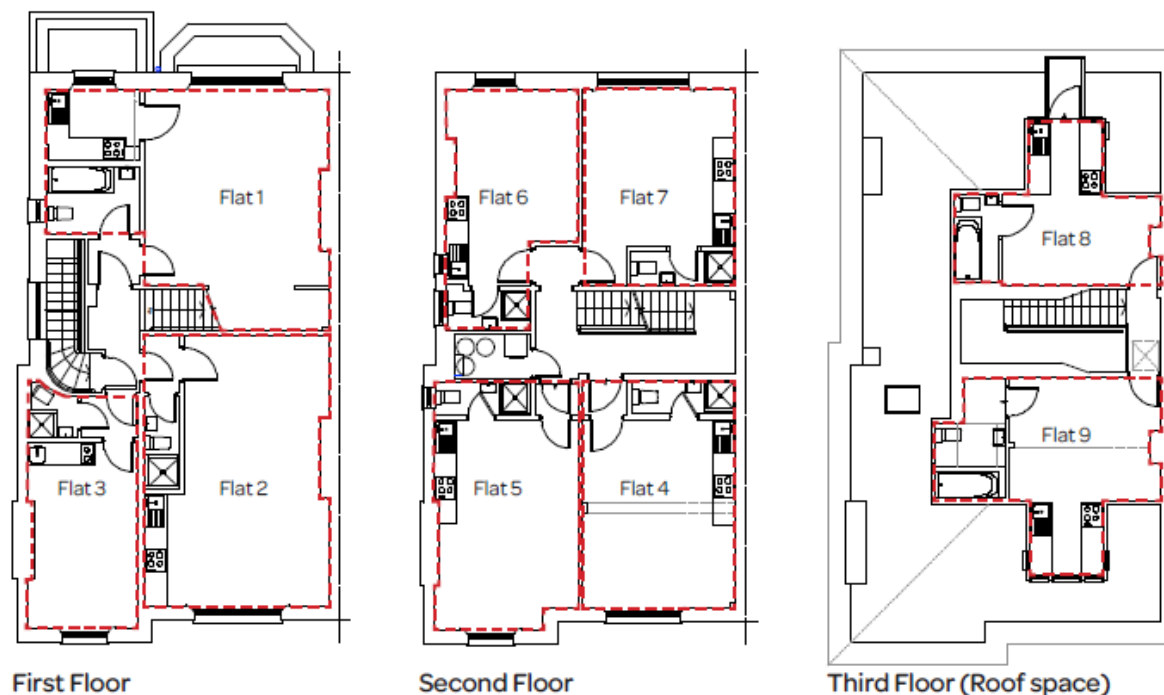
**uniform rhythm to the streets and provide important, glimpsed views....”.**

- 2.9 The application site is one of many buildings identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. However, over time, some of the fine detailing of the front facade has been lost, particularly around the portico. It is intended that this application will provide the catalyst for the sensitive repair/restoration of the original facade.



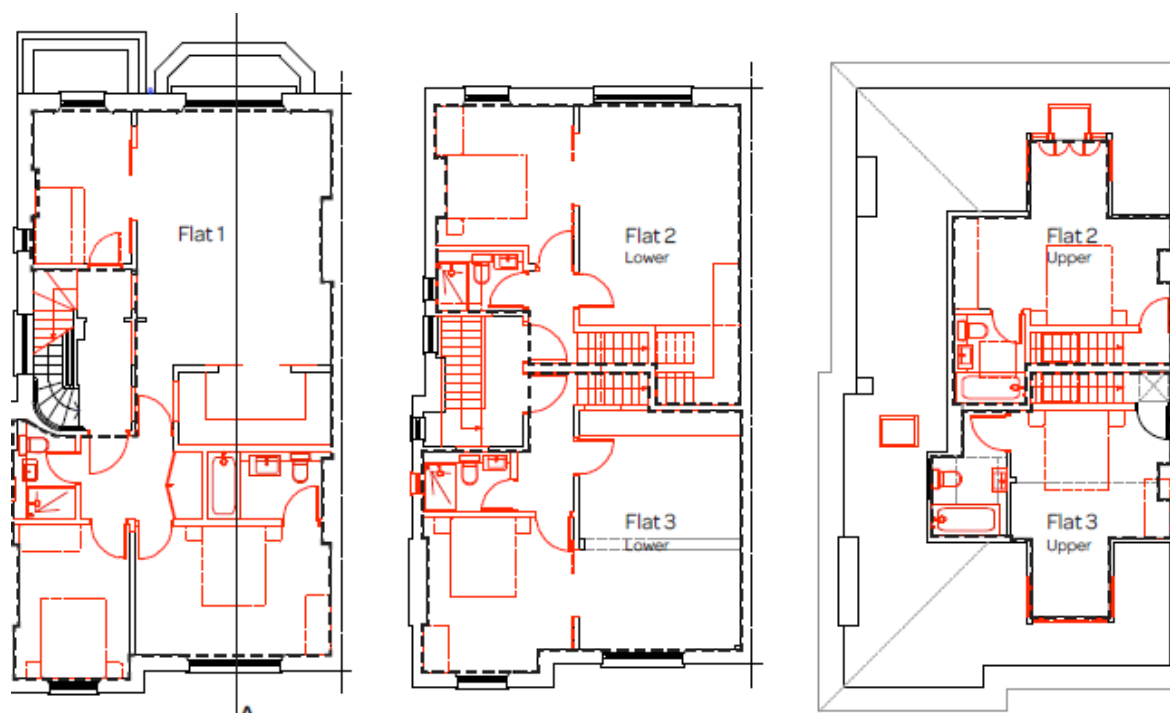
### 3. The Proposed Development

3.1 The application relates only to the first, second and third floors. As presently arranged two of the three flats on the first floor are substantially below the floorspace requirements set out in Camden Planning Guidance and the London Plan, whilst the remaining seven across the second and third floors are also significantly below the required standard. As studio units, the deficiency is particularly acute as the drawing extract below shows.

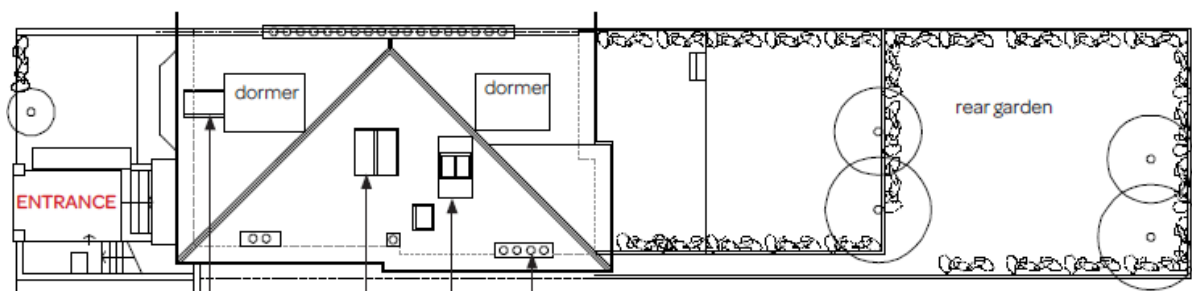


3.2 The application proposes the creation of a 3-bed 5 person self-contained flat on the first floor with a total floor area of 93m<sup>2</sup>; and two 2-bed 4 person duplex units on the second and third floors with floor areas of 71.4m<sup>2</sup> and 72.4m<sup>2</sup> respectively. Detailed layouts are contained within the Design and Access Statement and the accompanying application drawings.





- 3.3 The existing front and rear dormers are being retained and refurbished following the latest officer advice and despite the Council's earlier pre-submission advice. In addition, the attic floor level is being dropped by approximately 200mm to create more headroom on the top floor.
- 3.4 There is an existing roof terrace in front of the existing front dormer. This is to be reduced in depth so that it is less prominent than the Council considers it to be and to enable the re-instatement of the slates across the front roof slope. The first floor flat will have a small terrace above the ground floor bay window enclosed by a very modest hand-rail balcony detail.
- 3.5 No car parking is proposed. The reduction in unit numbers from nine to three will have a beneficial impact through the reduction in the number of CPZ permits that occupiers will be eligible for.



- 3.6 As there are no communal areas other than the circulation space, cycle storage will have to be contained within the respective dwellings. However, as the floor areas for these dwellings exceed to the Council's requirements, this should not be problematic. The refuse storage presently takes place in the front garden area. This will be continued, however, there will be six less households.

#### **4. Pre-Submission Advice**

- 4.1 Prior to the submission of the earlier application, formal pre-submission advice was sought from the Council.
- 4.2 A meeting was held with the Council in December 2012. At that meeting, two alternative schemes were tabled: firstly, there was a scheme that provided one 3-bed and one 4-bed unit; and secondly there was a scheme proposing two 2-bed and one 3-bed unit.
- 4.3 The Council's formal pre-submission response indicated that whilst the loss of units was justified in this particular instance given the significant shortfall in floor area relative to the Council's published standards, the replacement units should seek to address the requirements of the development plan in terms of unit mix. The Council recognised that Option 1 provided the best mix but that as a new dormer window was required, this would potentially have an impact on the external appearance of the building.
- 4.4 The Council's response acknowledged the architects' evidence that dormer windows were part of the character of this part of the sub-area. However, the side dormer as shown was larger than what had been approved elsewhere and therefore it should be reduced in size and set further back from the front building line. The chimney stacks should be retained. The installation of rooflights as proposed would minimally alter the character and appearance of the building and would likely be acceptable.
- 4.5 Taking account of those views (copy of letter included within application documents), the original scheme proposals were amended to address the points raised by the Council and the application was submitted.

- 4.6 However, during consideration of the application the case officer came to a different conclusion regarding the impact of the proposals on the character and appearance on the conservation area than the officer who gave pre-submission advice. Clearly this volte face is regrettable and undermines the purpose of engaging the Council in pre-submission discussions. The applicant submits this revised scheme to address the latest comments offered by the Council though this is without prejudice to the belief that the original scheme is acceptable in the context of the development plan. The applicant wishes to carry out the refurbishment and redevelopment of this site without any further delays, noting it took some considerable period of time to secure the original pre-submission meeting.

## 5. The Development Plan and Other Material Considerations

- 5.1 The Development Plan for the Borough comprises the London Plan 2011; the Core Strategy 2010; and Camden Development Policies DPD 2010-2025. The Camden Planning Guidance SPD is also a material consideration. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications for development must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Other material considerations include statements of national planning policy set out in the NPPF.
- 5.2 As the planning application relates only to a small-scale development comprising of three dwellings, the application raises no particular issues of a strategic planning nature and therefore the most relevant policies are those in the Local Development Framework.
- 5.3 The *Core Strategy* identifies housing as the priority land use for the borough and that maximising the supply of residential uses is the primary objective of the Plan. Policy CS6 seeks to maximise the supply of additional housing and to exceed the requirements of the London Plan. The policy states:

### "CS6 Providing quality homes

The Council will aim to make full use of Camden's capacity for housing by:

- a) maximising the supply of additional housing to meet or exceed Camden's target of 5,950 homes from 2007-2017, including 4,370 additional self-contained homes;
- b) maximising the supply of additional housing over the entire plan period to meet or exceed a target of 8,925 homes from 2010-2025, including 6,550 additional self-contained homes;
- c) supporting the supply of additional student housing, bedsits and other housing with shared facilities providing this does not prejudice the Council's ability to meet the target for the supply of

additional self-contained homes, the balance of uses in the area;  
and the quality of residential amenity or the character of the  
surrounding area;

- d) minimising the net loss of existing homes;
- e) regarding housing as the priority land-use of Camden's Local Development Framework.

The Council will aim to secure high quality affordable housing available for Camden households that are unable to access market housing by:

- f) seeking to ensure that 50% of the borough-wide target for additional self-contained homes is provided as affordable housing;
- g) seeking to negotiate a contribution from specific proposals on the basis of:
  - the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing under the specific circumstances of the site, including the financial viability of the development,
  - an affordable housing target of 50% of the total addition to housing floorspace, and
  - guidelines of 60% social rented housing and 40% intermediate affordable housing;
- h) minimising the net loss of affordable housing;
- i) regenerating Camden's housing estates and seeking to bring Council stock up to the Decent Homes standard by 2012.

The Council will aim to minimise social polarisation and create mixed and inclusive communities across Camden by:

- j) seeking a diverse range of housing products in the market and affordable sectors to provide a range of homes accessible across the spectrum of household incomes;
- k) seeking a range of self-contained homes of different sizes to meet the Council's identified dwelling-size priorities;
- l) seeking a variety of housing types suitable for different groups, including families, people with mobility difficulties, older people, homeless people and vulnerable people; and
- m) giving priority to development that provides affordable housing and housing for vulnerable people.

The Council will monitor the delivery of additional housing against the target for housing supply, and will seek to maintain supply at the rate necessary to meet or exceed the target. In seeking to maintain the housing supply, the Council will adjust the type and mix of housing sought, having regard to the financial viability of development, the sales or capital value of different house types and tenures, and the needs of different groups."

- 5.4 Policy CS14 sets out the Council's objective of securing new development that promotes high quality places whilst conserving the borough's heritage. It states:

**CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage**

The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

- a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;
- b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;
- c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;
- d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible;
- e) protecting important views of St Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster from sites inside and outside the borough and protecting important local views.

- 5.5 The Camden Development Policies DPD provides more detailed policies for development management purposes that build upon the strategic objectives set out in the Core Strategy. Policy DP2 states the Council's objective of seeking to maximise the supply of additional homes in the borough by ensuring underused or vacant sites make the maximum contribution they can and by resisting the loss of residential land to other uses.

- 5.6 Policy DP5 requires new residential development to contribute to the creation of mixed and inclusive communities by securing a range of self-contained homes of different sizes. The supporting text to the policy contains a "Dwelling Size Priorities Table" that is informed by the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment. In the market sector, the demand for



family-sized dwellings is defined as “medium” with 1-bed dwellings “lower” and 2-bed dwellings “very high”.

- 5.7 Policy DP24 requires all development to be of the highest standard of design having regard for the character of the area in which the development is sited. Finally, Policy DP26 seeks to ensure new development does not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenities of neighbours and that the quality of the development itself is provided to acceptable internal space standards. Further guidance on this is provided within Camden Planning Guidance sections CPG2 – Housing – and CPG6 – Amenity.

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- 5.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government indicates that this has three dimensions:

- An **economic role** to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. This requires sufficient land of the right type to be available in the right places and the right time to support growth and innovation
- A **social role** to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring a supply of housing to meet present and future need and by creating a high quality built environment
- An **environmental role** that contributes to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

- 5.9 The pursuit of sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environments and to people's quality of life.
- 5.10 Paragraph 14 of the NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development. LPAs should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area. Developments according with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.
- 5.11 Supporting the three dimensions to achieving sustainable development, the NPPF sets out 12 core land-use planning principles:
- Planning should be plan-led and plans should be kept up to date and provide a framework so that planning decisions can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency;
  - Planning should find ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;
  - It should proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units and thriving local places the country needs;
  - It should always seek high quality design and a good standard of amenity for existing and future occupiers;
  - Planning should promote the vitality of urban areas taking account of differing roles and characters of different areas;

- The transition to a low-carbon future should be supported encouraging the re-use of existing resources and the use of renewable resources;
- The natural environment should be conserved and enhanced and land allocations in plans should prefer land of a lesser environmental value;
- Planning should encourage the effective reuse of brownfield land
- Mixed use development should be encouraged and multiple benefits encouraged from the use of land in urban and rural areas
- Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance
- Focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable;
- Deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

### **Building a strong, competitive economy**

5.12 The NPPF expresses the Government's strong support to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity (para 18 refers). The planning system should do everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system. LPAs should identify priority areas for economic regeneration and environmental enhancement. Planning policies should avoid the long-term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being re-used for employment. Applications for alternative uses should be

treated on their merits having regard for market signals (para 22 refers).

### **Delivering a wide choice of quality homes**

- 5.13 LPAs are required to identify (and annually update) specific deliverable sites to provide 5 years worth of housing with a 5% buffer. Further, land should be identified for years 6-10. Guidance on housing density should reflect local circumstances. The NPPF states clearly that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 49 refers). If a 5 year supply cannot be demonstrated, then the housing policies will be considered out of date. Affordable housing policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time. Planning applications for a change of use to C3 from B use classes should normally be approved provided there are no strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate (para 51 refers).

### **Requiring good design**

- 5.14 Great importance is attached to good design and it is a key aspect of sustainable development. Developments should function well; establish a strong sense of place; optimise the capacity of the site; respond to local character and history while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation; create safe and accessible environments; and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture. Design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription and should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. However, it is proper to promote

or reinforce local distinctiveness. In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area (para 63 refers).

### **Ensuring viability and deliverability (para 173)**

- 5.15 Pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in plan-making and decision-taking....Therefore, the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that their ability to be developed viably is threatened. To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to developments, such as requirements for affordable housing, standards and infrastructure contribution or other requirements should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.

### **Decision Taking**

- 5.16 The NPPF expects LPAs to take a positive approach to decision-taking in a way that fosters the delivery of sustainable development. They should look for solutions rather than problems and applications for sustainable development should be approved where possible. LPAs are expected to work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area (paras 186 & 187 refer).

The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. In determining planning applications, LPAs should apply the

presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 197 refers).

## 6. Planning Arguments

- 6.1 The principle land use planning issue regarding this application involves the reduction in the number of self-contained dwellings from nine down to three.
- 6.2 Policies CS 1 and 6 of the Core Strategy express the Council's objective to promote the most efficient use of land within the Borough with the primary land use objective being for residential development. Complementing these objectives, Policy DP2 of the Camden Development Policies DPD seeks to resist the loss of existing dwellings in most circumstances. It states:

### **"Policy DP2 - Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing**

The Council will seek to maximise the supply of additional homes in the borough, especially homes for people unable to access market housing, by:.....

- f) resisting developments that would involve the net loss of two or more homes, unless they:
- create large homes in a part of the borough with a relatively low proportion of large dwellings,
  - enable sub-standard 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."

- 6.3 Supporting paragraphs 2.22-2.26 provide further guidance in instances where development proposals involve the net loss of two or more dwellings such as the present application. In particular, Paragraph 2.25 advises:

"2.25 Some housing in the borough does not conform to current residential space standards. These are usually homes that were built before the standards were introduced or without the benefit of planning consent. Where existing homes fall substantially



below the residential space standards set out in our Camden Planning Guidance supplementary document, the Council may consider proposals involving the loss dwellings in order to meet the standards. We will consider proposals favourably if existing homes are 20% or more below the space standards and the loss of dwellings is no greater than is necessary to meet the standard."

- 6.4 The existing dwellings are all studio units. Camden Planning Guidance 2 – Housing – sets out minimum floor space requirements and the more recently adopted London Plan incorporates more stringent requirements. Camden requires a minimum of 32m<sup>2</sup> for a 1 person studio where the London Plan now requires 35m<sup>2</sup>. When assessed against these requirements, all but one of the units are below both Camden and the London Plan requirements, with seven of them being substantially below.

	EXISTING AREA M <sup>2</sup>	CPG +/- %	LP +/-%
FLAT 1	39	+21	+11
FLAT 2	33	-4	-6
FLAT 3	17	-47	-52
FLAT 4	23	-29	-35
FLAT 5	23	-29	-35
FLAT 6	18	-44	-49
FLAT 7	20	-38	-43
FLAT 8	16	-50	-55
FLAT 9	21	-35	-40

- 6.5 All bar two of the units are defined as "substantially" below the floor space standards having regard for Policy DP2 and paragraph 2.25. Therefore, the principle of a loss of dwellings is acceptable in the context of the development plan.

- 6.6 The Council's formal pre-submission advice letter noted the following:

"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."

- 6.7 The new flats to be formed all exceed CPG2 and London Plan floorspace requirements. Due to the layout and size of the building, it is not feasible to create a greater number of smaller units. In addition, the applicant's choice of unit mix has been guided entirely by Policy DP5 of Camden Development Policies DPD. As the Dwelling Size Priorities Table below shows, for market housing, the requirement for 2-bed dwellings is assessed as "very high" with a policy aim to secure 40% of 2-bed dwellings in new housing schemes.

Dwelling Size Priorities Table					
	1-bedroom (or studio)	2-bedrooms	3-bedrooms	4-bedrooms or more	Aim
<b>Social rented</b>	lower	medium	high	very high	50% large
<b>Intermediate affordable</b>	medium	high	high	high	10% large
<b>Market</b>	lower	very high	medium	medium	40% 2-bed

- 6.8 Taking account of fact the seven of the nine studio units are classed as "substantially substandard" in floor area, and the size and mix of units that are to be created, the proposed development complies with Policies CS6, DP2 and DP5 of the

development plan. This conclusion appears to be supported by the fact that the case officer has not raised this as an objection in the context of the original planning application.

- 6.9 Policy DP6 requires all new residential development to meet the requirements of Lifetime Homes standards. However, supporting paragraph 6.6 does acknowledge that it may not be possible for some conversions to meet all the standards, but that the development should strive to meet as many as possible. At present, none of the studio units meet any of the requirements. As Section 6 of the Design and Access Statement demonstrates, ten of the sixteen requirements are likely to be met. The development will therefore meet the aims and objectives of Policy DP6.
- 6.10 Policy DP18 requires development to provide the minimum necessary level of parking. The site is currently in lawful use for eleven flats with no restriction on CPZ permits. This current application reduces the net number of flats by six and does not propose off-street parking. Indeed, there is no space within the site to do so. The site lies within the CPZ and within easy proximity to public transport services. As such, the reduction in the number of flats will reduce the pressure for permit parking. However, in the circumstances, restricting the issue of permits further could not be justified and the aims and objectives of Policy DP18 will still be satisfied.
- 6.11 Policy DP25 states that the Council will only grant planning permission within conservation areas for developments that preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. In the case of this application, the only elements that will affect the external appearance of the building, and hence its potential impact upon the character and appearance of the

conservation area are the small changes to the existing dormer windows.

- 6.12 At the original pre-app stage, the Council expressed the desire to see changes to the existing dormers that it considered would be beneficial to the appearance of the building. These related to the reduction in the height of the dormers and this application makes provision for these changes. It was considered that such changes would enhance the appearance of the building. However, the Council has now indicated that it does not consider the changes will have a beneficial impact or even a neutral impact. This revised application simply intends to retain and refurbish the front and rear dormer windows.
- 6.13 In addition to the changes identified above, it is proposed to reinstate the lost detailing to the portico, repair the existing rendering on the front elevation where required and to repair and reinstate the existing timber sash windows. In addition, the eaves line across the front of the front dormer will be reinstated in slate so that it is continuous. In the round, the sum of the changes proposed will have a positive and beneficial impact upon the character and appearance of the building and the contribution it makes to the character and appearance of the wider conservation area. The proposed development will therefore comply with the requirements of Policy DP25.
- 6.14 Policy DP26 seeks to control the impact of development upon the amenities of occupiers and neighbours. This includes safeguarding levels of privacy and overlooking, outlook, daylight, sunlight, etc. It also seeks to ensure acceptable standards of accommodation are achieved in terms of internal arrangements, room sizes, etc. In respect of the latter,

Camden Planning Guidance 2 – Housing – provides detailed guidance.

- 6.15 In terms of the impact of the scheme upon neighbours, the proposal represents a far less intensive use of the building than currently. Of the ten principal windows in the front and rear elevations, seven of them will serve bedrooms and three will serve living rooms. This compares favourably when you consider that presently, the ten windows serve self-contained studio dwellings. The development will therefore represent an improvement in terms of the relationship of the building to neighbouring residential occupiers.
- 6.16 With regard to unit and room sizes, Section 4 of CPG2 sets out the minimum requirements of 61m<sup>2</sup> for a 3 person dwelling, 75m<sup>2</sup> for a 4 person dwelling and 84m<sup>2</sup> for a 5 person dwelling. Main bedrooms should be a minimum of 11m<sup>2</sup> and single bedrooms 6.5m<sup>2</sup>. Flat 1 is a 5 person dwelling with a gross floor area of 93.3m<sup>2</sup> and all bedrooms exceed the minimum standard. Flat 2 is a 4 person flat with a gross floor area of 72.4m<sup>2</sup>, whilst Flat 3 has a gross floor area of 71.4m<sup>2</sup>. Whilst these areas are marginally below the CPG advice for a 4-person flat, they exceed the London Plan standard set out in the Housing SPG adopted in November 2012 of 70m<sup>2</sup> for a 2-bed four person flat. In any event, Flats 2 and 3 may be considered as 2-bed 3-person flats which significantly exceed the CPG advice.
- 6.17 Taking these factors into account, the proposed development will meet the requirements of Policy DP26.

## 7. Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 The application site comprises the first, second and third floors of a building constructed in the mid-nineteenth century in the Italianate villa style. It stands in the core of the Belsize Conservation Area. These three floors are presently arranged as nine self-contained studio units benefitting from a lawful development certificate.
- 7.2 Seven of the nine units are substantially substandard have regard for the Council's floorspace standards set out in CPG2 – Housing.
- 7.3 The application proposes to create three self-contained dwellings from the nine studios. The first floor will become a 3-bed five person flat with the two floors above being converted into two 2-bed four person duplex units. Minor elevational alterations are required to provide a coherent conversion.
- 7.4 This Planning Statement has demonstrated that the proposed development will bring about a sympathetic restoration of this building which the Council has identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It has also been demonstrated that the creation of two 2-bed and one 3-bed self-contained dwellings that meet the Council's planning standards will represent a better use of this building and provide substantially greater amenity for the future occupiers than the present arrangement provides.
- 7.5 The proposed development meets the requirements of Policies CS1, 6 and 14 of the Core Strategy DPD; Policies DP2, DP5, DP6, DP18, DP25 and DP26 of the Camden Development Policies DPD; and SPD CPG 1 and 2.