

Camden Planning  
Camden Town Hall  
Argyle Street  
London WC1H 8EQ

24<sup>th</sup> June '10

Dear Sir / Madam,

**BASEMENT EXTENSION, 56 BELSIZE AVENUE, LONDON NW3 4AA  
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT.**

The dwelling at the above address is part of a terrace of similar large 4-storey late Victorian houses along the south side of Belsize Avenue. The terrace has been designed in a restrained art nouveau style and forms part of the Belsize Park Conservation Area. Belsize Avenue is characterised by green verges with an avenue of mature lime trees. Terraces are set back behind front gardens which contribute to a spacious park-like street environment.

Number 56 Belsize Avenue remains largely unaltered externally, but exhibits signs of structural movement in the external brickwork which appears to have been caused by the proximity of several mature trees. The boundary walls to the front garden are collapsing and potentially dangerous. The applicant wishes to carry out a restoration of the building fabric which will contribute to the Conservation Area by maintaining the building for years to come. A report from structural engineers Elliott Wood Partnership (see attached) warns that the Ash tree in the front garden is likely to have contributed to the current problems with the foundation. Also attached is an Arbocultural Impact Assessment Report prepared by Adam Hollis of Landmark Trees which reports on the condition of the Ash Tree and proposes replacing it with a Lime Tree to infill the current gap in the avenue of mature trees which lines Belsize Avenue. Adam Hollis has met Camden Tree Officer Alex Hutson on site to discuss this proposal.

The building proposal is to extend the existing basement level of the dwelling below the front garden where large vault already exists below the paved entrance area. This vault area will be excavated to a level adequate to provide usable headroom and extended to form additional service space in the new basement areas. The collapsing front garden walls will be replaced on top of new concrete retaining walls around the perimeter. The new garden walls will be constructed from red brick in flemish bond to match the existing building.

The basement development will not be visible when viewed from; a green roof above the new basement is proposed and the current front garden and planted areas will appear unaltered when viewed from Belsize Avenue. The paved entrance path will be reinstated on top of the replacement concrete roof slab at ground floor level.

The new lower level internal areas will be utility and storage spaces to meet current requirements allowing the original Victorian rooms and features to remain intact. Also at the lower level, there will be sheltered storage for five family bicycles below the new green roof. This will be reached by a replacement external staircase leading to an external well and will ease congestion on the public highway.

A proposal lower the window cills to the existing front-facing basement windows is also included in this application. The intention is to improve daylighting to the existing habitable room at basement level. The new windows will be timber-framed casements with glazing bars to match existing. Proposals to alter the rear ground floor window openings have previously been confirmed by Camden to be Permitted Development (see attached letter).

Level ground floor access to the to the main entrance from the street level will remain unaltered.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Hay