

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		12/05/2010	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		14/04/2010	
Officer				Application Number			
Aysegul Olcar-Chamberlin				2010/1107/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Flat C & D, 7 Belsize Park Gardens London NW3 4LB				See draft decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal							
<p>Conversion of two one-bedroom flats into one three-bedroom flat including replacement of rear first floor windows with doors and installation of railings above the rear bay windows in connection with a new balcony to first floor flat.</p>							
Recommendation:		Grant Planning Permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	75	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00	
			No. Electronic	00			
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A site notice was displayed from 24/03/10 to 14/04/10.</p> <p>The occupiers of 9-11 Belsize Park Gardens did not object to the proposal in principle and commented on the materials. They considered the railings to be of wrought iron with spaces between the uprights and the proposed French doors to be white in keeping with the rest of the building.</p> <p><i>Response: Please refer to the assessment part of the report.</i></p>						

CAAC/Local groups***comments:**

*Please Specify

Belsize CAAC objected to the formation of terraces on both front porch and rear bow (bay) window. In summary, the grounds of their objection area:

- The proposed industrial style railings to the front façade would be visually intrusive.
- The original windows would be replaced with inappropriately scaled French doors.

Belsize Residents Association

- The proposal would harm the architecture of the conservation area.
- The traditional Belsize Park Villas are not designed with such balconies and railings therefore the proposal would damage the character of the conservation area.
- One of the Council's Conservation Area officers should be involved.

Response: This application was taken to the design surgery on 11th May 2010. The applicant amended the proposed scheme in accordance with the conservation officer's recommendations (please refer to the assessment part of the report).

Site Description

The application site is a three storey plus semi-basement level semi-detached property on the south side of Belsize Park Gardens in the Belsize Conservation Area. The property is an early Victorian Italianate villa style typical of the area. The property has been divided into flats.

Relevant HistoryApplication property:

None

Neighbouring Properties:

18 Belsize Park Gardens – Planning permission was granted on 17/10/2008 for the change of use of two self contained flats at lower ground and ground floor levels to create a single self-contained maisonette.

23 Belsize Park Gardens – Planning permission was granted on 24/08/2009 for the alterations to existing terrace to provide steel railings and new French windows to residential flat (2009/2582/P).

Relevant policies**Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006**

SD6 – Amenity for neighbours and occupiers

H3 - Protecting existing housing

H7 - Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing

H8 - Housing mix

B1 – General design principles

B3 – Alterations and extensions

B7 – Conservation Areas

Camden Planning Guidance 2006**Belsize Conservation Area Statement****LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies**

As the draft LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies documents have now been published, they are material planning considerations. However, as a matter of law, limited weight should be attached to them at this stage.

The following policies in the draft LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies documents have been taken into consideration

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

DP2 – Making full use of Camden’s capacity for housing
DP5 – Housing size mix
DP6 – Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing
DP24 – Securing high quality design
DP25 – Conserving Camden’s heritage
DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Assessment

Proposal

The current proposal seeks permission for the conversion of two adjoining one-bedroom flats into one three-bedroom flat including replacement of rear first floor windows with French doors and installation of railings above the rear bay windows in connection with a new balcony to first floor flat.

The proposal has been amended since it was originally submitted. The proposed front balcony with associated new French doors (above the front porch) on the front elevation was omitted from the proposal. The height of the railings above the rear bay windows was reduced and the vertical glazing bars were removed from the new French doors at the rear.

The proposal would not change the existing communal access arrangements to and throughout the building. The internal door of the rear flat would be kept and provide access to the proposed flat.

The key issues that are relevant to the determination of this application are:

- The principle of conversion and accommodation standards;
- The visual impact on the appearance and character of the existing house and wider conservation area;
- Impact on neighbours' amenity; and
- Transport conditions.

The principle of proposed conversion and living standards:

The Council has a policy to protect its existing housing stock. Policy H3 states the Council will not grant planning permission for a development that would involve the net loss of two or more residential units unless it creates large affordable housing units; or any loss is necessary to bring sub-standard units up to an acceptable standard. As the proposal would result in loss of only one unit it would comply with policy H3 and is acceptable in principle.

It is also in compliance with Policy H8 (housing mix) – neither of the two existing flats are family sized units, and the new unit would be a large unit capable of accommodating a family. It therefore improves the mix of units in the building as a whole.

The proposed three-bed flat would be generously sized with very good access to natural light. As the building already exists, it would be unreasonable to expect the proposed flat to comply with the all lifetime homes standards. It is considered that adequate consideration has been given to the lifetime homes standards on the internal layout of the proposed flat. Thus, the proposal complies with the aims of policy H7.

Design and appearance:

Black painted iron railings would be installed at first floor level above the rear bow shaped bay windows to enclose the space for use as a terrace. The proposed railings would have similar pattern and height to the existing railings below (around the ground floor terrace). The middle section of the rear sash windows would be replaced with timber double doors to provide access to the proposed roof terrace.

The proposed alterations to the rear elevation of the proposed flat would be minor and would not significantly change the existing rear elevation of the entire building. A number of the properties in the surrounding area have been similarly altered to provide roof terraces. The railings and doors would be similar features installed at the same level at 21, 23, 25 and 27 Belsize Park Gardens and 46 Belsize Square. The proposed materials and design of the railings and door would also be in keeping with the conservation area.

The proposed alterations to the rear elevation are considered to respect the appearance and character of the existing building and wider conservation area. The proposal therefore complies with policies B1, B3 and B7 of the UDP.

Residential Amenity

Camden's Planning Guidance specifies that balconies/terraces should not cause unreasonable overlooking into habitable rooms or gardens of neighbouring properties, but not other terraces. The railings are of too small a scale to affect neighbours in terms of loss of light and no views into the habitable rooms of neighbouring properties would be obtainable. The development would facilitate greater overlooking into the gardens of the adjoining properties and the below flat in the application property. However, the gardens of all these properties are already well overlooked by existing rear windows at the application and adjoining properties. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not result in a significant loss of privacy to any of the gardens compared to the existing situation. Likewise, the potential for noise disturbance would be no greater than any of the neighbouring gardens.

Due to the shape and narrow depth of the terrace and the tight angle of views available from this terrace it is considered that the proposed roof terrace will not result in a detrimental level of overlooking into adjoining properties and the below garden. Thus, the proposal would be in accordance with policy SD6.

Transport:

As the proposal would reduce the total number of residential units in the building there would be no adverse impact to the existing transport conditions in terms of traffic and parking.

Recommendation: Grant conditional permission.

Disclaimer

This is an internet copy for information purposes. If you require a copy of the signed original please contact the Culture and Environment Department on (020) 7974 5613