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Design Statement

Flat 3, 18 Belsize Square
Belsize Park
London NW3 4HT

Loft conversion including addition of
side dormer, rear inset terrace and
new rooflight to front roof elevation

February 2010

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement forms part of the application for planning permission for the conversion of the loft space to the upper flat at 18 Belsize Square.

The proposals submitted for planning approval seek to convert the existing loft into habitable space incorporating a bedroom and bathroom. The proposals include the erection of a side dormer, an inset terrace to the rear with the only modification to the front elevation being the insertion of a single rooflight.

Assessment

The property lies within The Belsize Square Conservation Area and forms a pair with No.17 Belsize Square. The property is very similar in design to other buildings in the locality, many of which have also been modified at roof level to accommodate dormer extensions and inset terraces similar to that proposed for No.18.

Recent Planning History

Similar such consented applications which now incorporate similar terraces and dormer include No. 21 Belsize Square (2006/3108/P) dormer to front, side and rear elevations and balcony to the rear, No.48 (2007/2596/P) dormer to front, side and rear inset terrace. Also pre-dating the 'CPG 2006' No.16 (2003/0330/P) and No.9, Flat 6 (2004/2136/P) also both feature a rear dormer window and inset roof terrace.

The immediately adjacent property at No.17 has a large inset terrace to the rear and projected side dormer, however the date of this modification is unknown.

Planning Policy and Consultation

It has come to our attention that the client requested some initial pre-application advice in September 2009 prior to the draft proposals being drawn up (CA\2009\ENQ\04335). The response received from Camden Planning sought to draw attention to the 'CPG 2006' and raised concerns that included consideration: to reduce overlooking from habitable rooms and terraces, loss of sunlight/daylight to neighbouring properties and modifications which have no adverse effect on the immediate townscape or character of the building.

As a result the submitted application has aimed to address each of these concerns and we feel the proposed design displays a thorough consideration towards maintaining each of these elements. The application includes photographs demonstrating the wide variety of dormers and terrace already existing within the surrounding area.

Design Considerations

As is clearly visible within the immediate vicinity of Belsize Square there are numerous examples of similar dormer windows designs, terraces and inset terraces. The alterations at roof level are similar in scale and design to many of those that exist.

Within the design of No.18 both the side dormer and the inset terrace have been proportioned to be sympathetic to the original design of the building and should therefore have no detrimental impact on both the character and appearance of the Belsize Square Conservation Area. These elements have taken in the concerns and advice provided within the 'Camden Planning Guidance 2006' (CPG) for Conservation Areas and seek to ensure the visual amenity of the neighbouring properties is fully maintained. With only the minimal

insertion of a rooflight to the front elevation we have sought to ensure the most visually accessible aspect of the property adheres to the original streetscape.

As with many terraces the proposed design at No.18 has sought to address the concerns of overlooking into neighbouring habitable rooms and gardens. As a result the terrace has been inset deep into the loft plan, therefore reducing any potential problems. This also allows the roof tiling to continue, uninterrupted across the height and width of the property as required under the 'CPG 2006' and ensures the terrace is offset from the party wall to No.17. Furthermore as the proposed side dormer serves only the stairwell and internal bridge, providing much needed daylight to the centre of the plan the internal layout is such that it is impossible for any user to directly overlook into the adjacent property at No.19.

Another concern carefully considered within the design was to ensure there was no adverse impact on both daylight and sunlight access to neighbouring properties and we feel the design demonstrates clearly that neither the side dormer or the inset terrace raise any problem under this concern.

Appearance

The design of the proposed roof modifications seek to blend in with the surrounding context and through careful detailing both the rolled lead clad dormer and roof to the rear terrace these new elements will be meticulously integrated into the existing roofscape. The proposed rooflight to the front elevation will be a 'Velux Conservation rooflight' being inset into the roof depth with minimal projection above.

Within the rear inset terrace the proposed sliding folding doors will be timber framed with large glazed central panes, matching both the proportion and colour of the existing glazing to the lower storeys.

Access

Unfortunately the stepped access to this property from street level does not offer any scope for improvement for disabled users. The main entrance door, directly off Belsize Square is only accessible via the existing external front steps and Flat 3 is only accessible via an internal communal sweeping staircase.

Summary

This application seeks consent to convert the existing loft to Flat 3, No.18 Belsize Square, to include the integration of a side dormer, rear inset terrace and single rooflight to the front elevation.

The proposals have fully considered the existing streetscape of the Belsize Square Conservation Area and the visual amenity of the surrounding area and endeavour to maintain the original character of the immediate building. In these circumstances, it is considered that the proposals will not adversely affect the property at No.18 Belsize Square or the local vicinity and should comply fully with Camden Planning Policy. Therefore we feel the proposed works are both considerate and in keeping and should be granted planning permission on these grounds.