

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		02/11/2007	
		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:		19/10/2007	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Bethany Arbery				2007/4496/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Flat A, 1 Howitt Road London NW3 4LT				Refer to draft decision notice.			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Excavation to enlarge the existing basement with the provision of a front lightwell, rear lightwell with ground level bridge link to garden and stairs leading from basement to ground level, and alterations to windows/doors at rear ground floor level all in connection with the existing ground floor flat (Class C3).							
Recommendation(s):		Grant conditional permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	30	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		A site notice was displayed from 28/09/07 to 19/10/07. Adjoining owners/occupiers The occupier of Flat D, 1 Howitt Road has written in support of the application. They state that it will add additional support and rigidity to the property.					
CAAC comments:		Belsize CAAC No objection.					

Site Description

The application site is 1 Howitt Road which is an end of terrace property located close to the junction with Haverstock Hill. The building comprises cellar, ground, first floor and roof storey with dormer windows. They date from the Edwardian period. The property is in residential use as 4 self-contained flats. The current application relates to Flat A the existing ground floor and cellar residential unit. The building is not listed, but is situated within the Belsize Park conservation area. It is considered to make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Relevant History

PWX0203111

Planning permission was granted on 11.03.03 for use of the loft space as additional accommodation for the 3rd floor flat, including the erection of a rear roof dormer extension and terrace with railings, and installation of 3 additional rooflights at front.

Relevant policies

Set out below are the UDP policies that the proposals have primarily been assessed against. However, it should be noted that recommendations are based on assessment of the proposals against the development plan taken as a whole together with other material considerations.

London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan (2006)

- S1/S2 – Sustainable development
- SD6 – Amenity for occupiers and neighbours
- H1 – New housing
- H8 – Mix of units
- N8 – Ancient woodlands and trees
- B1 – General design principles
- B3 – Alterations and extensions
- B7 – Conservation areas

Camden Planning Guidance (2006)

- Conservation area
- Extensions, alterations and conservatories
- Residential development standards

Belsize Conservation Area Statement (2003)

Assessment

Planning permission is sought to carry out the following works all in connection with the existing ground floor level flat:

- Excavation of an enlarged basement;
- Excavate a front basement lightwell covered over with a metal grille;
- Excavate a sunken patio at rear basement level;
- Erect a ground floor level bridge link (over sunken patio) with glass balustrade to provide level access from ground floor flat to garden;
- Installation of stairs leading from sunken basement patio to garden level; and
- Alterations of rear ground floor level windows/doors.

Land Use

The proposal includes the creation of an additional 57sqm of residential floorspace. The Council seeks to increase the supply of housing within the Borough. Policy H1 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan states that the Council will grant planning permission for development that increase the amount of land and floorspace in residential use and provides additional residential accommodation. The proposal will allow the existing 2-bedroom unit to be enlarged to provide a new 3-bedroom residential unit. Policy H8 seeks a mix of unit sizes and acknowledges that there is a shortfall of family-sized accommodation within the Borough. The provision of a new 3-bedroom residential unit is therefore welcomed.

Standard of accommodation

The new basement level accommodation is to be used to provide a new living room, bedroom and bathroom facilities; the only source of natural light will be from the windows which face into the front and rear lightwells. The living room which faces into the sunken patio has extensive floor to ceiling glazing (2.72sqm unobstructed glazing) and should receive an adequate level of light. The area of glazing exceeds 10% of the floorspace of the living room (19.25sqm). The level of light to the bedroom will be low; the glazed area of the window serving the space is largely obstructed by the wall of the lightwell. Were this to be a smaller unit without other adequately lit rooms then the provision of this accommodation with a low level of light would be unacceptable, but in this instance given that the rest of the property receives a good level of natural light it is not considered that refusal could not be justified on this basis. The proposed unit and rooms are all adequately sized and will provide a suitable standard of accommodation.

Amenity

The proposed excavation works do not raise any amenity issues. The proposal includes the creation of new lightwells to the front and rear. These elements of the proposal are not considered to be contentious in amenity terms. They will not result in the loss of daylight, sunlight or outlook to neighbouring residential properties and therefore the proposal complies with Policy SD6 of the Unitary Development Plan (2006).

Design

Policy B3 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan 2006 provides guidance on where alterations and extensions to existing buildings are likely to be acceptable in design terms. In this instance the proposed extension involves the excavation of a new basement area. The proposed extension is to have both a front and rear lightwell.

Part (B) of this policy addresses townscape features and states that the Council will not grant permission for excavation to create new basements where it is considered to harm the appearance and setting of a building or the established character of the surrounding area.

The properties in this street do not have any lightwells under the front bay window. All the properties with the exception of No. 1 have an excavated area adjacent to the front entrance steps which has allowed for either the insertion of a window or door to provide access/light to the existing basement area. It is likely that No. 1 did have this historic arrangement, but that it was infilled when the building was converted to flats.

As a general rule, based on the above, we would resist the insertion of lightwells below the bay windows in the front garden areas of properties along this street. As No. 1 is slightly different in nature, it does not have any excavated area and does not follow the same pattern of development along the street a front lightwell is considered to be acceptable. This is, subject to it being enclosed by a metal grille (as shown on the drawings) so that its visibility from the public realm is minimised. Railings would not be appropriate in this context.

It is unlikely that a similar application for these works at any other property along Howitt Road would be

considered to be acceptable in design and conservation area terms.

The rear of the property has already been substantially altered. The two-storey rear projecting wing has been altered with new doors and windows installed at ground floor level and the first floor level extension being altered and render applied. Despite being end of terrace the rear of this property is not visible from the public realm as the narrow pathway leading to the rear of the house abuts a single-storey garage which obscures views through. Whilst the rear lightwell is not traditional a feature of this street, in context of the alterations already carried out at this property, the fact that it is not visible from the public domain and it does not read as a dominant feature on the rear elevation of the building it is considered to be acceptable in design and conservation area terms. The proposed alterations to the fenestration at rear ground floor level are considered to be acceptable. The window and door replacements have been sympathetically designed and are to be constructed of timber which is considered to be an appropriate material given that the property is located within a conservation area.

Trees

It is unlikely that a small Elder tree will survive the excavations for the lightwell. It does not meet the criteria for a TPO. There would be insufficient space at the front to establish a new tree. The hedge will only survive if sufficient care is taken during the construction works. There are no tree or landscape issues raised by the proposals at the rear. The Arboricultural Officer has not requested the imposition of any conditions relating to trees or landscaping.

Recommendation: Grant conditional permission.