

DESIGN STATEMENT

June 2014



6 ANTRIM GROVE, LONDON NW3 4XR
Proposal for New Basement Accommodation

INTRODUCTION

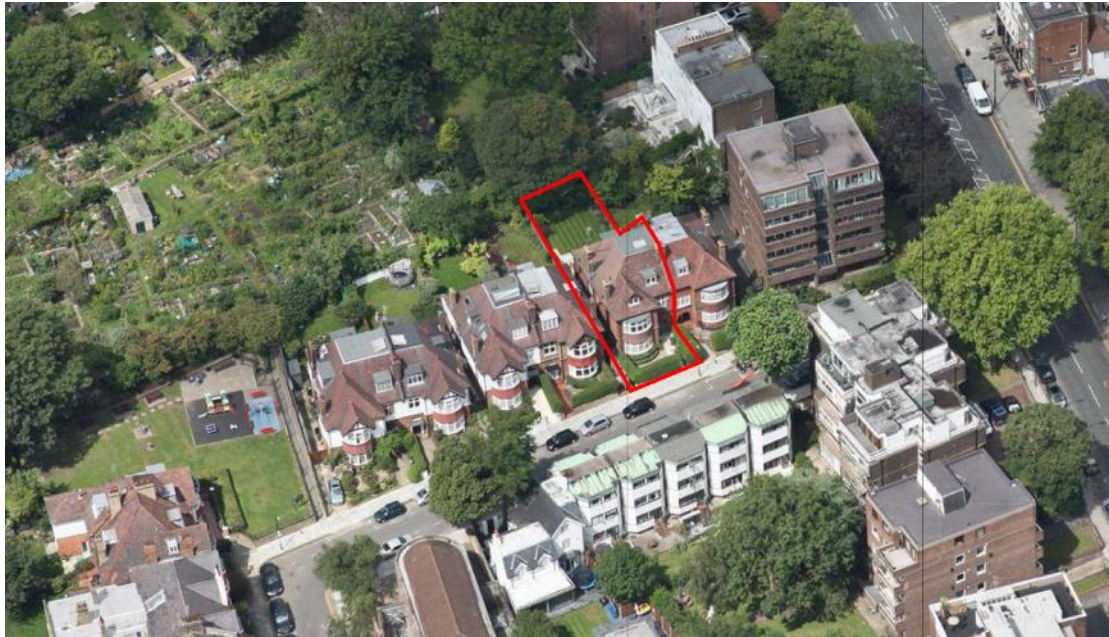
An application is being made for planning consent to provide new accommodation in a new excavated basement storey at 6 Antrim Grove in Belsize Park. This Design Statement is appended to that application to explain the relevant planning considerations in its support.



Aerial photo with plot outlined

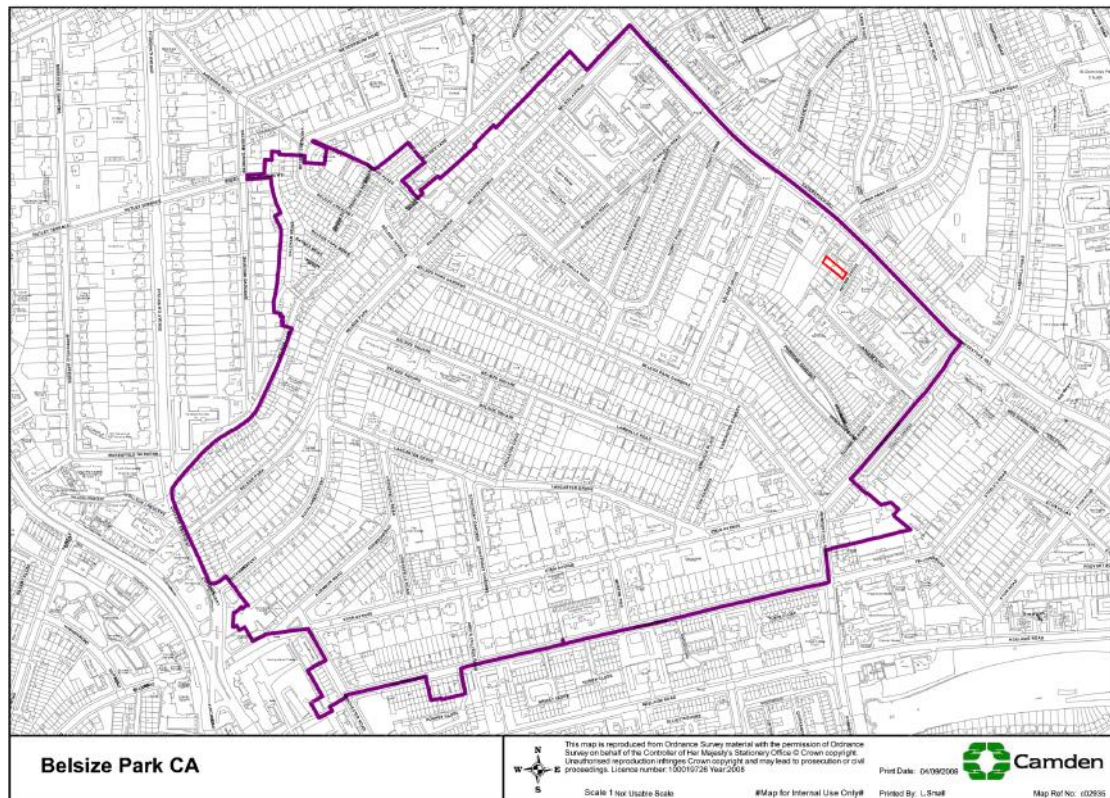
THE SITE

Antrim Grove is a short residential side street branching off the west side of Haverstock Hill which changes its name to Antrim Road as it bends to the South to connect with England's Lane. The short stretch of Antrim Grove is lined with private dwellings while both Antrim Road and Haverstock Hill comprise a mixture of purpose built flats and houses. A terrace of late 20th Century townhouses lines the south side of Antrim Grove while the north side comprises substantial Edwardian semi-detached dwellings. No. 6 is one these latter and its rear garden abuts the rear garden of 131 Haverstock Hill. To the North of this terrace sits a substantial plot of allotments occupying the centre of the block bounded by Belsize Grove and Primrose Gardens. The property provides a modest front garden and access via a shared side alley to a generous rear garden.



Aerial photos of plot

Antrim Grove is located at the eastern boundary of the Belsize Conservation Area, but No. 15 (Antrim Grove) is the only property that is listed. The building has been internally refurbished, works which included a modest glass roofed conservatory extension across the garden face of the property replacing an original single storey wing. The adjoining property, No 4 Antrim Grove, is a group home for adults with learning disabilities run by Camden Council. The adjoining pair to the West, No.'s 8 & 10, have both recently been extended and refurbished over the past few years. These projects included alterations to the roofscapes, single storey rear extensions and new basement accommodation of a similar scope to what is now proposed at No. 6.



Photos of the context



Photos of existing front garden

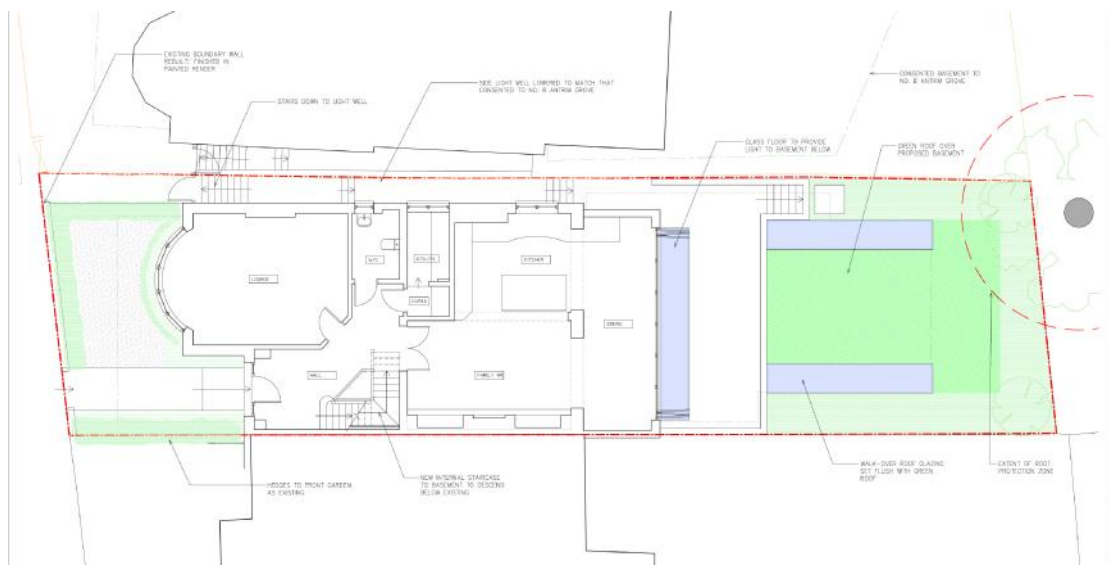
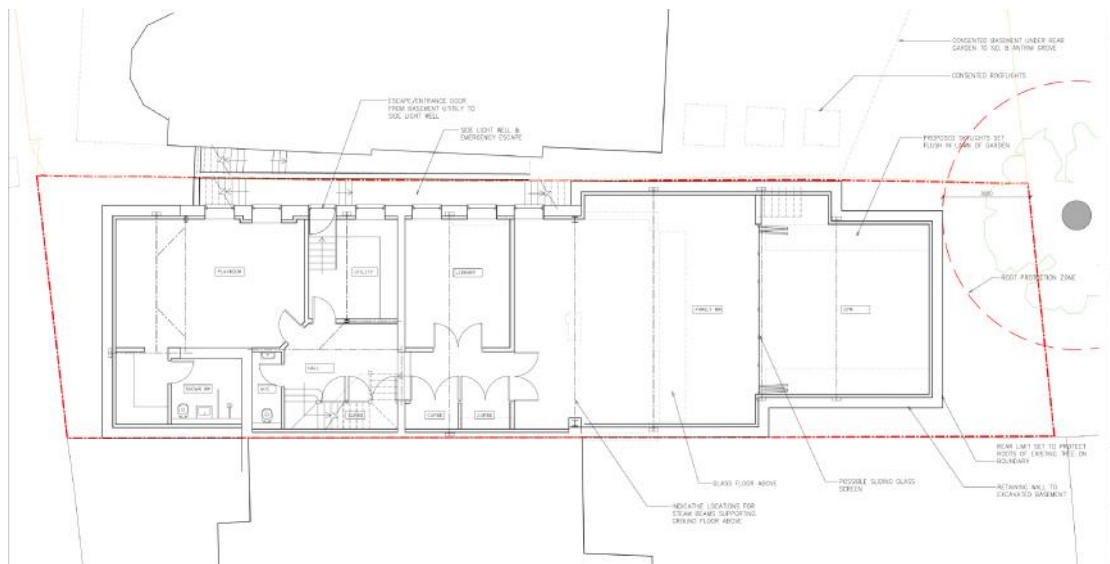


Photos of existing side alley

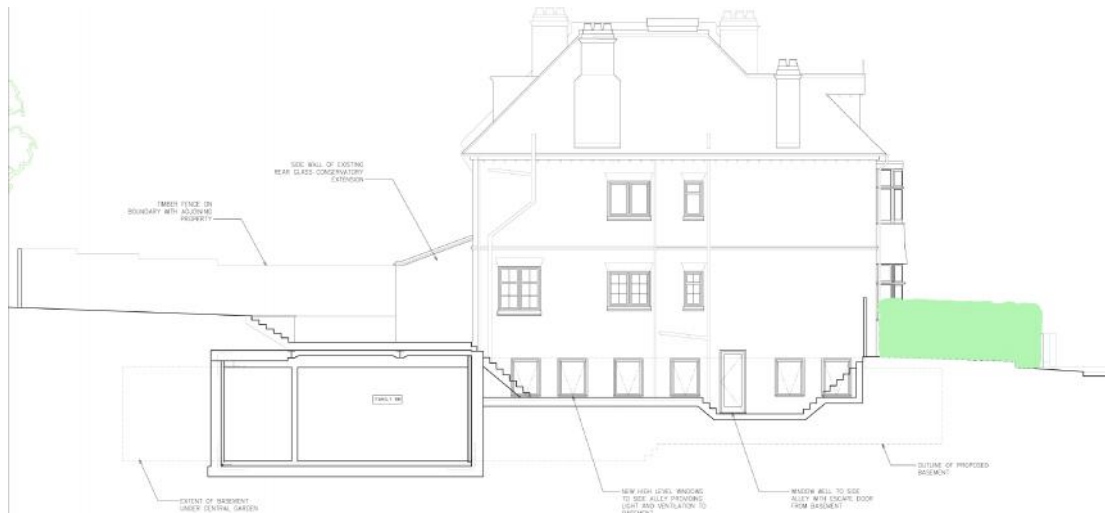
No. 6 Antrim Grove is the left hand of the semi-detached pair and is set back behind a landscaped front garden with depth varying between 5.0-6.0m excluding the main bay window. A side alley connects to the rear garden enclosed by timber fences and approximately 13.5m deep which rises in elevation following the generally rising topography of Haverstock Hill. The rear garden provides a paved patio area 3.4m deep while the rest features a generous lawn area with planted borders. The garden is a typically compact size for the Belsize Conservation Area. There is a mature sycamore tree in the adjoining garden to the rear of the property which sustained substantial loss of limbs in a storm in January 2012. An arboriculturist's report has been appended to the application to address the potential impact on this tree.



Existing garden to rear of property



Proposed basement & ground floor plans



Proposed side elevation

PROPOSALS

Planning consent is being sought to create a new basement level in order to provide a range of accommodation required for a family home. This new space would provide space for a suite of facilities including a playroom, family room and gym, home office and utility room which cannot be accommodated elsewhere in the house.

A similar programme of works has recently been completed on a number of properties in Antrim Grove including No.'s 8 & 10 which readily demonstrate the improvement which can be made to properties while safeguarding the visual coherence and quality of the Belsize Park Conservation Area.

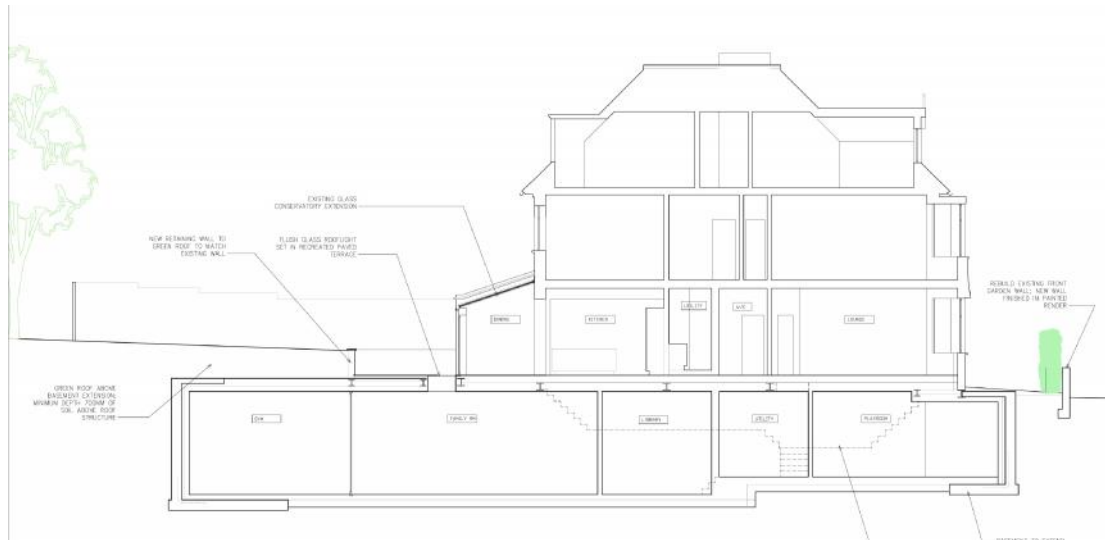
The scheme proposes to excavate below the house and partly under the garden. The roof of the basement would be fully integrated and intensively planted making it effectively invisible within the garden aside from areas of flush fitted glazed roof light. The raised level of the existing lawn to the rear of the house allows the installation of a substantial, deep roof garden with mature planting to a minimum depth of 700mm providing no restriction on the species and size of the new planting. The basement is offset from the shared property boundaries in order to allow full depth planted borders. To the front of the property, a small basement extension would be wholly hidden below the garden. This space is currently bounded by tall hedges and finished with low box plants bordering a central expanse of gravel. This garden design would be faithfully recreated above the partial basement. The front line of the basement would be set well back from the pavement in order to avoid any impact on the boundary and to allow full height hedges to be replanted at the conclusion of the works.

The completed garden after the works would contribute fully to the verdant character of this part of the Belsize Park Conservation Area, and would maintain its amenity value for both this dwelling and the outlook of neighbouring properties.

Natural light will be brought into the basement via discreet openings to a lightwell in the existing side alley as well as glass floor panels in the rear patio and garden. Emergency escape from the basement would be provided along the side alley via a new door from the basement utility room. There would be no loss of garden area or soft landscaping. The lightwell would be wholly hidden from the public realm as well as neighbouring properties and would not materially alter the setting of the existing property and so would not have a visual impact on the character of the Conservation

Area. The excavation is planned to achieve a basement ceiling height identical to the existing ground floor so that the new level would enjoy a bright and spacious feel.

The CAS (Belsize) at BE2 notes that “the creation of new front basement areas will generally be resisted for traffic and design reasons” but does not comment on basement works under an existing building, nor to the side or rear. Since the proposed basement in this application would have no front access nor visual impact on the front of the property it complies with CAC guidelines. Following the aims of CPG1 (Design), the proposal is clearly secondary to the main building and uses high quality materials sympathetic to its architectural language.



Proposed section

PLANNING POLICIES

The scheme has been designed with reference to a number of documents and policies published by the London Borough Camden:

Development Policies

- LDF policy CS5 – Managing the impact of growth and development
- LDF policy CS14 – Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
- LDF policy DP22 – Promoting sustainable design & construction
- LDF policy DP23 – Water
- LDF policy DP24 – Securing high quality design
- LDF policy DP25 – Conserving Camden's Heritage
- LDF policy DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours
- LDF policy DP27 – Basements and Lightwells

Supplementary Planning Documents

- CPG1 – Camden Planning Guidance
- CPG4 – Basements and lightwells
- Conservation Area Statement – Belsize Conservation Area

A number of specialists have been consulted in preparation of this design proposal. A structural engineer has advised on suitable details for excavation and retention of the new basement storey ensuring no damage is caused to adjoining dwellings and gardens. A team of specialist engineers has prepared the Basement Impact Assessment required under new LB Camden guidance outlined in DP27 and CPG4. The BIA is appended to this application and also addresses the principles of policy DP23.

Bchitecture has broad experience working on a number of basement projects for both new build and refurbishment including underpinning, sheet piling and contiguous piling with a short list of experienced and suitably scaled building contractors. Most recently, these have been involved nearby in the Belsize Conservation Area as well as in the Highgate Conservation Area, including consents granted for new basements to No.'s 8 and 10 Antrim Grove. Recent discussion between this contractor and officers from Camden Council have addressed particular methods allowing future works to be more carefully accommodated and programmed to minimise the disruption to neighbours from noisy work, deliveries and removals. These proposals are outlined in a draft Construction Management Plan which forms part of the planning submission.

With reference to DP22, due consideration will be given to determining the most sustainable manner of carrying out the work, disposing of the waste and sourcing new building materials. Excavated clay is a material sought after by landfill sites as it is needed to meet daily cover requirements. Refurbishment of the building will provide the opportunity to upgrade its existing envelope and greatly improve its thermal efficiency. Energy efficient lighting and other environmental systems are a committed part of the design brief.

With reference to DP24, the proposals have been carefully designed using high quality materials matching those of the existing building. Alterations would respond directly to the local context character building on relationships with neighbouring and adjoining dwellings. Preservation and refurbishment of the existing property will

retain its 'embodied' energy while enhancing its environmental performance in order to provide a high quality family home.

DP25 requires development within conservation areas to demonstrate that the character and appearance of the area will be preserved and enhanced. The proposed alterations and extensions will have minimal impact on the externally visible fabric of the host building because the basement has very little external manifestation. The only exposed faces of the basement will be to a side lightwell hidden behind the existing gate and side boundary fence. Therefore, the proposals will not represent a material change from the existing situation. Landscape features in the front and rear gardens will be retained and enhanced.

The proposals have been made with due regard to their potential impact on neighbouring properties. The new accommodation would be wholly underground and the side and rear light wells would not intrude on the privacy or light to these neighbours. The potential structural impact on neighbours will be addressed appropriately through Party Wall Agreements and the underpinning of the host property will be professionally designed by qualified engineers. The BIA has determined that the proposed basement will not impact the local water table or geology to the detriment of either the host or neighbouring properties.

ACCESS STATEMENT

The existing building will be extended to create new accommodation which will be no less accessible than the existing building. The new internal staircase serving the basement storey will be designed to comply with Approved Document M standard. All building works will comply with current Building Regulations and best practice wherever possible.