



Planning, Design and Access Statement

**Proposed works to
Flats 1 & 2, 7 Strathray Gardens, London NW3 4PA**

Prepared by Drawing and Planning Ltd

January 2015

**On behalf of
Mrs Lindsey Bell**

**Regarding a planning application for combining two apartments
into a single residential unit, side extension and conversion of
garage to habitable space at:**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Drawing and Planning have been instructed by Mrs Lindsey Bell to prepare and submit a planning application for the amalgamation of two currently separate self-contained flats and conversion of garage into a single residential use, together with a side extension at first floor level and various other ancillary works. The application site is Flats 1 and 2 on the lower ground and ground floors, respectively, of 7 Strathray Gardens, London NW3 4PA.
- 1.2 At present Flats 1 and 2 form the lower half of a substantial property consisting of a total of four flats including a garage at lower ground level. Under the existing situation the footprint of the house runs the full width of the plot and as such the proposed extensions and alterations will be justified in light of this. Regard will also be had to the planning history of the site.
- 1.3 Situated within a residential area, the proposal seeks to continue the residential use within a converted villa-style building. As such little external construction work for the amalgamation of the flats is involved; the conversion would be sympathetic to the property's character and appearance and, given the established scale of houses along the street, involves minimal additional effects upon the amenities of neighbouring residents.
- 1.4 This 'Planning, Design and Access Statement' is submitted in support of an application and pursuant to Article 8 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. This application should be read in conjunction with the submitted application forms, certificates and drawings in line with the planning submission requirements of London Borough of Camden Council.
- 1.5 Primarily this statement aims to demonstrate that the proposed development endorses Central Government Guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as well as the relevant policies from the London Plan 2011. With reference to London Borough of Camden Council, the proposal complies with the adopted Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Policies documents 2010, and (supplementary) Planning Guidance 2011.

2.0 SITE AND AREA ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Located in the borough of Camden, north London, the application site lies within the Belsize district as shown in the map opposite. The site is near Finchley Road (A41) and Haverstock Hill (A502) which, together with Fitzjohn's Avenue/College Crescent (B511), are main north-south routes to/from central London; also Adelaide Road (B509) is a main local east-west link.
- 2.2 Situated along Strathray Gardens, a residential street running between Eton Avenue to the south and Lancaster Grove to the north, the application site is well placed for the range of civic and commercial facilities along Belsize Lane, Haverstock Hill and Finchley Road. These have local shopping parades with banks, retail outlets, offices and catering establishments; also there are a range

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of primary schools, libraries and open spaces including Primrose Hill in the vicinity.

- 2.3 Built in red and buff brick similar to other houses in the street, the application property is 5 storeys in height. Its frontage features a richly decorative gable, bay windows over 2 floors and an arched front entrance porch. On a high level main hipped roof, there are small pedimented dormer windows, and an oriel window with conical turret-type roof above sits to one side of the main elevation.
- 2.4 To the rear are further bay windows and attic level windows and dormer with flat parapets; externally there is a sizeable garden with associated decking. Overall there is much fine brickwork detailing worthy of retention – the application site forming part of the Belsize Conservation Area. An extract from the LDF Policies map is included under the ‘Local Planning Policy’ section of this report.
- 2.5 Currently the two separate flats, No.s 1 & 2 Strathray Gardens are accessed by the same main entrance as are other flats within the subdivided house. In largely remaining within the confines of the existing building rather than any substantial alterations to the exterior, the works will respect the property’s traditional character and striking appearance.
- 2.6 Public transport links in the surrounding area are excellent; the site being within a few minutes' walk of Finchley Road and South Hampstead railway stations. As regards underground stations, Belsize Park and Swiss Cottage are also nearby. On a north-south axis, Finchley Road and Haverstock Hill are main bus routes with Fitzjohn’s Avenue forming another link. Additionally, from east-west there are bus links along Adelaide Road and Buckland Crescent/Belsize Park.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) document sets out the Government’s most up-to date vision for growth with a presumption in favor of sustainability. The Ministerial Foreword states that: **“sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations”**.
- 3.2 This reflects the three aspects of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental. Economically, demand for development should be met to support growth; socially, development should be considerate and not impact upon others’ enjoyment of properties and areas. Environmental issues include the protection of the natural, built and historic environment.
- 3.3 Paragraph 17 of the NPPF sets out core planning principles. Of particular relevance to the development is that Councils must look to:

“proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth and; conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.”

- 3.4 Paragraph 58 states that local planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure developments optimise the potential of sites in order to accommodate development. Paragraph 59 of the NPPF concerns design noting the following:

“Local planning authorities should consider using design codes where they could help deliver high quality outcomes. However, design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally.”

- 3.5 Chapter 7 is titled ‘Requiring good design’ and sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute to making places better for people.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The London Plan 2011

- 3.6 The London Plan represents the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. Policy 7.2 is entitled ‘An Inclusive Environment’ and stipulates that:

“applicants for planning permission should demonstrate their commitment to achieving high quality inclusive design, how their proposals ensure an accessible environment, how they have engaged with users (including for example organisations of disabled and older people) and the processes used to achieve these.”

- 3.7 Policy 7.4 is entitled Local Character and under paragraph 7.14 of the document states:

“The physical character of a place can help reinforce a sense of meaning and civility – through the layout of buildings and streets, the natural and man-made landscape, the density of development and the mix of land uses. In some cases, the character is well preserved and clear. In others, it is undefined or compromised by unsympathetic development. Through characterisation studies, existing character can be identified and valued, and used to inform a strategy for improving the place.”

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3.8 Policy 7.6B states that buildings and structures should not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential buildings, in relation to privacy and overshadowing.

3.9 Policy 7.9 'Heritage Assets and Archaeology' points out that:

“Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.”

3.10 Paragraph 7.31 makes reference to Conservation Areas, stating that they make a significant contribution to local character and should be protected from inappropriate development that is not sympathetic in terms of scale, materials, details and form. Development that affects the setting of listed buildings or conservation areas should be of the highest quality of architecture and design, and respond positively to local context and character outlined in the policies above.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Local Development Framework Core Strategy Policies (2010)

3.11 Camden's Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Policies documents were adopted in 2010 and provide the main development guidance for the Borough. Policy CS5 'Managing the Impact of Change' applies due to the provisions outlined below:

“The Council will manage the impact of growth and development...with particular consideration given to:

a) providing uses that meet the needs of Camden's population and contribute to the borough's London-wide role;

b) providing the infrastructure and facilities needed to support Camden's population and those who work in and visit the borough;

c) providing sustainable buildings and spaces of the highest quality; and

d) protecting and enhancing our environment and heritage and the amenity and quality of life of local communities.

The Council will protect the amenity of Camden's residents and those working in and visiting the borough by:

e) making sure that the impact of developments on their occupiers and neighbours is fully considered;

f) seeking to ensure development contributes towards strong and successful communities by balancing the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities; and

g) requiring mitigation measures where necessary”

3.12 Policy CS6 'Providing quality homes' has among its aims various criteria relating to the satisfactory provision of housing within the borough. These include:

“c) supporting the supply of additional student housing, bedsits and other housing with shared facilities providing this does not prejudice the Council's ability to meet the target for the supply of additional self-contained homes, the balance of uses in the area; and the quality of residential amenity or the character of the surrounding area;

d) minimising the net loss of existing homes;

e) regarding housing as the priority land-use of Camden's Local Development Framework.

The Council will aim to secure high quality affordable housing available for Camden households that are unable to access market housing by:...

f) seeking to ensure that 50% of the borough-wide target for additional self-contained homes is provided as affordable housing;

g) seeking to negotiate a contribution from specific proposals on the basis of:

- the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing under the specific circumstances of the site, including the financial viability of the development,

- an affordable housing target of 50% of the total addition to housing floorspace, and

- guidelines of 60% social rented housing and 40% intermediate affordable housing;

h) minimising the net loss of affordable housing...

The Council will aim to minimise social polarisation and create mixed and inclusive communities across Camden by:

j) seeking a diverse range of housing products in the market and affordable sectors to provide a range of homes accessible across the spectrum of household incomes;

k) seeking a range of self-contained homes of different sizes to meet the Council's identified dwelling-size priorities;

l) seeking a variety of housing types suitable for different groups, including families, people with mobility difficulties, older people, homeless people and vulnerable people...”.

3.13 Policy CS14 'Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage' is applicable as Strathray Gardens falls within the Belsize Conservation Area as defined by the Policies Map. In this situation:

“The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;

b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;

c) promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces;

d) seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible;

e) protecting important views of St Paul's Cathedral and the Palace of Westminster from sites inside and outside the borough and protecting important local views."

Local Development Framework Development Policies (2010)

3.14 Further to the Core Strategy, Camden Council also provides detailed planning direction in the form of the Development Policies document. Policy DP24 'Securing high quality design' reads as follows:

"The Council will require all developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;

b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;

c) the quality of materials to be used;

d) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;

e) the appropriate location for building services equipment;

f) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;

g) the provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;

h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and

i) accessibility."

3.15 Policy DP25 'Conserving Camden's heritage' centres around developments within areas of designated conservation importance such as the application site (which lies within Belsize Conservation Area) as defined by the Policies Map and states the following:

"In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:

a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;

b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;

c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character or appearance of the conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;

d) not permit development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that conservation area; and

e) preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a conservation area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage."

3.16 Policy DP26 'Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours' seeks to protect amenities of properties surrounding development proposals and reads as follows:

"The Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity. The factors we will consider include:

- a) visual privacy and overlooking;***
- b) overshadowing and outlook;***
- c) sunlight, daylight and artificial light levels;***
- d) noise and vibration levels;***
- e) odour, fumes and dust;***
- f) microclimate;***
- g) the inclusion of appropriate attenuation measures.***

We will also require developments to provide:

- h) an acceptable standard of accommodation in terms of internal arrangements, dwelling and room sizes and amenity space;***
- i) facilities for the storage, recycling and disposal of waste;***
- j) facilities for bicycle storage; and***
- k) outdoor space for private or communal amenity space, wherever practical."***

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) (2011)

CPG1 – Design; CP2 Housing and CPG6 – Amenity

3.17 These documents are also material to planning applications in Camden as they inform appearance and character of developments and highlight good practice to follow in any alteration of existing housing. CPG1 – Design (updated September 2014) relates to Core Strategy Policy CS14 and Development Policies DP24 referred to above.

3.18 Within Chapter 2: Design excellence, reference is made within para 2.10 to how design should:

- ***ensure buildings not significantly overshadow existing/proposed outdoor spaces***
- ***consider the extent to which development may overlook the windows or private garden of another dwelling***
- ***contributions to the character of certain parts of the borough [and]***
- ***provide visual interest.***

3.19 Specific reference is made to buildings within conservation areas in Chapter 3: Heritage, whose key messages include the below:

"We will only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area".

3.20 Key messages within Chapter 4 include the following:

- ***alterations should always take onto account the character and design of the existing building***

- **windows, doors and materials should complement the existing building**

3.21 Para 4.16 states that with specific regard to side extensions, these should:

- **be no taller than the porch; and**
- **set back from the main building.**

3.22 CPG2 – Housing (updated September 2013) refers to development involving net loss of homes (Chapter 6) in relation to which para 6.4 specifies: **“The Council does not generally seek to resist schemes combining dwellings where they involve loss of a single home”**. It is emphasised that it is only the bottom floors of this property that are affected by such a combination, and the upper storeys will remain as separate apartments.

3.23 CPG 6 – Amenity identifies sensitive areas as regards sunlight, outlook and privacy and advises various design measures to reduce risk of overshadowing and overlooking, such as restricting the scale of development, installing obscure glazing and screening by walls or fencing.

Conservation Area Statement No 9: Belsize – 2002

3.24 This document divides the Belsize Conservation Area into sub-areas and refers to Strathray Gardens. This forms part of the Eton Avenue area which was developed by Eton College in the late 19th century as outlined by the statement:

“Eton Avenue and Strathray Gardens are relatively quiet, straight residential roads of large, detached red brick houses. They were developed over a period of approximately fifteen to twenty years starting in 1885 with much of the development at the eastern end of the area being undertaken by William Willett and Son. The mature trees that line the streets are a defining characteristic of this area, filtering views of the frontages and providing enclosure to the street. These houses are predominantly of Queen Anne style, but with groups of buildings showing some Arts and Crafts influences. However, as is typical of the period there are a variety of domestic revival influences. The predominant materials are red brick, red clay tiles and tile hanging. These are contrasted with a variety of materials including London stock brick on upper floors, roughcast render and half-timbering to give visual interest. The use of decorative terracotta is also evident. Despite the differences in the elevational treatment along the street there are a number of recurrent themes: asymmetrical composition of the elevations, canted and curved bays, large slab chimneys, gables and white-painted timber casement and sash windows sub-divided by glazing bars into smaller panes”.

3.25 Strathray Gardens is highlighted as a **“...particularly consistent street with identical walling and gate piers...”** and, despite a few exceptions **“...all of the buildings along the street contribute to the character...”**. No 7 Strathray Gardens is included within the Statement as one of the area’s **“...unlisted**

buildings which make a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area....”.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 The following describes the most recent planning history on this site:

2007/2053/P

Enlargement and conversion of existing garage to habitable space and erection of a new first floor level above to provide additional space to the upper ground floor flat and alterations to the rear staircase – Granted with conditions 19/04/2007

2007/0740/P

Enlargement and conversion of existing garage to habitable space and erection of a new first floor level to provide additional space to the upper ground floor flat – Withdrawn 21/02/2007

TPD/1140/855

Conversion of 7 Strathray Gardens, NW3 into three 3-roomed flats and one 4-roomed flat (one per floor) – Granted with conditions 29/05/1963

4.2 The most relevant planning history on the site is the enlargement and conversion of the existing garage to habitable space and the erection of a new first floor level above to provide additional space to the upper ground floor flat and alterations approved in 2007 but now lapsed. The current scheme bears some similarities to the previously approved scheme in that a first floor side extension is also proposed; the details of the proposal and its compliance with the Council's relevant policies are discussed below.

5.0 APPRAISAL

Introduction

5.1 This application is for conversion of two currently separate and subdivided residential units into one larger apartment, reflecting to some extent the property's original single use. As such, the bulk of the works are contained within the current building's footprint and reintroduce a single use of the ground and lower ground floors within a substantially unaltered external structure and design.

Compliance with policies

5.2 In replacing a smaller pair of subdivided residential apartments with a larger single unit, there are limited external alterations other than those approved in 2007. Having reviewed the policies we note that there are only small changes in the Council's design policy for side extensions in conservation areas. In line with CPG1 (Design), the proposed side extension is no taller than the existing porch and is set well back from the main building. Whilst the side extension would be

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built up to the shared boundary with the neighbouring property, the scheme retains the gap between the detached buildings and hence respects this part of the conservation area. Original features of the application property including a shared hallway for upper and lower ground floors, traditional brickwork and window patterns are restored or retained.

- 5.3 Along the rear, the proposal would involve slight increase to the decked area by 0.6m. This modest increase would not result in any significant overlooking over onto the neighbouring properties, over and above the existing situation and would therefore be acceptable in policy terms. The modest infill of the southernmost rear corner would be a sympathetic addition to the original property and would not harm any neighbouring properties.

Design and character

- 5.4 The previous scheme consisted of converting the lower ground floor into habitable accommodation, extending this slightly and building another extension directly above this housing a study/bedroom. The current scheme is similar to the approved design in that a ground floor side extension above the lower ground garage is proposed – the garage will also be converted into habitable accommodation. The converted garage will be extended slightly to allow more room at this level. A small extension ‘squaring off’ the southern-most rear corner of the property is proposed. Given the building’s location within the defined Belsize Conservation Area, it is emphasised that the change is relatively minor in nature with minimal effect upon exterior character and appearance.
- 5.5 In keeping with the building’s original Victorian character, few external changes are involved and those that are made are sympathetic e.g. use of traditional sash windows. The north side elevation extension is set back from the main building, sits atop a basement level garage and projects 3.1 metres from the rear building line as per the existing. In form, it has a shallow hipped roof structure which mirrors other examples on the street. Both this and the decking would utilise materials that match those of the existing house and there would be less glazing facing the neighbouring house.

Access

- 5.6 The proposal enables two flats to become a single flat across two floors, with full and free access throughout the single residential property. The facility is immediately served by public transport and has good potential for pedestrian access. Parking provision remains in the form of the front hard standing and controlled on-street spaces, despite loss of the garage space.

Use

- 5.7 The development involves extension of a single residential use across two floors more closely aligned to the property’s original purpose as a single villa-style dwelling. No new basement excavation is necessary (as advised by the Conservation Area Statement, p39); conversion of the garage involving creation of a new stairwell and an adapted new front doorway at this level.

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- 5.8 In terms of internal layout, the proposal is for the existing upper ground floor flat (Flat No 2 – which has 2 bedrooms, kitchen and living room) to have the main reception rooms, including the playroom within the new side extension. The lower ground floor flat (Flat No 1 – which currently has 2 bedrooms) would then be converted mainly into 5 bedrooms and linked private bathrooms.

Amount and Scale of Development

- 5.9 The amount of development proposed would not be significantly more than that approved in 2007. In this regard the scheme is by no means an ‘overdevelopment’ of the site and rather, is a sympathetic and proportionate addition to the main building and surrounding conservation area.
- 5.10 As specified within CPG1 – Design, the small side extension on the north side elevation is no taller than the front porch; the minimal height having weighed in favour of the previous extension application approved in 2007. The converted garage would be extended forwards by 2.7m at lower ground level and 2.2m at ground floor level. Consequently it is not too bulky and would not lead to overshadowing as there would be a sufficient gap between it and the adjacent dwelling.

Landscaping

- 5.11 Within an extensive plot, the development retains existing landscape features and amenity space including the mature trees and hedges that are so integral to the Conservation Area’s character and appearance.

Community Safety

- 5.12 Extensions and alterations at ground and lower ground floor levels with front, rear and side windows (including those above the converted garage) offer greater potential for natural surveillance.

Environmental Sustainability

- 5.13 Contained largely within an existing built footprint, the development makes highly efficient use of the site. In prioritising residential use in the garage conversion, the proposal discourages car use and both occupiers and visitors can continue to access the property by foot, bicycle and nearby public transport links.

Movement

- 5.14 Internal access is improved within the house for all users including vulnerable groups with the ground floor level benefiting from a level decked area at the rear garden elevation. At lower ground floor level, the sloping driveway allows access to the apartment by a new independent front entrance replacing the garage door, enabling greater freedom for those with mobility issues.
- 5.15 As a development is within walking distances of the bulk of main business and commercial premises within the Belsize area of Camden (such as Belsize

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Avenue, Finchley Road and Haverstock Hill), it is in a highly sustainable location. The site is in close proximity to bus and rail links including bus routes along Finchley Road and Haverstock Hill to central London and mainline stations at Hampstead South.

Cycle storage

- 5.16 There is room for cycle storage within the secure hard standing area to the front of the property accessible from the public highway.

Surface water run-off

- 5.17 All surface water run-offs are into existing systems and no additional run-off will occur.

Waste (storage of non-recyclable and recyclable household waste)

- 5.18 Adequate storage space for waste is provided with already highly organised procedures in place for pre-sorting recyclable waste before collection by the local authority in suitable storage bins.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of 2 separate flats into a single residential unit. This more closely approximates with the property's original use and character as one, substantial villa-style dwelling. It is therefore considered that the works complement the area's residential character and appearance without affecting its conservation value.
- 6.2 This proposal would standardise the use of the entire property as a single planning unit thus offering family sized accommodation and therefore greater choice of dwelling types in this particular area. Also the proposal would be of sympathetic scale, closely matching the existing house in terms of materials and appearance. No significant adverse effects would be caused to neighbouring amenities in terms of light, overshadowing or privacy due to the size of the plot and presence of high boundary walls as well as mature trees and hedges.
- 6.3 For the reasons outlined within this statement, it is considered that the relevant policy requirements of the adopted Camden Council Local Development Framework are satisfied in this case. It is therefore respectfully requested that the Council give the application favourable consideration.