

Design and Access Statement And Heritage Statement

Upper Maisonette 91 Belsize Lane NW3

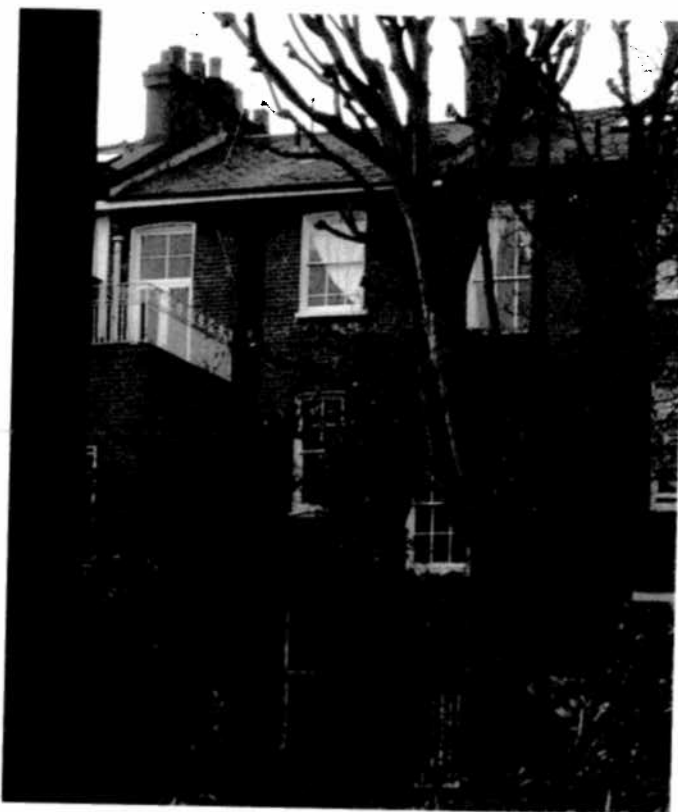
April 2015

1.1 PLANNING PROPOSAL

This is a Planning and Listed Building Application for a modification to the rear elevation of 91 Belsize Lane and some internal changes. We have established that this is a mid 19C house that was officially converted into 2 separate dwellings in the 1970's.

We propose the following changes:

- new dormer window to the rear of the main roof
- new roof lights to the rear of the main roof
- replacement railings to the existing rear balcony
- new opening between front and back room on the first floor and a new kitchen
- top floor bathroom relocated – top floor room to be used as a bedroom



Photograph 1 - Rear Elevation of 91 Belsize Lane

1.2 HISTORY OF THE AREA

Belsize Lane is the oldest road in the area and can be seen on the following page on a map of 1829. At this time the Finchley Road and Swiss Cottage had not been built and the new suburb known as Belsize Park had not been developed.



Photograph 2 – Stucco terrace - 91 Belsize Lane is the second house from the end

Belsize House dating back to the 14 C and now demolished gives its name to the area. Belsize Village, a mid-Victorian creation, is now located on an intersection half way down Belsize Lane. This was the location of a farm house, formal gardens and a toll gate.

The gardens of Belsize House had a brief spell as pleasure gardens but from 1808 the whole of the Belsize estate lands (including the gardens) were divided up into smaller estates. These dictated the street layouts when the unplanned residential development began in the 1850's.

Most of the main roads of Belsize Park were built by 1866 and populated by the professional middle-classes as London rapidly expanded.



Drawing 1 - Plan from 1829 showing Belsize Lane running southwest from Hampstead. Finchley Road, Swiss Cottage and the new Belsize Park Area is yet to be developed.

1.3 LISTING

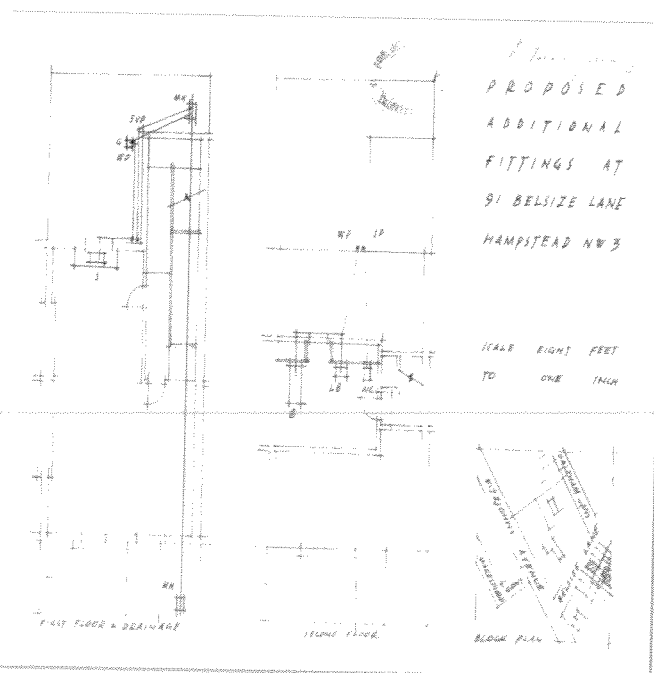
The terrace containing 79-93 Belsize Lane was Grade II listed in 1974 (ref. 1244561). Number 91 Belsize Lane is located close to the end of this very fine mid 19C terrace of 8 houses.

The listing description is as follows:

"Terrace of 8 houses. Mid C19. Stucco. Slated roofs with projecting eaves and brick slab chimney-stacks to party walls. 3-storeys and basements. 2 windows each. Round arched recessed entrances with rosette patterned architraves; doorways with pilaster-jambs carrying cornice heads, overlights and part glazed paneled doors approached by steps with cast-iron railings. Architraved sashes, most upper floors with margin glazing. Ground floor sashes have rosette-patterned architraves, console-bracketed cornices and cast-iron window guards; 1st floor, architraved sashes with console-bracketed segmental pediments, having foliated tympani, and linked by continuous cast-iron balconies; 2nd floor, architraved sashes with lugged sills and flanked by enriched eaves brackets. INTERIORS: not inspected."

The wording of the listing above also makes no mention of the rear elevation which is described in the next section. It does not refer to the room in the roof space which appears to be original.

1.4 ARRANGEMENT OF THE HOUSE AND MODIFICATIONS



Drawing 2 - Drainage Records from 1954

The rear elevation of the terrace has no stucco. The elaborate decoration and eaves brackets are also missing. The walls are yellow stock brickwork with arches above sliding sash windows or double doors.

There are original 3-storey extension structures tagged onto the backs with more recently added double doors and roof terraces.

At roof level there are an assortment of roof lights, conservation roof lights and dormer structures (81, 83 and 85).

Number 91 is arranged as an upper maisonette (top 2 floors and roof space) and a lower maisonette (ground and lower ground floors). We have yet to establish exactly when this formal conversion took place although it is likely to have been in the 1970's. There is evidence in the records that by the 1950's the houses were in multiple occupation. They were owned by the Church Commissioners for England.

The drainage records show the installation of a new kitchen sink on the first floor and a new bathroom in the roof space in 1954. This was a period when the area was characterized by a proliferation of bedsit accommodation and these additions seem to indicate a subdivision of the house.

Since the 1970's the area has been re-inhabited by the upwardly mobile middle classes. Some of these have spent a lot of money restoring and improving these once dilapidated properties. The freehold ownership has been taken on by a not-for-profit trust.

The maisonette is arranged on 3 floors. The kitchen and living room are on the first floor, there are 3 bedrooms on the second floor and a bathroom in the roof space. The original plaster and timber mouldings and other details are quite ornate in what would have been the drawing room and adjacent rear room. Further up the house the original decorative features become much less ornate.

1.5 BRIEF

The owners of this residence are very keen to upgrade and improve the property. They would like to form a link between the kitchen and the large living room on the lowest floor. The bedrooms are remote from the single bathroom. A much better arrangement would be to use the top floor as a bedroom with en-suite facilities and move the main bathroom downstairs next to the remaining 2 bedrooms. In order to make the top floor function as a pleasant bedroom, a new dormer window is proposed.

Other items which will require listed building approval are small roof lights, replacement railings and a number of internal alterations.

1.6 PLANNING INCLUDING CONSULTATION

A planning enquiry was made in June 2014 by the owner, Mr George Everett. The planner was Alex Dougall who gave a written response dated 08/07/14.

The reference for the enquiry is 2014/3661/PRE. We have included the response letter in full in this report as it covers all the planning issues relating to the proposed dormer window (following 2 pages).

Date: 08/07/14
Your ref: N/A
Our ref: 2014/3661/PRE
Contact: Alex McDougall
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Dear Mr Everett,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Re: 91 Belsize Lane, London, NW3 5AU

Thank you for your enquiry received on the 2nd June 2014, regarding the proposed rear dormer roof extension.

The site is currently occupied by a 3 storey plus semi-basement mid-terrace building. The site is located within the Belsize Park Conservation Area. The building is listed as making a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Principle of Proposal

Camden Planning Guidance 1 – Design (CPG1) sets out when roof extensions are likely to be considered acceptable in principle. The guidance states that roof extensions and alterations, which change the shape and form of the roof, can have a harmful impact on the Conservation Area and are unlikely to be acceptable where:

- It would be detrimental to the form and character of the existing building
- The property forms part of a group or terrace which remains largely, but not completely unimpaired
- The property forms part of a symmetrical composition, the balance of which would be upset
- The roof is prominent, particularly in long views

There are rear roof extensions, of varying styles, at Nos. 81, 83 & 85. In addition, the Belsize Conservation Area Statement concedes that rear roof extensions have become part of the prevailing character of the area and as such further sensitively design extensions are likely to be considered acceptable. In this case it is considered that there is a precedent for rear roof extension on the row of terraces of which the building is a part. However, this is subject to the detailed design of the proposal and its impact on the amenity of adjoining properties.

Design

The proposal as submitted would mimic an existing rear roof extension at No. 85 Belsize Lane. The proposal is not considered to be precedent for the proposal for the following reasons:

- Council records indicate that this roof extension, as originally built, did not have planning permission.
- The adjoining roof extension was built prior to Council's existing planning controls that do not allow for full width dormers.
- The adjoining roof extension is only a single example in a terrace of 8 properties. As such it is not considered to constitute the character of the terrace or the wider conservation area.
- The Conservation Area Character Appraisal notes that several of the existing rear roof extensions detract from the character of the area.

However, it is considered that there is precedent for a rear roof extension that is in keeping with the appearance of the building and Council's design policies. CPG1 paragraphs 5.11 - 5.13 provides guidance on dormer roof extensions. Rear roof extensions should be set down at least 0.5m from the ridge of the roof, 0.5m up from eaves and generally be in keeping with the scale of the building. In this case it is considered that a dormer should be no more than half the width of the roof in which it is set. It may also be possible to have two smaller dormers similar to those at No.81. The dormer should be finished in materials that match the existing building (i.e. slate roof, and timber sash windows). Notation should be included on the plans to this effect. There may be some scope to raise the dormer on the roof surface if needed to provide adequate internal headroom.

Amenity of Neighbouring Properties

Due to the orientation of the site it is unlikely that a rear dormer would have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of adjoining properties by way of overshadowing, loss of outlook, sense of enclosure or the like. With regard to privacy, it is not uncommon for dormer windows to look out across the rear garden of the subject building. There is considered to be adequate separation between the subject building and the dwellings adjoining to the rear. As such the proposal is not considered likely to have an unacceptable impact on the privacy of adjoining properties.

Conclusion

As such the proposal is likely to be considered acceptable in principle, but subject to design amendments, consultation and a site visit. Please note that the information contained in this letter represents an officer's opinion and is without prejudice to further consideration of this matter by the Development Control section or to the Council's formal decision. I trust this information is of assistance. Should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on 020 7974 2053.

Yours sincerely,

Alex McDougall
Planning Officer – West Area Team

1.7 THE DESIGN, MATERIALS AND AMENITY

The Main Roof and the Top Floor

Having discussed the possibility of a dormer window with the planners in 2014 we are proposing a structure which will be clad in high quality lead-work and have timber windows. The lead finish will fit in very well with the existing slate pitched roof. We will ensure that the main roof is not dominated by the addition. The 2 small conservation roof-lights will also be discreet.

Having first thought of using a small black aluminium ogee gutter we have decided to go with a small softwood moulding with lead drip. This is a simple elegant detail which should avoid costly maintenance.

In line with the comments made in the previous planning letter and the CPG1 guidance we have ensured that the dormer is no more than half the width of the main roof. It is set well back from the eaves but we have only been able to achieve a 0.25m dimension between the top of the dormer and the main ridge (because of restricted head height). The planning letter mentions "there may be some scope to raise the dormer on the roof surface if needed to provide adequate internal headroom".

The dormer window is well above the next door properties and is set well back. There will therefore be no overlooking issues regarding surrounding gardens.

The First Floor – Doors and new Kitchen

We propose to form a link between the 2 principle rooms on this floor. A pair of "1850's style" panelled doors with parliament hinges will be installed. All architrave details will be taken from the existing originals.

At present, the kitchen is L-shaped and runs across the south facing window cutting across the bottom panes. The new kitchen will simply run down the party wall with additional units in the corners of the opposite wall. This will allow the dining table to be located next to the restored south facing window.

The Second Floor – The Relocated Bathroom and walk-in wardrobe

The new bathroom will be located in a narrow bedroom at the front of the house. The second bedroom at the front is very long. You will see from the plan that a walk in wardrobe can be constructed to serve the main rear bedroom without too much disruption to the original plan.

The Balcony Railings

Included in this application is a proposal to replace the 1970's style lightweight railings on the rear balcony. In their place we propose black cast iron railings which will exactly match the originals on the front of the building.