

Reasons

The effect on the conservation area

18. The area subject of the Belsize Conservation Area was developed in the late 19th Century. Despite various alterations to the built environment that have been made since, it is still characterised by attractive Victorian buildings that reflect that period through their materials, scale and detailing, and these contribute to its significance as a heritage asset.
19. According to a date stone on its front elevation, 45 Lancaster Grove was built in the 1880s, and, although now sub-divided to flats, it was no doubt originally a large, grand single dwelling. Before the works subject of Appeal B were undertaken, any external alterations that had been made to the property had generally been sympathetic to its original character and appearance. It is mainly of a red brick finish with strong detailing around the windows, doors, corners and eaves. It also displays notable horizontal brick detail across the principal elevations and its windows, doors and dormer windows are of designs that reflect its age. For these reasons the building makes a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area. On the rear it had a bay window. That was to be retained as an external feature by the 'L' shaped arrangement of the schemes subject of the 2005 and 2007 permissions and was also to be unaffected by the 2008 scheme, but it has now been substantially incorporated into the 'as built' extension. To my mind the detailing and scale of this bay means it would have further enhanced the property's contribution to the significance of the historic surroundings. //
20. The conservation area is most strongly appreciated from the streets, as they comprise the public domain and allow views of the ornately detailed and relatively unaltered front elevations of the original properties. The rear of the block containing the appeal site has not been highlighted as valuable by the Council in the BCAS and it is not generally open to public view. However, although subject to greater alteration over the years the buildings' rear elevations still contain much detailing that reflects their status and origins. Moreover, the verdant and secluded nature of the garden areas provides a tranquil domestic setting for the buildings that complements their residential character. Therefore, the rear of the appeal property and its adjoining neighbours also makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. //
21. The Appeal A scheme would project some 10m from the main rear elevation and extend across much of the width of the building. It would be of a contemporary design with a modern angular form and its elevations would be finished in a white render.
22. I raise no objections in principle to contemporary additions to strident Victorian properties. However, clearly this does not mean all such additions would be acceptable. Rather they would still need to respect the existing development around. Such an approach accords with the Council's guidance in the BCAS. //
23. The western elevation of the scheme would run off the bay leaving just one canted side face and some of the parapet visible externally. In my opinion this would be a cumbersome join and would mean the proposal related poorly to the architectural detailing of the main building. The extension would be of a significant scale and mass, and would sever the original house from its garden. Furthermore, its gable, which would be some 7m from the main rear elevation,