

*Aerial: Belsize Park Gardens and surrounding area. No. 4 highlighted in red)*



**Flat 2, 4 Belsize Park Gardens**

**London NW5 4LD**

Planning Submission

September 2015



**SQUARE FEET ARCHITECTS**

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# Introduction

Square Feet Architects have been appointed by our client to prepare a Planning application for extending their family home, a duplex apartment within a four-storey Victorian terraced property. The property is situated within the Belsize conservation area, but it is not listed.

## Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to detail the extent of the proposals we are seeking planning permission for, and to demonstrate our understanding and fulfilment of the Council's planning policies in relation to this proposal.

## Drawings

All drawings reproduced in this report are Not To Scale. For scaled drawings please see Planning Application set.

## Recent Planning History

Case No: 2007/5130/P Submitted: 18/10/2007

Status: Granted

Change of use of two self-contained flats at lower ground and ground floor levels to create a single self-contained maisonette, plus erection of bay window to side elevation at lower ground level, erection of staircase to the rear and alterations to windows and doors.

Case No: 9491170 Submitted: 02/08/1994

Status: Agree to remove & replace trees

Seeking permission to fell a Birch in the front garden because it is causing damage to boundary wall. Also fell an Ash in the front garden because it is causing chronic cracking to steps to front door. Both trees to be replaced with new trees.

# Contents

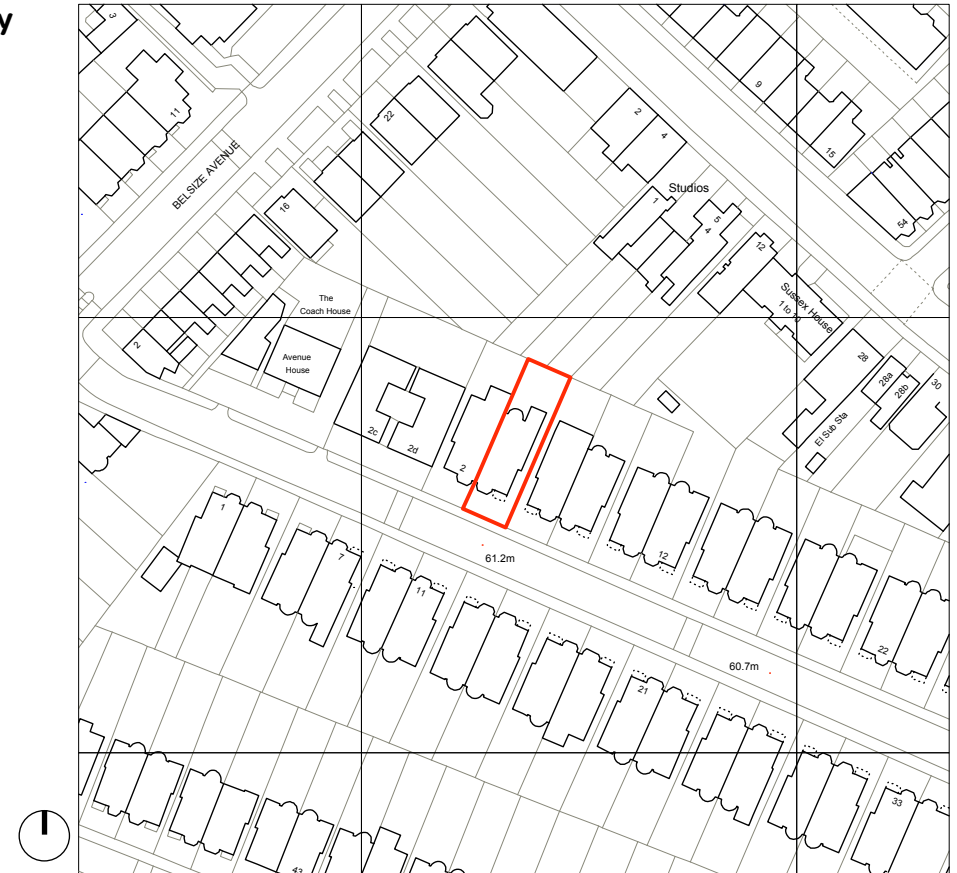
## 1.0 Context + Planning Policy

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Location Plan. No.5 (highlighted in red) NTS



# 1.0 Context

## 1.1 Existing site

The house is at the north-west end of Belsize Park Gardens, close to the junction with Belsize Avenue. The street is characterised by substantial paired four-storey semi-detached villas. They were built between 1850 and 1870, predominantly by Daniel Tidey. Most of the houses now have converted attic storeys, making five storeys in total.

The properties are uniformly fronted in painted stucco, with side and rear elevations in yellow London stock. This gives the street a consistent and grand character, although sadly many elements of architectural detail such as mouldings, railings and other architectural details have been lost from individual properties.

Forward facing dormers and balconies at roof level are a particular feature of the street.

Many of the houses have been subdivided into apartments. This includes no. 4, although the number of units has recently been reduced following a successful 2007 planning application to combine lower ground and upper ground apartments into a single larger duplex apartment.

The existing building includes an original balcony with cast-iron balustrading at upper ground level overlooking the rear garden. There is also a single storey timber framed glazed conservatory structure at lower ground floor level. This is labelled as existing on the 2007 drawings; it is not clear when it was built.





## 1.2 Planning Policy

Camden's various planning policies wish to promote respect for local character in the design of all buildings and ensure that they are in harmony with their settings - aiming to help improve the local area through good design. This property has scope to be improved and in turn to enhance the area.

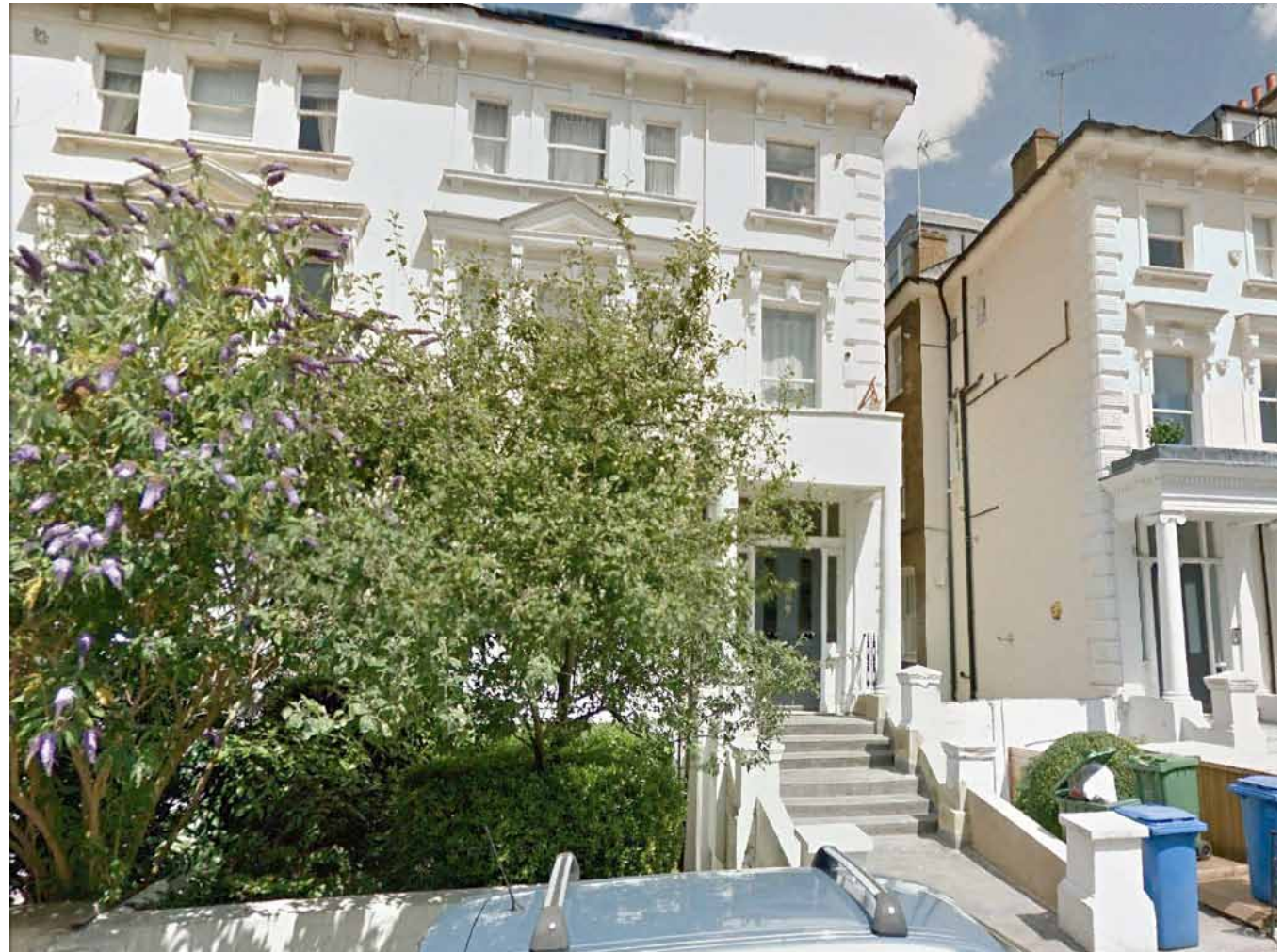
DP24 requires any alterations to be carried out after careful consideration of the host building's scale, its context, and the quality of materials used; CS14 strives to achieve the dual role of providing a high quality of life for the building's users while preserving the conservation heritage of the building and area. Our proposal aims to address all these issues, adapting the building to suit the current property owner's needs whilst maintaining the character of the conservation area.

It is noted that whilst respect for local design characteristics should remain at the forefront of design considerations it need not mean slavish replicas with no element of originality.

## 1.3 Existing Property

Flat 2, 4 Belsize Park Gardens is in use as a family sized residential apartment arranged over two floors. The main living accommodation is located on the upper ground floor with access to the rear garden via an internal staircase to lower ground level. The bedrooms are located on the lower ground floor.

The total floor area of the apartment is approximately 235m<sup>2</sup>, which includes the existing glazed conservatory to the rear of the property. The house benefits from sole access to the rear garden. There are four bedrooms although two are restricted in size (less than 2.5 metres in one direction).



*Belsize Park Gardens street scene*

## 2.0 Proposal

### Design

The apartment will remain in use by the property owners and their family. The proposals are focused on improving the use of the available space, by constructing a new bedroom to replace the existing glazed conservatory.

#### Rear Extension

The proposed rear extension occupies the same footprint as the existing conservatory. The proposed structure is slightly taller (just over 4 metres from adjacent ground level) but as it is over a metre from the boundary (and 2.5 metres from no. 6 Belsize Park Gardens, which has a full width single storey rear extension, it is not expected that there will be any material loss of daylighting to any of the windows to the neighbours' property.

A roof terrace over the newly formed flat roof will afford the property additional external amenity space. The separation between nos. 4 and 6 Belsize Park Gardens would maintain an oblique angle of view to the neighbouring building's windows, so it is not considered that there would be any loss of privacy.

Views of the garden to no. 6 Belsize Park Garden from the proposed roof terrace will be ameliorated by an existing tree and hedging to the boundary. It is not considered that the potential for overlooking is significantly increased from that afforded by the original curved balcony at raised ground level. It is also noted that balconies and roof terraces at upper levels are an established feature on many buildings on the street. Both no. 4 and no. 8 already have balconies at second and third floor from which a more direct view into neighbouring gardens is possible.

The design of the rear extension is contemporary in character, so as to clearly identify it as a later addition to the historic building. In choosing a restrained palette of painted render and hardwood timber framed windows,

we feel the contemporary design will harmonise with the existing building.

#### External staircase

To improve the access between the raised ground floor living areas and the rear garden, it is proposed to reinstate a straight flight original staircase which was positioned along the north west boundary. The location of the staircase can be deduced from the angled boundary wall in this location, and the infill balustrading to the balcony where the staircase would have ended which is clearly more modern in design.

Permission was gained in under previous permission 2007/5130/P to reinstate the staircase, but this was not carried out. The staircase will be re-constructed to match the appearance of traditional cast iron, to appropriate period details. There will be no loss of historic fabric.

#### Planning Policy

In preparing the proposals, reference has been made to the contents of Camden Planning Guidance document CPG1, particularly Section 2 (Design Excellence), Section 4 (Extensions, Alterations and Conservatories), and Section 5 (Roofs, Terraces & Balconies).

It is considered that the proposals fully comply with the relevant policies.

## 4.0 Sustainability

In preparing the proposals, reference has been made to the contents of Camden Planning Guidance document CPG3. Wherever possible, all building materials to be used will be either reclaimed, or environmentally friendly products accredited by the Environmental Statement/ ISO 14001.

The proposals provide for the replacement of a single storey fully glazed conservatory thought to be about 20 years old with new extensions constructed to contemporary standards of thermal insulation and airtightness. As such, the net effect on the energy performance of the apartment is likely to be a reasonable improvement.

## 5.0 Access

The existing building is a historic Victorian terraced property. The main entrance door at raised ground floor level is accessed by a flight of eight steps from pavement level. The building entrance door has a leaf 1.2m wide; the entrance door to the apartment is 1m wide.

Within the context of the proposals and the need to preserve the historic character of the street scene, it is not reasonably possible to improve the accessibility of the property from the street.

However, within the property, it is proposed to improve accessibility by providing a larger bedroom with an ensuite bathroom.

The site has a PTAL rating of 4.

## 6.0 Conclusion

This proposal is considered to be in keeping with the scale and proportion of the host building. There is an established precedent of single storey rear extensions in the immediate area, and as a result the scale and massing proposed is in keeping with neighbouring properties. The extension's small size and reasonable separation from the boundary, coupled with the existence of a single storey rear extension at no. 6 Belsize Park Gardens, means that there will be no adverse effect on the light levels to neighbouring property.

Two of the four bedrooms in the apartment are particularly small in size, and as such it is considered reasonable to extend the property to provide an additional bedroom of a more generous size.

The use of high quality materials - painted render, architectural stone, and hardwood windows - will harmonise with the existing building and maintain the quality of the conservation area.

In addition, the work proposed to restore the original staircase to the raised ground floor balcony at the rear of the property will improve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

As there is demonstrably no material harm either to neighbours' amenity or to the appearance of the surrounding area, we trust that the application will meet with your support. Please do not hesitate to contact Gavin Challand of this office if you require any further information.