

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 07th April 2008. For further information see

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/planning-applications/development-control-members-briefing/>

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	11/04/2008
(Members Briefing)		N/A	Consultation Expiry Date:	26/03/2008
Officer		Application Number(s)		
John Sheehy		2008/0174/P		
Application Address		Drawing Numbers		
Flat D 14 Belsize Square London NW3 4HT		Refer to draft decision notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
Installation of French doors and railings at front first floor level in connection with existing first/second floor level maisonette (Class C3).				
Recommendation(s):	Grant conditional permission			
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission			

Conditions:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	21	No. of responses No. electronic	4 1	No. of objections	2
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>Site notice displayed from 5th March 2008 to 26th March 2008.</p> <p>14B Belsize Square: No objection.</p> <p>14C Belsize Square: Objection - the railings would change the appearance of the building in a harmful way.</p>					
CAAC/Local Group comments:	<p>Belsize CAAC: No objection, provided that the railings to the proposed balcony are inset and that there is a transom inserted into the proposed French doors to line with the adjoining windows. <i>Response: The insetting of the railings will be covered by condition. It is however considered that the application of a transom to the French doors would not be beneficial. A simple style, as is proposed, would better match the existing French doors at no. 13, the other half of this semi-detached pair.</i></p> <p>Belsize Residents Association - objection: the proposed balcony on top of the classically conceived entrance portico will trivialise the entrance portico, an important part of the architecture of the house; the proposal would not preserve the architectural standard of the Conservation Area; the proposal would set a precedent for such alterations elsewhere in Belsize Park. <i>Response: See under "Design" and "Impact on CA" in the assessment below.</i></p>					
Site Description						
<p>The site is located on the southern side of Belsize Square, a formal residential square located in the core area of the Belsize Park development undertaken in the 1850s.</p> <p>The building on the site is a large 3-storey with basement semi-detached villa. It forms part of a pair with no.13 Belsize Square. It is divided into flats.</p> <p>The site is located in Belsize Park Conservation Area. The building on the site is not listed. The properties nos. 1-22 Belsize Square are noted as buildings that positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.</p>						
Relevant History						
None						

Relevant policies

Camden Development Plan 2006

S1,S2 Sustainable Development

SD6 Amenity for occupiers and neighbours

B1 General design principles

B3 Alterations and extensions

B7 Conservation Areas

Camden Planning Guidance 2006

Section 19 Extensions, Alterations and Conservatories

Section 41 Roofs and terraces

Belsize CAS

Proposal: the installation of railings on top of the entrance portico to form a balcony plus the installation of French doors in place of a sash window on the front elevation.

The application relates to the maisonette on the first and second floor levels.

Assessment:

The southern side of Belsize Square, where the application site is located, is characterised by a series of semi-detached villas which form an architecturally coherent set of buildings.

The front elevation of the house which this application relates to has not been significantly altered since the building was originally constructed. It retains all of the features which contribute to the original character of the house. These include the grand entrance portico served by steps, and recessed sash windows diminishing in size on successive upper floors with classically detailed surrounds.

The proposal has been assessed against the design, Conservation Area and amenity policies contained in the UDP.

Design

Policy B3 states that the Council will not grant permission for alterations that it considers will cause harm to the architectural quality of the existing building.

The proposed French doors are not considered to relate well to the other windows on the front elevation of the house, or to be in keeping with the original character of the house.

The proposed railings on top of the entrance portico plus the installation of French doors in place of sash window on the front elevation are not part of the original architecture of the house and are, in principle, considered to add clutter the front elevation and potentially to appear incongruous.

However, the proposal does not involve substantial, irreversible changes to the plan or form of the building nor does it involve substantial demolition, therefore the proposal is not considered to be sufficiently harmful to justify refusal under UDP Policy B3. The building is not listed therefore does not benefit from protection under listed buildings policy.

Impact on the Conservation Area

UDP policy B7 states that the Council will only grant planning permission for development in a Conservation Area that preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area. The proposed alterations are located on a highly sensitive main frontage within the core area of the original Belsize Park development dating from the 1850s.

The properties at nos. 7, 10 and 11 Belsize Square have all had balcony railings installed above the portico, albeit not with the benefit of planning permission. The properties at nos. 7, 11 and 13 Belsize Square have had French doors installed at first floor level, though not with the benefit of planning permission - the installation of French doors to 13 Belsize Square has marred the original symmetry of the pair which 14 Belsize Square forms part of.

These works, whilst in themselves inappropriate and unauthorised, have however been in place for a significant period of time, perhaps over 30 years in some cases – as such, they do form the immediate context of the site and are not likely to be reversed. They are therefore part of the

character and appearance of this part of the conservation area, and this needs to be given some weight in the assessment of this application i.e. whether the proposed development will preserve the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. In this regard, it is considered that the immediate context of the application site has been changed by this type of development to such an extent that its architectural coherence has been compromised. For this reason it is considered that, on balance, the proposal, while intrinsically harmful, would not involve the introduction of an inappropriate alteration into a perfectly preserved set of buildings, and would not therefore be harmful enough in and of itself to justify refusal. Therefore, the proposal would not be inconsistent with Policy B7 as the external frontages of the buildings in the immediate context have lost many of the features which contribute to the original character and appearance of the Conservation Area due to inappropriate alterations over time; therefore there is a diminished amount of character to preserve.

The current proposal is not considered to involve alterations that are substantial enough to diminish the reduced character which prevails in the immediate context of the application site.

In this regard, it is considered that the grant of permission for the proposal on this building would not set a precedent for other areas of Belsize Conservation Area, as the Conservation Area contains many groups of buildings whose architectural coherence has not been compromised and where proposals similar to those contained in the current application could be more easily be resisted.

While there are reservations about the relationship of the proposal to the Conservation Area, it is not considered to be sufficiently harmful to justify refusal under UDP Policy B7.

Amenity

There would be no loss of amenity to neighbours by virtue of loss of sunlight, daylight, privacy or other disturbance and therefore the proposal is considered to be consistent with UDP policy SD6.

Recommendation: Grant conditional permission.

