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62 Belsize Park Gardens

Planning and Design & Access Statement

Prepared on behalf of Nik and Julia Leitner

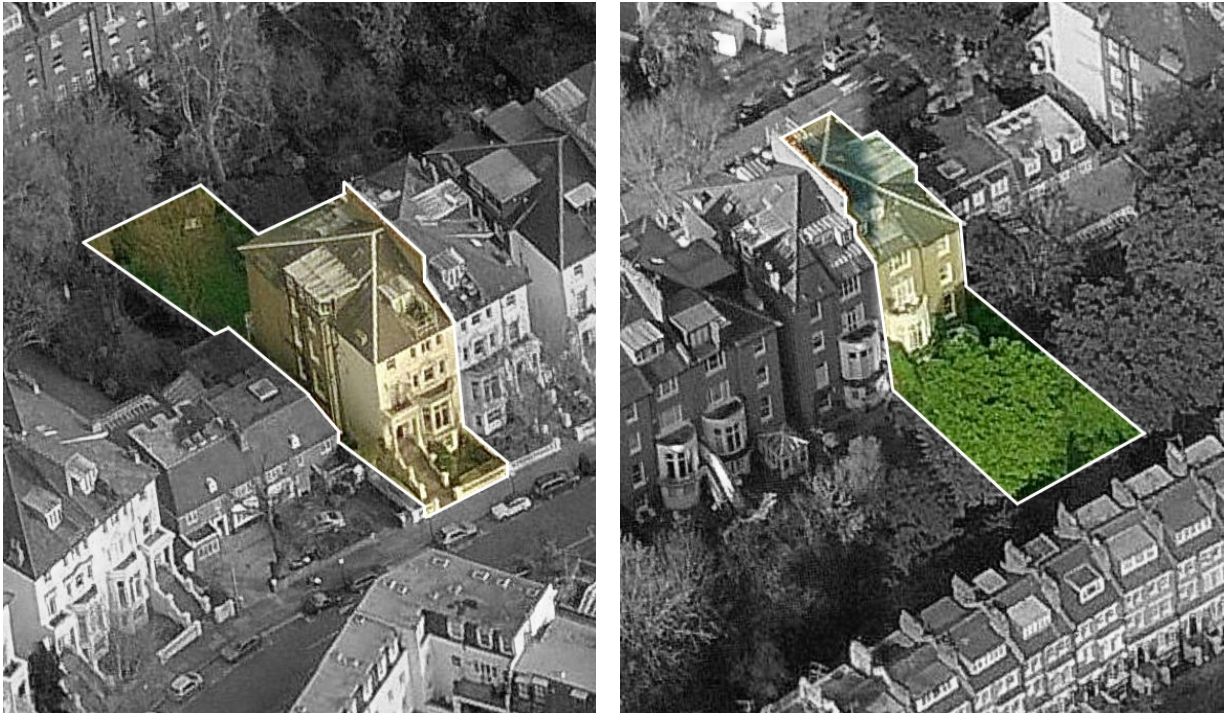


Fig 1. Birds eye views of 62 Belsize Park Gardens, South West & North East

1. Introduction

This design and access statement is submitted on behalf of Nik and Julia Leitner of 62 Belsize Park gardens, garden flat. The proposal is for a new single-storey rear extension and changes to the openings and fenestration of the side elevation.

This statement sets out the proposals in the context of the relevant national and local planning policy. The statement will explain and consider issues relating to the design and impact of the proposals as well as the impact on local amenity and neighbouring properties.

2. Site Context

62 Belsize Park Gardens is not a Listed Building, but lies within the Belsize Park Conservation Area as part of Camden Council. The house is for residential use (C3) and is one of the many typical 5-storey imposing semi-detached Victorian Villas found in the area- of masonry construction with stucco front facades (Fig 1-2).



Fig 2. 62 Belsize Park Gardens front facade



Fig 3. Location Map of 62 Belsize Park Gardens

The site lies on the East side of the road with a south-west facing front elevation and an north-east facing rear elevation. The property has its own private garden to the rear, which is accessed down a side alley.

The Belsize Park Conservation Area was designated in 1973 and subsequently extended in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

The Council's Conservation Area Statement describes Belsize Park thus:

Belsize Park is an area of large scale, imposing semi-detached Victorian Villas of distinct yet uniform appearance. They show elaborate and consistent architectural detail and within the designated boundary there is little to detract from the unity of appearance. Belsize Village is also an area of considerable charm, the particular character of the village being one of the main justifications for designation.

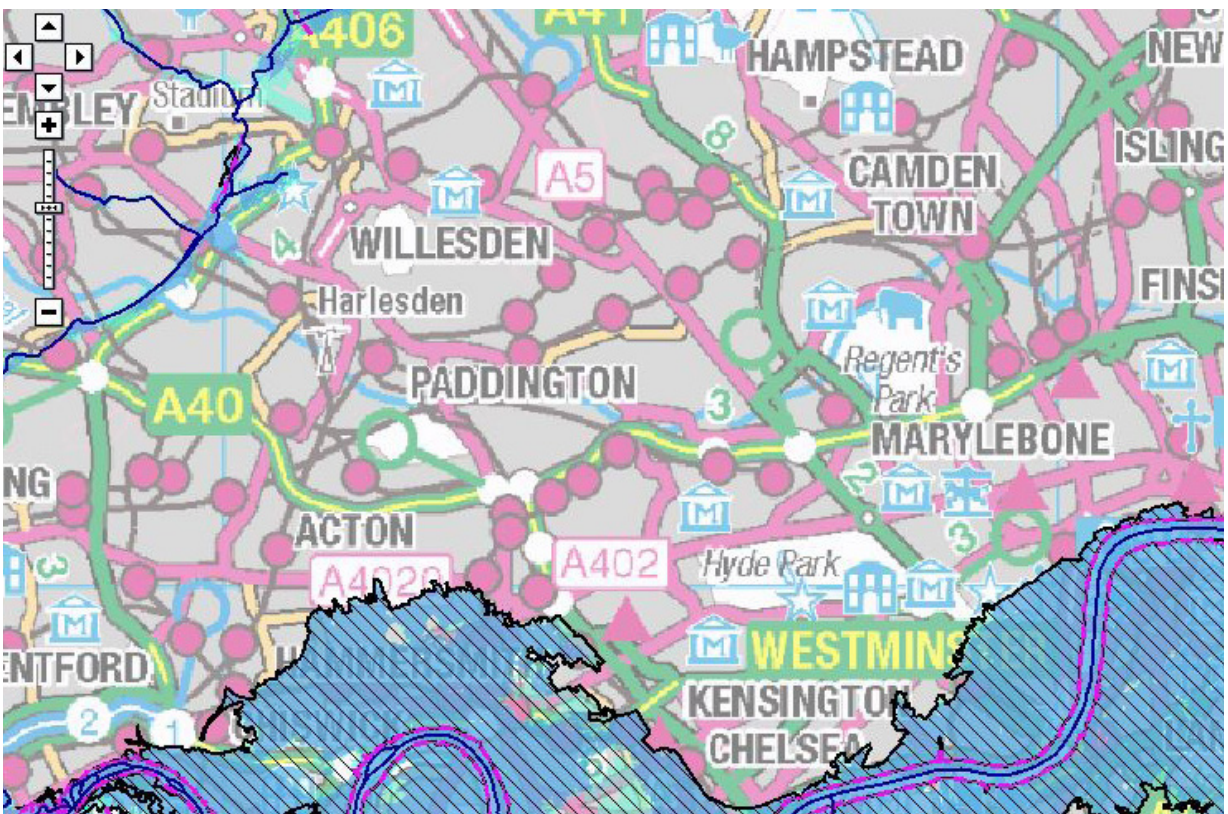


Fig 4. Environment Agency, Flood Risk Assessment Map

The Council's Conservation Area Statement describes Belsize Park Gardens thus:

Belsize Park, Belsize Park Gardens, Buckland Crescent and Belsize Square represent the core area of the Belsize Park development undertaken by developer Daniel Tidey on the site of Belsize House in the mid-1850's. The streets are predominantly residential, characterised by the repeated forms of the stucco villas, whose design gives a strong identity and unity of appearance to the area.

In Belsize Park, Belsize Park Gardens, Belsize Grove, Buckland Crescent and Belsize Square the predominant type is the paired villa. The villas are symmetrical about their slab chimney stacks, have hipped, slate roofs with overhanging eaves which are supported on brackets, the elevations have large rusticated quoins, recessed sash windows diminishing in size on successive upper floors with classically detailed surrounds, canted three-light bays on the ground floor and steps up to porticoes. Other distinguishing features of Tidey villas are their curved glass bay windows at the rear and front doors with two panels, characteristically of etched glass with rounded heads (apart from Buckland Crescent, south side).

The closely spaced villas maintain a continuous building line and their repeated forms with narrow gaps between give a uniform rhythm to the streets and provide important, glimpsed views. Belsize Park Gardens is a long, straight and consistent street to its junction with Lambolle Place where the slight bend in its alignment reflects the later development of the southern part of the street. The impact of the continuous line of villa development on the street is significantly softened by mature trees and vegetation in the front gardens. This filtering effect on the views from the street is also notable along Belsize Park.

The south-east end of Belsize Park Gardens sits outside of the designated Archaeological Priority Areas.

The property is not within the 'Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea' area (Fig 4).



Fig 5. Rear view of 62 Belsize Park Gardens

3. Planning History

The recent planning history for 62 Belsize Park Gardens is as follows:

2003/2309/T - Tree works carried out in 2003

9091158 - Tree works carried out in 1990

9005475 - The erection of a conservatory on the rear elevation

In addition, there have been a number of recently approved applications on Belsize Park Gardens for rear extensions as follows:

44 Belsize Park Gardens 2012/1411/P - Erection of 5m long single storey rear extension at ground floor level

47 Belsize Park Gardens 2006/3249/P - Erection of 6m long single storey rear ground floor level extension with green roof and rooflight, including provision of rainwater storage facility, and part excavation of rear garden all in connection with existing ground floor level flat

56 Belsize Park Gardens 2009/2068/P - Erection of 4m long single storey rear extension, enlargement of side extension, alterations/replacement of windows/doors to front, side and rear elevation all in connection with lower ground floor flat

61 Belsize Park Gardens 2012/6685/P - Erection of 5m long single storey rear extension to existing residential flat, installation of glazed window to side elevation, and replacement of existing windows

62 Belsize Park Gardens 2015/4442/P - Erection of 5m long single storey rear conservatory in association with other minor alterations to rear elevation

4. Proposed Scheme

The details of the proposal are as follows:-

Lower Ground Floor

- Demolition of existing conservatory
- New single storey rear extension, 3.5m long
- Floor area and garden lowered to have a comfortable head height
- New extension's language characterised by a modern approach - precast or insitu concrete, frameless fixed windows and sliding metal-framed glass doors

The existing layout comprises a warren of small rooms, many of which receive no natural daylight. The flat was previously arranged over two floors (encompassing the raised ground floor) and as such the garden flat was used for amenity and storage purposes. The two flats are now separate dwellings, and as such existing internal arrangement of the property requires refurbishment works in order for it to function well as a modern family home in its own right.

5. Planning Policy Assessment

National Planning Policy Framework

Any proposals for consent relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the NPPF (2012). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. With regard to 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', the framework requires proposals relating to heritage assets to be justified and an explanation of their effect on the heritage asset's significance provided.

The NPPF has the following relevant policies for proposals such as this:

14. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both planmaking and decision-taking.

The NPPF sets out twelve core planning principles that should underpin decision making (paragraph 17). Amongst those are that planning should:

- *not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;*
- *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. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;*
- *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
- *support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);*
- *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;*

In determining applications local planning authorities are required to take account of significance, viability, sustainability and local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 131 of the NPPF identifies the following criteria in relation to this:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

Design and Local Distinctiveness

53. Both the NPPF (section 7) and PPG (section ID26) contain detail on why good design is important and how it can be achieved. In terms of the historic environment, some or all of the following factors may influence what will make the scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and proposed use of new development successful in its context:

- *The history of the place*
- *The relationship of the proposal to its specific site*
- *The significance of nearby assets and the contribution of their setting, recognising that this is a dynamic concept*
- *The general character and distinctiveness of the area in its widest sense, including the general character of local buildings, spaces, public realm and the landscape, the grain of the surroundings, which includes, for example the street pattern and plot size*
- *The size and density of the proposal related to that of the existing and neighbouring uses*
- *Landmarks and other built or landscape features which are key to a sense of place*
- *The diversity or uniformity in style, construction, materials, colour, detailing, decoration and period of existing buildings and spaces*
- *The topography*
- *Views into, through and from the site and its surroundings*
- *Landscape design*
- *The current and historic uses in the area and the urban grain*
- *The quality of the materials*

Local Policy

London Borough of Camden Policies

Camden's Local Development Framework was adopted in 2010.

London Borough of Camden Development Policies (2010)

DP24 – Securing high quality design

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.*

DP25 – Conserving Camden's heritage

Conservation Areas

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.*

DP26 – Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

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.

London Borough of Camden Core Strategy (2010)

CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

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.

Camden Guidelines - Conservation Areas

New Development

BE19 New development should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area. All development should respect existing features such as building lines, roof lines, elevational design, and, where appropriate, architectural characteristics, detailing, profile and materials of adjoining buildings. Proposals should be guided by the UDP in terms of the appropriate uses and other matters such as density and parking standards.

BE20 The Belsize Conservation Area has a variety of building types, ages and styles. Modern development has not always taken account of the area's history and its context. Development which is overtly modern will not be resisted provided it respects the layout, height and scale of existing development within the Conservation Area.

Rear Extensions / Conservatories

BE21 Planning Permission is usually required for the erection of a rear extension or conservatory. However, modest single storey extensions to a single family dwelling may be exempt from permission under the General Permitted Development Order 1995 depending on the proposed volume & height. It is advisable to contact the Planning Service to confirm if this is the case.

BE22 Extensions and conservatories can alter the balance and harmony of a property or of a group of properties by insensitive scale, design or inappropriate materials. Some rear extensions, although not widely visible, so adversely affect the architectural integrity of the building to which they are attached that the character of the Conservation Area is prejudiced. Rear extensions should be as unobtrusive as possible and should not adversely affect the character of the building or the Conservation Area. In most cases such extensions should be no more than one storey in height but its effect on neighbouring properties and Conservation Area will be the basis of its suitability.

BE23 Extensions should be in harmony with the original form and character of the house and the historic pattern of extensions within the terrace or group of buildings. The acceptability of larger extensions depends on the particular site and circumstances.

BE24 The infilling of yards and rear spaces between buildings will generally be unacceptable.

BE25 In many locations there are views along rear elevations from adjoining streets. Rear extensions will not be acceptable where they would spoil a uniform rear elevation of an unspoilt terrace or group of buildings.

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The proposed development falls within the guidelines contained in all the above named policy documents.

6. Protection of Heritage Assets

As the majority of the work is to be performed at the rear of the building, there will be little visibility of the proposed work from the street.

The proposed rear extension is in keeping with the adjoining approved development.

The front facade will not be altered. The existing windows, both on the rear and front elevations, will be replaced with new double glazed windows that will match the existing sash windows.

7. Design and Access

For the avoidance of doubt, the following paragraphs address the requirements for design and access statements, using headings set out in national guidance on preparation of such statements.

Use:

62 Belsize Park Gardens is entirely for residential use. This proposal intends to retain the residential use of the property.

Layout:

The proposed layout offers a much improved arrangement, making the lower ground floor flat more up-to-date for modern day living, and creating more daylight and sunlight access.

Scale:

The size of the proposed rear extension is modest - smaller than many approved schemes in the area - and respects the scale of the original dwelling house.

Landscaping:

The new rear extension will enable the living spaces to be better connected to the garden.

The amount of excavation works will be minimum. The lawn will be mainly maintained with some additional perennial planting along the borders.

Vehicular Links:

The scheme has no impact on transport or traffic levels to the site.

Inclusive Access:

Although by its nature the property does not allow for wheelchair access, the opening of the dining / kitchen area improves the general internal accessibility of the house. Otherwise, flush flooring thresholds have been maintained where possible.

8. Conclusion

In summary, the proposal seeks to alter and improve the residential use of the newly created garden flat. The alterations to the side of the building are crucial to the functioning of the property and will be out of sight from public viewpoints and as such will have no effect on the street scene. The proposed rear extension is of a contemporary design which contrasts with the original building, and is consistent with recent approvals in the immediate locale.

Alterations of this nature to the rear facade are commonplace in residential properties nearby. We consider that the proposals are of a high quality both in terms of design and construction and are in full compliance with the aims and objectives of relevant Core Strategy policies and national planning guidance. For all of the reasons set out in this report, we consider the proposals pass the Section 38 test and that planning permission should be granted accordingly.