

Date: 16th November 2016
Our Ref: 2016/5932/PRE
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Dear Mr Gil,

**2016/5932/PRE: THE COACH HOUSE, 50A BELSIZE SQUARE, NW3 4HN–
BASEMENT EXCAVATION, ROOF EXTENSION AND THREE STOREY REAR
EXTENSION**

Thank you for your request dated 28th October 2016 for pre-application advice in respect of a proposal involving basement excavation works, raising of the roof level and a rear extension at The Coach House. This letter is based on drawings 1507_Ex_01, 1507_Ex_02, 1507_Ex_03, 1507_Ex_04, 1507_Ex_05, 1507_Ex_06, 1507_Ex_10, 1507_Ex_12, 1507_Ex_013, 1507_Preapp_001, 1507_Preapp_002, 1507_Preapp_003, 1507_Preapp_004, 1507_Preapp_005, 1507_Preapp_006, 1507_Preapp_007, 1507_Preapp_008, 1507_Preapp_009, 1507_Preapp_010, 1507_Preapp_011, 1507_Preapp_012, 1507_Preapp_013, 1507_Preapp_014, 1507_Preapp_015 and a site visit carried out on 16th November 2016.

This document represents an initial informal officer view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage and would not be binding upon the Council, nor prejudice any future planning application decisions made by the Council.

Proposal

Excavation works over the footprint of the site to create a basement level; extension of building including raising of the roof level; 3 storey rear extension; creation of side terrace and extension of building into 3 bedroom dwelling. Three proposed options have been presented for comment. Option 1 includes a pitched roof with traditional windows, Options 2 and Option 3 would have contemporary street elevations with Option 2 including a diagonally sloped roof and Option 3 an off-centre pitched roof.

Site description

The subject site is located on the northern side of Belsize Square at the end of a group of semi-detached properties and to the east of five single storey garages. The site is an unusual triangular shape and currently hosts a three storey residential dwelling which is attached to 50 Belsize Square. The property is within the Belsize Park Conservation Area and has no specific reference within the relevant Conservation Area Statement. Opposite the site to the south is a grade II listed church (Church of St Peter).

The property includes a sloped forecourt area accessed from a crossover that is capable of accommodating two vehicles and a garage. The house is accessed from an alleyway which runs along the side of the driveway and is shared with the adjacent garden flat.

Planning history

34592- Conversion of the existing garage into two-storey house. Granted, 03/12/1982.

34841- Retention of dormer window in side elevation. Granted, 28/10/1982.

35515- The retention of the alteration to the aide house. Refused, 01/03/1983.

37084- Alterations to elevations and form of roof. Granted, 02/05/1984.

PWX0002961- Alterations at front ground floor level and at roof level. Granted, 19/03/2001.

2005/2651/P- Erection of a timber summerhouse in rear garden of single family dwellinghouse. Granted, 09/09/2005.

Comments on proposal

Height, scale and massing

The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments. The following considerations contained within policy DP24 are relevant to the application: development should consider the character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings, and the quality of materials to be used.

General comments

Camden's design guidance (CPG1) advises design and schemes should consider context and the surrounding area. Design which is inappropriate to its context or fails to improve the character of the area will be unacceptable. Within conservation areas, policy seeks to preserve or enhance the area. It is considered a traditional appearance would be most appropriate within the context of the subject site which is currently a modest coach style house which is generally sympathetic to the semi-detached properties along Belsize Square.

Option 1

Of the options presented Officers consider this one the most favourable although it's unacceptable as it stands. It is recommended that the cornice on the forward elevation is allowed to rise above the level of the neighbouring portico, this would allow the floor heights and window sizes to be proportioned in a more appropriate fashion. The ground floor should be made taller while the first-floor windows could become bigger with a parapet on the top floor partly concealing the windows there. The roof should be made into a true mansard rather than the pitched form it takes here. The attic is much too tall at the moment. The proposal should be amended to occupy the same amount of bulk but with a classically proportioned façade. The design should reflect the mansard roof guidance given in CPG1. Option 1 is the preferred option as mentioned above; however it requires amendments including a traditional mansard and appropriate detailing of the facade. As discussed in the amenity section below, side elevation windows would not be acceptable.

Options 2A and 2B and 3

Options 2A and B present contemporary fenestration details and roof pitch. They are both considered unacceptable and do not fit at all with the existing character of the area with the raised parapet height on the side boundary and modern façade especially objectionable. Option 3 is also not supported. The height of options 2 and 3 are excessive in height and not subordinate to the neighbouring property at 50 Belsize Square. Both proposals do not respect the historic proportions of the existing gatehouse property. The Council favours materials that are traditional and in keeping with the surrounding area. The proposed glazing/fenestration details and materials in options 2 and 3 are considered unacceptable.

Rear Extension

CPG1 design guidance recommends alterations take into account the character and design of the property and surroundings; windows, doors and materials should complement the existing building; and rear extensions should be secondary to the main building.

The glazed three storey rear extension would fail to comply with design guidance in that it would not be one full storey below the roof eaves and would be visible from surrounding properties. There may be scope for a two storey extension; however glazing at high level is generally not acceptable. A more traditional style extension should be explored instead.

Materials

The Council favours traditional materials which match the main and surrounding properties. Where non-traditional materials are proposed the applicant should provide material samples, manufacturing details and examples of the material on other projects. The success of non-traditional materials depends on the ability to be sympathetic to the main property and how the material would weather. Given the context here the Council would be much more likely to support materials which match the host and attached property.

Quality of living accommodation

Given the location of the proposed bedroom at basement level, the applicant would need to clearly demonstrate at application stage that the bedroom complies with the minimum head height (2.3m) and natural light requirements including window size, orientation and ventilation in accordance with Camden Planning Guidance 2 (CPG2) pages 53-62. A daylight and sunlight assessment should be provided in accordance with BRE standards. It is considered unlikely that this could be achieved and it would be better for the basement level to be used as ancillary accommodation rather than a bedroom which would likely have very poor quality of accommodation due to the only light source being borrowed from the glazed ceiling of the proposed extension.

Basement Impact Assessment

In determining proposals for basement and other underground development, the Council will require an assessment of the scheme's impact on drainage, flooding, groundwater conditions and structural stability, where appropriate. The Council will only permit basement and other underground development that does not cause harm to the built and natural environment and local amenity, and does not result in flooding or ground instability.

You are advised to thoroughly examine the requirements for Basement Impact Assessment as per DP27 and CPG4 prior to submission. You are advised to submit a comprehensive and accurate Basement Impact Assessment demonstrating no significant harm to the application site, neighbouring sites or those surrounding.

The BIA will include the following stages:

- Stage 1 - Screening;
- Stage 2 - Scoping;
- Stage 3 - Site investigation and study;
- Stage 4 - Impact assessment; and
- Stage 5 - Review and decision making.

Further detail on BIAs can be found in Camden Planning Guidance 2013 (CPG4 Basements). At each stage in the process the person(s) undertaking the BIA process should hold qualifications relevant to the matters being considered. The Council will only accept the qualifications set out in paragraph 2.11 of CPG4.

Independent verification of Basement Impact Assessments, funded by the applicant, is now also required (since CPG4 was updated in September 2013) in the following situations:

- Where a scheme requires applicants to proceed beyond the Screening stage of the Basement Impact Assessment (i.e. where a matter of concern has been identified which requires the preparation of a full Basement Impact Assessment);
- Where the proposed basement development is located within an area of concern regarding slope stability, surface water or groundwater flow; or
- For any other basement applications where the Council feels that independent verification would be appropriate (e.g. where conflicting evidence is provided in response to a proposal).

A full scoping study is required as part of any application, identifying the potential impacts for each of the matters of concern. When an audit is required, Campbell Reith (external auditor) charge a fixed fee dependant on the category of basement audit, outlined in appendix A of Camden's BIA audit service terms of reference.

Camden Planning Guidance CPG4 provides specific guidance on basements and lightwells. It should be noted sufficient margins should be left between the site boundaries and any basement construction to enable natural processes to occur and for vegetation to grow naturally.

The proposed lower ground floor would accommodate a gym/media room, storage and a third bedroom. As discussed above, this space should be for ancillary accommodation only. Windows would be located on the east side passage (the windows should be considered in terms of impact on amenity for number 50- see below) and a closed in walk on rooflight in the rear garden. The external manifestations of the basement are modest

and would not be visible from the streetscene. A large rear garden space would be maintained. The application should show the garden space in the site plan.

Construction Management Plan

The proposed development would require a significant amount of excavation within a sensitive residential area. This is likely to have an impact on the amenity of adjacent neighbours and the surrounding highway network. It is important that effective measures are taken during demolition and construction works to ensure that damage is not caused to the host building, neighbouring buildings or the surrounding highways.

The Council will generally require a construction management plan for basement developments to manage and mitigate the greater construction impacts of these schemes. Construction management plans will be required for schemes on constrained sites, in conservation areas, on sites adjacent to a listed building, or in other areas depending on the scale of the development and the conditions of the site.

The main highways issue in this case is the potential impact of construction / delivery vehicles associated with the basement excavation on the local highway network. A draft Construction Management Plan (CMP) would be required to be submitted with any application setting out how construction matters would be dealt with, for example deliveries, how material will be stored and construction waste removed from site etc.

A draft (based on the Camden [pro-forma found online](#)) should be submitted with the application, with the full CMP to be secured via S106 legal agreement. Chapter 4 of CPG4 (Basements and lightwells) provides more information [here](#).

A financial contribution of £1,140 would need to be secured to cover the costs of reviewing the Construction Management Plan. This would also need to be secured by a Section 106 planning obligation if planning permission is granted.

The Council will also expect the development to be registered with the Considerate Constructors' Scheme. Details are available at the website below:

<https://www.ccscheme.org.uk/>

Highways Contribution

Development Policy DP21 states that 'The Council will expect works affecting Highways to repair any construction damage to transport infrastructure or landscaping and reinstate all affected transport network links and road and footway surfaces following development'. The footway and vehicular crossover directly adjacent to the site could be damaged as a direct result of the proposed works. We may therefore need to secure a financial contribution for highway works as a section 106 planning obligation if planning permission is granted.

Car and cycle parking

The reduction in onsite car parking is supported (garage parking space lost). The applicant should consider incorporating onsite cycle storage in accordance with CPG7 guidance.

Amenity

CPG6 Amenity states: “Development should be designed to protect the privacy of both new and existing dwellings to a reasonable degree. Spaces that are overlooked lack privacy. Therefore, new buildings, extensions, roof terraces, balconies and the location of new windows should be carefully designed to avoid overlooking. The degree of overlooking depends on the distance and the horizontal and vertical angles of view. The most sensitive areas to overlooking are:

- Living rooms;
- Bedrooms;
- Kitchens; and
- The part of a garden nearest to the house.”

Any side elevation windows to the west elevations (discussed onsite) would be detrimental to neighbours amenity in terms of overlooking into rear elevation windows and gardens for properties along Belsize Park. For the same reasons, a side elevation terrace would not be acceptable either. Therefore, the side terrace proposed should be removed from any further iteration of the scheme.

Any additional windows to the east elevation (currently shown at lower ground floor level) would need to be carefully considered as there would be potential for overlooking and loss of privacy to the property next door at 50 Belsize Square. The proposed plan is showing side facing windows which are directly opposite windows on the other side of the passage. This is unacceptable.

The basement and the rear extension would not cause concern in terms of loss of privacy or light to neighbours.

Conclusion

The proposed basement level is likely to be acceptable, however should only be ancillary accommodation and would be subject to the BIA assessment. Windows and a terrace on the western side would be unacceptable for amenity reasons. The design as it stands is unacceptable and would need major alterations before being deemed acceptable.

For a valid planning application, I would advise you to submit the following:

- Completed form – householder planning permission;
- An ordnance survey based location plan at 1:1250 scale denoting the application site in red and rear garden (in blue if a separate title);
- Floor plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled ‘existing’ and ‘proposed’;
- Roof plans at a scale of 1:50 labelled ‘existing’ and ‘proposed’;
- Elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled ‘existing’ and ‘proposed’;
- Section drawings at a scale of 1:50 labelled ‘existing’ and ‘proposed’;
- Basement Impact Assessment ;
- Draft Construction Management Plan;
- The appropriate fee (£172).

Please see supporting information for planning applications for more information. You are advised to contact your neighbours prior to submission, to discuss the proposals.

We are legally required to consult on applications with individuals who may be affected by the proposals. We would notify neighbours by a notice on or near the site and, advertise in a local newspaper. The Council must allow 21 days from the consultation start date for responses to be received.

Depending on the extent of demolition required to facilitate the works, the proposal may need to go to [Development control committee](#).

Once you submit an application, please let me know the planning portal reference number so that I can process the application. If you have any queries about the advice please do not hesitate to contact Tessa Craig on 020 7974 6750. Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

It is important to us to find out what our customers think about the service we provide. To help, we would be very grateful if you could take a few moments to complete our [pre application enquiry survey](#). We will use the information you give us to monitor and improve our services.

Regards,

Tessa Craig
Planning Officer

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