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140b Belsize Road, London, NW6 4BG

FAO Evelyn Jones,
Case Officer,
Development Management,
Camden Town Hall,
Judd Street,
WC1H 9JE

10 May 2017

For the attention of Evelyn Jones, case officer

Dear Madam

Reference: PLANNING APPLICATION 2017/1888/P

Erection of single storey rear extension to lower ground floor flat, glazed balustrade balcony to ground floor flat and new cast iron railings to front boundary wall at 140 Lower Ground Floor & Ground Floor Flats Belsize Road London, NW6 4BG by Mr Ian Hislop:

I write in connection with the above planning application. I have examined the plans and I know the site well as owner and occupier of the flat directly above where the works are proposed. I wish to object strongly to the development at the rear and front of the property.

With reference to 'South Hampstead Conservation Area, Character Appraisal and Management Strategy', February 2011, prepared by the Conservation & Urban Design Team at London Borough of Camden:

Proposed Rear Extension

- The open green spaces of the private rear gardens and the communal gardens between terraces of houses remain undeveloped and are a very important amenity for local residents - both for those who look onto the spaces and those who have access to them' (paragraph 3.3). Although it is not possible without access to the garden and knowledge of the dimensions of the proposed extension, it is likely trees that overhang the garden, providing important green space and shields other gardens, maintaining residents privacy will required cutting back.
- The plans do not provide clarity on the extent to which the development will protrude into the garden, however, it appears that foundations have already been dug (see attached, fig 1) suggesting that the majority of the garden is to be developed. Scaling the plans available suggest a less severe 3 metres of a garden would be developed, however that is more than 50% of the garden, leaving very little to offer the benefits that the green space add to the Conservation Area.
- The 'undeveloped rear gardens and private opens spaces are central to the character and appearance of South Hampstead Conservation Area and their preservation is of paramount importance' (paragraph 7.13/12.16) as such any permitted development should be sympathetic to the area. Taking up so much of the garden and the proposed style is in contrast with this wish of the Council
- The development would conflict with the 'the serene character of the conservation area is further enhanced by lush green front gardens, mature trees, and the private open spaces behind houses which make a positive contribution and provide visual and practical amenity to many residents' (paragraph 5.4)
- The height of the proposed development will intrude into neighbouring gardens, which 'should not be compromised by overly large extensions' (paragraph 7.14)

Proposals at Front of Property

- The application proposes the demolition of the brick wall at the front of the property and installation of new cast iron railings. Paragraph 6.6 states works should 'seek to retain elements of streetscape whether listed or not', therefore permission for such works should be rejected
- The majority of the north side of Belsize Road has walls of at least 2 feet high, and therefore demolition of this wall in favour of railings would be in contrast to existing streetscape.

With reference to Camden Planning Guidance, Design, CPG1, July 2015

Proposed Rear Extension

- Paragraph 2.10 states that buildings should not 'significantly overshadow existing/proposed outdoor spaces' and that 'the extent to which developments may overlook the windows or private garden of another dwelling. There are a few small extensions to the rear of properties on Belsize Road but these do not overshadow the outdoor space or allow for overlooking into other private gardens, which the proposed development would.
- Paragraph 4.10 says that such developments should allow for the 'retention of a reasonable sized garden' which this proposal does not.
- The same paragraph also comments on the original design of the building, which would be damaged by the proposals, both at the front and the rear. The development should 'respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style'. The development proposed at both the front and the back are not in keeping with the late 1800's architecture.

Proposals at Front of Property

- Paragraph 2.9 states that 'good design should positively enhance the character, history, archaeology and nature of existing buildings on the site and other buildings immediately adjacent and in the surrounding area, and any strategic or local views. This is particularly important in conservation areas'. The proposed changes at the front of the property, from the replacement of a window with french doors, and the installation of a new door would be in contrast with the uniformity of the rest of house (above) and the street (to both the east and the west). It is this uniformity that adds character to the north side of Belsize Road.

General Comments on Planning Application

- The plans suggest that the Lower Ground and Ground Floor Flats are currently two separate units, however, prior to the current owner, the property was one unit occupied by one individual, it is not clear if the proposal is to split the unit into two flats, which in itself will add pressures in the area such as parking, etc.
- There has been no communication from the applicant regarding Party Wall issues in connection with the proposed works in line with the Party Walls etc. Acc 1996.
- There have been a works going on inside the building since March 2017; whether these are permitted development I am not sure.
- I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the plans with you as the Planning Officer for this case.
- If this application is to be decided by councillors, please take this as notice that I would like to speak at the meeting of the committee at which this application is expected to be decided. Please let us know as soon as possible the date of the meeting.

As I have indicated above, the proposed development is ill considered in the context of the two Council Documents which I have referred to and not in keeping with the desires of the Council for the area, particularly given the sensitivities of being in a Conservation Area. The proposals would have an adverse affect on those living above, beside and opposite the development as a result of loss of green space, potential loss of light, and loss of privacy in the rear gardens as the development will overlook existing garden walls. The proposals at the front will result in the street loosing its attractive uniformity that commands is Conservation Area status.

Yours Sincerely,



Georgie Harding-Edgar
MRICS

Fig 1 - foundations in rear garden, photo from 30 April 2017

