



27 Belsize Crescent, London, NW3 5QY

Heritage Statement

Heritage Significance and Impact Assessment

London Borough of Camden

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27 Belsize Crescent, London – Heritage Statement

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. 27 Belsize Crescent, London, NW3 5QY is an unlisted building within the London Borough of Camden. The building comprises a three-storey end-of-terrace house built during the late 1870s and converted into self-contained flats in 1973. The building is located within the Belsize Conservation Area.
- 1.2. This Heritage Statement has been produced to inform pre-application discussions and to accompany an application for Planning Permission. The proposals involve a number of internal and external alterations to the lower ground and raised ground floors, including:
- The removal of the existing unsightly timber fence and side gate and the provision of a new metal semi-transparent gate/metal screen to the side of the front elevation;
 - The reinstatement of timber sash windows to the canted bay to the front elevation;
 - The reinstatement of bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall;
 - The reinstatement of soft landscaping to the front garden;
 - The alteration of the side window opening to the rear room of the raised ground floor to create a loggia space with internal glazed screen;
 - The rationalisation of the existing window openings to the side elevation at lower ground floor level, the provision of a new pair of double doors and the reinstatement of metal framed windows.
- 1.3. This Heritage Statement complies with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012 (NPPF) and the online Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in respect of Heritage issues. No archaeological assessment has been undertaken as part of this report.
- 1.4. This Heritage Statement sets out:
- An historical background of the building and the surrounding area.
 - An appraisal of the historical significance of the building and its setting.
 - An assessment of the potential or actual impact of the proposed works upon the significance of any heritage assets, including the Belsize Conservation Area.
 - How the proposed works comply with relevant policies in the NPPF and the PPG, and how the works are in accordance with local policies.
- 1.5. **Summary**
- The subject site at 27 Belsize Crescent comprises an unlisted building within the Belsize Conservation Area.
 - An assessment of the significance of 27 Belsize Crescent concludes that it possesses low evidential, aesthetic and communal values, and low to medium historical value. The setting of 27 Belsize Crescent is considered to be of low to medium significance.
 - A related assessment concludes that No. 27 makes a neutral to negative contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, confirming the assessment made in the Council's Conservation Area Statement (2003).

- An assessment of the impact of the proposals concludes there would be a **minimal and neutral to positive impact** on the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area, and on the setting of the Grade II listed No. 24 opposite the subject site. The proposals have been guided by a detailed understanding of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (particularly of the Belsize Village Sub-Area) in order to create a scheme which causes no harm to any heritage assets. The proposals offer a number of enhancements which will provide tangible public benefit by enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and will go some way towards redressing the negative contribution made by the building as identified within the Council's Conservation Area Statement:
 - The removal of the existing unattractive timber fence and gate from the side of the house and the provision of a well-designed "light touch" metal screen/gate;
 - The reinstatement of timber sash windows to the canted bay to the front elevation;
 - The reinstatement of bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall;
 - The reinstatement of soft landscaping to the front garden;
 - The reconfiguration of the existing window openings and reinstatement of white painted metal windows to regularise and improve the appearance of the side elevation.

1.6. Authorship

- **Dorian A T A Crone** BA BArch DipTP RIBA MRTPI IHBC - Heritage and Design Consultant. Dorian has been a Chartered Architect and Chartered Town Planner for over 30 years. He has also been a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation for 25 years. Dorian is a committee member of The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the International Committee on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), ICOMOS UK and Institute of Historic Building Conservation. He has been a court member with the Worshipful Company of Chartered Architects and a trustee of the Hampstead Garden Suburb. He is also a trustee of the Drake and Dance Trusts.

Dorian has worked for over 30 years as Historic Buildings and Areas Inspector with English Heritage, responsible for providing advice to all the London Boroughs and both the City Councils. Dorian has also worked as a consultant and expert witness for over 20 years advising a wide variety of clients on heritage and design matters involving development work, alterations, extensions and new build projects associated with listed buildings and conservation areas in design and heritage sensitive locations. He is a Design Review Panel member of both the London Borough of Islington and Design Council – CABE – and a panel member of the John Betjeman Design Award and the City of London Heritage Award. Dorian has also been involved with the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition Architectural Awards and the Philip Webb Award along with a number other public sector and commercial design awards.

- **Dr Daniel Cummins** MA (Oxon) MSc PhD – Historic Environment Consultant. Daniel is an historian with a BA and Master's in History from Oxford University and a doctorate from the University of Reading, where he specialised in ecclesiastical buildings and estates and had his work published in leading academic history journals.

Daniel has a Master's in the Conservation of the Historic Environment and provides independent professional heritage advice and guidance to leading architectural practices and planning consultancies, as well as for private clients. He undertakes detailed historical research, significance statements,

character appraisals, impact assessments and expert witness statements for new development projects, as well as for alterations and extensions which affect the fabric and settings of Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings, the character and appearance of Conservation Areas, the outstanding universal value of World Heritage Sites, and all other types of heritage assets.

1.7. Methodology

This assessment has been carried out gathering desk-based and fieldwork data. The documentary research was based upon primary and secondary sources of local history and architecture, including maps, drawings and reports. Particular attention was given to the Camden Local Studies. A site visit was conducted on 27th February 2018 when a review of the surrounding area was conducted by visual inspection to analyse the site and identify the relevant parts of the Belsize Conservation Area that would be most affected by the proposed works. Consideration has been given to its historical development and the building types and materials of the key buildings which contribute to the identification of the built form and the understanding of the special character of the area.

2.0. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1. The subject site is located on the west side of Belsize Crescent, London Borough of Camden. The rear part of No. 27 backs onto the north end of Daleham Mews. Belsize Crescent and Daleham Mews are both located within the Belsize Conservation Area (Figure 1).

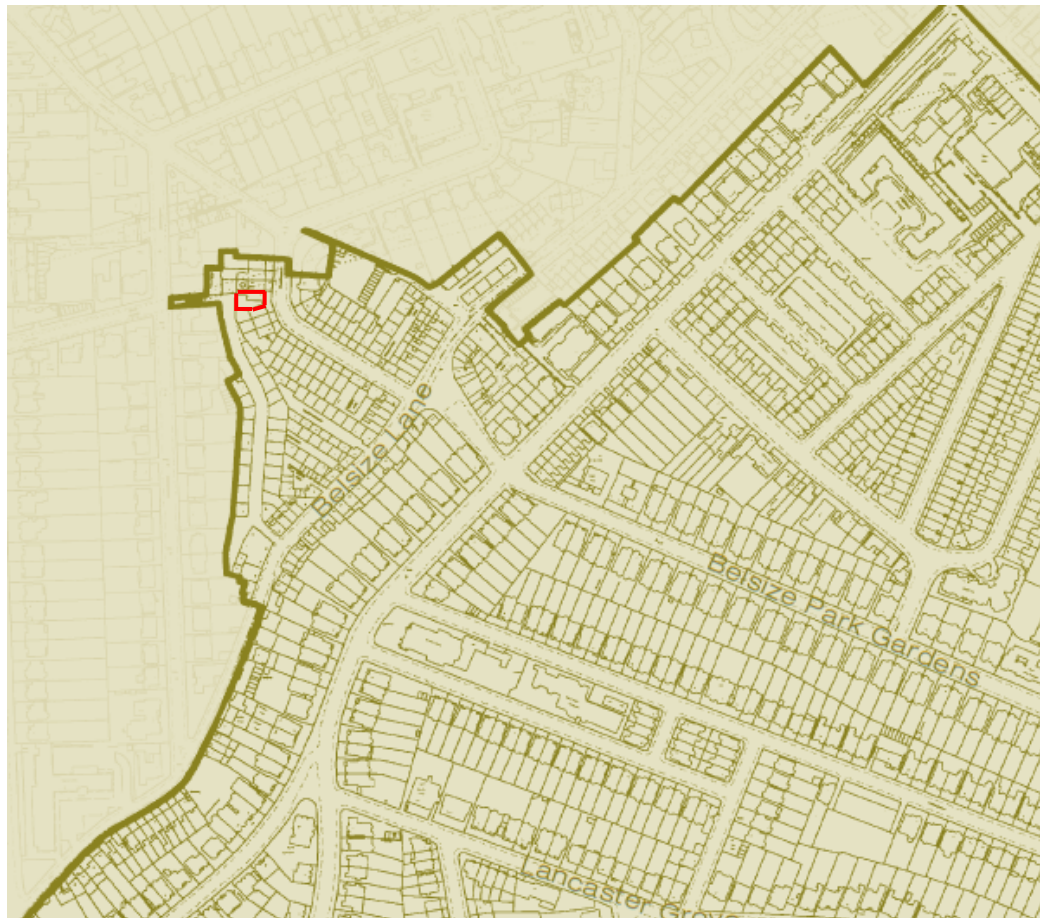


Figure 1: The location of the subject site within the Belsize Conservation Area.

- 2.2. The Belsize Conservation Area was designated in 1973 and was subsequently extended on a number of occasions; Belsize Crescent and Daleham Mews were located within the first designation. The Conservation Area Statement (adopted in 2003) has identified six Sub-Areas within the Conservation Area based on density of development, scale, style, materials, period and predominance of gardens and trees. The subject site is located within Sub-Area 2: Belsize Village. This area is characterised largely by terraces on a south-facing slope, constructed in a tight grain between the 1850s and the 1880s. Views are limited along short lengths of the streets which follow historic field boundaries and routes.
- 2.3. Belsize Crescent is an entirely residential street with terraces of three storeys over a semi-basement set back from the road with front gardens containing mature trees and planting to soften views along the curving sloped street. There is consistency in the use of materials and classical architectural detailing. The traditional features include barrel dormers, banded stucco to the ground floors, pitched slate roofs, pedimented surrounds to the windows, canted three-light bay windows and columned porticos. The prevailing boundary treatments are low stucco-rendered walls topped with bottle balustrading (Figures 2 and 3). However there is a distinctive change in architectural style and detailing to the northern end of Belsize Crescent, with a number of red brick houses built during the 1880s by builder-developer William Willett (No. 24 Belsize Crescent and 8 Arkenside Road). No. 24 is Grade II statutorily listed and is the only statutorily listed building in close proximity to the subject site; it is particularly distinctive within the streetscape with rubbed brick dressings in the Queen Anne style of asymmetrical composition and windows with small panes to the upper part (Figure 4). No. 27 is the only house within the mid-Victorian terraces on Belsize Crescent not to be identified as a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area – its unsympathetic alterations and loss of original detailing are highlighted as negative features within the Conservation Area Statement (Figure 2).
- 2.4. Streets of mews are distinctive within the sub-area, with Daleham Mews particularly consistent and retaining many original features. The simple two-storey mews are built of London stock brickwork with pitched slate roofs with a consistent roofscape (Figure 5). The degree of enclosure lessens at the northern end of Daleham Mews, allowing views to the rear of the buildings on Belsize Crescent, including the subject site at No. 27 (Figure 6).
- 2.5. The Council introduced an Article 4(1) Direction on most of the buildings within the Belsize Conservation Area in 2010, including those on Belsize Crescent. This applies only to those elevations facing the street and places additional planning controls on a number of alterations, including those which affect windows, boundary walls and front gardens.



Figure 2: Belsize Crescent (west side) looking south, the subject site indicated, illustrating the uniformity of the classical terraces; the loss of original architectural detailing and features at No. 27 are considered to be negative contributors to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



Figure 3: Belsize Crescent (east side) looking north showing uniformity in classical detailing, roofscape with barrel dormers (some altered), materials, fenestration patterns, boundary treatments and front gardens.



Figure 4: Belsize Crescent (east side) illustrating differing architectural styles at the north end with the Grade II statutorily listed No. 24 in the Queen Anne style located opposite the subject site.



Figure 5: Daleham Mews, south-west of the subject site looking south.



Figure 6: The looser grain of buildings at the north end of Daleham Mews allows views towards the rear elevations of the buildings on Belsize Crescent, including the subject site seen here.

3.0. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUBJECT SITE

- 3.1. The Belsize estate, with its frontage on both sides of Haverstock Hill, was an early magnet for merchants and others who wanted a country house within easy reach of London. Apart from the manor house of Belsize (built in 1663 within a pentagonally-shaped park), between 1679 and 1714 the number of houses increased from 6 or possibly 8 to 14; by 1808 there were still only 22. The whole estate suffered from the notoriety of Belsize House in the 1720s and 1730s when it was used as a fashionable resort and pleasure gardens; only three new houses were built between 1714 and 1750. In 1808 the Belsize estate was split into nine leasehold estates, largely based upon the traditional underleases and focussed on single houses. Until the 1850s Belsize was an area of country houses set in parkland, although a tranche of new villas and terraces fronting Haverstock Hill were built from 1815. The subject site was located in a field associated with Belsize Farm on the western boundary of the estate under the ownership of George Todd, one of the purchasers in 1808. Belsize House (rebuilt 1746-1812) was located south of Belsize Lane approached by a long tree-lined avenue (Belsize Avenue). Rosslyn House, one of the early buildings on the estate, stood immediately to the north of the subject site within its own park (Figure 7).

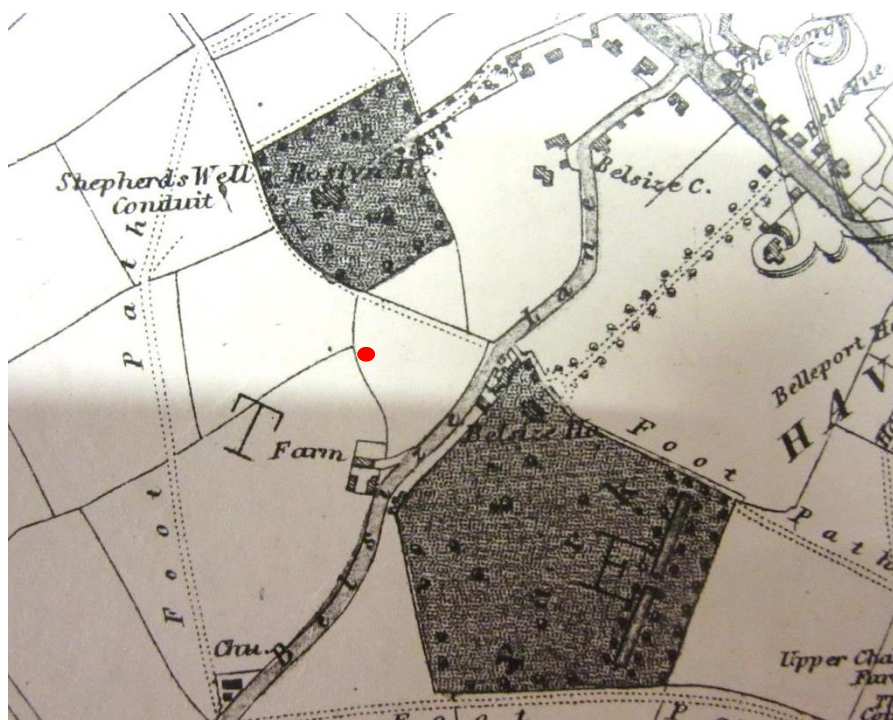


Figure 7: Wyld Map (1848), indicating the approximate location of the subject site.

- 3.2. By first edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1871 (Figure 8), Belsize House had been demolished after falling into decay for the development of a new exclusive square within the park walls; the walls were pulled down in 1864 however for development to the south of the square. The principal builder on the estate from the 1850s was Daniel Tidey, hence the name "Tidey Town". Tidey began at Buckland Crescent in 1856 with large stuccoed townhouses before moving onto Belsize Square, Belsize Park and Belsize Park Gardens during the 1860s; his training was rooted in the uniform classical terraces and villas of North Kensington and he followed this pattern at Belsize at a time when architectural fashions were changing. Indeed, the buildings were slow to sell, as Tidey and his family moved from house to house as they were built and awaiting sale; his last houses on Belsize Park Gardens did not sell quickly enough and he was bankrupt by 1870. The development had been aimed at wealthy professionals, with ample land left for the building of mews blocks on a large scale, but there had been little demand for extensive stabling, perhaps indicative of a lower class of resident than intended. There were many barristers, merchants, stockbrokers, fundholders, and clerks, ranging from senior civil servants to more lowly commercial clerks.
- 3.3. Belsize Crescent had yet to be laid out by 1870; the location remained a triangular meadow of 4½ acres likely because of plans to construct a railway tunnel. The Belsize Tunnel was built during the mid-1860s to link London with Bedford running through the field in which the subject site is now located; the line of the tunnel can be seen on the Ordnance Survey of 1871 (Figure 8). A ventilation shaft was located immediately adjacent to the location of the subject site.



Figure 8: Ordnance Survey (1871), indicating the location of the subject site.

- 3.4. Belsize Crescent was planned by Tidey prior to his bankruptcy as Prince Consort Road in 1865; he had sublet the development to builder William Willett. Building did not begin until 1876, when Willett built two terraces on the east and west sides of the road using the same classical architectural language as Tidey's houses but with unusual barrel dormer windows. The subject site had still not been built by 1878 (Figure 9). Owing to the irregular shape of the site, the houses were much more cramped and below the usual standard of finish on the estate; the road followed a curve leading only to an historic footpath to Rosslyn House. The curving western boundary was used as the line of Daleham Mews, still undeveloped by 1878 (Figure 9).

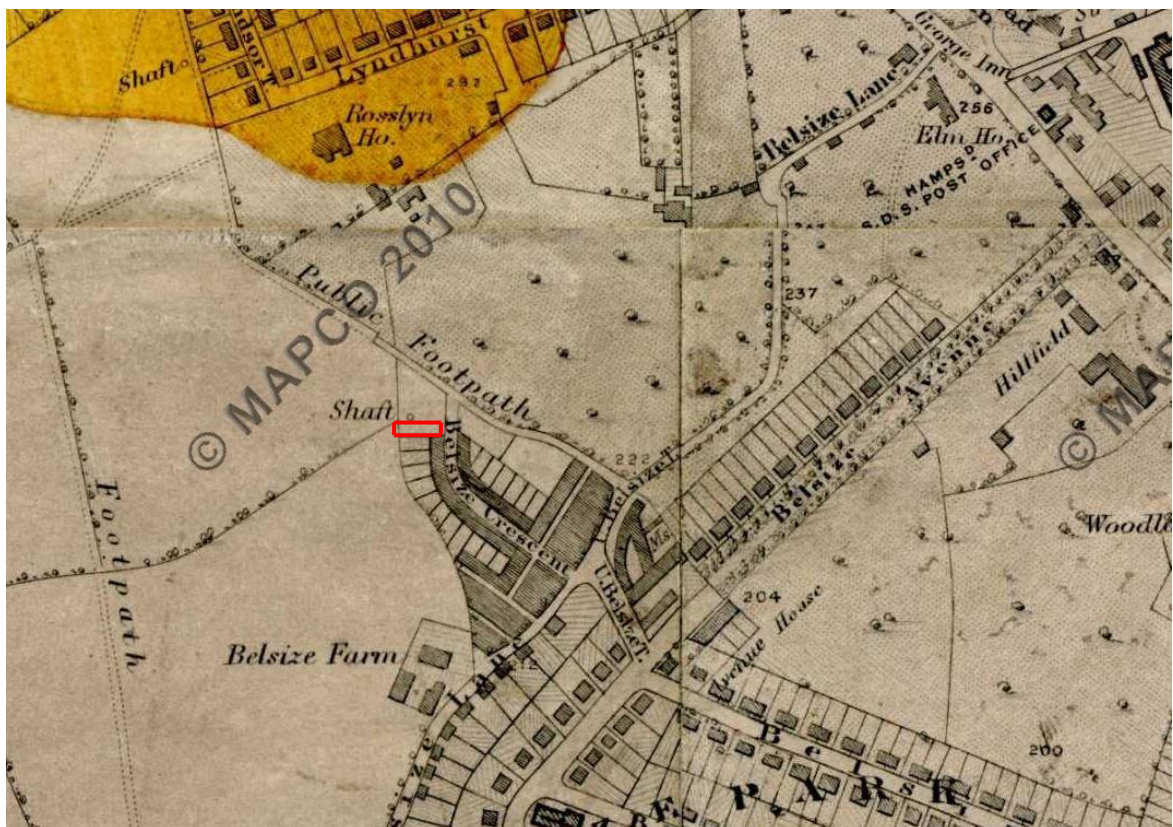


Figure 9: Stanford Map (1878), including the location of the subject site.

- 3.5. It is likely Willett constructed the terrace of four houses with the subject site at its south end shortly after 1878. These three-storey houses were built in the same by now old-fashioned classical style as the other terraces on Belsize Crescent with a raised ground floor with steps up from the street, pedimented surrounds to the first-floor windows, barrel dormer windows, incised stucco to the ground floor and a canted bay window (Figure 11). There appears to have been a side entrance to the south elevation which may either have been a tradesman's entrance with steps leading down to the lower ground floor (Figure 10). By the late 19th century, the front elevation appears to have been painted or rendered in its entirety. There was originally a low wall with bottle balustrading to the street as on the earlier houses and planting within the front garden (Figure 11). The terrace of four houses was deeper than the earlier buildings, with the houses filling the depth of the plot; on the subject site this meant a large rear projection with a bay window fronting the garden space. Opposite the subject site, Willett had built his own house at No. 24 in c.1886 in the Queen Anne style designed by Harry Measures, reputedly the first in the style in Hampstead (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Ordnance Survey (1895), the subject site outlined in red.



Figure 11: Belsize Crescent in c.1900, the subject site indicated.

- 3.6. Towards the end of the 19th century, however, a large number of the houses on the estate began to be converted to flats or even demolished in favour of mansion blocks as the wealthy and fashionable residents retreated up the hill. Many of the houses on Belsize Crescent were converted for use as boarding houses and apartments; the subject site was being run as a private boarding house under Mary Orr as early as the 1890s; Orr had at least three boarders in 1901, including a physician, a clerk and a musician and vocalist. Miss Eleanor Pollard ran the subject site as a boarding house from c.1914 to the early 1930s and she was succeeded by Mrs Margaret Twigg. The boarders broadly reflect the social make-up of the area at this time, when the inhabitants were predominantly young professionals of artistic or intellectual persuasions, making Belsize the centre of the artistic life of Hampstead by the 1930s. There was no recorded bomb damage on Belsize Crescent during the Second World War, and the footprint of No. 27 remained unchanged in 1955 (Figure 12). Many of the houses were in a poor and deteriorating condition by this time, however, with many freeholders selling all their properties in Belsize Crescent during the 1950s.

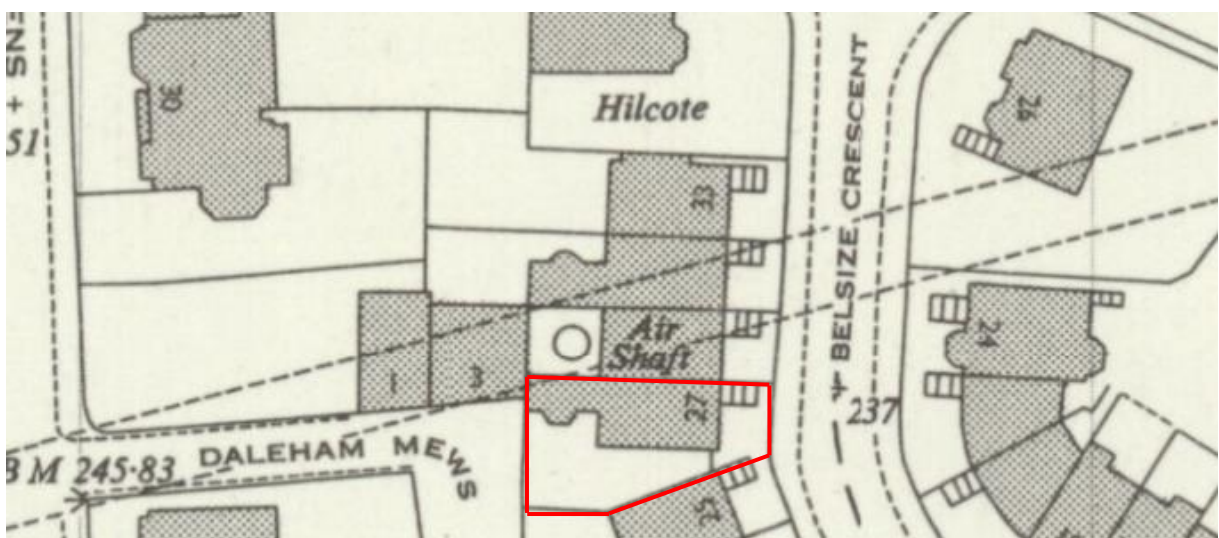


Figure 12: Ordnance Survey (1955), the subject site outlined in red.

- 3.7. In 1973, the subject site at No. 27 was converted from apartments to seven self-contained flats, one to each floor with the stairs between the lower ground and raised ground floors removed. The works were particularly extensive and can be seen in progress in Figure 13. All original four-panelled internal door can be seen stripped out on the street. The classical pedimented window surrounds and balustrading above the entrance porch and canted bay window were removed from the front elevation and all timber sash window were replaced with metal windows. The bottle balustrading was removed from the front boundary wall. The original barrel dormer window was replaced by two large incongruous flat-topped dormer windows (Figure 13). The rear projection was separated from the main house and converted to a two-bedroom house with its own access from Daleham Mews; the south bay window fronting the garden was removed at this time. A number of additional window openings were made, particularly on the side south elevation at lower ground floor level (Figure 15), and also to the rear room of the raised ground floor (Figure 14). Any original windows were replaced with metal windows at this time. The south chimney stacks (visible in Figure 11) were truncated above first floor level.



Figure 13: No. 27 during the early 1970s conversion (Camden Local Studies).

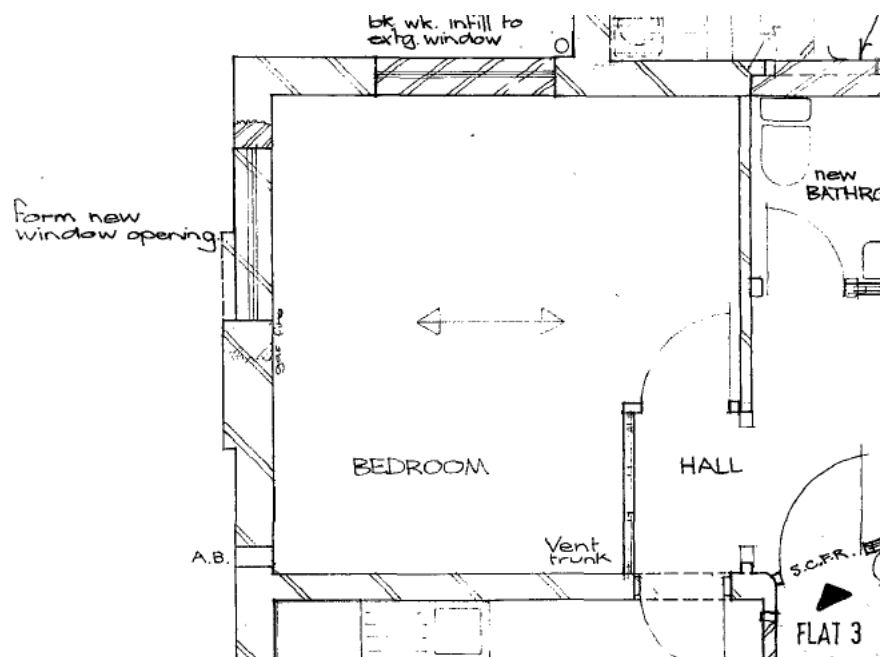


Figure 14: Conversion Plans from 1971 (raised ground floor) – this was an earlier unrealised plan, but it reveals the south window to the rear raised ground floor room was added during the 1970s.

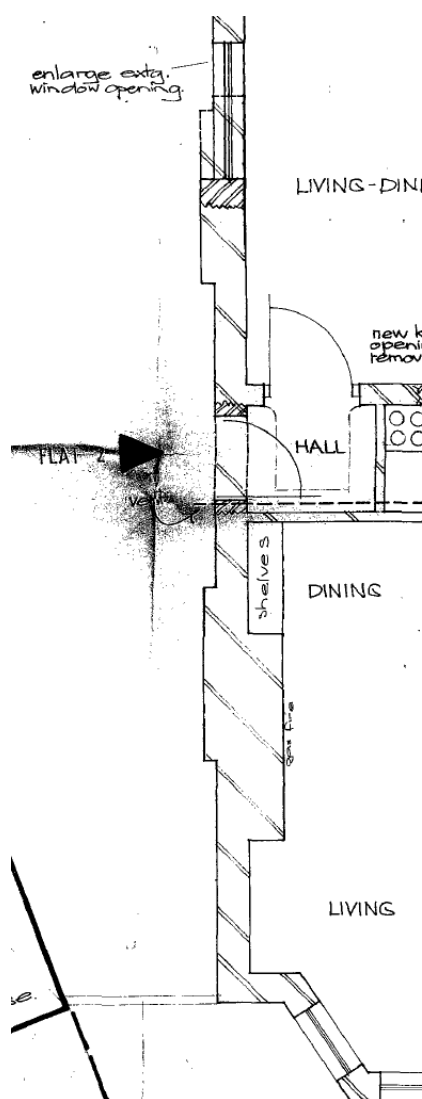


Figure 15: Conversion Plans from 1971 (lower ground floor) – this was an earlier unrealised plan, but it reveals the south windows to the side south elevation were added and altered during the 1970s.

- 3.8. The external appearance of the subject site remains unchanged from the early 1970s conversion. The front east elevation is devoid of architectural detailing to the window surrounds, whilst the dormer windows and large metal windows to the canted bay window are particularly incongruous (Figures 16 and 17). The lack of bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall and the unattractive hard landscaping to the front garden area contribute negatively to a streetscape which is defined by its uniform boundary treatments and soft landscaping (Figure 17). The access to the side of the house is via an unsightly solid timber fence and gate (Figure 17).



Figure 16: Front (east) elevation of No. 27 as existing.



Figure 17: Lower ground floor and front garden area of No. 27 as existing.

- 3.9. The appearance of the building is particularly disfigured to the south elevation as seen from Daleham Mews. The exposed London stock brickwork is of some quality in Flemish bond, but the 1970s alterations have been highly detrimental, including the truncation of the chimney stacks, the addition of a large number of new window openings to the south elevation and the subsequent use of inappropriate uPVC windows. The original rear part of the house now appears as an entirely separate building (Figure 18). At lower ground and raised ground floor level, a number of window openings have been added indicated by the concrete lintels and sills with some disruption to the brickwork pattern (Figure 19).



Figure 18: Side (south) and rear (west) elevations of No. 27 as existing.



Figure 19: Side (west) elevation at lower ground floor level to the east (left) and west (right).

4.0. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUBJECT SITE

- 4.1. The aim of a Significance Assessment is, in the terms required by Paragraphs 128-129 of the NPPF, a “*description of the significance of a heritage asset*”. In the context of a historic building which has been the subject of a series of alterations throughout its lifetime, it is also a useful tool for determining which of its constituent parts holds a particular value and to what extent. *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* (March 2015) states that understanding the nature of significance is important for understanding the need for and best means of conservation. Understanding the extent of that significance leads to a better understanding of how adaptable a heritage asset may be. Understanding the level of significance provides the essential guide as to how policies should be applied.
- 4.2. The descriptive appraisal will evaluate the unlisted building against listed selection criteria of ‘Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings’, DCMS, 2010. Historic England’s criteria outlined in ‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance,’ which partially overlap with the Statutory Criteria, have also been considered and encompass the following values:
- **Evidential Value** – relating to the potential of a place to yield primary evidence about past human activity;
 - **Historical Value** – relating to ways in which the present can be connected through a place to past people, events and aspects of life;
 - **Aesthetic Value** – relating to the ways in which people derive sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place;
 - **Communal Value** – relating to the meanings of place for the people who relate to it, and whose collective experience or memory it holds.
- 4.3. Although not officially considered to be one of the four principal values, **setting** is increasingly viewed as an important value that makes an important contribution to the significance of a heritage asset. This assessment of the contribution to significance made by setting should provide the baseline along with the established values used for assessing the effects of any proposed works on significance.

The level of significance for each value and the setting will be assessed using the following grading:

- **High** – values of *exceptional or considerable* interest;
- **Medium** – values of *some* interest;
- **Low** – values of *limited* interest.

4.4. Evidential Value

27 Belsize Crescent has been subject to substantial alteration in its lifetime. Although converted to apartments and multiple occupancy during the 1890s, the alterations of c.1973 stripped the building of almost all significant historic fabric and plan form. All architectural detailing was removed from the principal street elevation, including the distinctive Willett barrel dormer window and pedimented window surrounds to the first floor. Numerous additional ad-hoc window openings were created to the south elevation and the chimneys truncated. Any soft landscaping and the original bottle balustrading to the

front boundary wall was removed. All original windows were removed. The building therefore possesses little if any research value in revealing historic uses and activities. **Evidential value is therefore low.**

4.5. Historical Value

The historical value of 27 Belsize Crescent lies in its embodiment of the development of the area north of Belsize Lane during the second half of the 19th century; it is part of a typical classical terrace which characterised this period of development on the Belsize Estate by Daniel Tidey and William Willett. However, the terraces on Belsize Crescent were generally acknowledged to be of lower quality and more cramped than those elsewhere on the estate owing to the compact nature of the meadow plot. The terrace was built by William Willett who, increasingly with his son, became leading developer-builders in the area and throughout the suburbs of North London, but these early buildings were by no means innovative or distinctive like their later work. The early conversion of the building into apartments is illustrative of the social history of the wider area. **Historical value is therefore low to medium.**

4.6. Aesthetic Value

The aesthetic value of the Belsize Village Sub-Area resides in the number of uniform terraces with classical architectural detailing and use of stucco render, along with the attractive greenery within front gardens. 27 Belsize Crescent, although displaying original scale and form to the front (east) elevation in particular, has become somewhat of an unattractive “ghost” among its neighbours; the building has been disfigured by the removal of all original architectural detailing to the front elevation and the addition of incongruous dormer windows and metal windows throughout. The bottle balustrading to the front boundary and any attractive soft landscaping has likewise been lost. The extensive alterations to the rear and side elevations, particularly the truncation of the chimney stacks, the creation of numerous window openings in an ad-hoc and unattractive manner at lower ground floor level, and subsequent installation of uPVC windows at lower ground floor level are discordant with the original character of the building and its contemporary neighbours. The resulting poor-quality and plain facades provide No. 27 with undue negative prominence in the streetscape among its largely intact uniform terraces; indeed it is the only house within the classical terraces on Belsize Crescent not to be identified as a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area within the Council’s Conservation Area Statement. **Aesthetic value is therefore low.**

4.7. Communal Value

27 Belsize Crescent has always been a private residence (although in multiple occupancy for most of its lifetime) with no links to significant past events or persons of national or local note. The subject site therefore possesses **low communal value.**

4.8. Setting

The setting is divided between the suburban streetscapes of Belsize Crescent to the front east elevation and Daleham Mews to the rear west elevation. Both are located within the Belsize Conservation Area. The streetscape setting has a high-quality suburban character, comprising uniform classical terraces of three storeys, barrel dormers, and stucco architectural detailing with soft landscaping front gardens

behind low boundary walls and bottle balustrades. The streetscape comprises the distinctive Grade II listed No. 24 which is a landmark building located opposite the subject site. The rear elevation of the subject site is particularly prominent at the north end of Daleham Mews, one of the more intact mews within the Conservation Area. **The setting of the subject site is considered to be of low to medium value.**

4.9. Contribution to the Belsize Conservation Area

- 4.9.1. The following questions contained in the document *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (Historic England Advice Note 1, February 2016) might be asked when considering the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special architectural or historic interest of a Conservation Area. A positive response to one or more of the following may indicate that the site makes a positive contribution provided that its historic form and values have not been eroded.

Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?

Response: Yes. William Willett was one of the leading developers of the Belsize estate after 1870. The early classical terraces on Belsize Crescent are not his most original work, however, emulating the earlier terraces within the Belsize Estate designed by Daniel Tidey.

Does it have landmark quality?

Response: No. The building possesses no landmark qualities.

Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?

Response: Yes. The building was constructed at the end of the development on the former meadow on the north side of Belsize Lane after 1878. Its use of materials, form, scale and detailing in a classical idiom originally reflected many of the characteristics of the area and the road; however the front east elevation has been disfigured by the removal of all original detailing, windows and landscaping. The poor quality unattractive treatment of the side south elevation does not reflect the wider qualities of the Conservation Area.

Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?

Response: Yes. The building relates to the Grade II statutorily listed No. 24 Belsize Crescent – both were built during the late 1870s/1880s by William Willett as part of his development of this part of the estate.

Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?

Response: No. The detrimental alterations of the 1970s involving the removal of significant architectural features and detailing and addition of incongruous new elements have left the building a negative contributor to the setting of the Grade II listed No. 24.

Is it associated with a designed landscape eg. a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?

Response: No. Although the western boundary followed the historic field boundary which marked the western edge of the Belsize estate.

Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?

Response: Yes. The house illustrates the development of the Belsize estate and subsequent decline when many houses were converted into apartments. However the substantial loss of detailing and landscaping to the front elevation means that whilst it possesses a relationship in age and style with many of the other buildings on Belsize Crescent as part of a group, it is now the poorest example of the classical terraces which characterise the road and Belsize Village Sub-Area.

Does it have significant historic association with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?

Response: No. This plot was located on former agricultural fields.

Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?

Response: No.

Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?

Response: Yes. The area has always been predominantly residential consisting of classical terraces.

4.9.2. Summary of Contribution to Conservation Area

Based on the above assessment of an unlisted building within a Conservation Area, the subject site may be considered to be at best a neutral contributor to the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area, particularly the Belsize Village Sub-Area. However, despite some positive responses in the above checklist, the building itself is the poorest example of an unlisted classical terraced house on Belsize Crescent following detrimental disfiguring alterations and the removal of architectural detailing during the 1970s. **It is therefore considered that the subject site makes a neutral to negative contribution to the character and appearance of the Belsize Village Sub-Area and the Belsize Conservation Area generally,** confirming the conclusions of the Council's 2003 Conservation Area Statement. Indeed No. 27 is the only house within the classical terraces on Belsize Crescent not to be identified within that document as a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, but rather is singled out for its negative features.

5.0. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. The description of the proposal is accompanied by a series of drawings, as proposed, prepared by David Leech Architects in June 2018 which can be seen in **Appendix 1**. The proposals involve a number of internal and external alterations to the lower ground and raised ground floors, including:
- The removal of the existing usightly timber fence and side gate and the provision of a new metal semi-transparent gate/metal screen to the side of the front elevation;
 - The reinstatement of timber sash windows to the canted bay to the front elevation;
 - The reinstatement of bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall;
 - The reinstatement of soft landscaping to the front garden;
 - The alteration of the side window opening to the rear room of the raised ground floor to create a loggia space with internal glazed screen;
 - The rationalisation of the existing window openings to the side elevation at lower ground floor level, the provision a new pair of double doors and the reinstatement of metal framed windows.
- 5.2. The proposed development may have an impact on:
- The subject building at 27 Belsize Crescent;
 - The setting of the Grade II statutorily listed No. 24 Belsize Crescent;
 - The character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area;
 - The settings of the surrounding “positive” buildings on Belsize Crescent.
- 5.3. For the purposes of assessing the likely impact to result from the proposals and the subsequent impact on heritage assets, established criteria have been employed. If the proposed changes will enhance heritage values or the ability to appreciate them, then the impact on heritage significance within the view will be deemed **positive**; however, if they fail to sustain heritage values or impair their appreciation then the impact will be deemed **negative**. If the proposals preserve the heritage values then the impact will be deemed **neutral**.
- 5.4. Within the three categories there are four different levels that can be given to identify the intensity of impact:
- **"negligible"** – impacts considered to cause no material change.
 - **"minimal"** - impacts considered to make a small difference to one's ability to understand and appreciate the heritage value of an asset.
 - **"moderate"** - impacts considered to make an appreciable difference to the ability to understand or appreciate the heritage value of an asset.
 - **"substantial"** - impacts considered to cause a fundamental change in the appreciation of the resource.
- 5.5. The design ethos of the proposals are aimed specifically at repairing and restoring lost elements of significance to the south and east elevations of the lower ground and raised ground floors, thereby enhancing the aesthetic appearance of the house and also enhancing the surrounding historic environment.

- 5.6. The removal of the existing unattractive solid timber fence and gate, and the proposed installation of a new metal semi-transparent gate/screen will sustain and enhance the appearance of the gap between the houses that is illustrative of the phasing of the development on Belsize Crescent and the alignment of the former field boundary. The design is of an extremely “light touch” construction and, with a gap of 100mm between the screen and the houses, will appear as if it were freestanding – a “secret door” to the side garden of the subject site. **The semi-transparent nature of the design enhances an understanding of the important gap between the houses and is therefore considered to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, having a minimal and positive impact on its significance; there will be a negligible and neutral to positive impact on the setting of the Grade II listed No. 24 opposite.**
- 5.7. It is proposed to create an open loggia space to the south-west corner of the rear room of the raised ground floor with a glazed internal screen. The existing rear window opening is likely to be original and contains a metal framed window installed in 1973, whilst the existing side window opening was created in 1973 and also contains a metal framed window. The proportions of the original rear window opening will remain unaltered and the inappropriate metal window will be removed; the glazed internal screen with a single high-level transom will continue to give the impression and reflectivity of a window and will not detrimentally affect the appearance of the rear elevation. It is proposed to slightly enlarge the 1970s window opening to the side elevation to floor level and towards the rear; there will still be a clearly discernible strong brickwork corner to the corner of the building, sustaining the impression of an altered window opening; indeed the south elevation is the least sensitive elevation of the building and has already been subject to substantial visible change in terms of its fenestration. It is considered that this proposal will be a discreet alteration and barely discernible from the public realm on Daleham Mews; a “light touch” metal balustrade will reflect the semi-transparent design of the proposed new gate/screen to the front and will be imperceptible at ground level from the mews. With the internal glazed screen and minimal associated framing, the enlarged opening will still give the impression of a window opening and **so will not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, therefore having a negligible impact on its significance, character and appearance.**
- 5.8. The proposal to alter the existing window openings and replacement of the existing uPVC windows to the side elevation at lower ground floor level is considered to improve the existing disfigured appearance of the building from this aspect. With the possible exception of the doorway, all window openings were introduced in 1973; all windows are uPVC and the door is an unsympathetic modern replacement. The proposal will rationalise the openings between the two chimney stacks by better reflecting the proportions and arrangement of the windows to the upper floors, thereby improving the appearance of the side elevation. The existing inappropriate uPVC windows will be replaced by new metal windows with a white painted finish to match those on the upper floors of the building, thereby reinstating a more uniform and well-considered fenestration pattern. The proposed provision of a pair of double doors to the eastern side of the elevation is considered more appropriate to the garden setting of the building; the doors will be adjacent to the proposed new metal gate/screen and will be largely imperceptible from the public realm on either Belsize Crescent or Daleham Mews. **These proposals are therefore considered to have a minimal to negligible and positive impact on the appearance of the house, hence also on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.**

- 5.9. The remainder of the proposals affect the street frontage and principal east elevation of the house fronting Belsize Crescent, which currently makes a neutral to negative contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of the Grade II listed No. 24 opposite. It is proposed to reinstate painted timber sash windows to the canted bay to match those on more intact neighbouring houses, to reinstate bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall, and to reinstate soft landscaping to the front garden area, all of which were removed in 1973. Their loss has been highly detrimental to the aesthetic value of the building, the streetscape of Belsize Crescent and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These proposed enhancing works are in line with the Design Guide produced by the Council for the Belsize Conservation Area following the introduction of the Article 4 (1) Direction in 2010. This document encourages the reinstatement of original boundary treatments and the replanting of vegetation in front gardens where lost (Sections 6 and 7); the repair and restoration of original windows is encouraged in Section 1 of the document. **The reinstatement of these elements is considered to improve substantially the aesthetic value of the building on Belsize Crescent and will have a minimal and positive impact on the character and appearance of the Belsize Sub-Area and on the streetscape settings of the Grade II listed No. 24 Belsize Crescent and surrounding identified “positive buildings” on Belsize Crescent.**
- 5.10. Overall the proposals are considered to have a **minimal and neutral to positive impact** on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and on the setting of the Grade II listed No. 24 opposite. The proposals have been guided by a detailed understanding of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (particularly of the Belsize Village Sub-Area) and the contribution made by No. 27 to its significance in order to create a scheme which causes **no harm to any heritage assets, but rather offers substantial enhancements which begin to redress the negative contribution the building makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.**

6.0. POLICY COMPLIANCE AND JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

6.1. Camden Local Plan (2017)

- 6.1.1. The Local Plan was adopted by the Council on 3 July 2017 and has replaced the Core Strategy and Camden Development Policies documents as the basis for planning decisions and future development in the borough.

6.1.2. Policy D1 deals with design:

The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:

- *a. respects local context and character;*
- *b. preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage;*

The designs of the proposed alterations have been informed by the surrounding built environment on Belsize Crescent and the context of the side elevation which is partially visible from Daleham Mews. The proposed reinstatement of painted timber sash windows to the canted bay and bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall, together with the semi-transparent high-quality design of the proposed new metal

screen/gate are considered to be well-considered and sensitive alterations which will enhance the historic environment and the significance of heritage assets. The alterations to the window openings to the lower ground floor and reinstatement of painted white metal windows have been designed to regularise the existing somewhat ad-hoc and unattractive arrangement, thereby improving the appearance of the building to the side elevation and street frontage. The proposed loggia space to the south-west corner of the raised ground floor has been designed sensitively given the visibility from the public realm on Daleham Mews; the openings will still be understood as readable window openings and will retain an element of reflectivity and patterning by the internal glazed screen with high-level transom framing. Therefore, the proposals comply with Policy D1 by respecting the local context and preserving and enhancing the historic environment.

6.1.3. **Policy D2** deals with heritage:

The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

The impact of the proposals is not considered to cause no harm to any heritage assets. However there are a number of substantial enhancements offered by the scheme which will better reveal the significance of the Conservation Area, including:

- The removal of the existing unattractive timber fence and gate from the side of the house and the provision of a well-designed “light touch” metal screen/gate;
- The reinstatement of timber sash windows to the canted bay to the front elevation;
- The reinstatement of bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall;
- The reinstatement of soft landscaping to the front garden;
- The reconfiguration of the existing window openings and reinstatement of white painted metal windows to regularise and improve the appearance of the side elevation.

Conservation Areas

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas. The Council will:

- *e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;*
- *h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.*

The context of the subject site has been assessed fully in relation to its location within the Belsize Conservation Area, particularly the Belsize Village Sub-Area which is defined by uniform mid 19th century terraces with classical architectural detailing and soft landscaping within front gardens, alongside narrow smaller scale mews streets with simple detailing. The detailed assessment in Section 4 of this Heritage Statement accords with the findings with the Council's Conservation Area Statement, that the subject site at No. 27 as existing makes a neutral to negative contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area following poor-quality detrimental alterations during the early 1970s. The proposals are considered to offer substantial enhancements which will improve the aesthetic value of the building and will enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, namely the removal of the existing unsightly solid timber fence and side gate, the reinstatement of painted timber sash windows to the canted bay, the reinstatement of bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall, and the reinstatement of soft landscaping within the front garden area. The proposals to the side elevation are considered to

sustain and preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through the sensitive and well-considered design of the semi-transparent metal screen/gate and open loggia space, and the rationalisation of the fenestration to the lower ground floor; these proposals will be barely discernible from the public realm, but have responded to the prominence of the building on Belsize Crescent and Daleham Mews.

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. To preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings, the Council will:

- *k. resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.*

The proposals have been based on a detailed understanding of the development of Belsize Crescent, its history and architecture. This Heritage Statement has identified the key elements of the streetscape setting of the Grade II statutorily listed No. 24 and the currently neutral to negative contribution made by the subject site to that setting. It is not considered the proposals would cause any harm to setting of this statutorily listed building, rather they offer substantial enhancements by the reinstatement of traditional architectural features and soft landscaping to the front street elevation.

The proposals therefore comply with Policy D2 in relation to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, and in offering substantial public benefits to outweigh any perceived detriment.

6.2. London Plan (2016)

6.2.1. The London Plan is the overall strategic plan for London, and it sets out a fully integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of the capital to 2036. Chapter 7 sets out policies on a range of issues about the places and spaces in which Londoners live, work and visit. The policies are designed to create a city of diverse, strong, secure and accessible neighbourhoods, and a city that delights the senses which has the best of modern architecture while also making the most of London's built heritage (London Plan, para. 7.1.).

6.2.2. **Policy 7.8** deals with heritage assets and archaeology:

- **A** London's heritage assets and historic environment, including listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens and other natural and historic landscapes, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments, archaeological remains and memorials should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.
- **C** Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.
- **D** Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

The proposals have been based on a detailed understanding of the heritage significance of the subject site, the history and development of the local area, and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposals recognise the low heritage values of the building and the neutral to negative contribution it makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The design ethos of the scheme has been guided therefore by the enhancement of the historic environment and the contribution which the subject site makes to it, allowing the character and appearance of the

Conservation Area and setting of the Grade II listed No. 24 to be better understood and appreciated. The proposals therefore comply with Policy 7.8.

6.3. NPPF (March 2012)

6.3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced in March 2012 and provides a full statement of the Government's planning policies.

6.3.2. The NPPF contains a presumption in favour of sustainable development sympathetic to the conservation of designated heritage. The government's definition of sustainable development is one that incorporates all the relevant policies of the Framework contained within paragraphs 18 to 219. Paragraph 17 sets out twelve core planning principles and one of these is that planning should

'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'.

6.3.3. Other national core planning principles are that planning should 'take account of the different roles and character of different areas' and 'always seek to secure high quality design'.

6.3.4. Relevant NPPF Policies are found in Section 7 "Requiring Good Design" and Section 12 "Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment":

Paragraph 58. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.*

Paragraph 61. Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

The proposal has taken into account the evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values of 27 Belsize Crescent and its neutral to negative contribution to the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area on Belsize Crescent and Daleham Mews. The design of the proposed alterations has been based on a detailed understanding of the local context in order to preserve, sustain and enhance the significance of a number of designated heritage assets. The character and appearance of the streetscape of Belsize Crescent will be sustained by the sensitive and discreet alterations to the side elevation and will be enhanced by the proposals to reinstate lost significant architectural detailing and soft landscaping to the front street elevation, also enhancing the setting of the Grade II listed No. 24

opposite and the character and appearance of the Belsize Village Sub-Area as a whole. Therefore, the proposals comply with Section 7 of the NPPF 'Requiring Good Design'.

Paragraph 132. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

It is considered that the proposals would not cause any damage or loss of significance to the Belsize Conservation Area or the setting of the Grade II listed No. 24 Belsize Crescent. The proposals are considered to offer substantial enhancements which will improve the aesthetic value of the building and will enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, namely the removal of the existing unsightly solid timber fence and side gate, the reinstatement of painted timber sash windows to the canted bay, the reinstatement of bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall, and the reinstatement of soft landscaping within the front garden area. The proposals to the side elevation are considered to sustain and preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through the sensitive and well-considered design of the semi-transparent metal screen/gate and open loggia space, and the rationalisation of the fenestration to the lower ground floor. Therefore, it is argued that the proposals will not cause significant loss or substantial harm to the significance and setting of any heritage assets.

Paragraph 137. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

The impact of the proposal has been assessed in conjunction with the effects on the character, distinctiveness and significance of the historic environment. The proposal will sustain the elements which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, hence causing no harm. Opportunities for enhancements which will better reveal the significance of the Conservation Area and the contribution the subject site makes to it include:

- The removal of the existing unattractive timber fence and gate from the side of the house and the provision of a well-designed "light touch" metal screen/gate;
- The reinstatement of timber sash windows to the canted bay to the front elevation;
- The reinstatement of bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall;
- The reinstatement of soft landscaping to the front garden;
- The reconfiguration of the existing window openings and reinstatement of white painted metal windows to regularise and improve the appearance of the side elevation.

The proposed raised ground floor loggia will be barely visible from the public realm within the Conservation Area; it is a well-considered discreet response to suitably address the sensitive context of the building from Daleham Mews.

Paragraph 138. Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

This Heritage Statement has assessed the existing building according to latest guidance by Historic England and against a detailed understanding of the local character and context. The assessment found the existing building is the poorest example of a classical terraced house on Belsize Crescent owing to the substantial inappropriate removal of architectural detailing and addition of incongruous features in 1973. It is therefore considered that the subject site makes a neutral to negative contribution to the character and appearance of the Belsize Village Sub-Area and the Belsize Conservation Area generally. By definition therefore, the proposed repair and restoration of the principal street elevation at lower ground and raised ground floor levels will constitute substantial enhancements to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and tangible public benefit.

6.4. National Planning Guidance (PPG)

6.4.1. Available from March 2014, the PPG is an online guidance resource which is updated continuously.

6.4.2. Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 18a-003-20140306 - What is meant by the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment?

- *The conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle...Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets...In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time.*

The proposals recognise that the conservation of heritage assets must be in a manner appropriate to its determined significance and that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource. Equally important is the definition of 'conservation' as the 'active process of maintenance and managing change'. This is implicit in the proposed works to an unlisted building which currently makes a neutral to negative contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by offering enhancements through the repair and restoration of the principal front elevation and the removal and replacement of inappropriate later additions.

6.4.3. Paragraph: 019 Reference ID: 18a-019-20140306 - How can proposals avoid or minimise harm to the significance of a heritage asset?

- *A clear understanding of the significance of a heritage asset and its setting is necessary to develop proposals which avoid or minimise harm. Early appraisals, a conservation plan or targeted specialist investigation can help to identify constraints and opportunities arising from the asset at an early stage. Such studies can reveal alternative development options, for example more sensitive designs or different orientations, that will deliver public benefits in a more sustainable and appropriate way.*

A significance and heritage statement has been undertaken as part of this application and its findings incorporated into the design. Visual inspection of the building informed constraints and opportunities and there was a conscious effort to minimise the impact of the proposed works upon the significance of the Belsize Conservation Area and the settings of adjacent heritage assets.

7.0. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. The proposals have been designed so as to cause no harm to the significance of any heritage assets. The proposals to the lower ground and raised ground floors will both preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II statutorily listed No. 24 opposite the subject site; the proposals have been designed in an appropriate and sympathetic manner to sustain and enhance an understanding and appreciation of the significance of all heritage assets, including all other unlisted neighbouring houses identified as positive contributors to the Conservation Area.
- 7.2. The proposals are considered to have a minimal and neutral to positive impact on the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area and on the setting of No. 24. The proposed alterations to the side elevation, including the creation of the loggia to the south-west corner of the raised ground floor, the regularisation of the fenestration and provision of a pair of double doors to the lower ground floor, and the provision of semi-transparent metal screen/side gate are all considered to sustain the identified key characteristics of the Belsize Village Sub-Area on Belsize Crescent and Daleham Mews. The proposals offer substantial enhancements which will begin to redress the negative contribution the building currently makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as identified in the Council's 2003 Conservation Area Statement, including:
- The removal of the existing unattractive timber fence and gate from the side of the house and the provision of a well-designed "light touch" metal screen/gate;
 - The reinstatement of timber sash windows to the canted bay to the front elevation;
 - The reinstatement of bottle balustrading to the front boundary wall;
 - The reinstatement of soft landscaping to the front garden;
 - The reconfiguration of the existing window openings and reinstatement of white painted metal windows to regularise and improve the appearance of the side elevation.
- 7.3. The applicant has recognised the importance of performing investigations and analysis necessary for the assessment of the effects of the proposed works on the special interest of the surrounding heritage assets. This approach has been beneficial with regard to the process of acknowledging the best practice guidance as outlined in the NPPF and in local policies. It is considered that the information provided in this Heritage Statement is proportionate to the significance of the subject site. It sets out an appropriate level of detail sufficient to understand the potential heritage implications of the proposals in accordance with the proportionate approach advocated by Paragraph 128 of the NPPF.
- 7.4. The proposal is considered to sustain the special historic and architectural interest of the Belsize Conservation Area by preserving those elements of significance that have been identified as contributing to that special interest and removing those elements which are detrimental to that interest. It is therefore concluded that the proposed works satisfy the relevant clauses of the NPPF. These are consistent with the spirit of local, regional and national planning policies and conservation principles.

APPENDIX 1: PROPOSED DRAWINGS



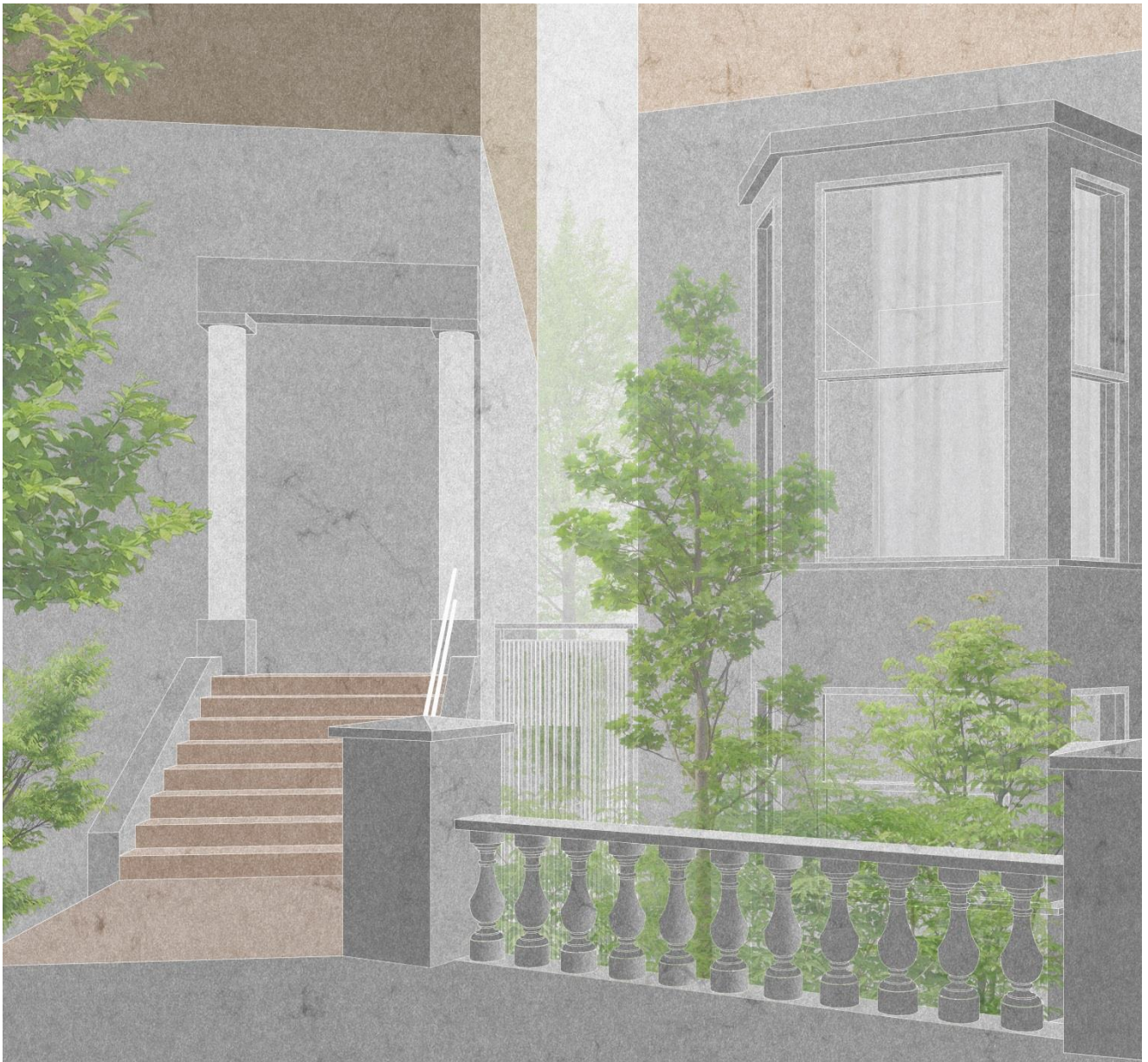
Proposed front (east) elevation.



Proposed rear (west) elevation.



Proposed side (south) elevation.



Proposed front garden view.