

**FORMER BELSIZE PARK FIRE STATION
36 LANCASTER GROVE, LONDON NW3 4PB
LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

MINOR MATERIAL AMENDMENT - PLANNING STATEMENT

Prepared By



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement accompanies an application for a minor material amendment to planning permission 2016/0745/P and Listed Building Consent by Vulcan Properties, the owner of the former Belsize Park Fire Station, 36 Lancaster Grove, Belsize Park.

Background

1.2 Belsize Park Fire Station closed on 9th January 2014 as part of the strategic planned closures by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA).

1.3 Belsize Park Fire Station is a Grade II* listed building. Such buildings are important assets. Vulcan Properties recognises that they are an irreplaceable resource and they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

1.4 In that regard, in 2017, Vulcan Properties secured listed building and planning consents 2016/0745/P, 2016/1128/L, 2016/5813/P, 2016/6119/L, allowing the *alteration and change of use of the former fire station to provide a total of 18 self-contained residential units, including replacement single storey side extension to east elevation and erection of two single storey side extension to west elevation and insertion of roof dormers, with associated external alterations, landscaping and parking.*

1.5 The applicants are in the process of implementing the above permissions.

The Proposal

1.6 Planning permission 2016/0745/P granted part change of use of the former first station to provide 11 self-contained residential units. As part of those works, permission was also granted to demolish and replace the single storey former fuel store (*right*) at the eastern end of the site, with a slightly larger building to accommodate a self-contained 1 bed dwelling. These works were granted and deemed sympathetic to the listed building.



FORMER FUEL STORE

1.7 However, during construction works on site and detailed design progress, it transpires that the floor-to-ceiling heights within the replacement structure are less than adequate.

1.8 Accordingly, this planning application (s.73, minor material amendment) and listed building consent, seek to amend the design of this part of the planning consent, to improve the functionality and overall appearance of the replacement structure.

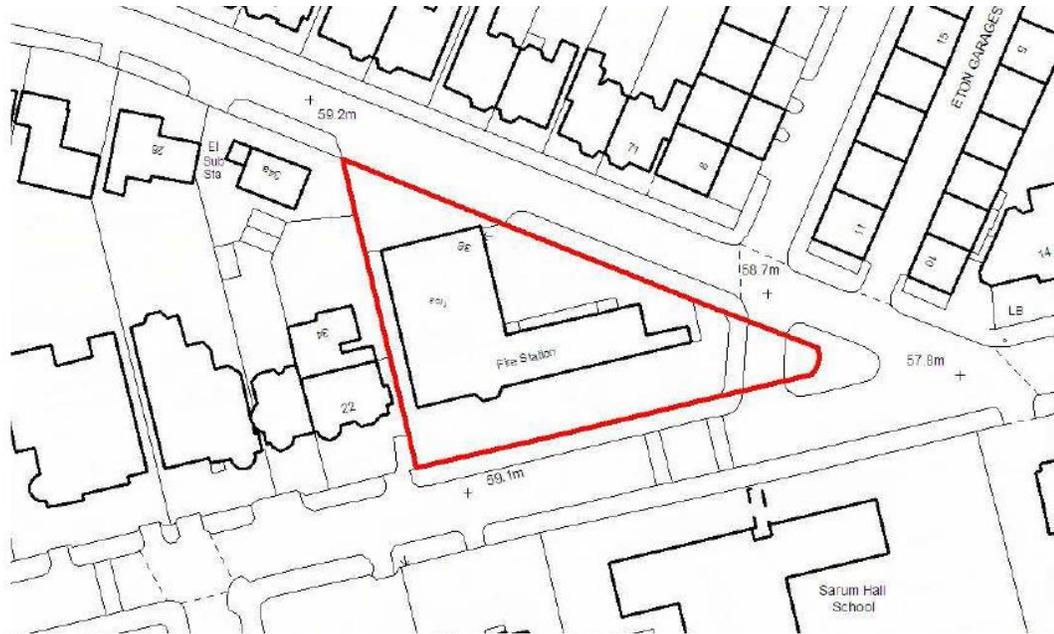
1.9 Prior to the submission of this application, the applicants have sought pre-application advice from Camden officers Charles Thuaire and Nick Baxter. Their comments are reflected in the final amendment proposals now sought.

Layout of this Document

- In section 2 we provide a summary of the background to these proposals.
- In section 3 we provide a description of the proposed amendments.
- In section 4 we identify the relevant planning framework and provide an assessment of the proposals against relevant policies and other material planning considerations.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSALS

2.1 The former Fire Station lies in Belsize Park at the junction of Lancaster Grove and Eton Avenue. The triangular shaped plot comprises 0.44 acres (0.1761 hectares).



SITE LOCATION PLAN

2.2 The building was designed by Charles Canning Winmill of the Fire Brigade Branch of the London County Council Architects Department and erected 1914-5. The building is Grade II* listed and is of special architectural merit.



BELSIZE PARK FIRE STATION (NORTH ELEVATIONS)

2.3 The building has an L shaped plan and comprises a part basement, ground/upper ground and first floor levels. There is also a substantial roof void at second floor level.

2.4 Elevations are constructed principally from brick. High architectural quality of an Arts and Crafts style is manifest in its design, detail and materials. The building is mostly intact, having not been extended or significantly altered externally.

2.5 The general exception, and the focus of this application, is the former fuel store located at the eastern end of the site.

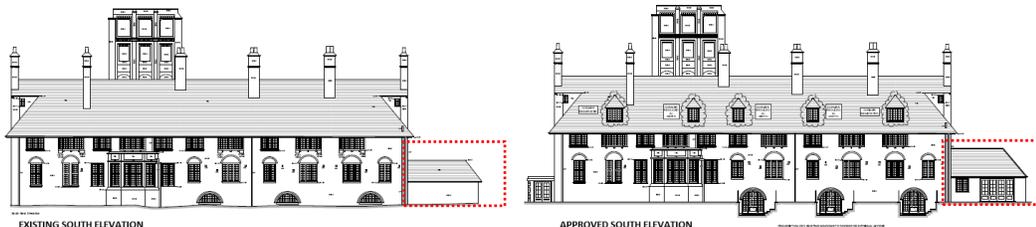


FORMER FUEL STORE

2.6 Whilst in the style of the main building, it lacks the design quality and detailing found elsewhere, and provides a more utilitarian appearance.

2.7 Planning permission and listed building consent was granted to demolish the store, as part of the wider works to convert the former fire station into 18 self-contained flats.

2.8 The replacement structure accommodates a self-contained 1-bedroom unit, spread over ground and first (attic) levels.

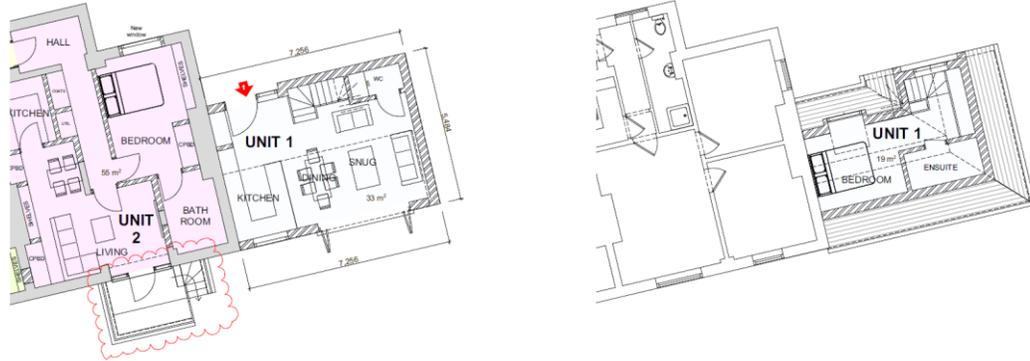


EXISTING AND APPROVED SOUTH ELEVATION

2.9 Works to implement the consent have commenced on site. During construction and detailed design development, it transpires that the floor to ceiling heights within the replacement structure are unsatisfactory. Accordingly, the new project Architects, Tate Harmer, have advised that the element of the proposals will need to be redesigned and the necessary consents achieved, prior to its construction.

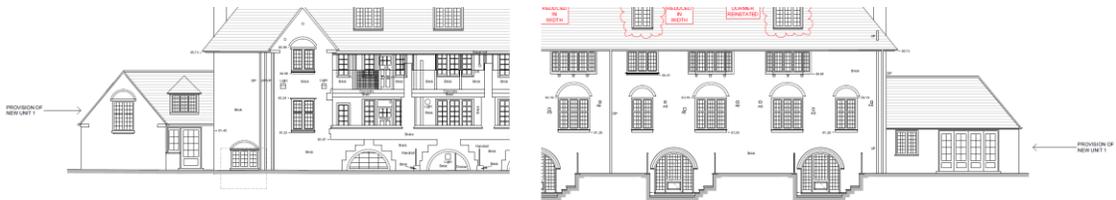
3.0 THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

3.1 The extant consent granted the redevelopment of the former fuel store, comprising ground floor entrance into open plan living/kitchen/diner, with stairs leading up to a first floor/attic level accommodating a double bedroom and en-suite.



APPROVED GROUND AND FIRST FLOOR OF REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE

3.2 Elevationally, the replacement two storey structure was designed in a style respectful to the host, and akin to the structure that it replaced. The north elevation comprised a dormer window to activate the roof space for habitable accommodation (bedroom).

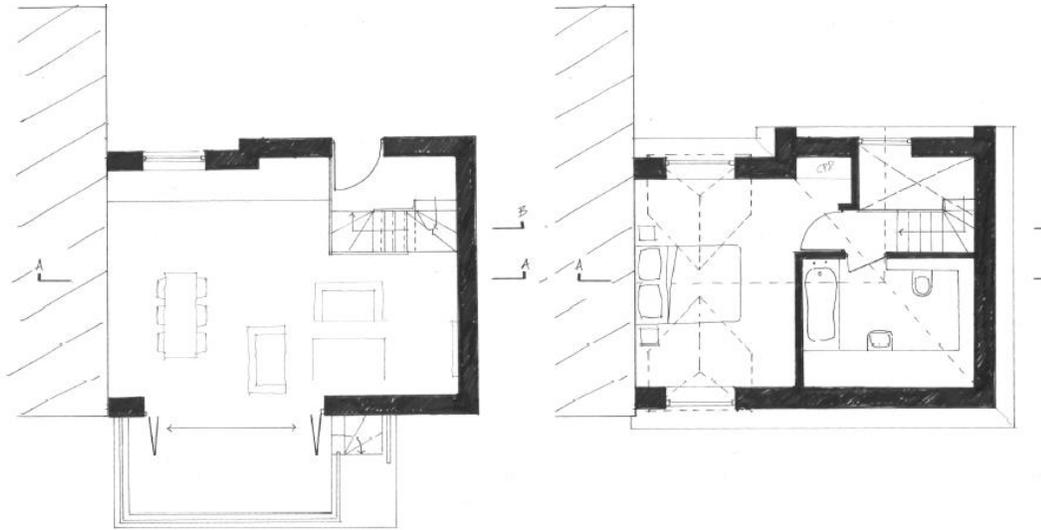


APPROVED NORTH (LEFT) AND SOUTH (RIGHT) ELEVATIONS OF REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE

3.3 The proposed amendment still seeks to demolish the former fuel store and construct a two-storey replacement comprising a one bed flat, however in order to provide adequate floor to ceiling heights, it is proposed to lower the ground floor further into the site, whilst maintaining the overall, above ground height (eaves and ridge) and relationship to the listed host.

3.4 A surface level ground floor entrance is maintained along the north elevation, albeit shifted further east along the façade. The entrance leads to a lobby which provides split level stairs down to the lowered/basement open plan kitchen/living/diner, and up to the first floor/attic double bedroom and bathroom.

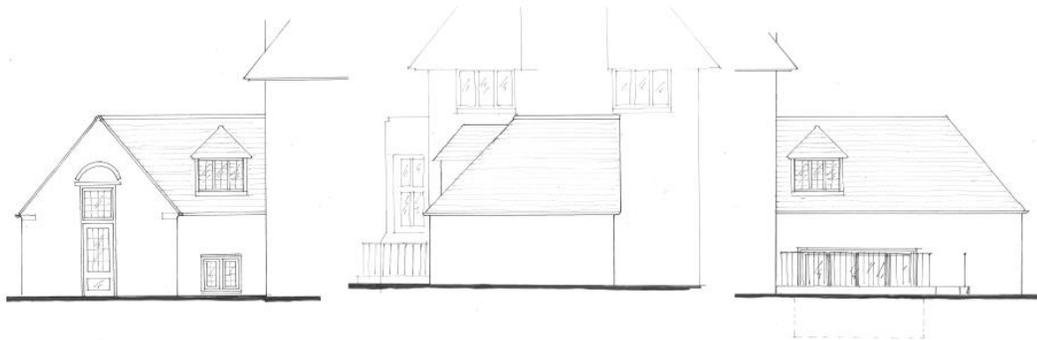
3.5 Along the south elevation, the kitchen/living/diner retains four pane bi-folding doors (as per the approved scheme), however given it is now lowered into the site, the room is served by a lightwell and associated railings at surface level. The proposed lightwell and railing are consistent with the other three lightwells approved further along the south elevation.



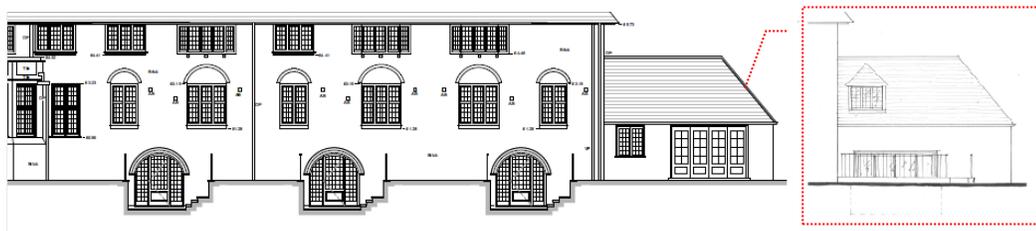
AMENDED LOWER GROUND/BASEMENT (LEFT) AND FIRST FLOORS (RIGHT)

3.6 Elevationally, the proposals seek to respect the approved scheme and listed host. The north elevation retains same proportions, eaves and ridge heights as the approved scheme, as well as the gable feature and dormer at first floor level.

3.7 Along the south elevation, again the main proportions, eaves and ridge height remain consistent with the approved scheme. The south elevation will see the bi-fold doors lowered into the site, however this is consistent with the existing lower ground level of accommodation and respective lightwells in the main building. The first floor sees the provision of an additional dormer window. This is to ensure that the floor to ceiling height is minimised, whilst allowing the unit to achieve appropriate internal floorspace.



AMENDED NORTH (LEFT), EAST (CENTRE) AND SOUTH (RIGHT) ELEVATIONS

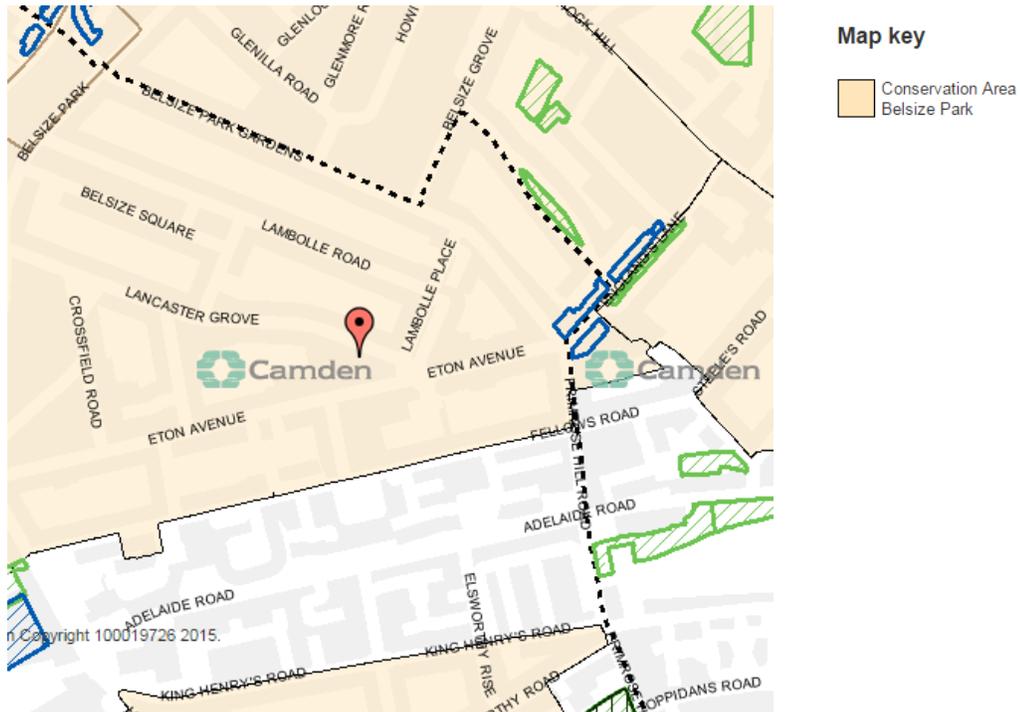


APPROVED SOUTH ELEVATION, AND AS PROPOSED REPLACEMENT (RIGHT)

4.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

4.1 The relevant planning framework comprises the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2018), Mayor's London Plan (2018) and the Camden Local Plan (2017).

4.2 The latter confirms that the site falls within the Belsize Park Conservation Area. The building is grade II* listed.



POLICIES MAP EXTRACT

4.3 The principle of demolition and replacement of the former fuel store has been established under planning permission 2016/0745/P and listed building consent 2016/1128/L. The consents have also established the principle of accommodating a self-contained 1 bed unit within the replacement structure.

4.4 It is considered that the only planning issue relating to the proposed minor material amendment (MMA) are design and heritage. Considering the additional excavation proposed as part of this amendment, officers have also requested a Basement Impact Assessment, the level of detail relative to the extent of excavation proposed and having regard to the established lower ground/basement area within the host.

a) Design and Heritage

4.5 Accordingly, the proposed amendment has been independently assessed by heritage architect Anthony Walker of DLG. Anthony Walker is a chartered Architect with a post graduate diploma in building conservation. He has been a visiting professor at Kingston University and lectures in MST courses at Cambridge and Leicester Universities.

- 4.6 We submit a copy of his appraisal as part of this application. We provide a summary of the pertinent discussions of that report below.
- *The overall dimensions of the unit are unchanged and the general disposition of the rooms and form of the building in an L shape are retained.*
 - *The lowest floor is set lower than as existing and is at the same level as the basement of the adjoining units which are formed out of the previous storage areas.*
 - *This has a significant impact on the quality of the accommodation provided by enabling the main bedroom on the upper floor to occupy a larger part of the upper floor instead of having to be inset to allow for the pitched roof above. The entrance is into the corner staircase thus freeing up the use of the lower floor and enabling the staircase to provide a lobby between the entrance and the rooms on the two floors.*
 - *The external elevations show more signs of alteration. The main entrance is located facing the courtyard on the northern side of the site. This relates better with the massing of the unit 1 extension positioning the doorway in the dominant form of the gable end in this elevation.*
 - *The sunken amenity area on the south side with a small staircase out the garden area is in keeping with the approved form of the similar amenity areas for the adjoining units 2, 3 and 4. This provides a more cohesive treatment of the southern façade.*
 - *A small dormer has been introduced on the southern slope of the roof which reflects the rest of the approved building design and supports the use of roof spaces with dormer windows which have been a feature of the building from the outset when the tall windows were a part of the identification of accommodation over the appliance bay. In the case of unit 1 and other residential units the smaller dormers reflect the smaller scale of the units.*
 - *The scale of unit 1 retains its role as a subsidiary extension to the main body of the building. The sunken courtyard retains the link with the adjoining units 2-4 and the linkage between the unit and the garden area*
- 4.7 The development of the design for unit 1 has improved the quality of the space provided while retaining the essential relationship between this extension and the main building.
- 4.8 It retains the architectural language of the historic building and that of the other approved alterations.
- 4.9 The proposed alteration to the main door provides a clear marker for its location and importance while providing a better relationship with the other main entrances.
- 4.10 It is concluded that the proposals comply with both national and local conservation legislation and guidance and conserve the building and the conservation area in accordance with their significance.
- b) Basement Impact Assessment**
- 4.11 A BIA/ structural report has been prepared by Coyle Kennedy and is submitted in support of this application.

- 4.12 The report confirms that the half basement is to be constructed with a 400 thick raft bearing slab with 225 thick cantilevered RC retaining walls. The structural slab level is to match the floor level of the adjacent existing lower ground within the main fire station.
- 4.13 From visual inspection of the light well excavations for Units 2 to 4, the existing ground strata is made up of 500mm of made ground overlying the London Clay Formation, comprising firm to stiff silty clay. No ground water was encountered within these lightwell excavations, but groundwater will be assumed to be 500 below existing ground for design purposes and buoyancy checks.
- 4.14 At present, planning has been approved for the Unit 1 flat consisting of 2 levels, starting from ground level. The amended application requests, for the extension to be lowered into the ground by 1.6m with the addition of a lightwell to the south side with the main structure having the same footprint. This will also allow for increased head heights within the floor levels.
- 4.15 The new drainage system for the site also has a low invert level to accommodate the lower ground levels for Units 2 to 4. Lowering the Unit 1 flat to the same level as Units 2-4 will have no effect on the surrounding areas surface water capabilities.

5.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This statement has been prepared on behalf of Vulcan Properties Limited.
- 5.2 The proposed minor amendment (s73) sought to the replacement fuel store structure/unit 1 will improve the quality of the space approved while retaining the essential relationship between this extension and the main building.
- 5.3 The proposed amendment, which essentially sees the greater excavation of the 'ground floor' level of accommodation to provide more appropriate floor to ceiling heights internally, will retain the architectural language of the historic building and that of the other approved alterations, as viewed from the exterior.
- 5.4 The proposed alteration to the main door provides a clear marker for its location and importance while providing a better relationship with the other main entrances.
- 5.5 Regarding the additional excavation, the submitted BIA confirms that the further 1.6m excavation required will have no impact from a structural perspective. It will have no bearing on neighbouring properties which are some distance away.
- 5.6 It is concluded that the minor material amendments proposals comply with both national and local planning and conservation legislation and guidance and conserve the building and the conservation area in accordance with their significance.