

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (CONTROL OF
ADVERTISEMENTS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2007**

APPEAL

BY

OMNIDE

96 Belsize Lane, London, NW3 5BE

ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT

FOR

Display of 1 x externally illuminated fascia and 1 x externally illuminated projecting signs.

LPA REF: 2018/4034/A

STATEMENT OF CASE

February 2019

19.5016

Report Control

Project:	96 Belsize Lane
Client:	Omnide
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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of the appeal against the refusal of Advertisement Consent by the London Borough of Camden in respect to the installation of an externally illuminated fascia and projecting sign measuring 0.5m (h) x 2m (w) and 0.3m (h) and 0.35m (w) respectively. The signs are constructed from laser cut aluminium lettering and externally illuminated by discretely designed backlighting. None of the signs are internally illuminated.
- 1.2 The application was registered on 28 August 2018 under local planning authority reference 2018/4034/A and determined under delegated authority on 12 December 2018.
- 1.3 The application was submitted along with a separate application seeking planning permission for alterations to the shopfront under application reference 2018/4033/P. This application was refused along with the application for advertisement consent which is the subject of this appeal.
- 1.4 The application was refused on grounds of harm to visual amenity. The application was refused for a single reason for refusal noting a single Local Plan Policy D4 (advertisements) as follows:

'The fascia sign, by virtue of its size, design, location and method of illumination, would be a dominant and incongruous feature that would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host and adjacent buildings, the conservation area and the residential streetscape, contrary to policy D4 (Advertisements) of the Camden Local Plan 2017'
- 1.5 The Appellant contests the reasons for refusal and does not consider that the proposal causes undue harm to the appeal site, wider streetscene or surrounding Conservation Area.
- 1.6 The advertisements, by virtue of their high quality, simple design, using discrete external illumination are entirely fitting for this modern shopfront and do not unduly harm the character or appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area.
- 1.7 Therefore, we conclude that this appeal against the refusal of the Council to grant Advertisement Consent should be allowed.

2. BACKGROUND

The Site

- 2.1 The Appeal site is a three storey end of terrace property located on the western side of Belsize Lane on the corner with Daleham Mews. The site is located at the end of a terrace of properties with commercial premises at the ground floor.
- 2.2 The site is located within the Belsize Conservation Area.

Planning History

- 2.3 The relevant planning applications for the appeal site have been listed in table 1 below. As can be noted, the appeal site has been functioning as commercial premises for many years with permission granted for a shopfront back in 1980.
- 2.4 An application for planning permission for a replacement shopfront was jointly submitted alongside the application for advertisement consent as referenced below (2018/4033/P and 2018/4034/A).

Table 1: Planning history of the Appeal Site

Application reference	Address	Description of Development	Decision	Date
2018/4033/P and 2018/4034/A	96 Belsize Lane LONDON NW3 5BE	Installation of a new shopfront. Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia and 1 x internally illuminated projecting signs.	Refused	12.12.2018
2015/1690/P	96 Belsize Lane LONDON NW3 5BE	Change of use from retail unit to B1 office.	GRANTED	22.04.2015
G7/8/7/30353	96 Belsize Lane LONDON NW3 5BE	The installation of a new shop front.	GRANTED	08.01.1980

- 2.5 Table 2 below details some relevant planning history for the surrounding area. This table demonstrates a clear precedent that has been set regarding the incorporation of illuminated advertisements both along Belsize Lane and the shopping row along the nearby Belsize Terrace.

Table 2: Planning history of the surrounding area

Application reference	Address	Description of Development	Decision	Date
2018/2489/A	Former Village Close Garages 21 Belsize Lane London NW3 5AS	Temporary display of an externally illuminated advertisement board	Granted	10.09.2018
2014/0534/A	Haute Coiffure 33 Belsize Lane London NW3 5AS	Display of 1x externally illuminated fascia sign and 1x non-illuminated projecting box sign.	Granted	31.01.2014
2006/1652/A	Belsize Tavern 29 Belsize Lane London NW3 5AS	Display of an advertisement hoarding for a temporary period of 8 months around the front forecourt of the building.	Granted	10.04.2006
2005/4806/A	Belsize Tavern 29 Belsize Lane London NW3 5AS	Display of two externally illuminated signs on the existing fascia.	Granted	17.11.2005
AWX0103813	12 Belsize Terrace, NW3 4AX	Display of an externally illuminated fascia sign, single projecting sign and advertisement Canopy	Granted	26.09.2001
AW9802693	48-50 Belsize Lane, NW3	Display of an externally illuminated fascia sign measuring 600 X 440mm, lit by four small spot lights	Granted	31.05.1998
9480139	10 Belsize Terrace NW3	The display of externally illuminated main fascia sign measuring 4750 X 600mm and a projecting sign measuring 0.5 X 0.9m	Granted	08.09.1994

9280057	12 Belsize Terrace NW3	Display of a fascia sign lit by three spot lights	Granted	13.04.1992
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3. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy / Legislation

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2018

- 3.1 The following paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (hereafter referred to as the NPPF) should be considered in relation to this case.
- 3.2 Paragraph 80 relates to economic growth and states that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt and that *significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development*. It states further that *this is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential*.
- 3.3 Section 12 refers to design. Paragraph 127 states that planning policies and decisions should 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 and that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
- 3.4 Section 16 refers to the historic environment and requires the decision maker to consider whether the proposal sustains and enhances the significance of the heritage asset, making a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (paras 193-197). If the development would lead to less than substantial harm (the Appellants position) then the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use and, importantly in this case, significantly improvements to public health.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 3.5 The NPPG was launched in March 2012 as a web-based resource to bring together planning practice guidance for England in an accessible and usable way. The NPPG sets out guidance on a wide range of topics including, advertisements. It makes clear that the display of advertisements is subject to a separate consent process within the planning system. This is principally set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.
- 3.6 Camden Council refused Advertisement Consent due to its impact on visual amenity only. In assessing amenity National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides the following advice:

“...In assessing amenity, the local planning authority would always consider the local characteristics of the neighbourhood: for example, if the locality where the advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, the local planning authority would consider whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features..”
(Paragraph 79)

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

- 3.7 The regulations make it clear that power can be exercised only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors. The regime is therefore a lighter touch than the system for obtaining planning permission for development.

Local Plan Policy - The Development Plan

- 3.8 For the purposes of this appeal, the adopted Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden comprises the London Plan (2016), the Local Plan (2017) and the Camden Planning Guidance Documents.

Camden Local Plan (2017)

- 3.9 The Camden Local Plan sets out the Council’s planning policies and covers the period from 2016-2031. The reason for refusal refers to a single policy of the Local Plan - Policy D4 (advertisements) as set out below:

Policy D4: Advertisements

The Council will require advertisements to preserve or enhance the character of their setting and host building. Advertisements must respect the form, fabric, design and scale of their setting and host building and be of the highest standard of design, material and detail.

We will support advertisements that:

- a. preserve the character and amenity of the area; and*
- b. preserve or enhance heritage assets and conservation areas.*

We will resist advertisements that:

- c. contribute to an unsightly proliferation of signage in the area;*
- d. contribute to street clutter in the public realm;*
- e. cause light pollution to nearby residential properties or wildlife habitats;*
- f. have flashing illuminated elements; or*
- g. impact upon public safety.*

The Council will resist advertisements on shopfronts that are above fascia level or ground floor level, except in exceptional circumstances. Shroud advertisements, banners, hoardings / billboards / large outdoor signboards are subject to further criteria as set out in supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on advertisements.

4. THE ISSUES

4.1 The Council refused the application for the following reason:

'The fascia sign, by virtue of its size, design, location and method of illumination, would be a dominant and incongruous feature that would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host and adjacent buildings, the conservation area and the residential streetscape, contrary to policy D4 (Advertisements) of the Camden Local Plan 2017'

4.2 It must be recognised that the reason for refusal refers only to the fascia sign and does not refer to the projecting sign. The projecting sign, which is externally illuminated and of a modern design consistent with that of the fascia sign, is acceptable.

4.3 Furthermore, the Council did not consider there to be a breach of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 Act nor any breach of national policy contained in the NPPF. The single reason for refusal considers a breach against Local Plan Policy D4 (Advertisements) only.

4.4 The Appellant sought clarity regarding the Council's position and turned to paragraphs 5.2 – 6.3 of the officer's delegated report (Appendix 2) which considers the acceptability of the proposed signage. The report discusses the merits of both the projecting sign and fascia sign and assesses the acceptability against Local Plan policy D4 (advertisements) with regard to visual amenity, highway safety.

4.5 Officers have concluded neither the fascia nor projecting sign raise any concerns regarding highways safety. The concerns relate to visual amenity only.

Projecting sign

4.6 As discussed in paragraphs 5.2 - 5.5 of the delegated report (Appendix 2), the size and position of the projecting sign raise no concerns. Rather, the method of illumination and the materials (brushed aluminium) are considered to be inappropriate. However, these concerns are not detailed within the reason for refusal and thus it must be concluded that the concerns raised in the report were not so sufficient as to warrant refusal of consent.

4.7 With regard to the illumination, the sign is lit by a small, vertical LED strip, discretely incorporated within the fascia board (as detailed on drawing no. A3.00 rev00). The discrete method of illumination is entirely in keeping with the modern shopfront which has been in place for many decades. Similarly, the use of brushed aluminium again befits both the modern shopfront and is entirely in keeping with materials used elsewhere on shopfronts along Belsize Lane and Belsize Terrace. The merits of these are discussed in more detail within section 5 of this statement.

Fascia Sign

- 4.8 Paragraphs 5.6 - 5.10 of the delegated report (Appendix 1) discuss the merits of the fascia sign. Whilst the reason for refusal specifically states the fascia sign to be contrary to Local Plan Policy D4 (Advertisements) confusingly, officers conclude within paragraph 5.7 which specially discusses the merits of the fascia sign;

'The proposed lettering of the sign is acceptable in terms of size, design, location and method of illumination – similarly to the illuminated projecting sign'.

- 4.9 The delegated report goes on to discuss the unacceptable size of the fascia board associated with the separate shopfront application (2018/4033/P) however fails to acknowledge the application proposes no change to the size of the existing fascia board. The relatively modern shopfront and fascia board have been in place for many years and the application was very clear in this regard as shown on submitted drawing no. A2.00 rev00.
- 4.10 The Appellant understandably remains unclear of the reasons why the lettering was eventually concluded to be unacceptable to the Council. Nevertheless, section 5 of this statement discusses the merits of the signage (fascia and projecting sign) in terms of its size, design, location and method of illumination as detailed within the single reason for refusal.

5. THE APPELLANT'S CASE

5.1 As noted in section 4, there is some confusion regarding the exact nature of the Council's objection to the application for Advertisement Consent. Whilst the reason for refusal notes only the fascia sign to be contrary to Local Plan policy, the delegated report raises concerns with only the projecting sign with regards to the method of illumination and materials.

5.2 That said, this section will discuss the merits of both the fascia and projecting sign in turn with regard to relevant national and local plan policies.

5.3 Firstly, it is important to consider the context, character and appearance of the appeal site when assessing the proposal against Local Plan Policy D4 which states;

*'The Council will require advertisements to preserve **or** enhance the character of their setting and host building preserve **or** enhance the character of their setting and host building';*

5.4 As noted within earlier sections of the report the host building, whilst traditional in form and detailing, occupies a longstanding shopfront of relatively modern proportions and detailed design. So any application must be considered against this context when determining the harm caused to the prevailing character and appearance of the host building.

5.5 The application as detailed by the Appellant, did not seek to alter the proportions of the existing fascia, merely sought to install the necessary signage befitting both the modern character and appearance of the existing shopfront.

5.6 With regards to materials, the use of laser cut aluminium lettering is again sensitive to both the modern proportions and detailed design of the shopfront and material palettes seen elsewhere immediately along Belsize Lane. Notably, nos. 100A; no.88 and no. 74 Belsize Lane.

5.7 With regard to the method of illumination, again a precedent has been set with external illumination incorporated within a number of shopfronts along both Belsize Lane and Belsize Terrace. This is highlighted within table 2 which sets out the planning history for a number of the shopfront in the immediately vicinity.

5.8 As detailed within drawing no. A3.00 rev 00 the external illumination proposed to both the fascia and projecting sign is discretely and sensitively designed, to provide a subtle backlighting effect to both the fascia and projecting sign. This approach is considered entirely appropriate.

5.9 Not only would the size, location, design (materials) and illumination of both the fascia and projecting sign preserve or enhance the character and appearance of both the appeal site and surrounding Conservation Area but it also play a positive role in the vitality of the local economy. The importance of recognising the needs of local business when Local Planning Authorities make planning decisions is emphasised by the NPPF (paragraph 80).

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The appeal proposal is for two externally illuminated signs to the shopfront at 96 Belsize Lane. The projecting sign and fascia sign are constructed from laser cut aluminium lettering and externally illuminated via discretely designed, soft backlighting.
- 6.2 The size and location of the signs respond to the relatively modern proportions and detailed design of the long standing shopfront. Furthermore, the materials and method of illumination are entirely in keeping with the material palette and illumination of nearby shopfronts both along Belsize Lane and Belsize Terrace.
- 6.3 As such the proposals successfully preserve and enhance both the character and appearance of the host building and Belsize Conservation Area in accordance with the relevant national and local planning policies.

APPENDIX 1 – SITE PHOTOS



Existing



Proposed – as built

APPENDIX 2 – OFFICER’S DELEGATED REPORT

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	12/10/2018
		N/A	Consultation Expiry Date:	30/09/2018
Officer		Application Number(s)		
Matthias Gentet		1) 2018/4033/P 2) 2018/4034/A		
Application Address		Drawing Numbers		
96 Belsize Lane LONDON NW3 5BE		Refer to Decision Notice		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
1) Installation of a new shopfront. 2) Display of 1 x internally illuminated fascia and 1 x internally illuminated projecting signs.				
Recommendation(s):		1) Refuse Planning Permission 2) Refuse Advertisement Consent		
Application Type:		1) Full Planning Permission 2) Advertisement Consent		

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice
Informatives:	

Consultations

Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
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Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A Site Notice was displayed on 31/08/2018 and expired on 24/09/2018, a Press Advert was published on 06/09/2018 and expired on 30/09/2018, and a Consultation Letter was issued on 29/08/2018 and expired on 19/09/2018.</p> <p>No response were received.</p>
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Belsize Conservation Area Advisory Committee	The Belsize Conservation Area Advisory Committee have no objection to the proposal.
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Site Description

The site address is a three-storey end of terrace property with mansard on the western side of Belsize Lane and on the corner with Daleham Mews. The row of terraces consist of commercial units at ground floor level with residential to upper floors. The door access to the residential flats above the site address is on the Daleham Mews elevation of the property and are known as No29A Daleham Mews.

The site address is in Belsize Conservation Area but is not listed.

Relevant History

Site History:

2015/1690/P – (granted on 22/05/2015) - Change of use from retail unit to B1 office.

2008/5781/P – (granted on 07/04/2009) - Change of use from Class B1 office to Class A1 shop/ Class A2 use on ground floor and basement.

37239 – (granted on 12/01/1984) - Installation of a new shopfront.

G7/8/7/30353 – (granted on 08/05/1980) - The installation of a new shop front.

Adjacent Sites History:

No31 Belsize Lane

2006/2023/P – (granted on 07/07/2006) - Installation of a new shop front; infilling of basement rear courtyard and the erection of a partial width rear extension of the ground floor; and change of use of rear section of the ground floor from retail (Class A1) to restaurant space (Class A3), for use in connection with the existing restaurant use at no. 29 Belsize Lane.

Adjacent Sites Enforcement History:

Belsize Lane

No21

EN18/0619 - Unauthorised display of an externally illuminated advertisement board connected to application reference: 2018/2489/INVALID – Case Closed on 04/10/2018 [Consent granted]

No37-39

EN18/0812 - Unauthorised shopfront, access ramp, security roller shutters and roller shutter box and externally illuminated signage – Ongoing.

No39

EN18/0917 - Unauthorised shopfront, access ramp, security roller shutters and roller shutter box and externally illuminated signage - Ongoing

No52

EN18/0813 - Unauthorised externally illuminated fascia sign, security roller shutters and roller shutter box – Ongoing.

No58

EN18/0816 - Unauthorised display of illuminated 2 x fascia and 1 x projecting signs - Ongoing

No66

EN18/0815 - Unauthorised illuminated fascia and projecting signs, and unauthorised security roller shutter and roller shutter box – Ongoing.

No68

EN18/0814 - Unauthorised illuminated fascia sign – Ongoing

It must be noted that the above Enforcement Cases have been opened for advertisement only – at the exception of No37-39 and No39. Unauthorised alterations to/replacement of some of the shopfronts were carried out and/or have been in place for more than 4 years and as such, these unauthorised works are immune from prosecution.

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

The London Plan 2016

Camden Local Plan 2017

C6 – Access for all

D1 – Design

D2 – Heritage

D3 – Shopfront

D4 - Advertisements

Camden Planning Guidance 2015 (as amended)

CPG1 (Design) – Chapter 2, 3 & 7

Camden Planning Guidance 2018 (as amended)

CPG (Advertisements)

Belsize Conservation Area Appraisal (November 2002)

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

1. Proposal and Background

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought for the installation of a new shopfront which will include the rendering of the fascia area.
- 1.2 Advertisement consent is also sought for the display of an internally illuminated fascia and internally illuminated projecting signs.
- 1.3 With regards the proposed method of illumination of the signage, there are some conflicting supporting information between the annotations on the proposed elevation drawing reference: A2.01 Rev00 which states that the fascia is to be non-illuminated, and the illuminance details provided in section 4 of the Advertisement Consent application form which states that both signs are to be internally illuminated. The signage is therefore assessed as being internally illuminated.
- 1.4 It must be noted that the current shopfront and signage are unauthorised. Permissions were neither granted nor sought. This would seem to be the trend within the commercial section of Belsize Lane where shopfront alterations and display of signage have taken place over the years without seeking the duly required permissions [*See Relevant History above*].
- 1.5 As a result, various Enforcement Cases have been opened to deal with the matters. These, however, would apply mostly to the unauthorised signage which has been displayed for less than 10 years. Commercial frontages' alterations would appear to have been in place for more than 4 years and are therefore immune from prosecution [*See Relevant History above*].

Revisions

- 1.6 During the course of the application, some 'draft' revisions were put forward in response to the unacceptability of the proposal as originally submitted. These 'draft' revisions were also assessed and found to be inappropriate. They did not address the concerns raised by the officers in terms of size, design and materials for this sensitive location, and as such, were not considered superseding revisions.
- 1.7 This report is therefore the assessment of the original proposal.

2. Assessment

- 2.1 The main matters for consideration are:
- Design and Heritage
 - Access
 - Visual Amenity
 - Public Safety

3. Design and Heritage

- 3.1 One of the considerations in the determination of this application is the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building, the conservation area and the streetscape.
- 3.2 Policy D1 (Design) of the Camden Local Plan 2017 states that '*Good design takes account of its surroundings and preserves what is distinctive and valued about the local area. Careful consideration of the characteristics of a site, features of local distinctiveness and the wider context is needed in order to achieve high quality development which integrates into its surroundings. The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development and will require that development respects local context and character, preserves or enhances the*

historic environment and heritage assets.'

3.3 Policy D2 (Heritage) of the Camden Local Plan 2017 states that *'The Council places great importance on preserving the historic environment. Conservation areas are designated heritage assets. The Council will require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area and will seek to manage change in a way that retains the distinctive characters of our conservation areas and will expect new development to contribute positively to this.'*

Shopfront

3.4 Policy D3 (Shopfronts) of the Camden Local Plan 2017 also states that *'Shopfronts contribute greatly to the character of centres and their distinctiveness. The Council will expect a high standard of design in new and altered shopfronts and other features. When determining proposals for shopfront development the Council will consider the design of the shopfront or feature, including its details and materials, the existing character, architectural and historic merit and design of the building and its shopfront'.*

3.5 The proposed shopfront is to replace a modern design shopfront of poor quality and poor design consisting of aluminium coated frame frontage with 6no glazing panel window display (3no large at the top and 3no small one at the bottom with a thick transom as divide) forming the window display to the centre and right of the shopfront, measuring approximately 3.5m in width by 2.5m in height. And the 2no glazing panel entrance door - of similar design to the window display (with a thick transom as divide located at the low level) with a fan light – to the left of the shopfront, measuring approximately 2.5m in height (with the fan-light) by 0.8m in width. Between the door and the window display stands a timber cladded 'partition' measuring approximately 2.5m in height by 0.5m in width. The overall width of the shopfront is measure approximately 5m and is set between 2no rendered brick pilasters.

3.6 The timber cladded fascia area sits above the shopfront and would measure approximately 5m in width by 0.9m in height. Separating both elements is a transom measuring approximately 5m in width by 0.1m.

3.7 The proposed shopfront contains similarities with the existing frontage, by virtue of its modern, simplistic and poor quality design and materials (aluminium frame), and large glazing expanse. The new shopfront would consist of 3no full height glazing panels separated by thin joints that would provide a large glazed window display fitted within the existing design and measurements (3.5m in width by 2.5m in height). The entrance door would also be fully glazed similarly integrated in the existing design and measurements (2.5m in height by 0.8m in width). The centred partition would be retained but would have the timber cladding removed and replaced with render.

3.8 The fascia area would see a small increase in height due to the removal of the thick existing transom separating both shopfront elements, and would now measure approximately 1m in height by 5m in width. It is also to be rendered.

3.9 It is clear by the various examples in this commercial section of Belsize Lane that unauthorised works have taken place over the years which have seen the introduction of unsympathetic modern design shopfronts and of poor quality materials. The loss of original/historical details has negatively impacted on the character and appearance of Belsize Lane. Indeed Concerns have been raised in the Belsize Conservation Area Appraisal in relation to the erosion of original details. It states that *'Some recent development has been carried out with poor finishes. Works have also been carried out without planning permission which do not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area, for example the removal of or failure to reinstate desirable original details. The appearance of characterful buildings within the conservation area is harmed by the removal or loss of original architectural features and the use of inappropriate materials. In all cases the Council will expect original architectural*

features and detailing to be retained, protected, and refurbished in the appropriate manner.'

- 3.10 It goes further by stating that *'The retention of traditional shopfronts, and introduction of new ones of a high quality design is actively encouraged in the conservation area. It is important that shopfronts maintain the visual character and appearance of the street through respect for the proportions, rhythm and form of the original frontages. The loss of original or historic shopfronts will be resisted. Inappropriate and poorly designed shopfronts detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.'*
- 3.11 The proposal is seeking to introduce a virtually sheer glass window and side access door with no stall riser, no framing, mullions and/or transoms to give the design some interest. This has resulted in what would be a bland and characterless shopfront. The fascia area is over scaled and visually dominates the frontage. The proposed design does not represent an enhancement nor does it preserve the current character of this part of the Belsize Park Conservation Area.
- 3.12 It must be noted that the attempts at revising the proposal were not sufficient to address the concerns raised. Although the aluminium frame was replaced by a timber frame (of the same size and design), and a transom was added at the lower part of the frontage to give the impression of a stall riser, it still fell short of what would be expected in this part of the conservation, which would be a traditional timber frame shopfront with timber stall riser, timber divide and a fascia area to be contained between the cornice above and the base of the capital.
- 3.13 In terms of size, design and materials to be used, the proposal provides no improvement on the current unsympathetic shopfront. It is unsympathetic and detract from the conservation area, contrary to policies D1 and D2.

4. Access

- 4.1 Policy D1 (Design) of the Camden Local Plan 2017 states that *'The Council requires new buildings and spaces to be inclusive and accessible to all. As accessibility is influenced by perceptions as well as physical factors, buildings should also be designed to appear, as well as be, fully accessible.'*
- 4.2 Policy C6 (Access) also states that *'The Council will seek to promote fair access and remove the barriers that prevent everyone from accessing facilities and opportunities. The Council will expect all buildings and places to meet the highest practicable standards of accessible and inclusive design so they can be used safely, easily and with dignity by all.'*
- 4.3 The new shopfront should ideally be step-free access to be DDA compatible and in line with CPG1 (Design) whereby *'Entrance doors should be accessible to all, particularly wheelchair users and people with limited manual dexterity. 1000mm minimum clear door width in new buildings and 775mm door width in existing buildings where a new shop front or alterations to a shop front are proposed.'*
- 4.4 The entrance door, being approximately 0.8m in width, and being part of an existing building, would fall within the 775mm required by CPG1 (Design). Although a direct street access was requested, it was pointed out that there is an existing ramp providing easy access from the pavement into the premises.
- 4.5 As such, in terms of access, the design of the entrance door is in accordance with policy D1.

5. Visual Amenity (Signage)

- 5.1 Policy D4 (Advertisements) states that *'Advertisements and signs should be designed to be complementary to and preserve the character of the host building and local area. The size, location, materials, details and illumination of signs must be carefully considered.'*

Advertisements in conservation areas and on or near listed buildings require particularly detailed consideration given the sensitivity and historic nature of these areas or buildings. Any advertisements on or near a listed building or in a conservation area must not harm their character and appearance and must not obscure or damage specific architectural features of buildings. The Council will require advertisements to preserve or enhance the character of their setting and host building. Advertisements must respect the form, fabric, design and scale of their setting and host building.'

Projecting Sign

- 5.2 The projecting sign consist of 2no internally illuminated intertwined capital letters 'O' and 'D' measuring approximately 0.3m in width by 0.2m in height, and would be affixed onto the fascia area – to the far left – by means of a bracket measuring approximately 0.23m in width by 0.32m in height and 30mm in thickness, with an overall projection of approximately 0.38m from the façade. The proposed projecting sign is simple in design and very discreet.
- 5.3 Despite the size (small) and design (formed of 2no intertwined letters) of the projecting sign, it is felt that the illuminance is considered inappropriate in this location. Although the site address sits within the commercial part of Belsize Lane, it is, however, at the tail end of the commercial section of Belsize Lane, opening onto a residential area. The lack of other internally illuminated such signs in the vicinity of the site further support the need to refrain from introducing any form of illumination in this predominantly residential area.
- 5.4 The proposed material – aluminium – is not considered acceptable. The building may not be listed but it is noted to be a positive contributor in the Belsize Conservation Area Appraisal, and as such, a traditional timber sign would be expected.
- 5.5 In terms of size and design, the projecting sign is not a cause for concerns. However, by virtue of its material (aluminium), location and illumination, the projecting sign is considered unacceptable and detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building, conservation area and residential streetscape, contrary to policy D4.

Fascia Sign

- 5.6 The proposed fascia sign would consist of internally illuminated letters of two different size: Both capitols – letters 'O' and 'D' – would measure approximately 0.5m in height and the lower case letters, approximately 0.25m in height. The overall width of the sign would be approximately 1.85m in width. The lettering sign is to be located on the right of the fascia area, above the window display.
- 5.7 The fascia area, to be rendered, would measure approximately 5m in width by 1m in height. Its height is disproportionate to the overall size of the shopfront and as a result, is an incongruous and dominant feature. Fascias in conservation areas are traditionally timber back with either painted letters and/or logos or attached individual letters and/or logos. The proposed lettering sign is acceptable in terms of size, design, location and method of illumination – similarly to the illuminated projecting sign. However, the rendered fascia area is in total contrast with the traditional architectural design of the host and adjacent building. This type of fascia would be suitable on a modern building where mortar and render material are common place, and would thus not be out of place. In this location, it is expected to have a timber fascia that is contained between the cornice above and the base of the capital. An example of this can be found at No70.
- 5.8 The poor quality of the signage present in this part of Belsize Lane cannot be used as a bench mark from which all forthcoming Advertisement Consent application must be assessed against. The loss of historical details, as stated in the Belsize Conservation Area Appraisal, is unacceptable and leads to the loss of the area's identity.

5.9 As for the illumination of the fascia sign, similar to the above projecting sign, is considered to be unacceptable for the reasons given in paragraph 5.3 above.

5.10 In terms of size and design, the lettering sign is appropriate. However, by virtue of its location and illumination, the fascia sign is considered to be unacceptable and detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building, conservation area and residential streetscape, contrary to policy D4.

6. Public Safety

6.1 Policy D4 (Advertisements) of the Camden Local Plan 2017 states that Highway safety, with focus on vulnerable road users should be considered. Advertisements will not be considered acceptable where they impact upon public safety including result in glare and dazzle or distract road users because of their unusual nature, disrupt the free flow of pedestrians or endanger pedestrians.

6.2 The type of illumination hereby proposed would clearly enhance the visibility of the business within the highstreet. However, the signage here proposed are commonly found on commercial frontages and have the only purpose to offer some visibility and do not produce a level of illuminance that is significant enough to be cause for concerns for the safety of the public.

6.3 As such, the method of illumination is therefore considered acceptable.

7. Recommendation

7.1 Refuse Planning Permission.

7.2 Refuse Advertisement Consent.