

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposal: Alterations to the fenestration of the front elevation to facilitate the erection of a front balcony with associated railings.

at:

Site Address: Flat 6 Atina Court, 2 Belsize Grove,
London, NW3 4UR

Applicant: Lorenzo Calzavara

May 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Urban Planning Practice has been instructed by the applicants, Lorenzo Calzavara, to apply for full planning permission Flat 6 Atina Court, 2 Belsize Grove, London, NW3 4UR for alterations to the fenestration on the front elevation to facilitate the erection of a front balcony with associated railings.

2 The Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site relates to a white stucco-fronted semi-detached villa, located at the junction of Belsize Grove and Belsize Park Gardens. The property has been divided into 7no. self-contained units and this application relates to Flat 6 which is located on the third floor of the property and is set within the existing roof space.
- 2.2 The surrounding area is characterised by stucco-fronted semi-detached villas, the majority of which have been converted into flats. Front balconies feature heavily along the Belsize Grove and Belsize Park Gardens street frontages, especially at roof level.
- 2.3 The site is located in the Belsize Conservation Area. However, the building is not listed and is not located within the Green Belt, or any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The site is located within flood zone 1 which has a low probability of flooding.
- 2.4 The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Rating (PTAL) of 3 (Good). The nearest pair of bus stop to the site are within 350m and provides access to services Archway and Brent Cross. The nearest train station to the site is Belsize Park Underground

Station (approx. 0.46km) which provides access to the Northern Line with direct access to Central London.

3 Relevant Planning History

3.1 The relevant planning history for the site is detailed below.

Flat 6 – 2014/2626/P – Replacement of dormer window with French doors and erection of railings to create roof terrace on front elevation. Refused (01/08/2014)

2008/4140/P - Alterations to the front and site boundaries including installation of new gates and erection of new low boundary wall, installation of new bin stores and rearrangement of car park within the curtilage of site (with reduction in parking from 9 spaces to 7), including the removal of the existing garage and new landscaping to block of flats. Approved (18/11/2008)

2006/5539/P - Alterations to the approved planning permission dated 23/05/2003 (PWX0103126) for change of use from 12 self-contained units to 7 self-contained units (5 x two-bedroom and 2 x three-bedroom units) including remodelling of existing dormer windows/roof terrace/lift tower and the formation of a rear first floor balcony, namely to reconfigure the internal layout (3 x three-bedroom and 4 x two-bedroom units), alterations to fenestration on front, side and rear elevation, creation of additional balcony at rear first floor level, minor alterations to side and rear dormer windows and rear rooflights. Approved (26/01/2007)

4 The Proposal

- 4.1 The application seeks full planning permission for alterations to the fenestration on the front elevation, including the replacement of a window with a timber glazed door and the erection of a balcony with associated cast iron railings.
- 4.2 The proposal seeks to provide private, external amenity space for the occupiers of this residential unit.

5 Planning Policy

- 5.1 The Local Development Framework for the area consists of:
- London Plan (March 2016)
 - Camden Local Plan (2017).
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration in decision making and is relevant to this application.
- 5.3 There are three aspects which comprise sustainable development; these are the economic role, the social role and the environmental role. In terms of the economic aspect land has to be made available where there is a demand to support growth; the environmental role involves the protection of the natural, built and historic environment; and the social role is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations.
- 5.4 Applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Local authorities should deliver a wide choice of high-quality

homes. The mix of housing should take account of future demographics and market trends, differing needs and local differences. It is inevitable that for compliance with the NPPF and in the spirit of progress higher densities are often required, especially where sites fall within sustainable and urban locations.

London Plan (2016)

- 5.5 The London Plan (2016) 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 2050. It forms part of the development plan for Greater London and is recognised in the NPPF as part of the development plan. The London Plan provides a unified framework for strategies that are designed to ensure that all Londoners benefit from sustainable improvements to their quality of life.

Camden Local Plan (2017)

- 5.6 Policy D1 of Camden's Local Plan relates to design. It is expected that all development proposals are of high quality design which respect the character of the area, preserve or enhance the existing heritage assets, integrates well with the surrounding street scene and uses materials which complement the local character.
- 5.7 Policy D2 relates to Heritage and seeks to ensure that all developments within a conservation area preserve or enhance its character and appearance.

6 Planning Considerations

Use

- 6.1 The proposal at the site will introduce a small area of external amenity space for the occupants of the residential unit. Given that no change of use is required for this development and the council's London Plan encourages the provision of on-site amenity space, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

Design

- 6.2 The proposal at the site seeks to replace 1no. window on the front dormer with a double glazed, timber framed door to create an access onto the proposed balcony. It is also proposed that the balcony will be enclosed with cast iron railings measuring a maximum of 1.1 metres in height.
- 6.3 The proposal has been sensitively designed to ensure that it is in keeping with the character and appearance of the main property and wider locality and would preserve the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area. The proposed door will be timber framed to ensure it matches the materials of the surrounding fenestration and the proportions of the new door have been deliberately kept the same as the window it is replacing to ensure it maintains the character of the property.
- 6.4 Additionally, the proposed balcony will only encompass half the area of the existing dormer to ensure it does not appear overly dominant within the roof space and the proposed railings have been kept to a minimal height (1.1 metres). Furthermore, as the surrounding balconies in the immediate locality are enclosed with cast iron railings, it is considered that this is a

contextually appropriate material that would be sensitive to the existing heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 of the Local Plan.

- 6.5 The design of the proposed balcony has been carefully considered to ensure it is in keeping with the character and appearance of the property, integrates well with the surrounding street scene, uses materials which complement the local character and minimises the harm caused to Clyde Circus Conservation Area and complies with Policy D1 of the Local Plan.
- 6.6 It is considered that the proposal has been sensitively designed in order to comply with Policies D1 and D2 of the Local Plan. As proposed, the balcony would create an appropriate addition to the existing property that would continue to preserve and enhance its character and appearance.

Character and Appearance

- 6.7 Although the Local Planning Authority have refused the installation of balconies in recent years, it is considered that front facing balconies, enclosed with cast iron railings, form part of the established character of the immediate locality. Given the prominence of these balconies, and the Local Planning Authority's reluctance to take enforcement action, it is considered that the character of the area has changed and whilst many do not benefit from full planning permission, their existence is a material planning consideration.
- 6.8 There are numerous examples of similar balconies on Belsize Grove, including the immediate neighbouring property at No 4. Additionally, No 6 benefits from a similar roof terrace as does No 20 which is located on the corner with Primrose Gardens. The application site is also located at the junction with Belsize Park Gardens and front balconies are numerous and feature prominently on this road. For example, in the area around the site, Nos 35, 37, 39, 43, 61, 63, 67, 69, 73, 77 and 79 all have front balconies enclosed by railings and this represents a small number of this road.

6.9 Given the above, the creation of a front balcony enclosed by cast iron railings is considered to be contextually appropriate and in keeping with the local character of the area. The presence of these other examples will ensure that the proposal integrates with the surrounding street scene in accordance with Policy D1.

Neighbouring Amenity

6.10 As part of any planning application, it is important to ensure development proposals would not have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity with regards to light, outlook or increased sense of enclosure.

6.11 Careful regard has been given to the occupants of 4(B) Belsize Grove, to ensure that the proposal does not have any impact on neighbouring amenity. It is appreciated that this neighbouring property benefits from an entirely glazed front dormer window with direct views onto the applicant's property. Whilst it is common practice to obscurely glaze side facing windows, in this instance the windows do not benefit from such materials and therefore due consideration must be given to this element.

6.12 The proposed balcony has been deliberately kept to the side of the dormer furthest away from 4 Belsize Grove to maintain the maximum separation distance possible. Additionally, at a depth of 0.65 metres, the balcony will allow space for a chair but not a full set of furniture which means the number of people able to use the balcony are extremely limited.

6.13 The proposed door will open outwards onto the balcony and will need to be kept open in order to allow access onto it. This means that the applicant will not be afforded direct views of the neighbouring property as it will be partially obscured by the door. Furthermore, the plans indicate site lines which indicate that there will be no material loss of privacy for the neighbouring occupier.

6.14 It is acknowledged that the flatted development on the opposite side of Belsize Grove are obscured by mature trees (which are automatically protected by virtue of their location in a conservation area). This means that the views from the balcony will be limited to the trees and there will be no direct views to the flatted development behind.

6.15 Given the above, it is not considered that the proposal would have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity, nor would it result in the loss of privacy or direct overlooking to the occupiers of the neighbouring residential properties.

7 Heritage Assessment

7.1 As detailed above, the site is located within the Belsize Conservation Area as shown below

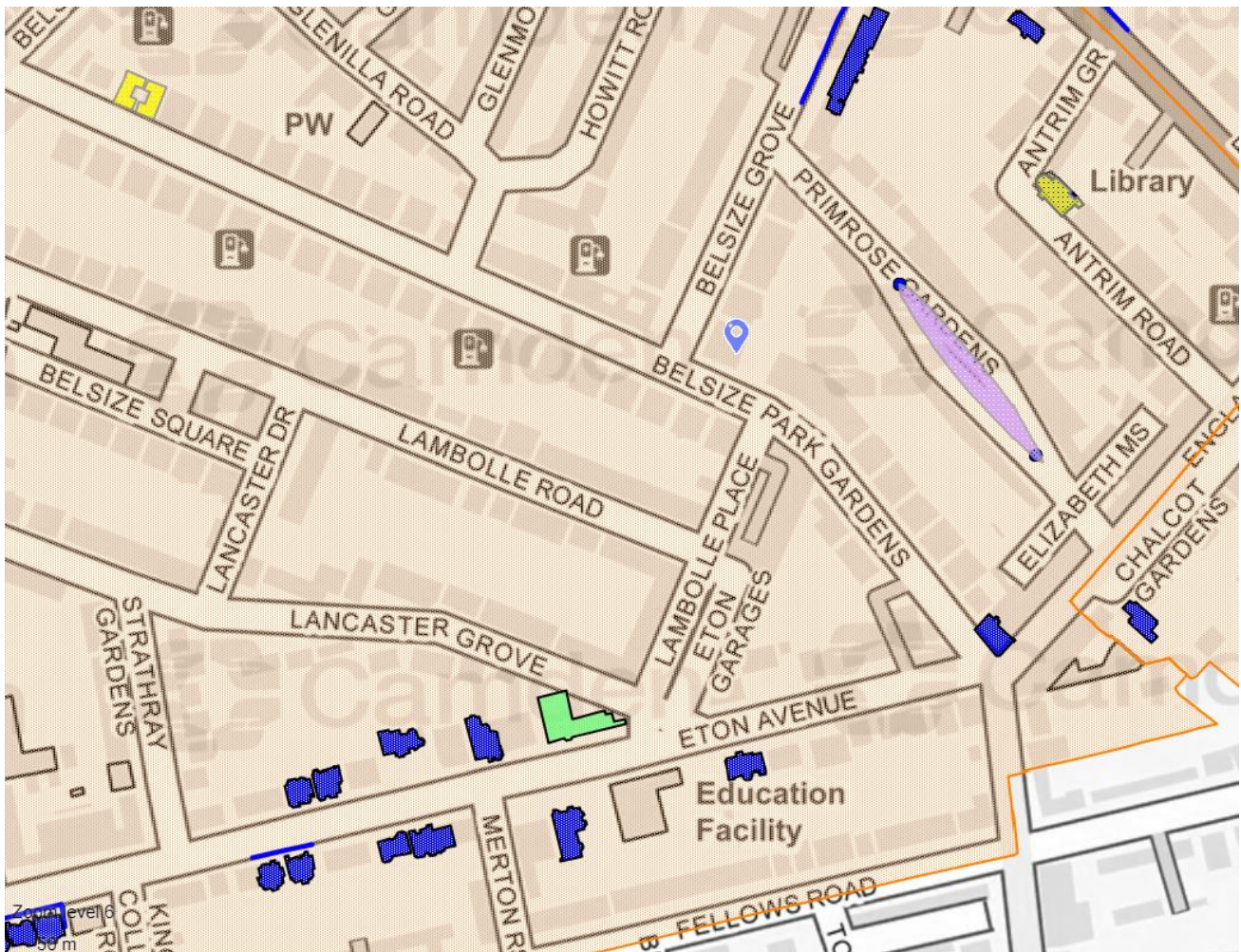


Figure 1 – A Section of the Belsize Conservation Area; the site highlighted with the blue arrow.

7.2 The Belsize Conservation Area Character Appraisal denotes that Belsize Grove is characterised by paired villas. These villas are symmetrical in their appearance with hipped

slate roofs and overhanging eaves. Other distinguishing features include large rusticated coins and recessed sash windows which reduce in size the successive upper floors.

- 7.3 The topography in Belsize Grove slopes from north-east to south-west which affords the long view of Belsize Park Gardens. A number of properties in this road are Grade II listed including Nos 26-38. The mature street trees which shelter many of the properties from public view are also considered an important element to the character of the conservation area.

Policy Analysis

- 7.4 The development framework includes:
- National Planning Policy Framework (2019);
 - London Plan (March 2016); and
 - Camden Local Plan (2017).
- 7.5 Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that applicants should demonstrate the importance of any heritage assets that could be affected by a proposal and the potential impact on their setting. *“The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”.*
- 7.6 Development in the setting assets can be considered to either have ‘substantial harm’ or ‘less than substantial harm’. More specifically the NPPF states that *“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”.*

- 7.7 Policies 7.8 to 7.12 of the London Plan (2016) provides guidance surrounding historic environment and landscapes. Policy 7.8 relates to Heritage Assets and Archaeology and states that London’s heritage assets and historic environment, including conservation areas, should sustain and enhance their significance, utilising their positive role in place shaping.
- 7.8 Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan provides guidance surrounding ‘Conservation’ noting that “the Council will preserve, and where appropriate, enhance Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings.” With regards to development in conservation areas, it is expected that “development within conversation areas preserves, or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area.”

Heritage Assessment

- 7.9 The application is seeking to introduce a modest balcony to the front of the property which will be enclosed with cast iron railings. These materials have been sensitively considered to ensure they respect the character of the area and also afford open views through the balcony. As highlighted above, there are numerous examples of front balconies in the immediate locality, all of varying design but with similar such materials. Given the size and siting of the balcony, together with the prevalence of roof terraces in the immediate locality, it is not considered that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area and would continue to preserve its heritage status.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 It is considered that the proposal provides a high-quality development that would be fully compliant with national, regional and local policies. The proposed balcony has been designed to reflect the style of the surrounding properties and would not have a detrimental impact on the existing heritage assets whilst improving the quality of accommodation for the occupiers



of this residential unit. Furthermore, it is considered that the existing living arrangements for neighbouring occupiers would not be compromised as a result of this proposal.