

Front Lower Ground Floor Flat
72A Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4NG

Design and Access Statement

June 2020

Introduction

This Design and Access Statement supports the submission of a full planning application being put forward by the applicant, Miss Lambert, for the conversion of two flats into one maisonette at 72 Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4NG. The two units which are the subject of this planning application are the front lower ground floor flat and the rear lower ground / raised ground floor maisonette.

The alterations to the property include a new floor layout, the recondition of existing openings onto the front patio and side passage, and a new blank opening to the side wall of the entrance stairway.

The applicant has undertaken discussions with owners and occupiers of the other flats in the building. They have confirmed that they do not raise any objections to the application.

The statement is set out as follows:

- A description of the site and its context
- A description of the proposals
- Access and environmental considerations
- Planning Policy Framework
- Conclusion

Drawings

Below is a schedule of the drawings submitted as part of this application:

Drawing number	Title	Scale	Revision
72BPG_07_001	Site location plan	1:625 @A1 / 1:1250 @A3	P1
72BPG_07_100	Ground and first floor plans - Existing	1:50 @A1 / 1:100 @A3	P1
72BPG_07_101	Ground and first floor plans - Proposed	1:50 @A1 / 1:100 @A3	P1
72BPG_07_200	Front and side elevation - Existing	1:50 @A1 / 1:100 @A3	P1
72BPG_07_201	Front and side elevation - Proposed	1:50 @A1 / 1:100 @A3	P1

Site context

The application site is located at 72 Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4NG. Belsize Park Gardens is a residential street which connects Belsize Avenue and Eton Avenue / England's Lane, and is located in close proximity to both Swiss Cottage and Belsize Park Underground Station.

The property is located on the lower ground floor of a paired Italianate villa built in the second half of the 19th century. It is part of a large number of white stucco houses of the same height and proportion and presenting similar features, which confers a harmonious character to the street.

The property is located in the Sub Area One of the Belsize Conservation Area. The house is five storeys high, with a pitched slate roof with overhanging eaves and a bay window forming an asymmetrical front façade, with steps leading to an elevated porch. Like most other houses in the street, the building has been subject to a series of conversions through the 20th century, resulting in its division to form several flats within.



Front façade of 72 Belsize Park Gardens

The property comprises a self-contained one bedroom dwelling (use class C3), a street fronting patio and a direct access from the side passage. The gross internal area of 82sqm / 881sqft. The property does not include any original period features and is in poor condition, including uneven floors, leakages and damp, as well as outdated plumbing and electrical installations.



Internal view of the existing front lower ground floor flat.

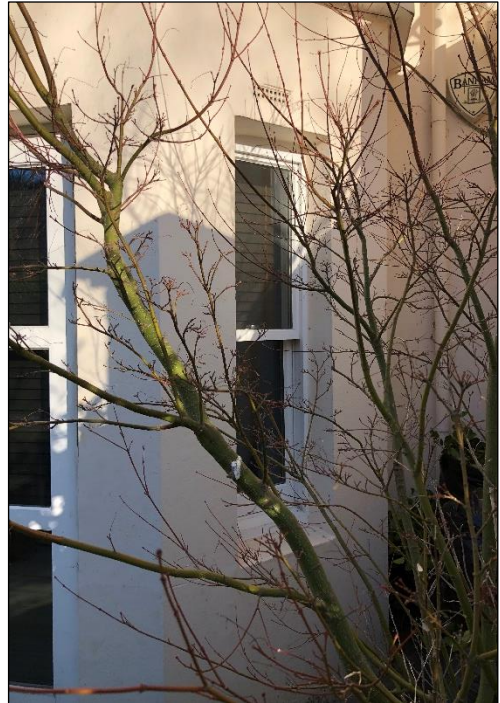
Design approach

The proposals comprise combining the front lower ground floor flat and the rear lower ground / raised ground floor maisonette to form a single four bedroom dwelling over two floors.

This will involve a number of internal alterations, entirely contained within the front lower ground floor flat. The works include stripping out of all non-load bearing partitions and internal finishes to provide a new layout resulting in two bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms, a dressing room and a utility room.

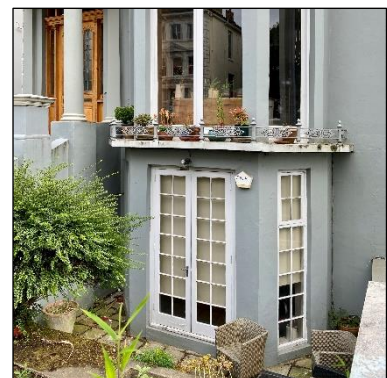
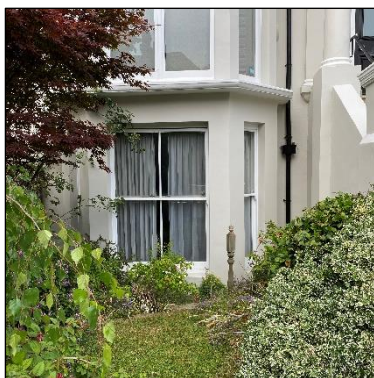
Although the internal layout of the accommodation is not a planning consideration, the design approach has been such to maximise the quality of the living accommodation and improve on the existing conditions. The new layout of the front lower ground floor flat maintains the original arrangement of the property, reflecting the two compositional bays of the front façade.

The only external alterations are the recondition of existing openings facing the front patio and side passage, and a new blank opening to the side wall of the entrance stairway. None of these openings are directly visible from the street as they are obstructed by the passage door, boundary wall and perimeter hedge.



Existing openings facing the front patio.

On the front facade, the two side openings in the projecting bay are extended to the ground floor to match the central opening, replicating the composition of the raised ground floor. All existing windows are to be replaced with uniform sightline composite timber frame windows with double glazing and external white coated finish.



Precedents of extended side windows in the lower ground floor of the projecting bay in Belsize Park Gardens.

On the side elevation, the three southernmost openings will be extended to reinstate their original size. In enlarged windows will improve the daylight conditions of the residential accommodation without affecting

its privacy. All windows are to be replaced with uniform sightline composite timber frame windows with double glazing and external white coated finish. The new windows are sympathetic in size, proportion and detail to the rest of the fenestration in the building.

In addition, a new opening is introduced to the side wall of the entrance staircase, providing a dedicated access to the utility/store room. There are numerous precedents on the same street of openings in this location and the internal build-up of the wall indicates a pre-existing opening.



Precedents of openings on side wall to entrance stairway in Belsize Park Gardens.

Access

Currently all the flats in the property above ground are accessible from common parts via the raised elevated porch, while the lower ground dwellings are accessed through the side passage. Both access routes will be maintained.

Sustainability

The scope of the proposed works offers moderate opportunities to improve the environmental performance of the property. However, the introduction of new double glazed units substituting existing single glazed ones, together with new thermal insulation on walls and floor, will improve the thermal performance of the internal space, resulting in reduced heat loss and lower demand for heating in low temperatures.

Planning Policy Framework

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for the site is the London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework, along with the Spatial Development Plan for Greater London (The London Plan). All of these documents embrace policy guidance issued at the national level. The following documents have been taken into consideration in the preparation of the application proposals:

- National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's key strategic planning objective to promote sustainable forms of development.

- Regional Policy

At a regional level the Consolidated London Plan sets the relevant regional planning policy guidance for London Borough of Camden.

- Local Policy

Documents within the LDF and relevant supplementary planning guidance, including: Core Strategy, Development Policies, and the Belsize Conservation Area Statement.

Having reviewed the above planning policy context in detail, the key planning considerations raised by the proposals are:

- Design of external alterations and impact on the Conservation Area

Design of external alterations and impact on the Conservation Area LB Camden Policy DP.24 states that the Council will require all developments to be of the highest standard of design. In addition, policy DP.25 requires new development/alterations to maintain the character of conservation areas. The site is located within the Belsize Conservation Area, the building is identified as positively contributing to the Conservation Area, and as such any external alterations need preserve or enhance the character and appearance of this Conservation Area. The proposals by virtue of their minor nature and construction in materials to match the existing property will be indistinguishable from the existing conditions, and as such will preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and comply with policies DP.24 and DP.25.

- Impact on neighbouring amenity

LB Camden Policy DP.26 states that the planning permission will only be granted for development that does not cause harm to amenity of adjoining occupiers. The proposal does not include any new windows and the extension of the three existing openings at lower ground floor level will not cause any detrimental impact to the privacy of the neighbouring properties, being below eye level and directly fronting a boundary wall. Therefore, the proposals comply with policy DP.26.

- Loss of one residential unit

LB Camden Policy DP.2 states that the Council will seek to maximise the supply of homes in the Borough. Part (f) of this policy applies to this application, which states that the Council will only resist developments which result in the loss of two or more residential units. The accompanying explanatory text goes on to say that the Council does not seek to resist schemes combining dwellings that involve the loss a single home. The current proposals only seek the loss of one residential unit, and they result in the creation of a good quality family sized unit, therefore they fully comply with policy DP.2, and design policies DP.22 and DP.24.

In conclusion the proposals are in accordance with planning and design guidance. The proposed development fully complies with planning policy and preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.