

Application ref: 2021/2848/PRE
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Date: 30 July 2021

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Dear Sir/Madam

DECISION

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010
Town and Country Planning (Applications) Regulations 1988

Pre-application Minor development Pre-application Advice Issued

Address:
8 Strathray Gardens
London
NW3 4NY

Thank you for submitting a pre-planning application enquiry for the above property received on 7th of June 2021.

I have set out my advice below. Please note that this letter represents an initial officer view of the proposals based on the information available at this stage. I was unable to visit the site due to the current situation with COVID-19. The views expressed in this letter would not be binding upon the Council, nor prejudice any future planning application decisions made by the Council.

Proposal

Raising the parapet of the upper ground floor rear extension, erection of two storey rear extension at first and second floor level with roof terrace above at 3rd floor level, enlargement of window openings at first, second and third floor levels and installation of balconies, replacement of rear dormer, installation of new spiral stair for garden access from upper ground floor on the rear elevation, installation of access safety railings on the main roof, solar panels, enlargement of the existing roof lights, alterations to the front and rear elevation including replacement windows, new entrance door, installation of new circular window in the front gable, new oriel windows to side elevation and replacement of Anderson shelter in rear garden by new garden studio outbuilding.

Planning History

The site does not benefit from any recent planning history. Any received applications within the last 8 years have involved works to TPO trees around the site. During the 70's and 80's rear and front dormers were approved (refs 28536 and 8401851). Within this period planning permission under ref 8905613 was also granted to alter the basement. Overall, little work has been done to the original building.

The supporting documents reference to the adjacent property (no.10) in terms of style and design. Several applications for development to the rear of the site have been granted including single storey rear extensions (2004/3659/P and 2009/4850/P) and a bedroom extension to the first floor (2003/0097/P). As with no.8 most of the applications received for the site revolved around works to the TPO trees in the site.

Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

London Plan (2021)

Camden Local Plan (2017) ([Link](#))

A1 Managing the impact of development

A4 Noise and vibration

D1 Design

D2 Heritage

CC1 Climate change mitigation

CC2 Adapting to climate change

Camden Planning Guidance ([Link](#))

CPG Altering and extending your home (2019)

CPG Design (2019)

Belsize Park Conservation Area Statement (2003)

The Site is in Belsize Park Conservation Area.

- The building is identified as a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the CA.
- It is an attractive period property, dating from the late 19th century. The properties in the street are listed as Queen Anne Style but with Arts and Crafts influences.
- Strathray Gardens is highlighted as a dominant character area within the CA
- The CA Statement list the recurrent themes as:
 - Asymmetrical composition of the elevations
 - Canted and curved bays
 - Large slab chimneys
 - Gables and white painted timber casement and sash windows sub divided by glazed bars in smaller panes

Due to the application's location, the Council has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in accordance with Section 72 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

Policy D1 of the Local Plan seeks to secure high quality design which respects local context and character and which preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2.

Policy D2 seeks to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas. The policy notes that the Council will not permit development that results in harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) "Design" (January 2021) advises that additional storeys are unlikely to be acceptable on buildings that have a roofline that is exposed to important London-wide and local views from public spaces.

Assessment: Heritage and Design

Part first floor, second floor and loft floor extension:

This would be unacceptable in my view:

- Whilst in the supporting statement it is stated the infill nature of this element would 'echo the structure and footprint of many properties in the Belsize CA', this is actually not the case and does not apply to the examples on this street.
- The CA Statement describes asymmetrical elevations as a dominant character for properties in this area; there are two other examples (no.4 and no.6) of recessed elevations in this style and adjacent to the site.
- The proposed infilling would remove this architectural element of the setback recess in the property and would undermine the character of not only the building but the Conservation area and therefore an 'in principle' objection is raised.
- The loft conversion with the balcony appears very prominent in this location. The extension would appear excessive and considerably add to the bulk of the top of the building. The large replacement glazed window looks incongruous in design.
- Whilst other properties on the streets have other features to the rear elevation, this does not act as a precedent for development of this sort.

Replacement of Dormer, Rooftop Terrace and Access

- The proposed rooftop access appears incongruous within the surroundings and does not positively contribute to the character of the conservation area and of the property itself. Views of the railings may be possible from longer views along the street and would not be supported.
- In terms of the dormer, any replacement dormer should respect the hierarchy of the fenestration pattern on the rear elevation which reduces in size as it moves up the building. A dormer which does not respect the existing fenestration pattern would not be supported. The proposed large glazed panel design and materials are not supported and a more sympathetic design should be used.
- CPG "Home Improvements" (January 2021) also notes that attention should be paid to the prominence of the building's roof and its impact on the streetscene and wider area.
- If the roof top elements were removed, a dormer which respects the character of the property in design, materials and bulk could be supported.
- The installation of solar panels is something that the Council could look to support; however further information relating to the impact on public and private views and details of the projection distance above the roof must also be provided.

Front Elevation Changes, Replacement of Windows and Rear Staircase

- The installation of a rear staircase from lower ground floor garden level to upper ground floor level appears acceptable, providing it comprises sympathetic materials and design.
- In terms of the drainpipe, the alteration is considered acceptable and does impact on the character of the property.
- The proposed replacement of the front door is objected to in its current form. For buildings of this architectural style and design, the front doors are important features that need to be retained. The Council would support the restoration of the door including all the original design features. A conditional survey to justify the need to replace the door should support any future planning application that would include the replacement of the front entrance door. Having reviewed aerial images as part of the desk-top assessment, the door looks in relatively good condition.
- In terms of the proposed replacement of the windows to the front and side elevations, no objection is raised to the principle of replacing these windows and frames. However, the replacement must include original materials such as timber frames to ensure that the character of the building is maintained. uPVC would not be supported.
- More information is required in terms of the replacement of the fenestrations next to the front door. Information relating to materials and design are required.
- The proposed circular window within the gable roof on the front elevation, if modest in size, is sympathetic and is considered acceptable.
- The enlarged windows to the side and rear elevation are considered acceptable, providing the materials used are sympathetic to the host property and conservation area.

Garden Studio

- In the supporting statement and on the site plan provided, a new 'garden studio' is proposed and looks to replace the original Anderson shelter and small shed that is existing. Whilst the principle is not objected to, more information is needed regarding its location, footprint, bulk and design. No floor plans or elevations have been submitted for this aspect but we would recommend the 'Home Improvements' CPG for more information relating to the type of outbuildings that the Council could support.

Assessment: Amenity

- Policy A1 of the Local Plan seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. The factors to consider include visual privacy, outlook; sunlight, daylight and overshadowing; artificial lighting levels; impacts of the construction phase, including the use of Construction Management Plans; and noise and vibration levels.
- It is not considered that the proposed part rear extension would cause undue harm to the residential amenities of neighbouring and nearby properties due to its infill nature. The extension does not exceed the depth of the adjacent property (no.10) and due to the fact there are no side windows, it means that the extension would not cause a significant impact to amenities.
- The external spiral staircase with access balcony to the upper ground floor flat is within relatively proximity to the windows on the first floor at no.10 and issues of perceived overlooking could be present. It is difficult to ascertain the extent of the impact from the submitted plans and photos and therefore more details would need to be provided in any forthcoming application to demonstrate that the impact to amenities is not significant.
- In terms of the new balcony terrace at third floor, as with the extension, this is infill in nature and stepped back from the windows at no.10. There would not be any direct views into neighbours' habitable rooms.

- There may be overlooking issues with the new accessible rooftop space if this ends up being more intensively used as an amenity roof terrace.

Validation requirements

If you do choose to submit a formal planning application you should provide the following:

- Application form (Full Planning Permission)
- Application fee (£206)
- Site Location Plan (typically at 1:1250 or 1:2500) with the application site outlined in red
- Existing and proposed elevations (at 1:50 or 1:100)
- Existing and proposed floorplans (at 1:50 or 1:100)
- Existing and proposed sections (at 1:50 or 1:100)
- Design & Access Statement / Planning Statement / Heritage Statement

Conclusion

The proposed rear, infill extensions at first and second floor level would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the host building, the wider terrace and the Belsize Park Conservation Area. Whilst the dormer could be acceptable, the roof terrace railings and enlarged loft window would not be acceptable, given the visible rooftop location. More information is needed for garden studio and the front elevational changes to be supported and you are therefore advised against submitting a formal planning application with a design in its current form.

Yours faithfully

Ewan Campbell

Supporting Communities Directorate

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