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Planning and Regeneration  
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London Borough of Camden  
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3 September 2021

**By Email**

Dear Sir / Madam

**75 Belsize Lane, London, NW3 5AU**

**Application for full planning permission (householder)**

Forward Planning and Development Limited ("FWPD") have been instructed to submit a planning application in respect of proposed works to the front of 75 Belsize Lane, London, NW3 5AU. The proposed works will improve the quality of residential accommodation provided at the property.

Planning permission is sought for the following:

***'The erection of a single-storey, front extension and associated works'.***

The application submission includes the following documents:

- a) Completed application forms and certificates;
- b) CIL additional information form;
- c) Location Plan;
- d) Existing and proposed plans, sections and elevations;
- e) Design and Access Statement;
- f) Planning Statement (included within this covering letter);
- g) Character of the area and references document.

The application has been submitted online via the planning portal (reference: PP-10142774). The requisite application fee of £206 (plus service charge) has been paid online at the time of submission.

## Site and Surroundings

The site comprises an existing two-storey residential property also known as Portman Lodge. The property adjoins residential properties on either side of a similar scale and height. The property benefits from a rear garden and a conservatory and roof terrace at first floor level providing amenity space.

The site is located on the east side of Belsize Lane close to its junction with Daleham Gardens and the Finchley Road to the west.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character with a variety of sizes and style of properties. To the west the Finchley Road provides a wide mix of uses including commercial, retail and bars and restaurants.

The property is located within the Belsize Park Conservation Area. There are no listed buildings within the immediate vicinity of the property although further to the south, nos. 79-93 Belsize Lane are a stucco terrace with classical detailing which are Grade II listed.

Within the Conservation Area the site is located within the 'Belsize Village' sub area. Within the sub area the site falls within the identified mews area to the western end of Belsize Lane. The building is not identified as one that makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

The property is well located in terms of public transport accessibility with Finchley Road and Swiss Cottage Overground and Underground stations located a short distance to the west. Fitzjohn's Avenue and Finchley Road also provide regular bus services.

## Planning History

A review of the statutory register of planning applications has been carried out. Set out below are those considered to be of particular relevance:

Application reference	Proposals	Decision	Date
2011/1489/T	Notification of intended works to trees in a conservation area: Reduction in crown size and clearance of rear garden trees.	No objection	07/04/2011
8600124	The enlargement of existing conservatory at first floor level at the rear	Granted	27/03/1986
8500171	Alterations to three existing garages to form an additional bedroom / study and a single garage	Granted	25/04/1985

### *Other permissions of relevance*

#### **No.97 Belsize Lane**

Planning permission (2015/1973/P) was granted in September 2015 for the erection of a hipped roof extension forming habitable loft space, insertion of 5 x rooflights, a first floor front extension, conversion of integral garage to form habitable space and external alterations to the front and rear elevations.

#### **No. 40 Ornan Road**

Planning permission (2019/6141/P) was granted in August 2020 for a ground floor front extension and conversion of the existing garage and associated works.

#### **No. 63 Ornan Road**

Planning permission was granted (2019/2948/P) in August 2019 for a two storey front extension including conversion of garage to habitable space.

Further details of other precedents including plans can be found within the accompanying Design and Access Statement. These applications demonstrate that there are cases where front extensions have been considered acceptable.

### **The Proposals**

The proposals for which planning permission is being sought comprise the following:

1. The erection of a single-storey front extension which infills behind the existing front wall;
2. Replacement of existing timber railing on balcony with metal railings;
3. Removal of brick piers at first floor level over garage extension;
4. Replacement of all windows and glazed doors on the front elevation with new to match existing.

The front elevation of the property is in a poor condition and is in need of refurbishment and restoration. The existing windows and doors to the front elevation are in desperate need of replacement. As is evident from the photos below, investment in the property is required to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.



Figure 1: Front elevation



Figure 2: Front elevation and courtyard from first floor front balcony

The proposals will improve the quality and standard of residential accommodation provided at the property which have fallen into a state of disrepair over recent years.

The front extension is proposed to improve the proportions of the existing building and rationalise the existing front building line.

The replacement of the existing windows and doors to the front elevation will improve the energy and thermal efficiency of the building and will significantly enhance its appearance.

The owners are committed to the enhancement of the appearance of the front elevation of property as part of the wider restoration of the property.

Full details of the proposals are set out within the accompanying Design and Access Statement and on the submitted plans, section and elevation drawings.

### **Other applications**

A separate planning application (householder) has been submitted for alterations and an extension to the rear of the property. This work does not form part of this application and is not included on the submitted drawings.

### **Planning Policy Framework**

The Statutory Development Plan comprises of policies set out in the London Plan 2021 (March 2021) and the Camden Local Plan (2017).

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

Camden Planning Guidance “Home Improvements” dated January 2021 provides additional guidance in respect of extensions and alterations to residential properties.

### **Key considerations**

The key planning considerations associated with the proposals are as follows:

- a) Principle of development
- b) Design
- c) Heritage – Impact upon the Conservation Area
- d) Amenity

*Principle of development*



The proposals will retain and improve the existing residential accommodation provided at the property. A small amount of additional residential floorspace will be provided as a result of the proposal (8 sqm).

The surrounding context is characterised by properties that have undergone a degree of extension, alteration and intervention. The street scene is varied in terms of scale, forms, massing, design and roof profiling.

There is no uniform building line to this part of the street and there are a number of properties with a ground floor building line set forward of the first floor building line.

This is evident at no. 71 Belsize Lane and 77 Belsize Lane.



Figure 3: Front elevation of 71 Belsize Lane



Figure 4: Front elevation of 75 and 77 Belsize Lane

It is not considered that the existing property makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. At best it could be considered to make a neutral contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

Undoubtedly the properties between 71 Belsize Lane and the mews buildings from 77A-77F Belsize Lane present a varied and inconsistent building line, with overhanging porches in the case of 77A-F and garages which are set forward in the case of 71, 73, 75 and 77 Belsize Lane. There is no regular pattern which is exacerbated by the protruding garages.

The proposed front extension will be visible in relation to the streetscene and will have an impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Notwithstanding this, in this instance, it is considered that the proposal is appropriate and acceptable in principle.

It is considered that the innovative design approach adopted by the architects enables the front elevation of the property to present a more cohesive and rational appearance to the street.

It is not considered that the proposed extension changes the character of the property. Indeed, it strengthens its character and aesthetic through addressing the somewhat clumsy composition of the existing front elevation with the existing garage, timber entrance gate and brick wall to the street.

The front garden to the property is not an important characteristic of this part of the Conservation Area. The majority of properties in the immediate vicinity don't have a front garden as their building line is on the street. The front garden to no. 75 Belsize Lane is set behind a solid brick wall and tall fence which means that its contribution is limited.

The proposed extension will enable the appearance of the property to be enhanced which will in turn enhance its contribution to the Conservation Area. The proposed design takes reference from properties of a similar age and will rationalise the ground floor of the property.

The front of the property is not architecturally distinguished nor does it form a harmonious composition which contributes visually to the townscape. It is not considered that the front elevation possesses architectural merit which warrants preservation in its existing state. As a result, it is considered that a modest front extension to the property in the form proposed is acceptable in principle.

There is no access to the rear as existing and thus the proposal will not alter this position.

The scale and volume of the extension has been designed to respect and be subservient to the host building in terms of its location, form, footprint and scale.

The extension has been appropriately designed for its context by local and established architects, Sanya Polescuk Architects, who have extensive knowledge of the local area and are experts at sensitively upgrading existing buildings within heritage settings.

The principle of the provision of improved residential accommodation, as proposed, is considered to be acceptable in principle and will support the continued use and inward investment into the property for residential purposes. The proposed extension is modest and will enable the property to make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, which it currently does not.

### *Design*

High quality and inclusive design is encouraged by planning policy at all levels.

Local Plan Policy D1 states that the Council will work to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development, inter alia:

- Respects local character;
- Is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaption;
- Comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement local character.

The supporting text to Policy D1, at Paragraph 7.2 of the Local Plan, states that the Council will require all developments, including alterations to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider, inter alia:

- Character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- The character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;
- The composition of elevations;
- The suitability of the proposed design to its intended use.

At Paragraph 7.3, it is noted that the Council will welcome high quality contemporary design which responds to its context. Paragraph 7.10 of the supporting text identifies that alterations and extensions should be carried out in materials that match the original or neighbouring buildings, or, where appropriate, in materials that compliment or enhance a building or area.

The proposed single-storey front extension will be a high-quality design and will constitute a high-quality addition to the existing building that has been sensitively designed, using appropriate materials, to respect the surrounding context. This is evident from the visual prepared by the architects which is included within the Design and Access Statement.



The proposed extension has been designed to be subservient to the existing building and to improve the appearance of the front of the building. The extension will continue the line of the existing garage and the boundary wall in the same position.

The short brick piers from the roof of the garage extension will be removed and replaced with a metal railing. A single horizontal datum line is taken from the base of the roof of the garage extension to create a more uniform composition to the front of the property. The garage which is currently set forward will be brought into the principal building line as is the case with no. 71 and nos 77A-F.

Perforations are proposed in the brickwork which will add visual interest to the streetscape and is considered to be appropriate for the age of the property.

Precedent images are provided by the architects demonstrating how this has been successfully achieved elsewhere.

The proposals are considered to be of an appropriate scale, character and appearance and would achieve a high-quality design consistent with planning policy objectives.

### *Heritage*

Section 72(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Act requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area when considering applications relating to land or buildings within that Area. The effect of this section of the Act is that there is a statutory presumption in favour of the preservation of the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Considerable importance and weight should be attached to their preservation.

London Plan Policy HC1 deals with heritage conservation and growth and notes, at part C, that development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings

Policy D2 of the Local Plan relates to Heritage and notes that the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings and locally listed heritage assets. Designated heritage assets include conservation areas. The Council will not permit the loss or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh any harm or loss.

Whilst front extensions in Conservation Areas are not usually considered to be acceptable, it is considered that the features of this building and those that surround it are different to the consideration of a traditionally detailed mews or Victorian terraced properties.

There is a lack of unity to the buildings along this part of Belsize Lane. There is no consistent front building line and the property lacks architectural symmetry. As a composition, it is considered to be lacking in integrity. The front elevation does not possess architectural features which should not be obscured.

The proposed works are considered to have a positive impact on the quality and integrity of the existing building and in turn will enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposals will improve the quality, design and standard of residential accommodation provided on the site and form part of a wider restoration of the property, which will enhance the appearance of the existing property and therefore the Conservation Area as a whole.

It is considered that the statutory duties in respect of the Conservation Area are upheld and that the proposals will comply with relevant planning policies in relation to heritage and conservation.

#### *Amenity*

Policy A1 of the Local Plan deals with managing the impact of development and notes that the Council will seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. Planning permission will be granted for development unless it causes unacceptable harm to amenity.

Camden Planning Guidance Amenity supports that development should be designed to protect the privacy of occupiers of both existing and proposed dwellings. Developments should ensure that the proximity, size or cumulative effect of any structures avoids having an overbearing and /or dominating effect that is detrimental to the enjoyment of their properties by adjoining residential occupiers

The proposals are for the erection of a single storey extension at ground floor level. The height and scale of the proposed extension would be subservient to the existing building and would not have any impact on the amenity of adjacent occupiers.

There will be no increase in overlooking or loss of privacy as a result of the proposals.

#### **Summary and Conclusions**

The proposals will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. The proposals will be subservient to the host building and of a high-quality design.

The proposal will be visible from the street and will have an impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area but it is considered that the specific architectural characteristics of the existing property mean that a front extension can be accommodated and will rationalise the front elevation, improving its architectural cohesion and symmetry.

Overall, the proposal is considered to result in an enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

No adverse amenity impacts resulting from the proposals have been identified.

The provision of improved and extended accommodation will meet the long-term requirements of the new owners.

The proposals are considered to accord with relevant planning policy objectives at all tiers and permission should therefore be granted.

We trust the application can be made valid and look forward to receiving confirmation of the same. Please do not hesitate to contact Faye Wright of this office if you have any queries in the interim.

Yours faithfully



For and on behalf of

**Forward Planning and Development Limited**