

Contact Camden

Conservation area advisory committee comments form - Ref. 21719619

Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Advisory Committee	Belsize
Application ref	2021/3839/P
Address	Howitt Close Howitt Road London NW3 4LX
Planning Officer	Kate Henry
Comments by	24 Oct 2021
Proposal	Mansard roof extension to create 7 flats (for the purpose of consultation: 1x 1bed, 5 x 2-bed, 1x 3-bed)
Objection	Yes
Observations	OBJECTION Objection

Hewitt Close is a non-designated asset in the Belsize Conservation Area and makes a contribution to its character and appearance. It has a distinct architectural character and visual appearance which is typical of the Art Deco style of the 1920s and some other developments of this period. It has deep projecting bays and a parapet formed by the flat roof which projects over the elevations. The design, style, use of brick with red brick dressings and the white rendered top floor give it a unified appearance and are consistent with the neighbouring buildings.

The white render helps to reduce the scale of the block and leads the eye from the red brick of the Howitt Road housing into the white stucco buildings of Belsize Park Gardens. The elegantly detailed overhanging roofs further reduce the apparent height of the block.

It is set within a spacious garden with tall hedges to the boundary which successfully screen it from its neighbours. It is typical of the area, with its variety of front gardens, garden trees, street trees and generous greenery. It is on a prominent corner at the wide junction with Glenilla Road. Its position in Howitt Road reflects the topography, which slopes down from Haverstock Hill to Belsize Park Gardens. In height, bulk and materials it is a pleasing neighbour to the 1890s terraced housing in Howitt Road and Glenilla Road.

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The proposed additional storey with dormer windows would be out of keeping with the date, design and style of the building. It would alter its architectural character by removing the flat roof and its projecting bays, which is a typical and characteristic detail of this style of building. It would be obtrusive and dominate the scale and appearance to the surrounding buildings in Howitt Road and Glenilla Road. The proposals are top heavy, bulky, have excessively high dormer windows and their subdivision and materials are unknown. The application does not include any evidence of where buildings of this type have been extended in a manner that is in keeping with their style, age and design.

The applicants' Design and Access Statement states that the building "sits at a low point Additionally, the flat roof contributes to its diminutive form which is visually subservient to the neighbouring terrace houses". It and the surrounding houses are all three storey. The reason it appears "diminutive" is that it has a flat roof and the surrounding houses have pitched roofs. This is no justification for the addition of another storey.

The four 'villas' in Belsize Park Gardens (38-44) originally sat in a large garden. As a result there are no 'back-to-back' buildings to their rear creating space to the next building (as is common elsewhere with the semi-detached buildings in this conservation area). This series of 'villas' is unique and as such should be acknowledged with their outlook and surroundings protected as part of the conservation area. Howitt Close as it stands fills up the original gardens of the 'villas', sitting tight along the rear garden walls and rising up a full three stories. It already forms a cliff-like wall. Its [REDACTED] and its height already causes considerable overshadowing and compromises the open gardens. The additional height would cause even more overlooking and loss of light. It would also significantly diminish long views from the four 'villas'.(Cont....)

Note: The rest of the BCAAC objections are posted directly to the web site of the Planning Officer q.v.

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Documents attached

No details entered

About this form

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