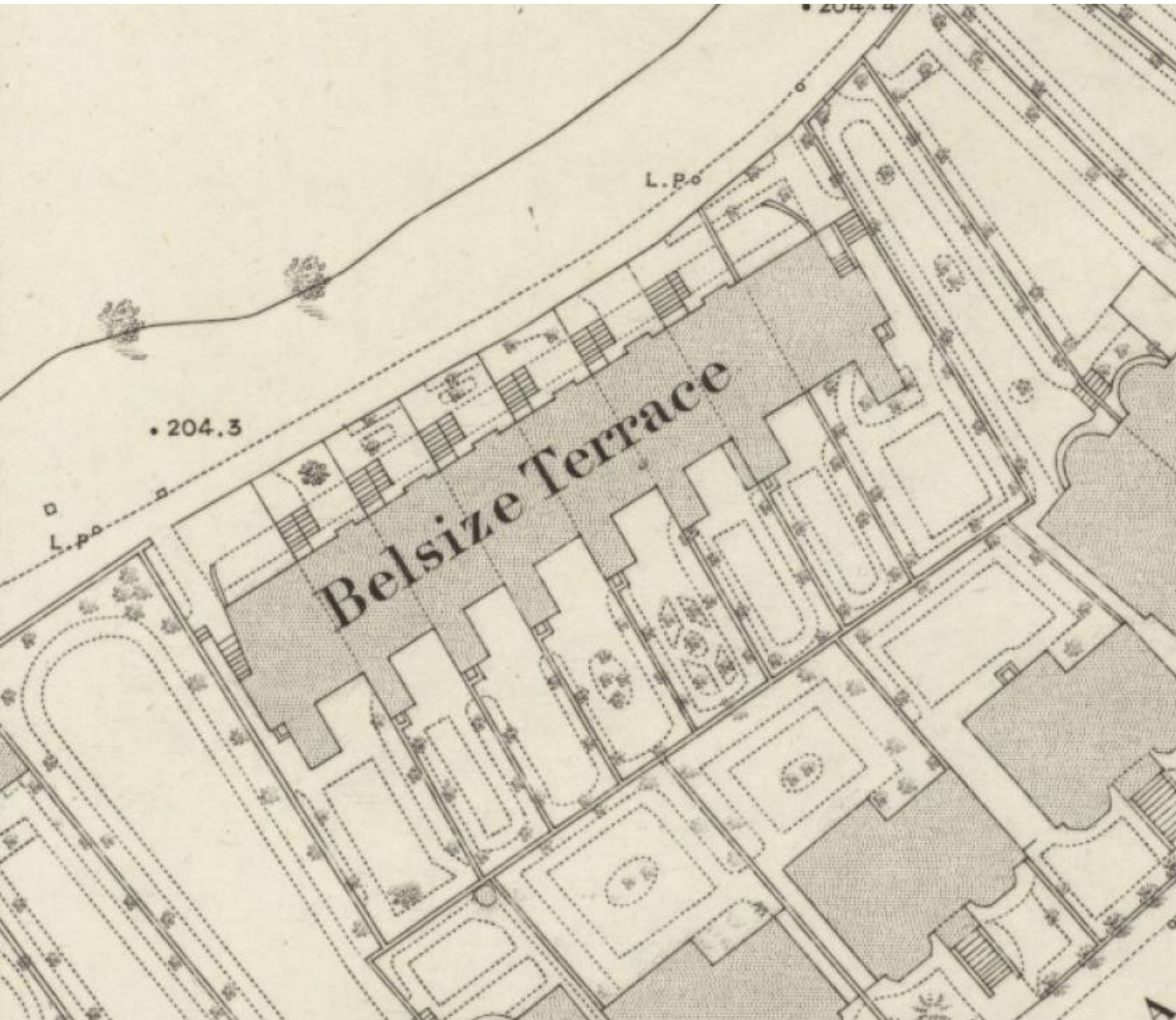


The
Heritage
Practice

10 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SL
+44 (0)20 3871 2951
www.theheritagepractice.com
info@theheritagepractice.com

Heritage Appraisal
No. 91a Belsize Lane, London, NW3 5AU
August 2022





1 Introduction

1.1 The following Heritage Appraisal has been prepared in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent for the extension and alteration of no. 91a Belsize Lane, London, NW3 5AU. No. 91a comprises the ground and lower ground floors of no. 91 that was converted into two, two-storey maisonettes in the 1970s. The following appraisal should be read in conjunction with the drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by Chris Dyson Architects.

1.2 The property forms part of grade II listed terrace that was added to the statutory list in 1974 and includes no. 79-93 Belsize Lane. The list description for the building is as follows:

Terrace of 8 houses. Mid C19. Stucco. Slated roofs with projecting bracketed eaves and brick slab chimney-stacks to party walls. 3 storeys and basements. 2 windows each. Round-arched recessed entrances with rosette patterned architraves; doorways with pilaster-jambes carrying cornice heads, overlights and part glazed panelled doors approached by steps with cast-iron railings. Architraved sashes, most upper floors with margin glazing. Ground floor sashes have rosette-patterned architraves, console-bracketed cornices and cast-iron window guards; 1st floor, architraved sashes with console bracketed segmental pediments, having foliated tympani, and linked by continuous cast-iron balconies; 2nd floor, architraved sashes with lugged sills and flanked by enriched eaves brackets. INTERIORS: not inspected.

1.3 No. 91 also forms part of the Belsize Conservation Area which was first designated in 1973 and has been extended a number of times. Belsize Terrace was added to the conservation area in 1988 as part of a wider area. Any future proposals in respect of the proposed site will need to take into account their effect on the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area as well as the special interest of the listed building.

1.4 There are no other statutorily listed buildings in close proximity to no. 91 other than those forming part of the terrace. The closest listed building to the site is the grade II listed church of St Peter, situated to the north-east.

1.5 The Belsize Conservation Area Appraisal makes specific mention of the group at nos. 79-93. It sets out at page 22 that '*Of particular note and prominent in views along Belsize Lane from the east, it is three storey, listed (Grade II) stucco terrace at nos. 79-93 with classical detailing and decorative first floor balconies*).

Research and report structure

1.6 This appraisal has been prepared following research into no. 91a's historic development and site and context assessment.

1.7 It should be noted that in common with many historic buildings, sites and places, it is not always possible to provide a truly comprehensive analysis of the site's historic development. The research and analysis set out in this report is as thorough as possible given the type and number of archival resources available. Research has been undertaken at the LB Camden's Local Studies and Archive Centre and using LB Camden's historic planning files. A number of online sources have also been used including British History Online. Historic England's national archive has also been consulted. Further sources and evidence that add to our knowledge and understanding of the site and its history may become available at a future date.

1.8 The following section provides an overview of the historic development of the existing building. The third section consider the existing building and its current condition before setting out its significance. Section 4 then provides an assessment of the proposed scheme against the significance of the existing building and the relevant historic environment



statutory and policy context as set out at Appendix A.

Pre-application advice

1.9 Pre-application advice on the alteration and extension of the existing building was sought in March 2022 with written advice on the pre-application proposals provided in June 2022. The current scheme has been amended to take into account pre-application advice and, where relevant, this is referred to in Section 4 below. The design response to the pre-application scheme is also set out in the DAS.

Author

1.10 This appraisal has been prepared by Kate Graham of The Heritage Practice. Kate Graham (MA (Hons) MA PG Dip Cons AA) has extensive experience in dealing with proposals that affect the historic environment having in recent years been Design and Conservation Manager at the London Borough of Islington and Senior Historic Buildings and Areas Adviser at Historic England. She also has an extensive background in research, in policy analysis and in understanding historic buildings and places. She has trained as a historian and has a specialist qualification in building conservation. Kate is also a member of the London Borough of Islington's and the London Borough of Hackney's Design Review Panels.

1.11 Additional historical research for this report was undertaken by Dr Ann Robey FSA, a conservation and heritage professional with over twenty years experience. She has worked for leading national bodies as well as smaller local organizations and charities. She is a researcher and writer specialising in architectural, social and economic history, with a publication record that includes books, articles, exhibitions and collaborative research.



2 Site and context

2.1 The following section provides an account, as far as is possible, of the historic development of no. 91a Belsize Lane and considers how the terrace of which it forms part has changed over time. It also takes into account the current condition and appearance of the building and provides an overview of the building's significance.

Historic development

2.2 The existing property forms part of a terrace of buildings at nos. 79-93 Belsize Lane. The terrace, originally known as Belsize Terrace, was recorded as 'new houses' in the parish vestry minutes of 1856 (*Streets of Belsize*, 2009). This date of construction matches with historic mapping which shows the area relatively undeveloped in 1853 (figure 1) and the terrace in existence by 1862 (figure 2).



Figure 1: Whitbread's New Plan of London (1853).

2.3 The terrace was constructed on previously undeveloped land that formed part of the Belsize House Estate. Initially, the terrace overlooked the open fields of Belsize Farm, a group of buildings situated to the north. Belsize Lane was an existing route linking St John's Wood and the Finchley Road with Haverstock Hill. This contrasts with much of the development to the north and south of the street which represents a more formal, organised town planning and development exercise.

2.4 Development gathered pace in the area during the 1850s, following the demolition of Belsize House in 1853. This development was led principally by a builder called Daniel Tidey. An interesting aspect of the terrace of which no. 91a forms part, is that it is a very different building form to the majority of Tidey's development which comprised large detached and semi-detached villa-style dwellings.

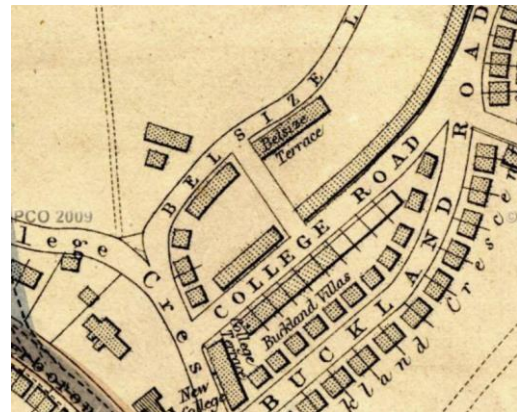


Figure 2: Map of Belsize Terrace, 1862.



Figure 3: OS map extract, 1860s with Belsize Terrace contrasting strongly in form to surrounding development. The lands of Belsize Farm to the north remain undeveloped by this time.

2.5 The terrace as a model for residential development became less popular in the later Victorian period and really in this context, nos. 79-93 is a standalone feature (as shown in later mapping such as at figure 3). It is unlikely that Tidey developed the terrace as his residential model was very different with buildings that were generally less densely developed and



more substantial, set within large gardens and with a greater sense of openness and space.

2.6 The terraced houses were evidently constructed on a two room plan accessed via a staircase that ran partly within a rear two/three storey outrigger. Each house was originally constructed over four floors from lower ground floor to second (some houses were altered historically to provide third floor accommodation). The exceptions to this are the end terrace houses at nos. 79 and 93 which are constructed with a slightly different plan.

2.7 The houses were occupied by the middle classes during the later 19th century with merchants, architects and solicitors amongst the occupants.

2.8 The chapter of Westminster owned considerable lands in the area during the 19th century and it is evident that the Church Commissioners were also active in Belsize Park during the 20th century. It seems probable that the Church Commissioners were originally the freeholder of the terrace. The Church Commissioners were the applicant on a number of early 1970s planning applications that sought conversion of the terraced houses into multiple units. Their estate was sold off in 1976 which would fit with the possibility of the Church adding value to its estate through a variety of contemporary permissions and associated conversions.

2.9 No. 91 was already in multiple occupation by 1910. Two families, the Greens and the Saunders, lived in the building, suggesting a probably informal separation of the building into two units. The occupants were trained professionals, a draughtsman and a master builder, but were potentially of the upper working classes. The demographic shift most likely reflects the drop in popularity of terraced house for the middle classes who instead sought out more substantial dwellings with larger gardens. The change in the terrace's social and economic circumstances inevitably

led to sub-division and conversion for multiple units.

2.10 By 1937, almost all of the houses in the terrace were subdivided including no. 81, no. 85, no. 87, no. 89, no. 91 and no. 95. The houses were converted to various degrees. Several of the houses, including no. 91, have or had a door at ground floor within the closet wing, apparently leading outside. This would seem to suggest that provision was made for occupants to access the garden without going through a separate residential unit at lower ground floor level. Today, many of the houses are either split into two units or have been converted back into single dwellings. The two unit arrangement seems to date back to the conversions carried out by the Church Commissioners in the early 1970s.



Figure 4: OS map extract of 1953.

2.11 Figure 4 shows alterations had been carried out to the rear of the terrace by the 1950s. Steps down from the ground floor of the closet wing are indicated at nos. 81, 83 and 91. No. 87 has a substantial rear extension (since demolished) and there are smaller extensions to no. 85, no. 89 and no. 93.

2.12 No. 91 was formally converted into two maisonettes in 1976 to form 91a and 91b (figure 5). The proposals involved the creation of an opening between the front and rear rooms at ground floor level and a new partition in the rear room to form a hallway providing access via the main entrance to Flat 91b.

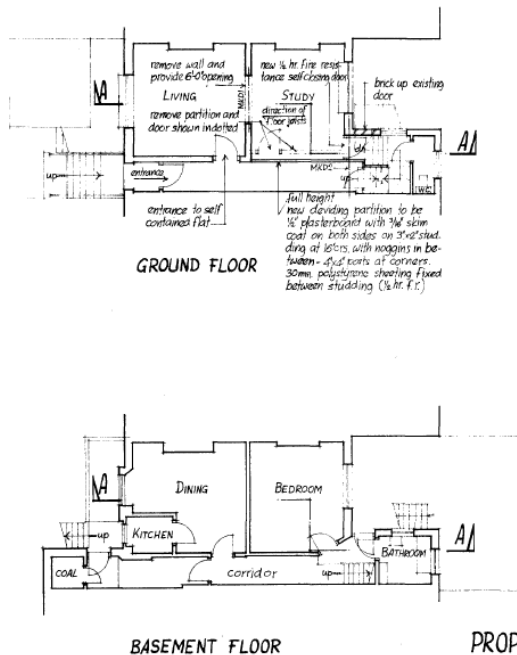


Figure 5: Approved plans, 1976.

2.13 Since then, the existing building hasn't changed significantly and has retained its historic layout more or less. One departure from the approved plans is the addition of a partition within the rear room of the ground floor in order to provide corridor access to the rear bathroom and the lower ground floor. This has impacted on the volume and surviving architectural details of the rear room. The lower ground floor level is broadly as established by the 1976 permission.

2.14 The 1976 drawing shows the stairs from the ground floor closet wing to the garden and the then proposed plan to block the doorway leading to those stairs. This door remains *in situ* and, in character and appearance, it clearly dates from the first half of the 20th century.

2.15 The late 20th century occupant of the flat undertook few alterations during their residency and the property very much has a later 20th century character in terms of its superficial appearance. It is also clearly in need of upgrading, repair and refurbishment and has

suffered from damp ingress at lower ground floor level.

Context

2.16 As indicated above, many of the houses within the terrace are still subdivided into two units. No. 89 is the only property that has been reunited. Subdivision clearly has had an effect on the significance of the terrace's interior where as a rule, lower ground floor and ground floor are separated from the upper levels and the upper levels are separated from the garden.

2.17 The architectural and aesthetic value of the exterior of the terrace as a group is clearly unaffected by internal subdivision. The principal, street elevation of the terrace is very attractive and characteristic of the later 19th century development of Belsize Park.

2.18 The terrace's rear elevation has undergone a high degree of change since the mid-20th century, principally through the addition of rear extensions. In some cases, these have taken the form of single storey rear extension at lower ground floor level, infilling the gap between closet wings (as at nos. 81, 83, and 87) (figure 6-8). In other cases, the closet wing has been extended by a storey as at no. 89. Three storey rear infill extensions have been added to no. 87 and no. 93 and there are dormer extensions at roof level in a number of cases.

2.19 Indeed, although all of the buildings within the terrace have been extended either through infill development, extension to closet wings or through development at roof level, the original rhythm and pattern across the rear of the terrace is legible. There is no consistent pattern either in form or in architectural detail for the various infill extensions and rear facing alterations.

2.20 In many cases, access to lower ground floor infill extensions has been facilitated by the removal of the lower ground floor window or

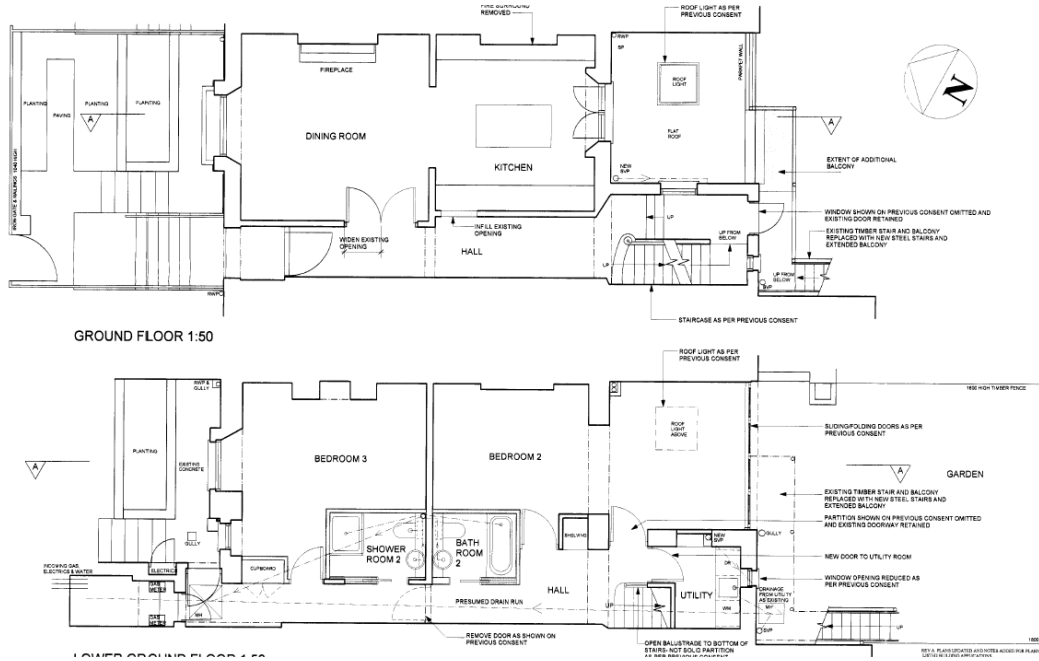


Figure 6: No. 83 Belsize Lane

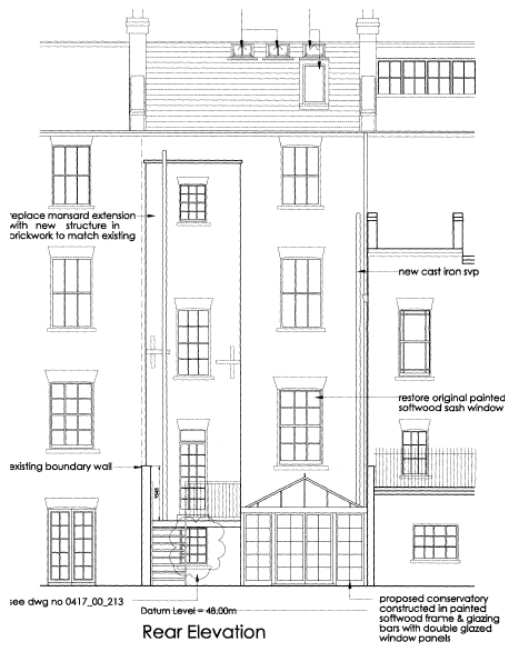


Figure 7: No. 87 Belsize Lane.

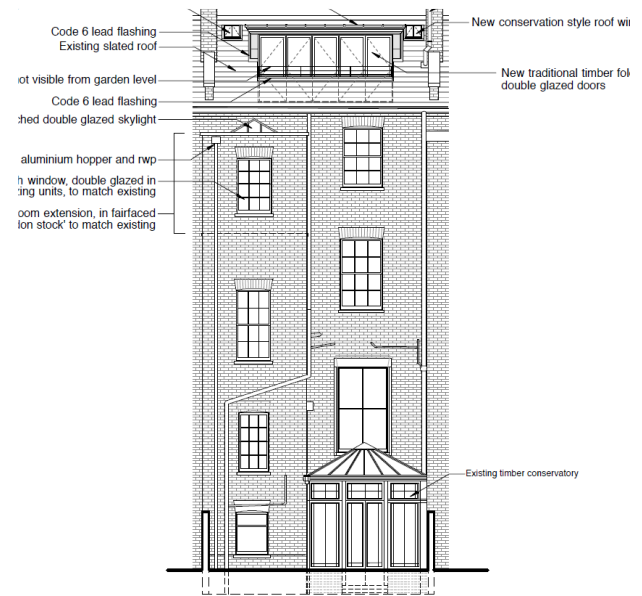


Figure 8: No. 89 Belsize Lane.



door and the widening of an opening at this point. This is generally now an established characteristic of the terrace as a whole.

Summary

2.21 The key phases of no. 91a's historic development include:

- Constructed c. 1855 as part of a terrace of 8 houses;
- The house was a single dwelling until the late 19th/early 20th century when it became home to multiple occupants/families;
- A ground floor door and fire escape were added during the early-mid 20th century. The fire escape is no longer *in situ*.
- The house continued as at least two units until 1976 when this arrangement was reconfigured and ratified;
- Alterations since 1976 have included the addition of a partition within the rear room at ground floor level;
- Works to the front area have been undertaken more recently by the managing freeholder.

2.22 As will be shown in Section 3 below, the underlying historic building is legible beneath later 20th century alterations although those alterations have inevitably had an impact on the significance and special interest of the building. The legibility is expressed through the retention of the building's historic layout at lower ground and ground floor levels (although altered) and through surviving architectural detailing such as cornices, skirting, windows, architraves and linings.

2.23 No. 91 is something of an anomaly in this context as it has not been extended to the rear. As noted above, all properties have been extended in one way or another and this has had an impact on the individual building envelopes and interiors.



3 The existing building

3.1 The following section considers the existing character and appearance of the property. It also provides an overview of its significance.

3.2 The flat extends over the lower ground and ground floors of the building. At ground floor, there are two principal rooms and a small bathroom in the closet wing to the rear of the stairs. The stairs lead downwards to the lower ground floor where there is another bathroom within the closet wing and two principal rooms. A corridor leads from the closet wing and stairs through to the front area of the property.

Ground floor – front room

3.3 The ground floor is accessed via the main door from the street or from lower ground floor level. The ground floor hallway is subdivided between the upper and lower maisonettes.

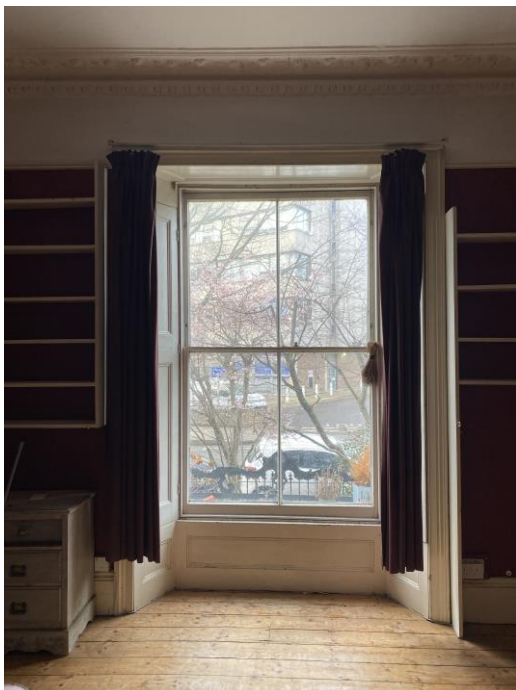


Figure 9: Front room bay with original window and associated details.



Figure 10: Cornice and fire surround detail, front room.



Figure 11: Partition to rear room with non-original door opening.

3.4 The ground floor largely retains its 19th century character with surviving historic fabric and features. The front room (figures 9-11) has



a bay to the street housing an original window with shutters, lining and architrave. There are good skirting and cornice details and an original fire surround with grate. The door and architrave to the entrance hall is original and of a good quality.

3.5 The indications are that there was historically an opening in the spine wall between front and rear rooms. Breaks in the skirting highlight the presence of an earlier opening. There are examples of similar openings in nearby properties including at no. 83, no. 87 and no. 89.

3.6 The front room of the building has a good level of integrity and authenticity and as a result, its significance is comparatively high.

Ground floor – rear room



Figure 12: Rear room window with lining and shutters.

3.7 The ground floor rear room (figures 12-14) is similar in detail to the front room but its volume has been diminished through later 20th century partitioning. The rear room has a

historic window overlooking the garden and a historic cornice.



Figure 13: Modern partition and door between rear room and hallway.



Figure 14: Original fireplace to rear room and original skirting.



3.8 The cornice is interrupted by the modern partition between the rear room and the hallway.

3.9 Although this room would clearly benefit from enhancement as noted above, it does retain historic fabric and detail. Traditionally, a house such as this would have doors to the front and rear rooms off the main entrance hall and corridor at ground floor level. As the house has been subdivided, the former position of the ground floor rear room's door is now within the demise of the upper flat. There is therefore no original door to the rear room and no chance of reinstating one.



Figure 15: Door to rear bathroom with moulded detail to panels on the house side and simple four panels on the inside.

Ground floor stair compartment and rear WC

3.10 The rear closet wing retains a similar level of historic fabric and fittings. The ground to lower ground floor stair is original, as is the door that encloses this stair (figures 15-18). The door to the rear bathroom is also original.



Figure 16: Original window to rear bathroom.



Figure 17: Original stair with bottom step altered from LGF.



Figure 18: Historic ground floor door adjacent to original window opening.



Figure 20: Platform in lower ground floor hallway.



Figure 19: Front room, lower ground floor.



Figure 21: Front window at LGF with flagstone below.



3.11 Again, the rear part of the ground floor contributes to the overall historic and architectural special interest and significance albeit more modestly than other areas of the building. The early 20th century doorway, now redundant reveals something of how the building has been used in the past (see figure 27 below).

Lower ground floor – front room

3.12 The lower ground floor comprises front and rear rooms with a bathroom in the rear closet wing as noted above. A long corridor extends the length of the flat from the stairs towards the front of the building. The floor level has been raised in this location, apparently to deal with a change in levels across the flat. However, this platform has affected the stair and is generally atypical in this context (figure 20).



Figure 22: Rear window to rear room and 1930s style fireplace.

3.13 The front room has a small kitchen added in the south-west corner but is otherwise complete in terms of its original volume (figure 19). There is a good sized chimney breast opening to the front room with original timber surround. The opening is indicative of a historic kitchen use. There is an area of painted flagstone around the window which is an interesting survival. The flagstones appear to be in a poor condition. The door to the front room is original.

Lower ground floor – rear room

3.14 With the exception of the 1930s fire surround, this room retains its historic form and character (figures 22-25). The panelling to the shutters is more modest than at ground floor level, reflecting the floor hierarchy and the more modest character of the lower ground floor. This is also reflected in the lack of cornices and modest skirting (modern).



Figure 23: Original rear window details.

3.15 The door to the rear room is original and as a simple four panel door, matching others at this level. The articulation of the building's floor hierarchy is particularly legible through the use and application of varying details. The picture rail appears to be a later addition but the floor, timber boarding, appears to be historic. This room would benefit from the addition of an appropriately detailed fireplace.

3.16 The rear bathroom is set within the outrigger. There is little of historic interest other than the original windows, one of which is blocked by a mirror (figures 26 and 27).

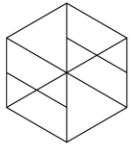


Figure 24: Door to rear room with typical details



Figure 26: Rear bathroom, lower ground floor.



Figure 25: Rear room floor finish.



Figure 27: Rear elevation with windows and doors to outrigger. This shows the redundant doorway that disrupts the composition of the rear elevation.



Figure 28: Corridor created out of rear room with original cornice evident on right hand side.

Significance

3.17 No. 91a is a property that has been affected by historic alteration. While the house is no longer a single dwelling, the property allows for an appreciation of the detailing, form, layout, hierarchy and fixtures of a house of this type and age.

3.18 Some alterations have resulted in an element of harm to the significance of the building such as the creation of a corridor at ground floor level (figure 28) and the following:

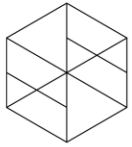
- General lack of investment and maintenance has resulted in the property being in reduced circumstances and, through recent vacancy, the building is at risk of further deterioration;
- Flooding and water ingress has damaged the flooring to the front room and has caused problems associated with damp;
- The redundant door within the outtrigger at ground floor level confuses

the original composition of the rear elevation and detracts from the original established circulation and architecture;

- Subdivision in the 20th century has resulted in the inability to access the rear ground floor room from the main entrance hallway and has removed the requirement for a door in this location;
- The partition to the rear room at ground floor level currently detracts from the significance of the property;
- The modern door between front and rear rooms at ground floor level is atypical in this context;
- The lower ground floor platform to the corridor has obscured part of the original building and its historic floor levels;
- The red brick retaining wall to the front garden (introduced by the previous occupant to deal with flooding issues) appears over engineered and in material terms is a discordant, harmful feature in the context of no. 91 and the terrace as a whole; and,
- One of the lower ground floor windows is modern and designed to incorrect proportions. It contrasts with the other front lower ground floor window.

3.19 The intrinsic interest of the historic form and fabric of the building remains legible to some extent beneath later additions and alterations. A lack of maintenance of historic fabric and features means that investment into the property is required before it slips further into disrepair.

3.20 Externally, the building is little altered, particularly to the street elevation (figure 29) although several minor alterations have had a cumulatively harmful effect on its significance and its contribution to the terrace. This includes the modern red brick retaining wall to the front garden which is discordant in this context. The front elevation is clearly the focus of the terrace's architectural expression and interest



and historic window alterations and the retaining wall affect that architectural expression.



Figure 29: Front elevation with poor retaining wall treatment.

3.21 It is also clear from an assessment of the wider terrace that there is the potential for the extension of the property, infilling the gap to the of the property adjacent to the existing outrigger. All other buildings within the terrace have been extended to varying degrees and there is an opportunity to extend the building in a calm and recessive way that would allow the historic building to remain legible.



Figure 30: rear elevation.



3 Assessment

3.1 The following section provides an assessment of the proposed scheme against the relevant statutory and policy provision as set out at Appendix A. As noted above, the proposed scheme has evolved following the submission of a pre-application scheme to LB Camden and the council's subsequent advice. The following section should be read in conjunction with the DAS prepared by Chris Dyson Architects.

3.2 This section will set out the proposed works to the building and will consider their impact. It will assess this impact in terms of the host building and its special architectural and historic interest as well as the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area.

3.3 The proposals are for the full repair, refurbishment and redecoration of the house which has not benefitted from ongoing investment in its fabric and finishes. A range of internal alterations are proposed which will update the plan form in order to suit modern family living and to improve the functionality of the house. A two-storey rear extension at ground and lower ground floors is also proposed.

The proposed scheme:

3.4 The proposals involve:

Ground floor:

- Retention of ground floor layout with the repositioning of the hallway partition to create a better proportioned rear room;
- Provision of a small sympathetically designed bathroom in the rear room using glazed panels in order to protect the spatial quality and character of the room and relevant historic features;
- Opening up of rear room window to allow doors through to a new rear

extension while retaining existing window surround;

- New rear extension (noted below);
- Restoration of ground to lower ground floor staircase; and,
- Alterations to existing door to flank wall of closet wing to create access to ground floor rear extension.

Lower ground floor:

- New white render and stone coping to existing front garden red brick wall;
- Removal of modern partitions and the existing platform within lower ground floor hallway;
- Creation of an opening between front and rear rooms;
- Creation of an opening between the rear room and the stair compartment;
- Creation of an opening to the rear wall of the building to create access to the lower ground floor level of the new extension; and,
- Adaption of front vault for a bathroom.

Rear elevation:

- The construction of a two-storey extension constructed as a lightweight glazed infill element and designed to be recessive in this context.

Proposed rear extension

3.5 The proposed rear extension is of two storeys, at lower ground and ground floor levels. The height is unchanged from pre-application stage but the footprint of the extension is much reduced and its rear building line now sits behind that of the existing closet wing. As an infill extension in a relatively modest area defined by the rear elevation and the closet wing, the proposed extension has a comparatively modest footprint.

3.6 The design for the infill extension is very simple and intended to be recessive, reading almost as a conservatory type infill. The glazing will sit sympathetically alongside the



more robust brick of the host building, allowing its original form and footprint to remain legible.

3.7 The council's pre-application advice set out that the principle of a single storey rear extension is acceptable. Concern was raised in relation to the proposed two-storey height *'which is seen to be contrary to the Council's CPG on rear extensions as there is a danger the extension will not read as subservient to the host building and wider terrace due to its height, depth, footprint and resultant bulk.'*

3.8 As noted in the DAS, the rear extension was seen in the context of a materially different scheme at pre-application stage. Since then, the footprint has been amended and the proposals for the interior of the building substantially scaled back. In terms of the building's depth and footprint, the proposed infill extension is now comparable to existing infill extensions in the terrace. In terms of the proposed design, the council notes in its pre-application advice that: *'the concept of a contrastingly lightweight extension is seen as an appropriate way forward.'*

3.9 With regard to the height, the council's *Camden Planning Guidance* sets out that: rear extensions should be secondary to the building being extended. The guidance sets out at paragraph 4.10 that extension should be secondary and should respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the host building. With regards to height specifically, paragraph 4.12 sets out that extensions should be subordinate in height and should respect the existing pattern of rear extensions where they exist. The maximum acceptable height of an extension should be determined against the criteria of paragraph 4.10 of the guidance (referred to above and in Appendix A).

3.10 Paragraph 4.13 sets out that: *'In most cases, extensions that are higher than one full storey below roof eaves/parapet level, or that rise above the general height of neighbouring projections and nearby extensions, will be strongly discouraged.'*

3.11 Consideration of the height of rear extension therefore comes down to its relationship with the host building and whether or not the proposed height is contextually appropriate. As shown on figure 31, the proposed extension sits a full storey below the existing closet wing and two full storeys below eaves height.

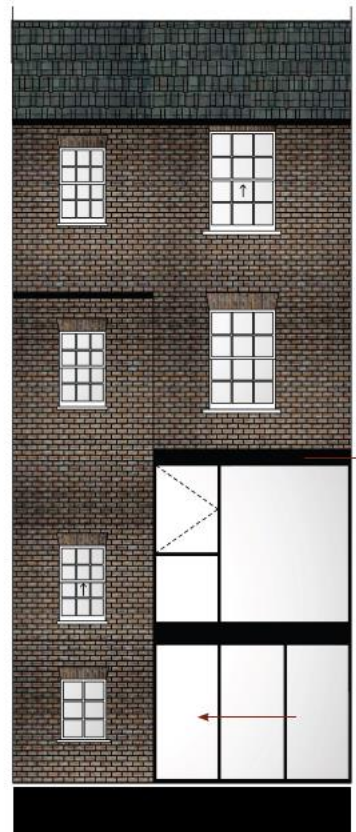


Figure 31: Proposed rear elevation.

3.12 Given the proposed height relative to that of the rear elevation as a whole, the proposed two-storey extension is clearly subordinate to the host building. Consideration must also be given to the existing pattern of rear extensions across the back of the terrace which is the designated heritage asset.

3.13 As shown in the DAS, there is no regular pattern of rear extensions to the terrace. Historically, the houses of the terrace were



constructed over four storeys with a ground to first floor outrigger. In some cases, the outrigger has been extended (no. 87 and no. 89 Belsize Lane) and in the majority of cases, an infill extension has been added in a variety of ways. The established pattern of development includes single storey glazed and other extensions that either sit within or project beyond the rear building line of the closet wing (figures 32 and 33).

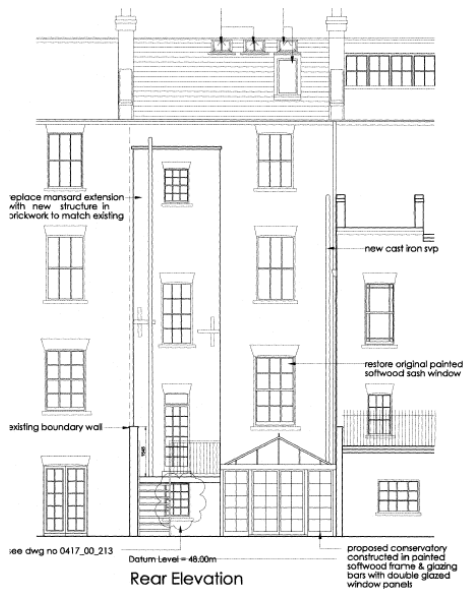


Figure 32: No. 87 Belsize Lane.

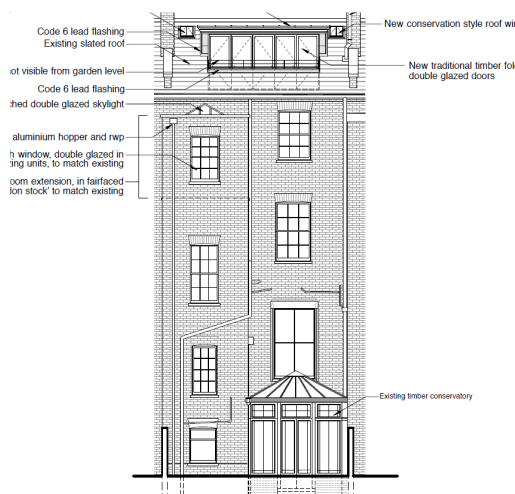


Figure 33: No. 89 Belsize Lane.

3.14 Three storey extensions exist at nos. 85 and 93 Belsize Lane. Thus extensions of varying heights and scale and in varied materials form part of the established pattern of rear extensions to the terrace. The pre-application advice noted that: *'Although other properties in the terrace have been extended at the rear, there is no planning precedent for a two-storey extension other than that at nos. 85 and 93, which were insensitively extended at the rear with three storeys many years ago, most likely prior to the statutory listing of the terrace and the conservation area designation.'*

3.15 Regardless of the timing of the various rear extensions to the building, they do form part of the established pattern of development. There is no clear logic or regularity to the rear extensions and the rear elevation cannot be considered as being anywhere close to its original character or appearance. The issue with the three storey infills, even where the infill is at a lower level than the closet wing such as at no. 85, is the use of solid masonry in construction. This has the effect of coalescing the infill and the closet wing so that the legibility of the original building is reduced.

3.16 The proposed materiality of the rear extension contrasts to the brickwork of the original building, allowing a clear visual distinction between the original building and the new extension.

3.17 The key considerations in this case are whether the proposal is subordinate to the host building and whether the proposal relates to the character of the terrace as a whole. There is no clear pattern to the rear of the terrace and as such, the proposed two-storey addition is not out of place in this context. In addition, the proposed infill extension is clearly subordinate to the host dwelling. For these reasons, this element of the proposal would comply with the relevant guidance in relation to rear extensions. Similarly, this element of the proposals would not cause harm to the significance of the Belsize Conservation Area or to the significance of the listed terrace.



Internal works – ground floor

3.18 Following on from the pre-application advice received from LB Camden in Jun 2020, the ground floor layout of the proposed scheme has been revised to take into account the council's comments. This results in a much simpler floor plan, comparable to the existing. The modern partition forming the hallway from the rear room will be moved slightly so as to improve the proportions of one of the principal rooms of the original house. It is difficult in terms of plan form and circulation to remove a hallway partition in its entirety.

3.19 In the rear room, a lightweight enclosure for an ensuite is proposed. This will be glazed to ensure that the volume and spatial quality of the surrounding room can continue to be appreciated. Minor changes are proposed to the rear closet wing, an area where the fabric has already been disturbed and altered, principally to improve circulation and to provide access to the rear extension. The window to the rear room will be removed with painted timber doors with solid panels in the lower third infilling the gap. The existing shutter boxes and architrave will be retained.

3.20 The works to the ground floor are comparatively modest and more or less relate the existing layout and character of this level. The removal of the rear window would cause an element of harm but this less than substantial harm should be seen against the minimal loss of historic fabric and also in enhancements to the internal layout such as the relocation of the existing partition to better reveal the spatial quality of the rear room. Clerestory glazing will also help to read the former relationship between the hallway and the rear room, visually reuniting the cornice. The retention of fenestration in the window opening will also maintain the existing aesthetic quality of the rear room and retain the enclosure provided by the rear elevation. The ground floor will of course also be fully refurbished.

Internal works – lower ground floor

3.21 The existing lower ground floor has a typical front and rear room plan accessed via the rear stair compartment with a small vault at the front of the property. The proposals involve the removal of 1970s work and the full refurbishment of this level.

3.22 The existing door to the front room will be fixed shut and retained and a new opening made between the front and rear rooms. The existing window to the rear room will be removed with the existing opening size, architrave and shutter boxes retained. Kitchen units will be located on the north wall of the rear room around the existing chimney breast. The fire surround in this room will be removed but this is 1930s style tiling and not original to the house.

3.23 Part of the wall between the staircase and the rear room will be removed with nibs and downstand retained. This is similar to the lower ground floor layout at no. 87 Belsize Lane where approval was granted for the removal of part of the spine wall and the opening of the rear wall. The hallway partition no longer exists at no. 87 (application reference 2016/2089/P).

3.24 To the front of the building, the existing vault is converted for bathroom use with its design and layout intended to emphasise character and form of this particular space. At no. 87, this area underwent structural alteration to form a bike store. The proposed conversion brings the otherwise redundant vault into the usable area of the property.

3.25 The works to the rear elevation at lower ground, and also at ground floor level, to enable access to the two-storey extension, have been minimised, as has the removal of historic fabric. The lower ground floor rear wall will be unaffected, unlike other buildings in the terrace such as no. 85 where a much wider opening has been permitted. Retaining more of the rear wall helps to maintain the overall integrity of the rear elevation.



3.26 The council's pre-application advice notes that *'Although the lower ground floor is acknowledged to be an area of lesser significance within the listed building, the majority of the original plan at this level remains, and any works of modernising and upgrading should respect the survival of historic fabric and original features where they exist.'* As shown in the DAS and on the proposed drawings, the proposed lower ground floor layout has been completely revised, taking into account the council's concerns about the open plan character of the pre-application scheme. The cellular layout of the building is retained with a clear character to each particular area of this level. Each individual room and the hall corridor would remain legible.

3.27 The pre-application advice also cautioned against the loss of the flank wall to the closet wing which formed part of the pre-application proposals. It should be noted that this wall is now retained in its entirety.

3.28 Also at lower ground floor to the front elevation, the existing modern red brick wall will be rendered and given a stone coping in order to improve its appearance. This will help to mitigate the discordant visual impact of the existing wall and will enhance the front elevation of the building and its contribution to the terraced group as a whole.

Refurbishment, repair and upgrading

3.28 Internally the building will be redecorated throughout, with any making good to plaster, joinery and other finishes undertaken on a like for like basis. Floorboards will be cleaned, repaired and refurbished

3.29 The existing servicing within the building is very dated and requires complete renewal. This will include the plumbing system, with new pipework following existing pipe routes where possible. The house will also be re-wired.

Policy compliance

3.30 The main issues for consideration in relation to this application are the effect of the proposals on no.91a as part of a listed terrace and the impact of external changes to the building on the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area.

3.31 The relevant statutory provisions in relation to these matters are contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 at sections 16 and 72. This appraisal has shown that the proposals will generally have no harmful impact upon the defined significance of the listed building, indeed it will be enhanced by the extensive works of sympathetic restoration and reinstatement of its fabric and finishes.

3.32 The proposed additions, extensions and alterations to the exterior and interior of the listed building are sympathetic and well designed and of a high quality. There is a potentially a lesser element of 'less than substantial harm' caused by the removal of the rear windows at ground and lower ground floor levels but these can be offset by the general enhancements to the existing building as described above and through widespread refurbishment. The delivery of heritage benefits in this regard would therefore accord with the relevant statutory provision and the relevant national historic environment policy provision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

3.33 The proposed works are considered to comply with the relevant sections of the London Borough of Camden's Local Plan 2017.

3.34 **Policy D1 – Design** requires development to respect local context and character, preserve or enhance the historic environment and heritage assets and comprise details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character. **Policy D2 – Heritage** outlines that the Council will preserve, and where appropriate enhance the borough's rich and diverse heritage assets, including

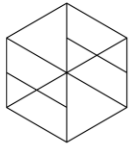


conservation areas and listed buildings. Any less than substantial harm must be outweighed convincingly by the public benefits of the scheme. In conservation areas, development is required to preserve or where possible, enhance their character or appearance. With regard to listed buildings, the Council will resist proposals to alter or extend them where this would cause harm to their special architectural or historic interest and setting.

3.35 Internally the building is very dated and has not been upgraded in several decades. The proposals will utilise and enhance the original layout of the listed building at ground floor as far as possible and retain the character of the lower ground floor levels. The plan form at lower ground floor level will be opened up to create attractive, modern family living accommodation, linked through to the new garden room and with improved connectivity with the rear garden.

3.36 The proposed rear extension will obviously have no impact upon the highly significant front façade of the listed building, which contributes substantially to the interest of the listed terrace. As set out above, the rear elevation of the terrace is much altered and there is no clear pattern of extension and infill. In this context, the proposed extension would not cause harm to the rear elevation of the listed group.

3.37 For these reasons, and for those set out above, it is considered that the proposed scheme will conserve the special interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area. The proposals would therefore comply with the relevant historic environment statutory and policy provision.



Appendix A Relevant Historic Environment Policy

National Planning Policy & Legislation

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that the decision maker: *'...shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'*

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that the decision maker: shall

The revised **National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)** sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. There is a general presumption in favour of sustainable development within national planning policy guidance.

Paragraph 194: In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

Paragraph 195: Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage

asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 199: When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 202: 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.

London Borough of Camden Local Plan

Camden's Local Plan was adopted in June 2017. The most relevant policy in this case is **Policy D2: Heritage**.

With regard to Conservation Areas, the policy states that the Council will:

- Require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character and appearance of the area.

With regard to Listed Buildings, the policy sets out that the Council will:

- Resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building.

Policy D1: Design is also of relevance. This sets out that the council will seek to secure high quality design in development and will require that development (inter alia):

- a) respects local context and character;



- b) *preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with 'Policy D2 Heritage;*
- c) *is sustainable in design and construction;*
- d) *is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;*
- e) *comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character.*

Camden Planning Guidance

Home Improvements: Camden Planning Guidance January 2021

This guidance provides information on common works to residential properties. With regard to rear extensions the guidance sets out that extensions should:

- *Be subordinate to the building being extended, in relation to its location, form, footprint, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing;*
- *Be built from materials that are sympathetic to the existing building wherever possible;*
- *Respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style;*
- *Respect and preserve existing architectural features, such as projecting bays, decorative balconies, cornices and chimney stacks;*
- *Be carefully scaled in terms of its height, width and depth;*
- *Allow for the retention of a reasonably sized garden.*

Camden Planning Guidance: Design CPG1 (July 2015)

General principles of rear extensions are established at paragraph 4.10 of CPG1. The principles state that:

Rear extensions should be designed to:

- be secondary to the building being extended, in terms of location, form, scale, proportions, dimensions and detailing;
- respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style;
- respect and preserve existing architectural features, such as projecting bays, decorative balconies or chimney stacks;
- respect and preserve the historic pattern and established townscape of the surrounding area, including the ratio of built to unbuilt space;
- not cause a loss of amenity to adjacent properties with regard to sunlight, daylight, outlook, overshadowing, light pollution/spillage, privacy/overlooking, and sense of enclosure;
- allow for the retention of a reasonable sized garden; and
- retain the open character of existing natural landscaping and garden amenity, including that of neighbouring properties, proportionate to that of the surrounding area.

With regard to the height of rear extensions, **paragraph 4.12** sets out that: *'In order for new extensions to be subordinate to the original building, their heights should respect the existing pattern of rear extensions, where they exist. Ground floor extensions are generally considered preferable to those at higher levels. The maximum acceptable height of an extension should be determined in relation to the points outlined in paragraph 4.10 above. In cases where a higher extension is appropriate, a smaller footprint will generally be preferable to compensate for any increase in visual mass and bulk, overshadowing and overlooking that would be caused by the additional height.'*

Paragraph 4.13 sets out that: *'In most cases, extensions that are higher than one full storey below roof eaves/parapet level, or that rise*



above the general height of neighbouring projections and nearby extensions, will be strongly discouraged.'

Paragraph 4.14 provides guidance on the width of rear extensions: *'The width of rear extensions should be designed so that they are not visible from the street and should respect the rhythm of existing rear extensions.'*

Belsize Conservation Area Statement

This document sets out at BE22 that: *'Rear extensions should be as unobtrusive as possible and should not adversely affect the character of the building or the Conservation Area. In most cases such extensions should be no more than one storey in height but its effect on neighbouring properties and Conservation Area will be the basis of its suitability.'*

BE23 states that *'Extensions should be in harmony with the original form and character of the house and the historic pattern of extensions within the terrace or group of buildings. The acceptability of larger extensions depends on the particular site and circumstances.'*