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16th February 2023

Via Planning Portal only

Dear Sir/Madam

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION - THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

BASEMENT EXCAVATION, INSTALLATION OF EXTERNAL PLATFORM LIFT, RECONFIGURATION OF EXTERNAL STAIRCASE, REINSTATEMENT OF STAIR BALUSTRADE AND FRONT BOUNDARY TREATMENT TO MATCH ORIGINAL, REPLACEMENT WINDOWS, INSTALLATION OF BI FOLDING DOORS, HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING AND ASSOCIATED WORKS.

13 BELSIZE CRESCENT, LONDON, NW3 5QU

Please accept this covering letter as a planning statement, heritage statement and an accompaniment to this full planning application for extensions and alterations to 13 Belsize Crescent. This letter provides a summary of the site and the proposed development.

Please also find enclosed a completed application form, full set of existing and proposed plans and a completed CIL questions form. A basement impact assessment, draft construction management plan and design and access statement will follow.

The site

The site is located on the southwest side of Belsize Crescent and comprises a five-storey mid terrace property. The site lies within the Belsize Park Conservation Area and is identified as a positive contributor to the conservation area, in the Belsize Conservation Area Appraisal. The immediate setting comprises similar residential properties, many of which have been converted into flats.

Planning history

On the 1st of September 2022, lawful development certificates (references 2022/3736/P and 2022/3739/P) were submitted for fenestration alterations. The applications are pending determination.

On the 15th of June 2022, a lawful development certificate was granted (reference 2022/1803/P) for use of the property as a single residential unit.

On the 12th of September 2000, planning permission was granted (reference PWX0002678) for the change of use of the lower ground and ground floor flats to one self-contained maisonette.

On the 15th of December 1981, planning permission was granted (reference G7/8/33/33075(R1) for the erection of a roof extension to provide extra residential accommodation.

The proposal

The proposal is for a basement excavation, installation of a platform lift, altered staircase arrangement to front light well, boundary treatment alterations, replacement windows, installation of bi-folding doors, hard and soft landscaping and associated works.

For full details see the supporting plans and design and access statement.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which incorporates three specific strands – economic, environmental and social. The following sections are relevant to the consideration of this application; Section 11 (making effective use of land), Section 12 (achieving well designed places), and Section 16 (conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

Local Planning Policy

For the purposes of this application, the adopted Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden (LB Camden) comprises the London Plan (2021) (LP), the Camden Local Plan (2017) (CLP) and the Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) Documents.

The following policies are considered relevant to the consideration and determination of this application:

London Plan 2021

- D1 London's form, character and capacity for growth
- D4 – Delivering good design
- D5 – Inclusive design
- D7 – Accessible housing
- D10 – Basement development
- HC1 – Heritage conservation and growth

Camden Local Plan 2017

- A1 – Managing the impact of development
- A5 – Basements
- C6 - Accessibility
- D1 - Design
- D2 – Heritage

Camden Planning Guidance

- Home Improvements
- Access for All
- Amenity
- Design
- Basement
- Transport
- Belsize Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Planning Assessment

Design, visual and heritage impact

Section 72 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 requires decision makers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas. This statutory duty is reflected in Policy HC1 of the London Plan and D2 of Camden's Local Plan.

The application comprises a five storey mid terrace building, on a street characterised by buildings of a similar age and design. Many of the buildings have been extended and altered over the years to meet the needs of the respective occupants. Many of the properties on the street have also been converted into flats.

Belsize Park Conservation Area Appraisal sets out that the site is located in Belsize Village sub area. The appraisal describes the area as residential streets, with terraces, set back from the road, with front gardens, mature trees and vegetation that softens the views along the street. The buildings are constructed of stucco and London brick, with detailing. Where development does not preserve the character of the area it is generally down to inappropriate materials, scale, alterations, and extensions to existing buildings.

The proposed front alterations include reinstating the stair balustrade and front boundary treatment to match the original. The proposed front platform lift will sit behind the boundary wall and proposed landscaping and would not be readily visible from public vantage points. The proposed lower ground floor front excavation and basement excavation are below street level and therefore would not be readily visible from public vantage points. Landscaping would be retained to the front to enable the site to continue to contribute to the semi- verdant character of the street.

The proposed bi-folding doors, at lower ground floor level, are located to the rear and they would not be visible from public vantage points. The proposal includes the replacement of existing windows with timber sashes of similar appearance to the existing. The proposal retains the general pattern and hierarchy of fenestration on the façades. The proposed hard and soft landscaping to the rear retains the verdant character and preserves the contribution the rear garden makes to the character and appearance of the area.

The proposed external works are sympathetic to the host building and preserve the contribution the building makes to the character and significance of the conservation area. The proposal accords with London Plan Policies HC1 and D1 as well as Local Plan Policy D2.

Neighbour amenity impact

Camden Local Plan Policy A1 sets out that development will only be supported where it does not give rise to adverse neighbour amenity impacts.

The proposed development does not extend the building above ground level or introduce any new side facing openings or terraces. The development would not have a detrimental impact on neighbour amenity with respect to daylight/sunlight, outlook, overbearing or privacy impacts.

As with any development, there will be some temporary disturbance during construction. It is anticipated that construction related impacts will be managed through appropriate management plan(s), which can be secured by condition/ legal agreement.

The proposal would not harm neighbour amenity and accords with Local Plan Policy A1.

Basement development

CLP Policy A5 (criteria a-e) states that the council will only permit basement development where it is demonstrated that the proposal would not cause harm to neighbouring properties; the structural, ground, or water conditions of the area; the character and amenity of the area and the significance of heritage assets.

In determining proposals for basements and other underground development, the council will require an assessment of the scheme's impact on drainage, flooding, groundwater conditions and structural stability in the form of a Basement Impact Assessment (BIA). As part of this assessment, it requires criteria n-u of Policy A5 to be considered. These criteria require the applicant to demonstrate a 'very slight' risk of damage to neighbouring properties, to avoid adverse drainage or water environment impacts, avoid harm to amenity of neighbours, to provide satisfactory landscaping and soil depth, avoid harm to the property and the established character of the area, protect archaeological remains and not prejudice the ability of the garden to support trees, where are part of the character of the area.

Camden's adopted planning guidance on basements (CPG Basements) provides further detail on the application of Policy A5.

The application will be accompanied by a basement impact assessment. The assessment will confirm that the proposal would not adversely impact stability, hydrological or hydrogeological impacts.

CLP Policy A5 also states that the siting, location, scale and design of basements must have minimal impact on, and be subordinate to, the host building and property, and provides a set of specific criteria (criteria j-m) which needs to be met. Below is an assessment of the proposed development against the aforementioned criterion:

f. not comprise of more than one storey

Passes - The proposed basement is limited to a single storey (4m high – excluding swimming pool).

g. not be built under an existing basement

Passes – The proposed basement is below the existing lower ground floor which has openings to the front and rear. The proposal will not be built under an existing basement.

h. not exceed 50% of each garden within the property;

Passes – The proposed basement accounts for approximately 38% of the rear garden and 50% of the front garden.

i. be less than 1.5 times the footprint of the host building in area;

Passes – The proposed basement has a footprint of approximately 1.3 times that of the host building.

j. extend into the garden no further than 50% of the depth of the host building measured from the principal rear elevation;

Passes – The proposed basement extends less than 50% of the depth of the host building when measured from the principal front and rear elevations.

k. not extend into or underneath the garden further than 50% of the depth of the garden;

Passes – The proposed basement does not extend underneath the front and rear garden further than 50% of its depth.

l. be set back from neighbouring property boundaries where it extends beyond the footprint of the host building;

Passes – Where the basement extends beyond the footprint of the host building, it is set back from the shared boundaries with the neighbouring properties.

m. avoid the loss of garden space or trees of townscape or amenity value.

Passes – The proposed basement will not result in the loss of any existing garden space or result in the loss of any trees of townscape or amenity value. The proposal includes new landscaping.

As demonstrated above, the proposed basement meets the requirements of policy A5. The principle of the proposed basement is acceptable.

Accessibility

LP Policy D5 supports the creation of inclusive neighbourhoods, by seeking to ensure that developments achieve the highest standards of accessible design. CLP Policy C6 sets out that the Council will expect all buildings to meet the highest practicable standards of accessible design. Camden's Access for All CPG reiterates that the Council expects all development (including developments that alter/ refurbish existing buildings) to be inclusively designed and promote equal opportunity. It also states that the council will balance the requirement to provide access with the conservation of heritage assets. The guidance contains

a list of features to be considered which includes level access, suitably wide doors, corridors and rooms, providing lifts and suitable stairs to all storeys above and below ground.

The proposed development significantly improves accessibility through the provision of an external platform lift providing level access to the lower ground floor, an internal lift facilitating access to all floors, suitably wide doors, corridors and rooms to facilitate wheelchair access and turning. The proposal provides a high-quality accessible dwelling in line with LP Policy D5 and CLP Policy C6.

Highway safety

CLP Policies T1 and T2 highlight the importance of prioritising walking and cycling as a sustainable mode of transport and indicate that car-free development across the borough is a key aim. This is also echoed in the Transport CPG.

The proposed development does not increase the parking demand for the site. The site does not have any on-site vehicle parking spaces. The applicants are returning residents who are currently eligible and will continue to be eligible for parking permits. The proposed development accords with Camden Local Plan Policies T1 and T2.

Summary

As demonstrated within this letter and supporting documents, the proposed works are considered to respond positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the host property. The proposal creates an accessible dwelling, that provides a high quality living environment for future occupants. The proposal would not harm highway safety or neighbour amenity. The development fully accords with the development plan and national planning policy guidance, and it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

I trust this letter and the enclosed documents provide you with sufficient information to determine the application but if you require any points of clarification or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Stuart Minty
Director
SM Planning