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Via Planning Portal only

30th October 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: FULL PLANNING APPLICATION – THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING EXTERNAL STAIRS AND MAKING GOOD THE BALCONIES IN MATERIALS TO MATCH, EXTENSION OF EXISTING OUTBUILDING, ENLARGEMENT OF EXISTING REAR OPENING TO FORM DOOR AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

ORNAN COURT, 2 ORNAN ROAD, LONDON, NW3 4PT

Please accept this planning covering letter as an accompaniment to this planning application for the demolition of the existing external metal stairs and making good of the balconies with metal work to match, extension of existing outbuilding, enlargement of ground floor rear opening to create a door and associated works at Ornan Court, 2 Ornan Road, London, NW3 4PT ('the site').

This letter provides a brief description of the site and the proposed development. Please also find enclosed for your consideration existing, previously consented and proposed plans.

The Site:

The application site comprises a mansion block located on the west side of Ornan Road, to the south of the junction with Haverstock Hill. The building is of Queen Anne Revival style, constructed of red brick, with timber sash windows, a decorative entrance portico and a plain clay tiled roof. The building has been extended and altered, particularly to the rear and at roof level. The building has a raised front and side garden beyond retaining walls and is currently a Sui Generis Hostel. The building has pedestrian access off Ornan Road and Haverstock Hill.

The wider area is characterised by residential buildings, between 2 and 6 storeys in height, set behind modest front gardens enclosed by brick/stucco boundary treatments.

The Proposal:

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing external metal staircases and the making good of the landing platforms to form balconies. The proposal also includes an extension to the existing outbuilding and enlargement of an existing ground floor rear opening to create a door. For full details of the proposed development please view the supporting plans.

Planning History:

On the 30th of January 2024, planning permission was granted (reference 2024/0084/P) for the demolition of existing single storey rear extension and detached outbuilding, erection of replacement single storey rear extension, infilling of the pedestrian access off Haverstock Hill, the re-landscaping of the front and side gardens and alterations to existing waste and bicycle store.

On the 3rd of May 2018, planning permission was granted (reference 2016/5652/P) for the excavation of a basement to create 2 x 2 bedroomed self-contained flats (Class C3) with associated front lightwells and cycle stores and reconfigured existing cycle and refuse storage areas to front garden.

On the 5th of February 2008, planning permission was granted (reference 2008/2886/P) for a single storey ground floor rear extension to the rear of the existing hostel (Sui Generis), erection of a bike and bin store accessed from the Ornan Court elevation.

Planning Legislation and Policy:

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty on decision makers to have a special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

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. Section 16 (conserving and enhancing the historic environment) is relevant to the determination of this application.

Local Planning Policy

For the purposes of this application, the adopted Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden comprises the London Plan (2021), Camden Local Plan (2017) and the made neighbourhood plans and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents.

London Plan

D3: Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach

D4: Delivering good design
D12: Fire safety
HC1: Heritage conservation and growth

Camden Local Plan

A1: Managing the Impact of Development
A3: Biodiversity
D1: Design
D2: Heritage
H3: Protecting Existing Homes

Supplementary Planning Guidance Documents

Design (2021)
Fitzjohns/ Netherhall Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (2022)

Planning Assessment:

Design and heritage

Case law dictates that decision makers are required to give *great weight* to any harm to the significance of a heritage asset and how this should be applied is set out in section 16 of the NPPF.

Section 72 of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 places a statutory duty on decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas.

London Plan Policy HC1 and Local Plan Policies D1 and D2 reflect the statutory duty insofar as they set out that the Council will seek to ensure that new development achieves high quality design that preserves and where appropriate enhances Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets. The policies continue to set out that the Council will not permit harm to heritage assets unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh the harm.

The Fitzjohns/ Netherhall Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (2022) highlights the importance that trees and vegetation make to the green and leafy character of the area. In townscape terms, the appraisal sets out that the area is characterised by large detached and semi-detached buildings, with space in between, set back behind front gardens enclosed by boundary treatments. The application building is identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

The existing metal external staircases, to the rear of the building, do not make a positive contribution to the appearance of the host building or the character of the conservation area. Subsequently, the principle of demolition of the staircase is considered to be acceptable.

The proposed making good of the stair landings, to form balconies, with materials to match would not harm the external appearance of the building or the contribution the building makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The proposed extension to the outbuilding is modest and would not be readily visible from public vantage points owing to intervening built form. Outbuildings in rear gardens form an established part of the character of the street. The proposed outbuilding extension is in keeping with the pattern and scale of development in the locality and would not harm the contribution the rear of the site makes to the special interest of the conservation area.

The proposed door would be in the position of an existing opening and would not be visible from public vantage points. It would not harm the appearance of the building and would preserve the contribution the site makes to the character of the conservation area.

The proposal preserves the contribution the building and the site makes to the character, appearance and special interest of Fitzjohns/ Netherhall Conservation Area. As such, the proposal accords with London Plan Policy HC1, Local Plan Policies D1 and D2 and section 72 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act.

Neighbour amenity and living quality

Local Plan Policy A1 seeks to ensure that development protects the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting planning permission to development that would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents. Policies D1 and H6 require development to provide a high quality internal and external amenity environment for the future occupants.

The removal of the external metal staircases would improve the outlook and light entering abutting windows and would remove any adverse privacy impacts arising from the use of the external staircases. The proposed balconies will not be functional, with any doors there too permanently locked other than for maintenance access. This can be controlled by planning condition, if deemed necessary. This would ensure that no adverse neighbour amenity impacts in respect to loss of privacy or overlooking.

The proposed outbuilding extension is modest, is single storey in height, with intervening built form separating it from neighbouring ground floor windows. As such, the outbuilding extension would not give rise to any adverse neighbour amenity impacts with respect to loss of light, privacy, outlook or overbearing impacts.

The proposed enlargement of the existing window opening to create a door at ground level would not harm neighbour amenity.

The proposed extension to the outbuilding will improve the functionality of the building to the benefit of the occupants. The proposal would improve living quality for the occupants whilst not harming neighbour amenity in line with Local Plan Policy A1.

Fire safety

London Plan Policy D12 requires all development to achieve the highest standards of fire safety.

The existing metal staircase was originally designed for maintenance access for roof level plant. It was later modified to provide a means of escape. The existing escape does not form part of the fire strategy for the building, with the means of escape being the internal stair core and hall which will be enhanced to provide a building regulation compliant means of escape. There would be no change to the fire tender access arrangements or the access and egress arrangements in the event of a fire. The works will be carried out in accordance with current building regulation fire safety requirements. There would be no conflict with Local Plan Policy D12.

Summary & Conclusion:

For the reasons set out in this letter it is considered that the proposed development constitutes sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. The proposal is in accordance with the adopted development plan and there are no over-riding material planning considerations which suggest the development should not be determined anything but positively in accordance with the adopted development plan.

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