

22 King's Mews, London WC1N 2JB



Supporting Planning Statement



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Introduction

Buchanan Associates Architects Limited (BAA) has prepared this supporting planning statement (incorporating original material by Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design) to accompany a planning and conservation area consent application being advanced by the freehold owners of 22 King's Mews, situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Draft proposals in respect of No 22 King's Mews has been the subject of a pre-application discussion with London Borough of Camden (LBC) on 13th July 2012 following which a report has been received from LBC setting out informal advice.

As advised by the Council this application is accompanied by sufficient material to enable it to be registered and determined, comprising:

- Planning and Conservation Area Consent Application Forms
- Ownership Certificate
- Location Plan at 1/1250
- Block Plan at 1/500
- Existing and proposed plans, sections and elevations
- The correct fee
- Design and Access Statement
- This Supporting Planning Statement
- Basement Impact Assessment
- Daylight and Sunlight Assessment
- Lifetime Homes Statement
- Code for Sustainable Homes Statement
- Draft Construction Management Plan
- Photographs/photomontages

We confirm that as part of the process of developing the proposals the applicant has been mindful of the recent relevant planning history as contained within the now expired permission 2009/0710/P. This previous permission, which covered 23-30 King's Mews & 43-45 Gray's Inn Road, involved the demolition of the King's Mews buildings and the erection of a part 3-, part 4-storey building to accommodate 18 private residential flats

and the erection of a rear extension at first to third floor levels and a mansard roof extension at fourth floor level at 43-45 Gray's Inn Road and a change of use from part office and part residential to a wholly residential to accommodate 7 affordable flats.

Whilst the permission expired in May of this year (2012) it provides useful guidance in terms of what might be considered acceptable in terms of the principle of demolition and redevelopment of the various King's Mews properties, their change of use to residential, and an appropriate scale and massing for redevelopment.

Since this permission was granted the subject property has been broken up and sold to several new and unrelated owners. These owners (particularly no 25 - 28 inclusive) have bought forward proposals and obtained planning permission for developments on these various plots. These very recent planning cases are relevant to this application due to their proximity and similarity . More detail of these cases are provided in the Design and Access Statement.

The key planning issues may be summarised as follows:

- Loss of employment use
- Principle of residential use
- Demolition of buildings in a conservation area
- Height bulk and design
- Amenity issues

Each of these issues is considered further in this report.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with policies of the statutory Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the statutory Development Plan comprises the following:

- Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (The London Plan) (July 2011)
- Camden Core Strategy 2010-2025
- Camden Development Policies 2010-2025
- The saved site specific policies of the UDP

In addition a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents prepared in support of Camden's LDF are relevant to these applications including CPG1 (Design), CPG2 (Housing) and CPG5 (Town Centre, Retail and Employment)

Loss of an existing employment use

The existing building contains the following floor space: 161m² (GIA). The proposed building (two dwelling house) contain the following floor space: 279m² (GIA). All of the existing space is currently vacant. It is understood that the space was last used as storage/ancillary office linked to an electrical wholesale retail unit on Gray's Inn Road. The use ceased prior to the grant of a planning consent for comprehensive redevelopment for residential at 23-30 King's Mews & 43-45 Gray's Inn Road (2009/0710/P). The King's Mews warehouse buildings were subsequently broken up and sold to individual buyers.

Development Plan policy DP13 states that the Council will resist a change to non-business use unless it can be demonstrated that a site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business use and there is evidence that the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site or building for similar or alternative business use has been fully explored over an appropriate period of time. Para. 13.5 of Camden's Development Policies

Document states that when a change of use is proposed, the applicant must demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction:

'that there is no realistic prospect of demand to use the site for an employment use. The applicant must submit evidence of a thorough marketing exercise, sustained over at least two years. The property should be marketed at realistic prices, include consideration of alternative business uses and layouts and marketing strategies, including management of the space by specialist third party providers'

Such marketing evidence accompanied the previous 2009 application. The marketing exercise ran for a continuous period from 2006 to the point of permission in 2009. The evidence confirmed that details of the premises, which included the application property, were distributed to over 500 agents, seeking interest in the site. The only responses received were from developers seeking to redevelop the entire site. No prospective tenants were identified as a result of this exercise. The application identified one of the key constraints associated with the existing premises was the fact that it had been knocked through over the years but not in any comprehensive manner. The planning statement that accompanied the original 2009 planning application stated that as a result of this subdivision:

'...a piecemeal collection of spaces, all different in size and on different levels. The access between the spaces is inconsistent, with different shaped openings/ doors and ramps of differing angle. The result is a 'rabbit warren' of small enclosed spaces, unsuited to today's modern storage standards. These problems would apply to a single occupier or a series of occupiers trying to adapt the current space'.

The marketing exercise was accompanied by additional evidence, which assessed the suitability of the site for continued employment use. The assessment highlighted a number of problems associated with level changes, restricted eaves heights, inadequate floor loadings, lack of 'clean' open spaces, inadequate vertical circulation, insufficient parking space for service vehicles and the inability to service from King's Mews.

The application also included an assessment of other available premises in

the area, which showed that there were a number of buildings, which provided better quality accommodation. Based on this evidence the officer's report to Committee confirmed that the premises would be exceedingly difficult to re-let. The report stated that whilst the location could accommodate small businesses they would require substantial offsite loading and servicing space to serve them effectively, which would reduce the actual 'lettable' space to an amount that *'would not be considered viable'* (para 6.9).

The report concluded that based on the detailed marketing assessment and the appraisal of the existing site constraints that sufficient information had been provided to justify the loss of business use. In the period since the granting of the 2009 consent UDP policy has been replaced by Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Plan Policies. In addition a change of use application has been submitted in respect of 43 Gray's Inn Road (2011/6278/P). The proposal sought a change of use from office to residential. In relation to this change of use and in the context of the replacement LDF policies the officer's delegated report confirmed in early 2012 that the based on the content of the officer's report in respect of the 2009 consent that, *'the principle of the loss of employment space and the provision of new residential units had been accepted'*.

In terms of the individual properties that comprised the original 2009 consent they now have been sold to different owners. Thus their relationship with the existing Gray's Inn Road electrical business has been broken and the additional subdivision has further comprised the ability of the space to be used for continued employment use.

Following discussions with LBC in relation to planning applications in respect of nos 26-30 King's Mews, Farebrother Chartered surveyors have produced a supporting statement that effectively updates the previous commercial appraisal carried out in relation to 2009/0710/P. A copy of this is included in the application documents.

Principle of residential use

Housing is regarded as the priority land use of the LDF and DP2 states that the Council will seek to maximise the supply of additional homes on sites that are underused or vacant sites. The application proposal will result in the delivery of new high quality individual family housing as follows:

Proposed residential m2 (GIA)

22 King's Mews 278 m2 (single family dwelling house)

The proposed residential accommodation advanced by the applicant exceeds the required size standards and satisfies the various design requirements set by current and emerging policy and guidance (see Design and Access statement and other supporting documents). In addition the provision of residential accommodation has already been accepted on the site as a result of the 2009 consent. Given the above the principle of providing new residential accommodation should not be an issue in the case of this application.

Demolition of buildings in a conservation area

The applicant has commissioned a heritage report that deals with planning matters relating to the demolition of No22 King's Mews. A copy of this report is included in the application documents.

The D&A statement that accompanies the application describes the component parts of the proposal in detail. In summary and in the context of the CA character statement the proposed building has sought through its detailed design to both preserve and enhance the existing character and appearance of the mews and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area in terms of the:

- Siting of the building within its respective plot boundary
- The proposed height and massing of the building

- The proposed arrangement of the elevation
- The solid to void relationships
- The proposed use of materials

Height bulk and design

The existing elevations to King's Mews are a mixture of two and three storeys. At either end of the street there are higher buildings. At the southern end is No 6-10 Theobald's Road, which is approximately 6 storeys in height, and considerably taller than the adjacent buildings. Across the mews are two recently permitted infill schemes at 7-8 King's Mews and 14/15 King's Mews both have either a mansard or set back third floor. The Theobald's Road properties to the south are 5 storeys in height.

This proposal recreates the existing elevation to the mews and replaces the existing roof with a new storey of accommodation. The massing and design of this new top storey has been configured to be in keeping with that of Nos 23 and 24 King's mews, which are subject to a separate planning application.

Amenity issues

DP26 states that the Council will only grant permission for development that does not cause harm to the amenity of occupiers and neighbours in terms of factors including:

- Privacy and overlooking
- Overshadowing and outlook
- Sunlight and daylight
- Noise and vibration levels
- Odour fumes and dust
- Microclimate

In pursuit of this policy the applicant commissioned in the first instance a sunlight daylight study to consider the impact of the proposal on sunlight and daylight levels to the properties fronting Gray's Inn Road. This study

confirms the daylight and sunlight results show that all rooms and windows in the surrounding properties will meet or be sufficiently close to the BRE Guidelines' daylight and sunlight criteria so as to be acceptable in planning terms and in accordance with planning policy.

In relation to privacy there is expectation that there should be a minimum distance of 18 metres between the windows of habitable rooms of different units that directly face each other. It is recognised that in dense urban environments that a more flexible approach should be applied in recognition of the dense urban gain of city locations. In advancing the proposal the applicant has sought to limit the level of glazing on the rear elevations, to place bathrooms/ bedrooms on the rear elevations and to include screening to windows and terraces prevent overlooking, where appropriate.

In relation to the control of dust and emissions from construction the applicant will expect to sign up to the Considerate Contractors Scheme.

PLANNING BENEFITS

The proposal will deliver a number of planning benefits to the sites and their surroundings:

- Provide appropriate replacement development for redundant storage units
- Provide high quality residential accommodation, in accordance with LBC objectives
- Provide an appropriate replacement building that will both preserve and enhance the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area
- Improve the residential environment for surrounding residential uses
- Respect the amenity of surrounding residential uses
- Accord with the environmental requirements of LBC

Given compliance with the prevailing policy context and the delivery of the above benefits the proposals should be granted planning and conservation area consent.

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