

# **E.M.PICK PLANNING**

**E. M. PICK B.Sc(Hons),,M.R.I.C.S.,B.T.P.,M.R.T.P.I. {PRIVATE }**

**30 Golders Manor Drive, London NW11 9HT**

**Tel: 020 8209 0752 Fax: 020 8209 0493**

**Also at Unit J Cobbold Road Business Estate, London NW10 9BP Tel: 020 8459 5304 Fax: 020 8459 5305**

**84 HATTON GARDEN EC1**

## **DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

1. This application follows the refusal of an identical application submitted last year, which was refused (2011/3927/P). No appeal was lodged. Further active marketing since that time has demonstrated that the additional 8 months of marketing has not produced any tenants. It had been suggested by Council officers that Centa may be interested in the property, but this is not the case.
2. The application site forms the upper floors of a six storey mid-terrace building situated on the west side of Hatton Garden.
3. Housing is one of the most important issues facing the borough, owing to the excess of demand over supply. Conversions make an important contribution towards meeting the need to increase the supply of new housing. The proposal is to provide a two bedroom residential flat on each of the first, second, third, fourth and fifth floors.

4. The existing premises have been lying vacant for a very considerable time. Although the Council has aspirations to accommodate jewellery workshops in such types of buildings, the long-term marketing which has taken place shows that there is no demand for such a use at this property. Indeed, the last use at this property many years ago was that of offices. The Council has stated that it will encourage vacant or underused upper floors, to be used for housing purposes.
5. There is clearly a large stock of office floorspace in the borough. Older office premises which cannot easily be adapted should be encouraged to convert to permanent housing.
6. The front ground floor shop is let to a retail jeweller, and it is hoped that the rear part of the ground floor will be accommodated in the future by a use connected to the jewellery trade. However, on the upper floors, although the premises have a lift, it does not provide for the modern standards of a wheelchair to enable access for disabled persons.
7. This application has not been made as an opportunist measure simply to secure housing in place of commercial. It is a desperate measure being used by the owner as a last resort, to try to bring these long-vacant premises back into a beneficial use. Following extensive marketing, details of which are attached to this application, the owner has become desperate to find a user, and considers he has no option but to seek a residential conversion.

8. In making this approach the Council's attention is drawn to other commercial premises available to let within Hatton Garden. Anyone requiring B1 space in the locality would have no difficulty in finding some. The proposed change of use would not therefore deprive the area of B1 office or workshop space.
9. Given the site conditions and restraints, it is not practical in this building to form flats of varied sizes. There are no side windows in the building, so that all rooms need to face either the front or the rear. The most practical form of conversion is therefore one two-bedroom flat on each floor.

### Planning Policy

10. The Local Development Framework Core Strategy has superseded the Unitary Development Plan. Policy CS6 seeks to maximise supply in quality homes in the borough. Paragraph 6.23 states that the greatest need for additional market housing is for homes with two bedrooms. The latest policy document of Camden puts considerable emphasis on the need to accommodate additional housing facilities throughout the borough.
11. The scheme represents a sustainable form of development making efficient use of previously developed land, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. The site is close to public transport, shops, and other amenities, being in a highly accessible location.

### Lifetime Homes

12. Attached is a schedule listing the 16 criteria set for Lifetime Home standards, together with our comments to demonstrate compliance where applicable.

### The Reasons for Previous Refusal

13. In the previous planning application, the first reason for refusal was based on the alleged loss of employment floorspace. There is even more compelling justification now than before to allow this application for the following reasons:

1. The period of marketing has continued for a further considerable period without success;
2. The Council's officer report reference to Centa requiring such accommodation has turned out to be incorrect.
3. The premises have been on the market for a considerable time with no interest.
4. The upper floors cannot easily accommodate a wheelchair, so the premises cannot conform to disability legislation for employers.

The second reason for refusal refers to BREEAM Ecohomes, and we have not seen similar residential conversions in Camden being refused on this ground. The policies quoted in the previous decision notice do not make this a requirement. What is most relevant are the Lifetime Homes standards, and these have indeed been assessed in an attached report.

Other reasons in the refusal notice can be overcome with a section 106 undertaking, which the applicant confirms he would enter.

### General

14. Both government and Council policy seeks to make the best and most efficient use of land and premises, particularly when such floorspace has been unused for a considerable time. The proposed conversion therefore should be regarded as a sensible way forward which conforms to policy objectives.

E M Pick Planning