

Delegated Report (Members' Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		26/07/2012	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		12/07/2012	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Rob Tulloch				2012/2769/P 2012/2771/L			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
15 Swinton Street London WC1X 9NL				See decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
(i) Conversion to a single family dwelling (Class C3) and the installation of metal staircase from ground to lower ground floor level to front elevation, and replacement of windows at rear upper and lower ground floor level with one window and french doors. (ii) Internal and external alterations to include the installation of metal staircase from ground to lower ground floor level to front elevation, and new layout to include new bathrooms, WCs and a new kitchen and associated works in connection with the conversion of the building to a single family dwelling.							
Recommendation(s):		(i) Grant Planning Permission subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement (ii) Grant Listed Building Consent					
Application Type:		(i) Full Planning Permission (ii) Listed Building Consent					
Conditions:		Refer to Draft Decision Notices					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	2	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
Summary of consultation responses:		Site notice 14/06/2012-05/07/2012 Press advert 21/06/2012 – 12/07/2012 No responses received.					
CAAC/Local group comments:		Bloomsbury CAAC objects that the proposal detracts from the historic plan form on the upper floors with the insertion of internal bathrooms which may result in the loss of historic fabric. Officer comment: The application has been revised (see para 1.2)					
Site Description							
The site is a three storey plus basement terraced building on the south side of Swinton Street. It forms part of a terrace of 7 houses 5-17) c1835-44 constructed in darkened stock brick with rusticated stucco ground floors. Architectural detailing includes round-arched ground floor openings, doorways with fluted quarter columns, cornice-heads, fanlights, paneled doors, cast-iron balconies to 1st floor windows, and stucco cornices with blocking courses. The site lies within the Central London Area and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the terrace is listed grade II.							

Relevant History

2012/1642/P Installation of metal staircase from ground to lower ground floor level to front of property (Class C3).

2012/1643/L Installation of metal staircase from ground to lower ground floor level to front of property, removal and installation of partition walls at lower ground, ground, first and second floor levels, in connection with refurbishment of 4x self contained dwelling flats (Class C3).

The above applications were withdrawn on 09/05/2012 as there was confusion over the existing use of the property, and the proposed subdivision/retention to four flats on a “temporary” basis would have been contrary to policies on design, housing mix and residential amenity.

Enforcement

EN10/0994 Grade II Listed property split into 4 flats without any permission. Case closed as there was no evidence what the lawful use was over the last 15 years and the Enforcement Officer concluded that the likely lawful use was as a single family dwelling.

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS1 Distribution of growth

CS5 Managing the impact of growth and development

CS6 Providing quality homes

CS11 Promoting sustainable and efficient travel

CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

DP2 Making full use of Camden’s capacity for housing

DP5 Homes of different sizes

DP6 Lifetime homes and wheelchair homes

DP17 Walking, cycling and public transport

DP18 Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking

DP24 Securing high quality design

DP25 Conserving Camden’s heritage

DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

DP27 Basements and lightwells

Camden Planning Guidance 2011

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

London Plan

NPPF 2012

Assessment

1 Proposal

1.1 The proposal is for the conversion of the house to a single family dwelling and the installation of a metal staircase in the front lightwell.

1.2 The scheme has been revised during the course of the application. At first floor level, a dressing room that would have overlapped a chimney breast and fireplace has been removed and a toilet proposed in front of the fireplace has been relocated, at second floor level the bathroom, which would have necessitated the removal of part of the spine wall, has been relocated to the front room similar to the “existing” arrangement.

1.3 The main issues are:

- Principle of development

- Standard of proposed accommodation
- Design
- Neighbour amenity
- Transport

2 Principle of development

- 2.1 The existing use of the property is unclear and there is no planning history for the site apart from an enforcement investigation in 2010 and the recently withdrawn application. The enforcement investigation was in response to a complaint that the property had been unlawfully subdivided into four flats. The owner claimed that the property had been empty for the last 15 years, and prior to that had been used occasionally as an HMO. The enforcement officer concluded that as the property was vacant and there was no firm evidence, in terms of Council Tax records or information from the Council's Private Sector Housing Team, to support any subdivision as being lawful, that the lawful use was probably as a single family dwelling.
- 2.2 A site visit in April 2012 found evidence that the property had been subdivided and occupied at some stage with partition walls and kitchens on each floor, most of which had recently been removed but are shown on the existing plans. It was unclear from viewing the layout and the existing plans whether the units were self-contained or shared some, or all, of the facilities. Therefore it is considered that any subdivision was probably unlawful, as there is no evidence to suggest it carried on uninterrupted for a period of at least four years, however it is not considered that there is enough evidence to support a lawful development certificate.
- 2.3 Housing is regarded as the priority land-use of the Local Development Framework, and the Council will make housing its top priority when considering the future of unused and underused land and buildings. Policy DP2 states that the Council will resist developments that would involve the loss of two or more homes unless it creates a large home in a part of the borough with a relatively low proportion of large dwellings. As the site is in the Kings Cross ward, which the LDF recognises as has a relatively low proportion of family sized homes, the proposal is considered to comply with policy DP2, even if the subdivision were lawful.

3 Standard of residential accommodation

Residential development standards

- 3.1 The proposal would provide a three bedroom house over four floors. Total floorspace would be approximately 160sqm which comfortably exceeds both Camden's residential development standards and the London Plan. All bedrooms are in excess of 11sqm which complies with Camden's residential development standards. The house would be dual aspect with good daylight, natural ventilation, storage areas and regular sized and shaped rooms. No bin store is proposed, but the lightwell and its vaults would provide space for refuse storage. An informative will remind the applicant not to leave refuse sacks on the highway until 30 minutes before collection. The house would also have 40sqm of outdoor at the rear. On the whole, It is considered that the proposed units would provide an appropriate standard of accommodation for future occupiers.
- 3.2 It is noted that the upper flat does not have access to outdoor amenity space as the terrace has been removed from the proposal, however is not uncommon for flats in conversions to have external amenity space.

Lifetime Homes

- 3.3 Policy DP6 requires all new residential accommodation, including conversions, to meet Lifetime Homes standards. It is acknowledged that conversions, particularly listed buildings, may not be

able to meet all of the criteria due to existing physical constraints, and the applicants have provided a limited Lifetime Homes Statement which indicates that the proposal will comply with the criteria where relevant. A condition will specify that the features denoted to be met shall be implemented.

4 Design

External Works

- 4.1 The only external change to the front of the building is the insertion of a stair within the front lightwell. Such an alteration is fairly common on this type of building, especially where it gives separate access to the basement. Little detail has been provided regarding their appearance or the alterations required to the original front railings, but this can be required by a condition. At the rear timber framed double doors will lead out onto the rear amenity space and window to the closet wing at upper ground floor level will be replaced with a timber framed window.

Internal Works - General

- 4.2 The building was listed in 1971. No record exists as to when the internal layout may date from (ie before or after listing), and it is noted that the enforcement investigation in 2010 decided not to enforce against the works. The proposal to return the building back to a single dwelling house is welcomed as this will restore the building back to its original use and thus minimise the need for potentially harmful partitioning. No details are given as to how the new bathrooms and kitchens will be serviced. It is likely they will reuse existing service runs (which still survive) and this will also be dealt with by way of a condition.

Basement

- 4.3 These works involve the removal of non original partitions to the front room and leave the original layout clearly discernible. No features of note survive on this level.

Ground floor

- 4.4 The only alteration on this level is the insertion of folding doors into the existing opening between the front and rear room. Subject to the design no objection is raised to this.

First floor

- 4.5 The dressing room, which would have overlapped the chimney breast, has been removed and the toilet that would have been in front of the fireplace has been relocated. Given the extent of the partitioning previously the return of this floor space back to the two main rooms is welcomed as a significant improvement to the building.

Second floor

- 4.6 The removal of the spine wall between the front and rear rooms and insertion of a bathroom has been removed from the scheme with the bathroom being relocated to the front room similar to the “existing” arrangement.
- 4.7 As such the proposal is not considered to harm the special interest of the listed building or the character or appearance of the conservation area and would comply with policies CS14, DP24 and DP25 of the LDF and Camden Planning Guidance.

5 Amenity

- 5.1 There are no extensions proposed to the building so the proposal is not considered to impact on daylight or sunlight to adjoining properties. There are no new windows so it is not considered that the proposal would lead to overlooking. The use as a single dwelling within a residential terrace is not considered to introduce an unacceptable level of noise or disturbance.
- 5.2 As such the proposal is not considered to harm the amenity of adjoining occupiers and would comply with policies CS5 and DP26 of the LDF and Camden Planning Guidance.

6 Transport

Car-free housing

- 6.1 The site has a PTAL score of 6b, which indicates that it has an excellent level of accessibility by public transport. The nearest stations are Kings Cross and St Pancras, located to the north, whilst numerous bus services are available from Kings Cross Road, Acton Road, Gray's Inn Road, and Pentonville Road/Euston Road. The site is located within Controlled Parking Zone CA-D, which operates between 8.30am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am to 1.30pm on Saturdays. The area south of Euston Road is known as suffering from a high level of parking stress and has high levels of traffic.
- 6.2 Policy DP18 states that the Council will expect development to be car free in the Central London Area, the town centres of Camden Town, Finchley Road/ Swiss Cottage, Kentish Town, Kilburn High Road and West Hampstead, and other highly accessible areas. In accordance with Development Policy DP 18 and Camden Planning Guidance 7: Transport, the proposed dwelling house should be designated as car free, i.e. the occupants will be unable to obtain parking permits from the Council. This should be secured by means of a Section 106 Agreement.

Cycle storage

- 6.3 The submitted plans do not show any cycle parking. Transport for London's cycle parking standards require the provision of 2 cycle spaces (1 Sheffield stand) for residential units with 3 or more bedrooms. However, as this is a listed building and space is limited, it is considered that this requirement can be waived on this occasion. The occupants could store cycles within the front light well or the rear garden. There are a number of Transport for London (Barclays) cycle hire docking stations in the vicinity of the site which will help encourage the future residents to travel by more sustainable means.

Other transport matters

- 6.4 As the proposed development is intended to bring the existing building back into use as residential accommodation, it is considered that it would be unreasonable to secure a Section 106 contribution towards improvements to the public realm on this occasion. Similarly, as the proposed works are relatively minor it is considered that a Construction Management Plan is unnecessary in this instance.

7 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 7.1 The proposal will be liable for the Mayor of London's CIL as the property has officially been vacant for the last 15 years. Based on the Mayor's CIL charging schedule and the information given on the plans, the charge is likely to be £8,000 (160sqm x £50). This will be collected by Camden after the scheme is implemented and could be subject to surcharges for failure to assume liability, for failure to submit a commencement notice and/or for late payment, and subject to indexation in line with the construction costs index. An informative will be attached advising the applicant of this charge.

8 Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission subject to a Section 106 Agreement for car-free housing.

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Monday 23rd July 2012. For further information please click [here](#).