

Delegated Report Members Briefing		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		01/02/2012	
		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:		26/01/2012	
Officer				Application Number			
John Sheehy				2011/6103/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
33 & 35 Grafton Way London W1T 5DA				Refer to draft decision notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal							
Erection of a roof extension and a part solid part open-work rear extension at first floor level in connection with reconfiguration of self contained and shared facility accommodation on the upper floors to form a 2 bed maisonette at no. 33; and change of use from self contained flat at third floor of no. 35 to 2x bedsits.							
Recommendation:		Grant conditional permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	32	No. of responses No. electronic	2 1	No. of objections	1
Summary of consultation responses:		<p>Site notices displayed 5-1-2012 to 26-1-2012 and press notice displayed 23-13-2011 to 13-1-2012</p> <p>Two letters received from occupiers of properties on Tottenham Court Road (116 and 118) one in support and one objection. The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of daylight to nearby ground floor shop (in use as health clinic) as a result of roof extension; • Noise disturbance from work which will negatively affect business; • "I support any improvement to this rather neglected block and anything that will improve the Grafton Street elevation in particular should be supported." 					
CAAC/Local groups comments:		<p>Bloomsbury CAAC, objection: "Inappropriate materials and form of rear extension. Ditto roof extension and considerably higher than neighbours".*</p> <p>*Officer comment: <i>amendments were made to the drawings during the course of the application period. For details see assessment section below.</i></p>					
Site Description							
<p>The application relates to the upper floors of two adjacent terraced properties located on the southern side of Grafton Way. The properties are four storeys in height over basement and both contain commercial use at ground floor level. Number 33 contains HMO accommodation and a self contained flat on its upper floors; number 35 contains office accommodation and a self-contained flat on its upper floors.</p> <p>They properties form part of a perimeter block formed by buildings fronting Grafton Way, Tottenham Court Road, Whitfield Street and Midford Place.</p> <p>The properties are finished in brown brick and are three bays wide. Number 35 shares a party wall with 37 Grafton Way, one of a group of five Grade II terraced properties (nos. 37-45) dating from the 1770s which is located to the west of the application site. Numbers 52 – 56 on the opposite side of Grafton Way are also grade II listed. Both application properties are identified as making a positive contribution to the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area in which they are located.</p> <p>Both properties have flat roofs which are in use as roof terraces. The roof of no. 33 is covered with a large green plastic netting structure held permanently in place by a number of poles.</p>							

Relevant History

None

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

LDF Core Strategy

CS5 Managing the impact of growth and development

CS6 Providing Quality Homes

CS14 Promoting high Quality Places and Conserving Our Heritage

LDF Development Policies

DP2 Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing

DP5 Homes of different sizes

DP6 Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Housing

DP9 Student housing, bedsits and other housing with shared facilities.

DP24 Securing high quality design

DP25 Conserving Camden's heritage

DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

Camden Planning Guidance 2011

Fitzroy Square Conservation Area Statement

London Plan 2011

National Planning Policy Framework

Assessment

Proposal: the properties each contain 1 self-contained flat. The application involves consolidation of these 2 flats into 1 larger unit and the transfer of two bedsits from 33 Grafton Way to 35 Grafton Way.

The layout changes are summarised as follows:

	Existing	Proposed
No. 33		
First floor	Bedsit x 2	<i>Bedsit x 2</i>
Second floor	Bedsit x 2	<i>Self-contained flat</i>
Third floor	Self-contained flat	
No. 35		
Third floor	Self-contained flat	<i>Bedsit x 2</i>

The two properties are in a single ownership. The applicant has stated that the owner, who lives at no. 35, intends to move to the flat proposed at no.33 if permission is granted.

The following external alterations to 33 Grafton Way are proposed:

Roof extension: an extension over part of the flat roof at the rear of the property. The extension would measure 3.7m L x 5.3m W x 2.5m H. It would be set back from the front of the property by 4.35m. The remainder of the flat roof would continue in its existing use as a roof terrace. The rear of the roof would be sloping to match the pitched roofs elsewhere in the terrace; the top of the roof would be flat (- the flat area would measure 1.9m L x 5.3m W).

Rear extension: first floor extension comprising the extension of the closet wing upwards by 1 floor (2.4m X 2.8m) and a simple openwork link to this extension via a new door to the rear elevation located in an existing window opening which would be extended to floor level.

No external works to no. 35 are proposed.

Revisions during application period

Following discussions with officers the applicant scaled back the works to the rear to remove the originally proposed glazed element of the rear extension and to provide the open-work link to the solid extension, and to retain the openings to the rear elevation (first and second floor) at their existing scale.

Assessment

The main considerations in the assessment of this application are as follows:

- the design/ impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings; and
- land use issues.

Design/ Impact on Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

The Council's design policies are aimed at achieving the highest standard of design in all developments and preserving the architectural quality of buildings. The Council's policies for developments in a Conservation Area are aimed at preserving and enhancing the special character and appearance of the area. In addition, design policies seek to safeguard the setting of Listed Buildings.

As noted above, no. 33 Grafton Way is part of a perimeter block with its rear elevation hidden in views from surrounding streets and open spaces. The rear elevation is only visible from within the rooms of properties that overlook the rear space.

The proposed roof extension and rear extension are dealt with in turn below:

Roof extension

The proposal would involve the removal of the existing unsightly green plastic netting structure at roof level. This structure is permanently fixed to the building by poles, ties and other fixings. Photographic evidence demonstrates that it has been in place for well in excess of 4 years - its installation appears to have taken place over 20 years ago. The scale of the netting structure is such that it has a material impact on the appearance of the building: can therefore be described as "development". Given that it constitutes "development" and has been in place for over 4 years the netting structure is now immune from enforcement action.

It is proposed to remove the netting structure and create a small extension at the rear of the roof. The applicants have provided a considerable amount of information concerning the visibility of the proposed roof extension. This demonstrates that the extension would be visible to a limited degree in long views from within Tottenham Court Road and Grafton Way.

The proposed extension would be:

- set back significantly from the front elevation;
- located behind existing large chimney stacks to both sides; and
- located behind the existing front parapet wall which is 0.9m in height.

In terms of height, the extension would generally match the historic pitched roof at No. 37 (LB Grade II). The rear elevation would have a traditional design with a solid roof slope. The front of the extension would be vertical and would be simple and regular in appearance. Limited information is provided on the finish and materials used to the front of the extension. A condition is attached to control the detailed design of the front to ensure that it is traditional in appearance and does not result in significant light spillage which would increase its prominence at times of darkness.

The terrace has an unbroken roofline which LDF policies and Camden Planning Guidance would seek to retain in most cases. However, because the existing netting structure is immune from enforcement action, its removal and the creation of a discreet and subordinate extension at the rear of the roof would represent an enhancement to the appearance of the property, the wider terrace and the Conservation Area.

Due to its location and scale, the visual impact of the proposed roof extension would be very limited as has been demonstrated by the information accompanying the application. This has been verified by evidence gathered on by officer on a site visit. The proposal would enhance the character or appearance of this part of the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby Listed Buildings.

First floor rear extension

The proposed extension of the closet wing upwards by 1 floor would have only a marginal visual impact and is

acceptable in terms of scale. This element would be clad in metal which may be an acceptable material for this element due to its robust character. No detail about the finish has been provided and is reserved by condition.

Beside this solid element would be located an openwork link served by the existing window opening which would be extended downward to form a single-leaf door opening. This openwork link has the benefit of being set back behind the rear elevations of the Listed Buildings and other buildings in the terrace which step out beyond the rear building line of no. 33. The set-back gives the proposed link and extension a level of concealment within this enclosed corner. The openwork link would have a metal balustrade and the enlarged door opening would be a timber-framed multi-panelled door to reflect the appearance and detailing of the other openings on the rear elevation. The lower portion of the new door opening would be solid so as to ensure that it does not appear excessively tall and narrow.

Subject to the further detailed design condition the scale, location and design of the rear extension is acceptable.

Conclusion

The works would safeguard the architectural quality of the application building and would preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the CA. The works would also safeguard the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings. The proposal is consistent with policies CS14, DP24 and DP25.

Land use

Policy DP2 states that the Council will resist proposals that would lead to a net loss of residential floorspace and states that it will not grant planning permission for a development that would involve the loss of two or more residential units.

The proposal does not involve the net loss of residential floorspace (an increase in floorspace is proposed) and would only involve the loss of one residential unit. As a result it is consistent with policy DP2.

Standard of Self-Contained and Non-Self-Contained Housing

The proposed self-contained 2-bedroom flat would measure ca. 90sqm. The main bedroom would have an area of 15sqm. The unit would be dual aspect and would have access to a generous roof terrace. It would provide a good quality living environment for future occupiers in line with Camden's Residential Development Standards.

The existing HMO accommodation is in a poor state of repair. The proposal would result in the provision of improved and refurbished HMO accommodation without any loss of floorspace. The retained HMO accommodation is therefore acceptable. The existing HMO while licensable has not yet been licensed. The Council's Environmental Health officers have written to the owners advising them to licence the property.

The applicants have also made alterations to the proposal to make the HMO compliant with licensing regulations e.g. by increasing the kitchen at 33 Grafton Way to 6sqm and by introducing toughened glass to a height of 1.1m internally where the cill level does not achieve this height. This welcomed.

A condition is attached to ensure that the HMO accommodation is completed, fitted out and made available for occupation prior to the first occupation of the self-contained unit.

Lifetime Homes

Since the proposal is a residential conversion on a constrained site it is not possible to incorporate into the design of the proposed self-contained unit all 16 lifetime homes design features. A condition has been attached to the decision notice requiring the applicant to comply with all reasonable lifetime homes standards.

Other issues/ Neighbour concerns

The proposal does not include any new roof terraces or windows which would provide views into neighbouring properties. The application involves creation of a flat roofed area at rear second floor level. If this was to be used as a roof terrace it could open up direct views into habitable rooms of neighbouring properties, resulting in a reduction in privacy of neighbouring occupiers. A condition is attached to the decision notice to ensure that this flat-roofed area is used for maintenance only.

One neighbouring commercial occupier has expressed concerns about the potential loss of sunlight and daylight to their property. Due to the limited scale of the external works and the location of nearby properties, the works would not have any detrimental impact on daylight or sunlight to neighbours. This is demonstrated by a Sunlight and Daylight Study prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (dated December 2011) which shows that all neighbouring windows surveyed using the Vertical Sky Component test would comfortably meet BRE Daylight guidelines.

Due to the limited scale of the external works there would be no loss of outlook to neighbours.

Subject to the above condition preventing use of the flat-roofed area as a roof terrace the application is acceptable in amenity terms.

One neighbouring commercial occupier has expressed concerns about the disturbance and noise that may result from the building works associated with the proposal. Noise and disruption caused by building works are subject to control under environmental health legislation and not planning legislation and the standard informative referencing the Control of Pollution Act 1974 is attached. The concerns raised by the neighbouring occupier have been taken into consideration by officers in the assessment of this application. In this case the proposal is essentially a conversion scheme which would retain a considerable amount of the fabric of the building. It is not anticipated that exceptional noise or disturbance would result from the proposal requiring further control. It is not considered to be reasonable to refuse the application or to attach conditions to the permission on the basis of the specific concerns raised.

Recommendation: grant conditional permission.

DISCLAIMER

Decision route to be decided by nominated members on Tuesday 10th April 2012. For further information see

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/planning-applications/development-control-members-briefing/>