

For Proposed Change of Use of 1st & 2nd floors from 'B1' office to residential to create 2 new dwellings with Ground & Basement retained as existing 'B1' use, and the 3rd – 6th floors retained as 3 dwellings as granted consent 2011/4508/P

Introduction

No 6 Gate Street is an early 19th Century commercial terraced building to the east side of Gate Street. Originally 7 storeys the mansard roof was added 4 years ago. The street façade is the buildings main aspect to the west, the rear east wall has no glazing at all, except at roof level. The painted brick façade has a cornice at 7th floor level with two tiers of dentil blocks beneath. The glazing to each floor is set in shallow relief to form two tall arches below with a projecting band at each floor level. The ground floor is slightly raised at the back of the pavement to facilitate 'clerestory lights' to the basement. The floor plate of each level is near identical with the stair and lift in the rear north east corner of the plan.

History:

All records indicate that the building has been used as an office / light industrial previously owned at used by the National Association of Plumbing, Heating & Mechanical Services Contractors, bought by the current owner in 1994 and was granted consent for change of use (ref: 2011/4508/P) in 2011

Current Use:

Holborn chambers (now known as 6GS) was established by Mr S Stevens in 1994 as legal chambers, currently serving 23 barristers providing direct legal service across a wide spectrum. Changes in technology and the introduction of new working practices, has greatly affected the use of the building. Traditionally, each barrister would retain their own desk and share the services of a clerk, this has now changed, the clerks remain, however the barristers have left, working from home accessing their files remotely via the Internet. The office is therefore only needed for the clerks, central filing, client meetings and as a base to provide 'hot desking' when attending the nearby courts or other legal offices, only two floors are required to meet this need.

Commercial Viability:

The original application made in 2011 was to create 3 new dwellings on the 3rd - 6th floors, retain the 1st & 2nd as legal chambers and create a Bar on the ground and basement. The Bar had been identified as being commercially viable, however Camden rejected this use at the last minute granting A1 shop use, which the client has been unsuccessful in finding any demand at all.

Design Brief:

The owner's business (Holburn Chambers) is to continue to operate from the Ground and basement floors under the established B1 use. Their current offices on the 1st and 2nd floors are to be converted to 2 self-contained flats to meet the working needs of members of chambers and capitalise on this successful working model now established. The upper floors 3rd to 6th are to remain as residential accommodation.

The proposals should seek to retain and restore the elements and spaces of the existing building whilst addressing the needs and desires of modern living, creating a prestigious accommodation that befits its location.

Planning Policy:

There are a number of current planning policies and Government guidance that support the need for new housing, where possible utilising existing buildings / brown field sites. It

is widely accepted that within London there is a surplus of second grade office space and it is key to provide for new business models that involve 'mixed uses' that fully utilises and maintain key commercial areas. This is one such model that provides for and supports an established legal business in a zone clearly identified for this type of use.

The Proposed Change of Use & Fit out:

It is very evident from the existing plan that the original form of the building remains thus no major internal alterations are necessary in creating 2 new dwellings. Generally each upper floor provides a new flat, each existing window bay forming a habitable room. The services to support this are virtually already in place.

The ground and basement is subject to minor alterations to match the windows with the previous application and new lobby to the flats.

All new materials and surface finishes are to be completed to match those of adjacent areas and thus appear seamless in their execution

Privacy & Rights of Light

There are no overlooking issues with other habitable rooms adjacent to the existing windows of the upper floors.

Access

The site access is established and remains unchanged. There is lift access from the ground floor all floors except the 6th and basement. There is an established means of escape from the top of the building via No 10 across the roof.

Life time Homes Standards:

The 16 key points addressed as follows:

1. *No parking provision is provided.*
2. *NA*
3. *All approaches are level the external pavement to road level is 50mm enabling easy drop off adjacent to the entrance.*
4. *The existing entrance to the buildings lobby is via a single low 150mm step*
5. *The communal stairs are existing and partly comply to the standards set out. New handrails and contracting nosings are proposed. The existing lift is to be upgrade to meet the standards set out however the width of the existing shaft is a limiting factor thus the 1100 min car width will be slightly reduced this will not preclude good wheel chair access. 1500 x 1100 landings are proposed. The 6th floor upper level of the maisonette is not accessible via the lift.*
6. *The recommended minimum door opening widths are achieved.*
7. *Standards for wheel chair manoeuvring is achievable within the 2 new flats*
8. *Provided*
9. *Provided*
10. *Provided*
11. *Solid wall to one side all partitions are to be 18mm ply faced thus suitable for any grab rails that may be required.*
12. *NA*
13. *The existing solid structure is capable of meeting this requirement.*
14. *The bathrooms to the 2 flats comply*
15. *The existing windows are very low thus with slight modification to their opening controls will comply*
16. *All control to be banded between 450 -1200 above floor level.*

Note as this is an existing period building subject to a 'change of use' it is not possible to fully comply with all the criteria set out, this especially applies to the maisonette which is unsuitable for a disabled or frail person.

Green Statement, Renewable & Energy Conservation

There is no fundamental change in the building envelope or change in the current method or system of heating, as both are in serviceable condition and will be reused with new more efficient control systems. No endangered timber species will be used or product that has a particular high emission of carbons are proposed for the new works. Recycled products will be considered where appropriate.

Conclusion

The above outlines the key aims of these proposals, which have been carefully considered at each stage to provide for the growth and sustainability of our client's business whilst preserving the character of the building. Fundamentally there is little change to the building fabric other than the new use. We welcome any further comments that may arise from the consideration of these proposals.