

7 Hampstead High Street

London NW3 1PR

Planning, Design and Access Statement



Prepared on behalf of Eastway Capital Limited

by Metropolis Planning and Design LLP

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Site Location Plan

The Site

7 Hampstead High Street is situated within the London Borough of Camden and lies on the northern side of Hampstead High Street, a key shopping district for the Borough. Direct pedestrian access is achieved via Hampstead High Street itself.

Site accessibility is very good with a number of bus routes serving the site and Hampstead Underground Station (Northern Line) a short walk to the north west.

The premises currently comprise a retail unit at ground floor (occupied by Bodyshop) with vacant office accommodation on three floors above.

The property is not listed but lies within the Hampstead Conservation Area.

Planning History

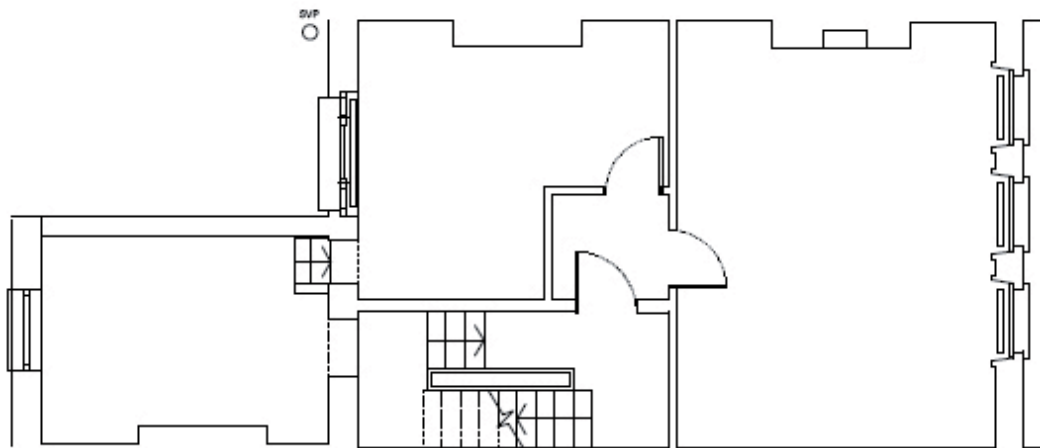
Having reviewed the planning history of the site on the Council's website, there have only been a limited number of minor advertisement applications within the recent past, namely application ref nos 2006/1880/A (approved) 2006/2054/P (approved) and 2008/2505/P (also approved). There are no other planning applications that are relevant to the proposal.

Proposed Scheme

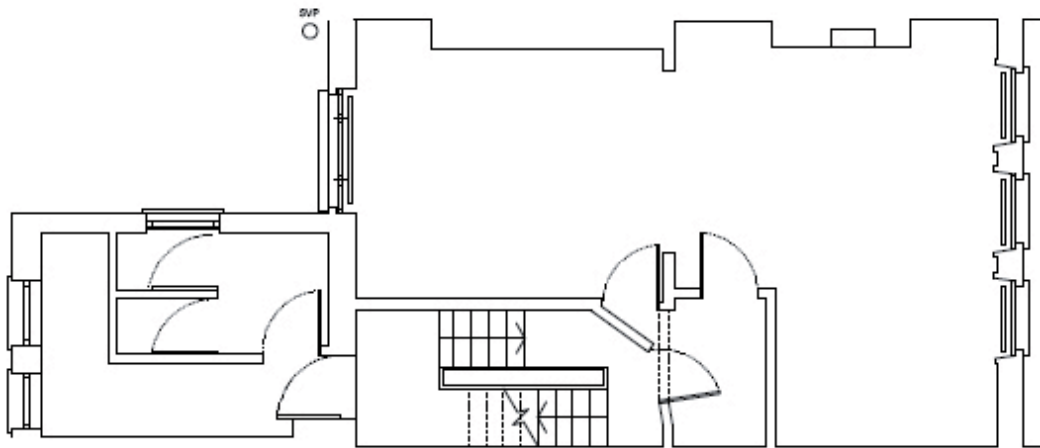
Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the upper floors (1st to 3rd floors) from office to residential use, creating a total of 3 flats.

Retail use is retained at ground floor level, with its own independent access as per the existing arrangement. The residential element is accessed by a separate doorway to the left hand side of the existing shopfront.

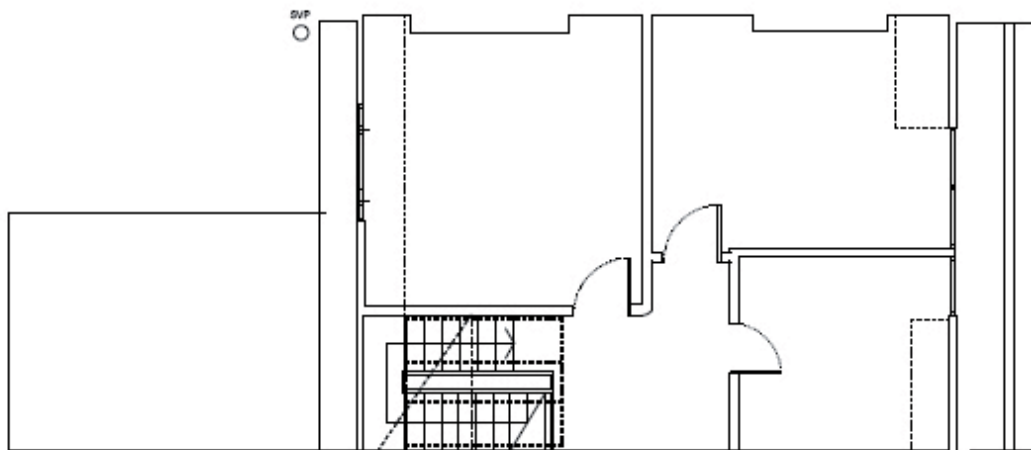
The property will be completely renovated and existing fabric repaired where necessary. No external alterations or extensions are proposed as part of the works.



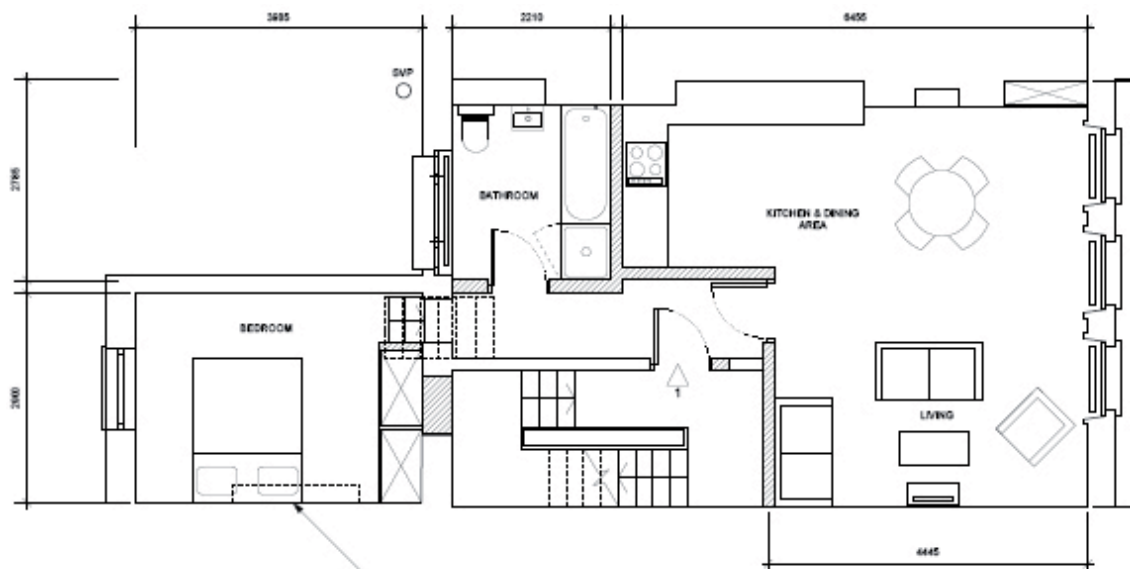
First Floor - Existing



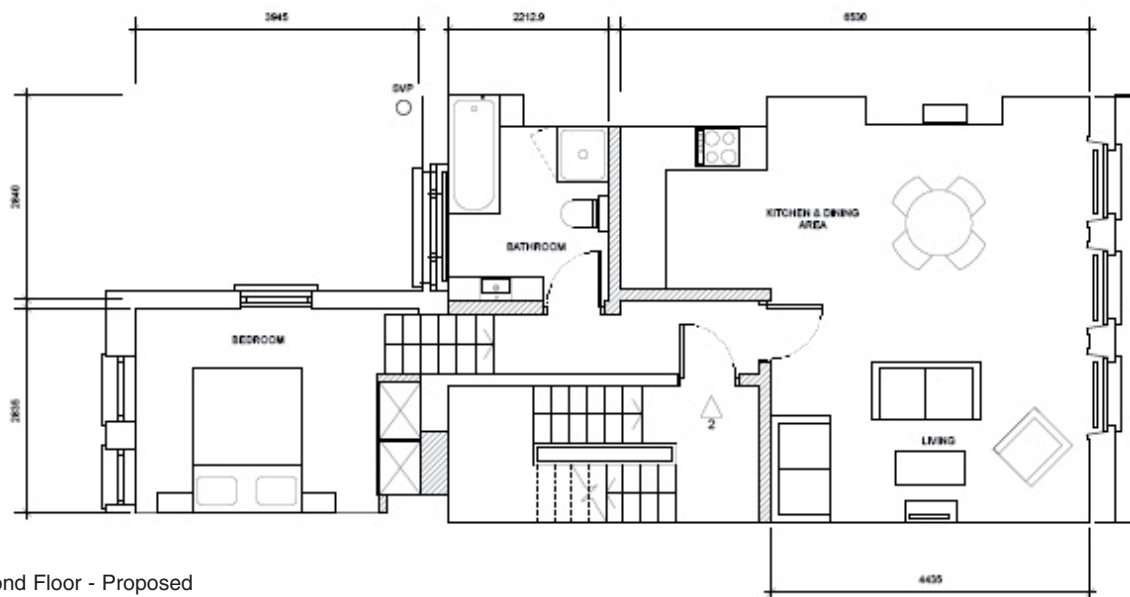
Second Floor - Existing



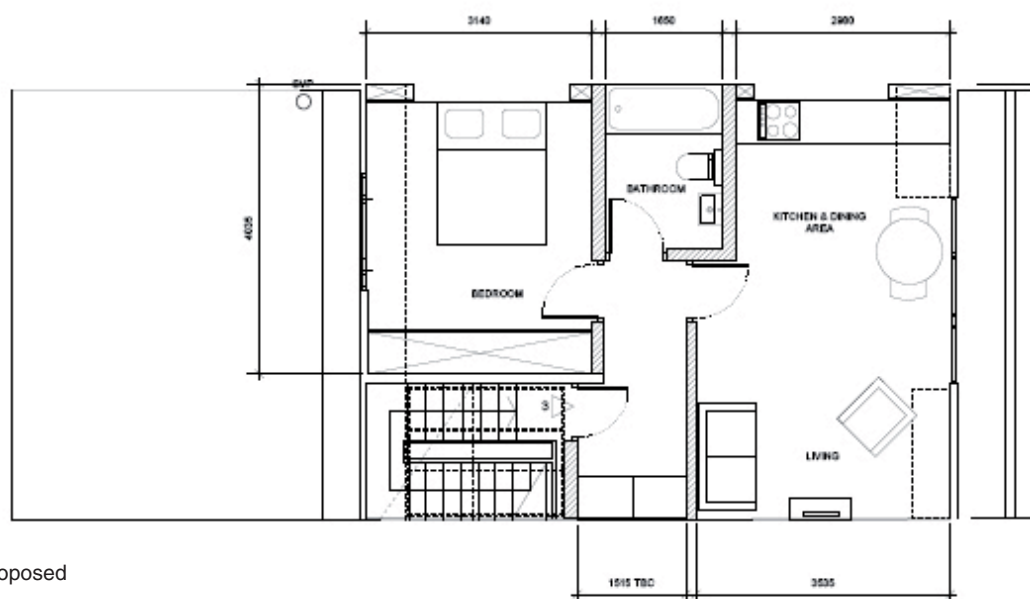
Third Floor - Existing



First Floor - Proposed



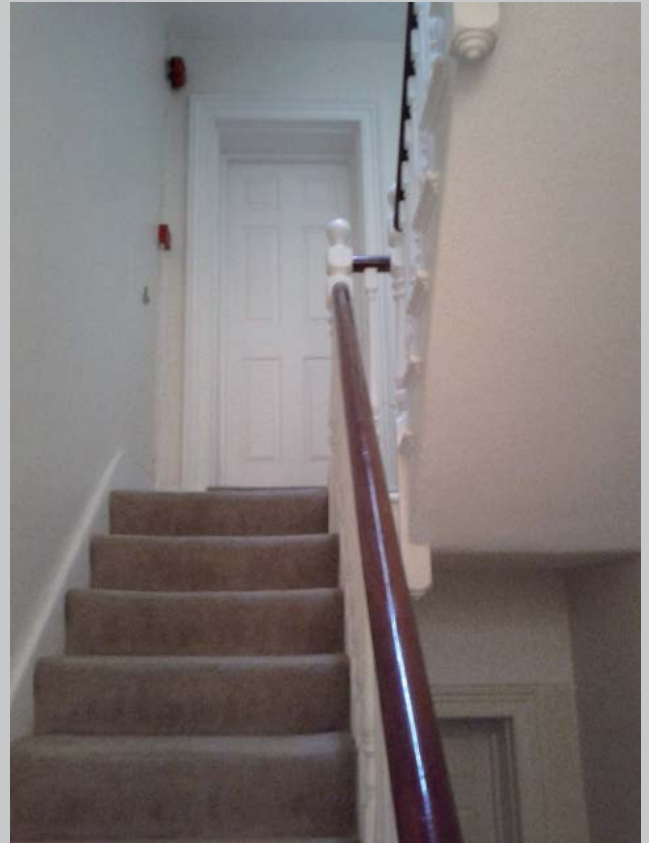
Second Floor - Proposed



Third Floor - Proposed



Front windows at first floor level



Stair and mid-stair



Front windows at first floor level



Existing Fireplace

Planning Policy Assessment

Change of Use

The relevant planning policies are set out in the Adopted London Plan 2011 and the Camden LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies.

The principal issue to consider in relation to this proposal is the loss of the existing employment floorspace. There is policy support for the creation of additional residential floorspace and the creation of mixed use developments, particularly in the CAZ, at all levels of planning policy.

London Plan

The London Plan encourages Boroughs to promote mixed use development “especially of surplus commercial capacity” (policy 3.1).

Policy 4.2 states that Boroughs should support the managed conversion of surplus office space into more viable uses.

Policy 4.3 seeks to encourage mixed use development, given the dependence of the labour market on the provision of adequate housing land supply.

Camden LDF DPD Policies

The proposal would accord with the objectives of Policies DP1 (secure a mix of uses) and DP2 which seeks to prioritise new housing development. Policy DP2 states:-

“The Council will seek to maximise the supply of additional homes in the borough, especially homes for people unable to access market housing, by:

a) expecting the maximum appropriate contribution to supply of housing on sites that are underused or vacant, taking into account any other uses that are needed on the site;”

Policy DP13 deals with proposals involving a loss of business use :-

“The Council will retain land and buildings that are suitable for continued business use and will resist a change to non-business unless:

a) It can be demonstrated to the councils satisfaction that a site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business use; and

b) 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.

Planning Policy Assessment

Most notably, the policy states that:

“When it can be demonstrated that a site is not suitable for any business use other than B1(a) offices, the Council may allow a change to permanent residential uses or community uses, except in Hatton Garden....”

It is clear that the existing building is not suitable for a wider range of employment uses given its location, layout and size.

In this instance, the application seeks a change of use to permanent residential use and therefore is supported by this clause of policy DP13.

Assessment of existing use

Further guidance on change of use away from business use is provide in supporting text to the policy, which sets out the following considerations, which we have addressed in turn:

When assessing proposals that involve the loss of a business use we will consider whether there is potential for that use to continue, taking into account whether the site:

- *is located in or adjacent to the Industry Area, or other locations suitable for large scale general industry and warehousing;*

The site does not lie in such a location

- *is in a location suitable for a mix of uses including light industry and local distribution warehousing;*

The site is not suitable for such a mix of uses due to surrounding residential occupants

- *is easily accessible to the Transport for London Road Network and/or London Distributor Roads;*

Hampstead High Street is a key thoroughfare but direct access to the road is limited due to on street parking

- *is, or will be, accessible by means other than the car and has the potential to be serviced by rail or water;*

The site lies in an accessible location but not by rail or water

- *has adequate on-site vehicle space for servicing;*

Servicing of the site is difficult due to on-street parking on Hampstead High Street and no access from the rear.

Planning Policy Assessment

- *is well related to nearby land uses;*

Whilst a vague requirement, the site is located on Hampstead High Street, but is well positioned for a number of uses

- *is in a reasonable condition to allow the use to continue;*

The existing building is not in particularly good condition in terms of attracting a potential end user for office space.

- *is near to other industry and warehousing, noise/vibration generating uses, pollution and hazards;*

There are no other such uses in the vicinity of the site

- *provides a range of unit sizes, particularly those suitable for small businesses (under 100sqm).*

The building due to its layout and circulation space does not lend itself well to subdivision for smaller businesses and was originally designed for residential purposes.

The premises are certainly not suitable for the "wider range" of B1 uses due to the configuration of the spaces across 3 floors, floor to ceiling heights, access for servicing, and floor loading.

Whilst the initial section of policy DP13 already explains that a change of use to permanent residential would be supported from a use only suited to B1(a) offices, we also would point out that the premises have been vacant for some time and have not attracted new interest from potential occupants.

It is our view that the given the awkward layout of the accommodation, traditional "above shop" spaces along Hampstead High Street are better suited to residential use and as such the proposed change of use should be supported.

Residential Standards / Amenity

Policy DP26 of the Development Management Policies refer to standards of accommodation for occupiers of residential development.

It is our understanding based on the Council's guidance that the proposed scheme is compliant in terms of overall flat size standards. In addition, given that there are no significant external alterations proposed, there is no impact upon neighbouring properties in terms of daylight/sunlight, loss of privacy or increased noise and disturbance.

Design and Access Statement

The following paragraphs address the requirements for design and access statements, using headings set out in national guidance on preparation of such statements.

Use

The proposal involves a change of use from office accommodation to residential use, creating a total of 3 no one bed flats. The existing retail use at ground floor is retained.

Amount

The proposed scheme does not involve any extension to the existing property. The total amount of floorspace affected by the change of use is approximately 170sqm.

Layout

A number of alterations to the internal layout are proposed to enable the conversion of the property into flatted accommodation. These are detailed on the application drawings.

Scale

The proposal does not involve any additional extensions to the property. The level of residential accommodation proposed is considered acceptable and relates to similar conversions along the high street.

Landscaping

No landscaping is proposed by the scheme

Appearance

The external appearance of the property is unaffected by the proposal.

Vehicular Links

There is not impact upon vehicular traffic by the proposal. The applicant is willing to enter into a "car free" S106 agreement if considered necessary in this location.

Inclusive Access

Due to the nature of the existing building it is not possible to provide wheelchair or accessible access to the proposed flats.

Conclusions

The proposal seeks to create three new one bedroom flats by converting existing vacant office space found on the upper floors of 7 Hampstead High Street.

The existing space is not ideally suited for modern office standards, in terms of its arrangement and layout, and is ill equipped in terms of services and requisite features that can be provided by purpose built office schemes. The building would have originally provide living accommodation and as such this represents the most appropriate use for the building, particularly given its existing vacancy.

Residential use above retail on high streets is extremely common and has historically been supported by planning policy since it can add to the vitality and viability of a retail area, increasing the number of potential users of the shopping area itself.

The design and layout of the proposed flats accords with the guidance set out in the LDF documents and guidance, and the applicant is willing to enter into a car free agreement if this is required.

For all the reasons outlined in this report, we consider that the relevant development plan policies have been fully satisfied. We therefore consider that the application proposals pass the Section 38 test of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and that Planning Permission should be granted accordingly.