

14 – 15 College Crescent, London NW3 5LL

Proposed Development – Design & Access Statement

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10 NOV 2010

Site Analysis

14 – 15 College Crescent is a large 5 storied end of terrace period building in a Conservation Area situated at the corner of Crescent College and Buckland Crescent. It is excellently located near shops and services in nearby Finchley Road, and is virtually next public transport in the form, of both the underground and buses, at Swiss Cottage. It is also within easy walk of Finchley Road underground station.

The building at present has Class B1 use and has been occupied for over 32 years as offices by a well known local firm of solicitors, who have now decided to vacate the premises and move elsewhere. The remaining terraced buildings are residential.

The existing layout provides for public access to the building at ground floor level by way of the front car park area, and has staff access to the building by way of external staircases off the rear car park area leading to the upper floors.

There is off street parking for 6 plus cars with two existing crossovers leading to either the front or rear parking area

Externally the building has a stucco rendered finish with many fine ornamental embellishments to both the front and side elevation, and brick and render to the rear elevation. The pitched roof is slate covered with a flat section that appears to be either lead or zinc covered.

An internal lift has been added over the years that runs from the ground floor to the third floor and is situated to the side elevation to Buckland Crescent, and is enclosed externally by stucco rendered, walls which matches the treatment to the surrounding elevation.

There are timber casement windows to the top floor, with mainly timber sash windows to the remaining floors although some windows as shown on the drawings (mostly to the ground floor and to the front first floor) have been altered in the past. There are balconies with cast iron railings to the large sash windows at 2nd floor level to both the front and side elevations.

The building must have been originally a traditional residential terrace in nature but has been altered to suit the present offices arrangement.

Internally there are some rooms, mostly to the front, which still retain original features such as shuttered windows, corning to ceilings, and skirtings.

Proposal

Layout

It is now intended to change the use of the building from Class B1 to Class C3, by carrying out internal alterations and by forming rear and side extensions in order to

convert it in to four self contained flats, which will provide a ground floor 3 bed family flat, 2 bed flats at 1st and 2nd floors levels, and a 3 to 4 bed flat at 3rd and 4th floor levels

As such, the external layout of the existing building will not change other than by the addition of the small rear extension and the side infills to both sides of the existing lift enclosure.

Scale

As mentioned above the scale of the proposed external alterations are considered not to be excessive in nature and therefore will not impact the historic scale of the existing building.

Landscaping

At present there is no planting to both the front and rear car parks. However, there is a tree in the rear car park which is the subject of a preservation order, and as such, will remain untouched.

It is proposed to provide a rear private garden / patio area for the ground floor flat, and a planting scheme for this and for the front car park will be submitted to the L.A. for approval at a later date.

Also, planting will be introduced to the proposed first floor rear terrace

It should be noted that parking for 5 cars will be provided – see proposed site plan.

Appearance

The proposed external alterations will alter slightly in style but not in substance as the building will present itself as a residential building rather than a commercial office, as the existing sign board will be removed.

The original features and proportions of the building are generally retained and the proposed changes will respect and replicate these and the match the existing finishes.

Access

Existing access points into the building will be changed

The existing splayed ground floor entrance is to be squared off, and the existing rear access stairs removed.

A new main entrance to the building will be formed next to the lift at ground floor level.

The ground floor flat will have access to its private garden area by way of french doors in the rear extension

The first floor flat will have access to its roof terrace by way of french doors from bedrooms.

The proposals consist of the following

A single storey rear extension added to the rear 3 metres in depth

The existing internal staircase is to be moved forward towards the lift in order to link the front of the building with the rear thus providing internal circulation within each flat without having the problem of entering the common areas.

Side infills will be formed at both first and second floor levels to the sides of the existing lift structure in order to provide necessary space to the flats at these levels

The original front rooms will be revert back to their original proportions by removing the non original office partitions, and all original features retained

Non original windows will be replaced with new timber sash windows

New timber sash windows and timber french doors are introduced to the rear elevation, which we believe is sympathetic to the overall design of the building and will enhance its visual appearance

New kitchens and bathrooms are to be formed in each flat

The existing lift is to be retained.

A terrace is to be formed at first floor level over the proposed ground floor extension - it should be noted that this should not present a problem with overlooking the adjoining properties garden as the existing metal access staircase platform is at the same level, but if found necessary a side screen of obscured glass could be introduced to provide additional privacy

Generally, all external alterations will respect, retain, and replicate the existing finishes and original features, such as the stucco finish, timber sash windows and doors, and the reuse of balconies and cast iron railings

Internally the proposed alterations will also respect and retain original features, and the finishes of the flats will be of a very high standard

It is thought that the proposals will maintain the historic integrity of the building both internally and externally

The proposed flats are larger than that recommended by the Local Authority and will provide accommodation of a generous size eg

3 bed flat 104 m²

2 bed flats 84 m²

3 / 4 bed flat 142 m²

Lifetime Homes

The Local Authority recommendation for Lifetime homes is for 10% of new residential units to be designed to be either wheelchair accessible or easily adapted to the same. As there are 4 flats it appears that the proposals fall below this requirement. However, if after consideration, the LA require this to be implemented then the ground floor flat is considered best to be easily adapted, and this could be done by way of a planning condition.

However, the relevant criteria for such an adaption would be as follows

Criterion 1 – Parking

One of the proposed car spaces in the rear area can meet the space requirement as it is shown on the site plan as being 2.4 x 4.8 and has a 900mm space to the side thus achieving the 3.3m overall parking width.

Criterion 2 – Approach to the dwelling from car parking

The distance from the car space to the main entrance is kept to a minimum and will be gently sloping to meet the requirement

Criterion 3 – Approach to all entrances

It is already proposed to form a ramp down to the new main entrance, which can meet the required gradient, as will the width of the path

Criterion 4 – Entrances

The main entrance will have level access as will that into the flat and that from the flat into the proposed garden. Other requirements can also be met

Criterion 5 – Communal stairs and lift

There is an existing lift that could enable access to the flats above the entrance level to as many people as possible, although the common stairs could present a problem due to existing space limitations, which is why the ground floor flat is considered the best for possible adaption.

Criterion 6 – Internal doorways and halls

The ground floor flat is considered large enough to change dimensions of the above to suit

Criterion 7 – Circulation space

The layout of the ground floor flat could be altered to suit

Criterion 8 – Entrance level living space

As the flat is on one level only this criterion is not relevant

Criterion 9 – Potential for entrance level bed – space

As the flat is on one level only this criterion is not relevant

Criterion 10 – Entrance level wc and shower drainage

As the flat is on one level only this criterion is not relevant, but the proposed bathrooms and wc can be changed to suit.

Criterion 11 – WC and bathroom walls

Provision of necessary grab rails etc could be allowed for

Criterion 12 – Stairs and potential through –floor lift in dwellings

Not relevant

Criterion 13 – Potential for fitting of hoists and bedroom / bathroom relationship

Provision for the above can be made

Criterion 14 - Bathrooms

An accessible bathroom can be provided for the main bedroom to suit the requirements

Criterion 15 – Glazing and window handle heights

The requirements for the above can be met

Criterion 16 – Location of service controls

The requirements for the above can be met

In conclusion it is thought that the proposed change of use from Class B1 (offices) to Class C3 (residential) and the proposed alterations will benefit the immediate area and local residents, and retain the historic and architectural merit of the property.

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