

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		20/05/2010	
(Members Briefing)		N/A		Consultation Expiry Date:		21/04/2010	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Jennifer Walsh				2010/1302/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
1-1A King's Mews, London, WC1N 2JA				Please refer to draft decision notice			
PO 3/4		Area Team Signature		C&UD		Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)							
Change of use from office use (Class B1a) at ground floor and hair loss treatment centre (Class D1) at first floor level to 1 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 1 bedroom residential flats including the erection of a rear extension and associated roof terrace at first floor level.							
Recommendation:		Grant Planning Permission subject to a section 106 agreement					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	21	No. of responses	01	No. of objections	01
				No. Electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		<p>2 Kings Mews objects to the loss of the office use, as they have been there for such a long time and have become part of the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They are slightly concerned with the closeness of the windows between no 2 and no 1 and 1a. On both ground and first floor level the windows are close and some overlooking is inevitable. - Concerned that the plans show kitchens at ground and first floor level, where extractor fans could be installed which could exit directly and affect the first floor window. - The structural strength of the wall between 1 and 2 kings mews needs to be taken into account. 					
CAAC/Local groups comments:		Bloomsbury CAAC commented on the application stating 'they have no objection to the change of use, yet can not understand why two units are being squeezed into one small property.'					
Site Description							
The application site is a two storey mews property which was built in 1715. The building is split into two offices and has been in such a use since the late 1950s. There is an office on the ground floor and a hair loss studio on the first floor. The building is not a listed building, yet it is located adjacent to listed buildings and is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.							
Relevant History							
2008/3174/P: Change of use from office (Class B1) to a hair loss treatment centre (Class D1). GRANTED 24/09/2008							
Relevant policies							

London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD2 Planning Obligations

SD6 Amenity for occupiers

H1 New Housing

B1 General design principles

B3 Alterations and extensions

B7 Conservation Areas

E2 Retention of existing business uses

T3 Pedestrians & Cycling

T8 Car-free housing and car capped housing

T9 Impact of Parking

Camden Planning Guidance 2006

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

As the draft LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies documents have now been published, they are material planning considerations. However, as a matter of law, limited weight should be attached to them at this stage.

The following policies in the draft LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies documents have been taken into consideration:

CS1 - Distribution of growth

CS5 - Managing the impact of growth and development

CS6 - Providing quality homes

CS11 - Promoting sustainable and efficient travel

DP2 - Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing

CS8 - Promoting a successful and inclusive Camden economy

DP13 - Employment sites and premises

DP26 - Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours

CS14 - Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

DP17 - Walking, cycling and public transport

DP18 - Parking standards and the availability of car parking

DP19 - Managing the impact of parking

DP24 - Securing high quality design

CS19 - Delivering and monitoring the Core Strategy

DP25 - Conserving Camden's heritage

Assessment

1.0 Proposal

1.1 The application seeks permission for:

- The change of use of the ground floor office unit (Class B1) and the first floor hair loss studio (Class D1) to two self contained residential units (Class C3);
- The construction of a rear extension at 1st floor level with an associated roof terrace.
- Three rooflights are to be infilled, and three new smaller rooflights are proposed

The proposal includes conversion into a 2 bed duplex flat, and a studio flat. The flats will have separate entrances and will be self contained.

2.0 Revisions

2.1 Revisions have been received omitting a side proposed window at 1st floor level.

3.0 Principle of development

3.1 Policy E2 does in principle seek to protect employment uses, but this is on the basis that they can be used flexibly for a range of employment uses. It would appear that this site has few, if any, of the typical design features as outlined in paragraph 7.18 of the UDP that would allow flexible employment use and it is unlikely that incorporating such features would be feasible in a building such as this. The applicants indicate that it would require significant repair and upgrade to bring the building up to modern requirements. Given the size of the site it is not clear that such upgrade would result in a viable office occupier for the premises anyway.

3.2 The applicants have not submitted any detailed information to support their claims that the site is vacant and/or the premises have become dated and are no longer attractive to modern office occupiers. However, after a site visit it is considered that the building is dated and is not suitable to modern office occupiers due to the size of the building and the site restrictions.

3.3 Paragraph 7.22 of the UDP does make an exception for office premises in areas where there is a surplus of office accommodation to revert to other uses, in particular housing. It has been acknowledged that the Holborn area does have a surplus of office accommodation given the large number of recent developments for purpose built, modern office

accommodation. The UDP goes on to state that in instances where we accept the loss of old office stock, the Council's preference is for the released floorspace to be used for residential and/or community uses. The first floor unit is currently in D1 use. However this use is only taking place in one room and there is no room to expand such floorspace. On a site inspection it was considered that the physical features that would allow such flexible use for both D1 and B1 space are not present on site. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to resist the loss of the employment and community space under this policy.

3.4 The current tenants are book binders and they have been located at the premises for a number of years. After detailed discussions, it has come clear that the business is increasingly difficult to operate from the site due to the difficulties with deliveries and the size of the site. As it is a small unit other uses for the unit must be considered. However, the site is laid across different levels and the unit is very dark. The agent has commented on different uses for the unit and has stated that the size and characteristics of the site do not lend it to conversion to other uses. Conversion to other units would only be possible through making substantial changes to the appearance of the building. The characteristics of Kings Mews have changed over the years. The original opening could no longer be used due to the residential units which join the property to the north. This would mean that the entrance would have to move to the front of the building.

3.5 The overall characteristics of Kings Mews have changed over the years. The area surrounding the application site is predominately residential with 2, 4 and 7 being mews housing and a large scale private and affordable housing scheme being granted permission on the site opposite in 2009. Therefore recent development is returning the character of the upper part of the mews is changing the character to residential use.

3.6 In terms of the proposed use, housing is the priority land use of the UDP, as indicated by policy H1. The proposed change of use will therefore help to meet and exceed the strategic housing target for the Borough. This is on the basis of the residential accommodation proposed being of an acceptable standard. As such, the principle of providing residential accommodation at this location is accepted.

4.0 Quality of residential accommodation

4.1 The proposal involves the creation of a two bedroom duplex flat and a studio flat on the first floor. Within the duplex flat, the first bedroom is 13.2sqm, the overall floorspace of the unit is to be 72.88sqm. This figure is over the minimum standard and is therefore acceptable. The studio unit is proposed to be 32.8sqm. This figure is that of the minimum standard for a studio unit, therefore, both units are in line with the Camden Planning Guidance. All rooms are regular in shape and size, with sufficient circulation and ventilation space. There is also adequate outlook, with windows provided within each room.

4.2 With regard to lifetime homes, the applicant has provided limited commentary as to where the scheme can adhere to lifetime homes standards. However, it is acknowledged that the unit proposed involves the conversion of an existing building, making all lifetime homes standards difficult to achieve. As such, an informative will be added to any permission granted, encouraging the applicant to adhere to as many of the 16 standards as possible when implementing the scheme.

5.0 Design

5.1 Within the proposal it is proposed to build a first floor level extension to accommodate the upper floor of the duplex flat. It is proposed to extend the rear wall of the building 2.3metres out and have a roof terrace 2m deep up to the neighbouring property. The rear of the property backs on to a building with a large side flank wall. There are no windows on this elevation. To the south of the building there is a small courtyard which is accessed from the Listed Buildings which face Theobalds Road.

5.2 The extension at the first floor level is to be built out over the existing flat roof to the rear of the property. The extension is to be white rendered to match the original side elevation of the property. The existing parapet wall is to be extended in height by 1m so to be used as a balustrade to the proposed roof terrace. The terrace is to be accessed from timber framed double doors opening up from the first floor bedroom. The existing northern flank wall which serves 2 Kings Mews will act as a natural balustrade to the northern side of the proposed roof terrace.

5.3 Due to the proposed rear extension having matching materials, being at the rear of the property and not protruding any higher than the existing building, the rear extension is considered to be acceptable in design terms. The extension is considered to be in scale with the existing building and is not considered to have a dominant impact of the host property or the surrounding conservation area or Listed Buildings. Whilst the proposal is not visible from the public realm, it is visible from the rear of the buildings to the south of the mews property. It is considered that due to the points raised above, the extension would maintain the proportions of the original mews property, and as the detailed design is consistent with that of the original property, the proposal is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the wider area. Through raising the height of the existing parapet wall, the detailed design of the proposed roof terrace is considered to have a minimal impact of the design of the mews property. It will be raised by 1m, yet it will be built in the same materials and as the roof terrace maintains the set back of the first floor from the flank wall to the west of the mews property, the proposal is considered acceptable in design terms.

5.4 Included within the application it is also proposed to infill 3 rooflights, and insert 3 rooflights in new locations. The existing parapet wall is considered to conceal the proposed rooflight, and therefore the alterations at roof level are not

considered to have a detrimental impact on the host property nor, the wider conservation area.

6.0 Transport

6.1 UDP policy T3 requires development to sufficiently provide for the needs of cyclists, which includes cycle parking and UDP policy T7 states development must comply with Camden Parking standards. The London Plan also adopts the Transport for London cycle parking standards.

6.2 Camden's Parking Standards for cycles (Appendix 6 of the Unitary Development Plan), states that 1 storage or parking space is required per residential unit. The proposal is for 2 residential units therefore 2 cycle storage/parking spaces are required. The applicant has included provision for one cycle storage/parking within the internal layout of the proposed design. Although one cycle space included internally is not the ideal situation, it is considered that not supplying 2 cycle spaces would justify a refusal on these grounds.

6.3 Given that The London Plan Consolidated with Alterations since 2004 (February 2008) should be taken into consideration (policies 3C.1, 3C.17 and 3C.23) as well as the UDP (policies T1, T8 and T9) and to some extent Camden's Draft LDF Development Policies (draft policy DP18); car-free should not only be sought for housing but also for developments in general and should be ensured by Boroughs in areas of high public transport accessibility. Therefore, this development should be made car-free through a Section 106 planning obligation for the following reasons:

- The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of (PTAL) of 6b (excellent) and is within a Controlled Parking Zone.
- The site is within the "Clear Zone Region", for which the whole area is considered to suffer from parking stress.
- Not making the development car-free would increase demand for on-street parking in the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) the site is within. This is considered unacceptable in CPZ's that are highly stressed where overnight demand exceeds 90%. Kings Cross (CA-D) CPZ operates Mon-Fri 08:30-18:30, Sat 08:30-13:30 and 117 parking permits have been issued for every 100 estimated parking bays within the zone. This means that this CPZ is highly stressed.

6.4 UDP Policy T12 seeks to protect the safety and operation of the highway network. For some development this may require control over how the development is implemented (including demolition and construction) through a Construction Management Plan (CMP) secured via S106. Although access to the site is somewhat constrained, the work is relatively minor and is unlikely to be intensive. Therefore it is not considered that a CMP is required. Any occupation of the highway, such as for hoarding, skips or storage of materials, will require a licence from Highways Management and this, along with the existing on-street waiting and loading controls, should be sufficient to ensure the work is carried out in such a way as to not adversely affect the safety or operation of the public highway.

7.0 Amenity

7.1 Due to the height and bulk of the proposed extension it is not considered that the proposal would have adverse effects on outlook, privacy or loss of light and therefore, the scheme is considered to comply with Policy SD6. As there are no windows proposed on the side elevation of the extension, it is not considered that the proposed external changes to the rear or side elevation would have any significant impact on amenity to that of the existing situation. There are existing ground floor windows at the boundary with the courtyard to the rear of the office block to Theobalds Road and existing ground and first floor windows to the side elevation facing the Mews and looking towards 2 King's Mews. The courtyard windows are looking on to a relatively unused space associated with an office use and the other windows are located at an angle away from the residential windows to the front elevation of 2 King's Mews it is therefore considered that there will not be any overlooking issues with the conversion.

7.2 The proposed roof terrace at first floor level would look over the existing courtyard and could look into the neighbour windows to the rear of the listed buildings which face Theobalds Road. These buildings are predominately office blocks, yet it is considered that a privacy screen should be erected on the south elevation of the proposed roof terrace to reduce overlooking. This is advised to be secured by condition.

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission subject to a Section 106 agreement securing the proposed units as car free.

Disclaimer

This is an internet copy for information purposes. If you require a copy of the signed original please contact the Culture and Environment Department on (020) 7974 5613