

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		12/01/2010	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		23/12/09	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Katrina Christoforou				2009/5438/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
27 Swinton Street London WC1X 9NW				See decision notice			
PO 3/4		Area Team Signature		C&UD		Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)							
Change of use of ground and basement floor levels from live work unit (Sui Generis class) to one self-contained maisonette (Class C3).							
Recommendation(s):		Grant planning permission subject to a S106 agreement (car-free).					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	26	No. of responses	01	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		<p>A site notice was erected on the 02/12/09. One resident of the upper floors of the building wrote in support of the application. The comments are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed would provide a more homogeneous feel to the building which is predominantly in residential use. - The ground floor has an austere ground floor elevation as a result of the B1C use. - Potential to add railings to integrate with the street and to deter from littering. 					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		Bloomsbury CAAC were consulted and responded offering no comment.					

Site Description

The former industrial building dates from the 19th Century its footprint forming a U shape open at the eastern side to the railway. The northern most section fronts Swinton Street and the west section lies perpendicular to the rear gardens of the terraces of Swinton Street and Acton Street with views from Swinton Place. Internal to the U shape is an open courtyard with small terraces. The property contains a live/work photographic studio on the ground and basements floor and a number of residential flats at the upper levels. The site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is surrounded by listed buildings.

Relevant History

The property has been the subject of numerous planning applications, permissions and appeals which have resulted in some rather unsympathetic extensions at roof level.

The main history relating to the ground and basement floors is outlined below:

2005/0395/P

Planning permission granted 07/04/2005 for the installation of french doors and one new window to rear basement level to provide access to new terrace.

2004/4420/P

Planning permission granted 29/11/2004 for the installation of 2 enlarged replacement windows to the rear of the property at ground floor level in connection with an existing photographic studio (B1) use.

Condition 2: Notwithstanding the drawings hereby approved the glazed panels below the upper transom and either side of the opening element of each window, shall be obscured glazed and retained and maintained as such.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the premises to the rear of 27 Swinton Street in accordance with the requirements of policies RE2 and EN19 of the London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan 2000.

PS9704157R1

Planning permission granted 25/04/1997 for the change of use of ground floor/basement from Photographic Studio (Class B1c) to a live work unit providing 125m² residential floorspace and 150m² light industrial use (photographic studio), plus the insertion of a rooflight on the ground floor flat roof.

Condition 1: This permission is personal to (Name) and shall endure for the period of their occupation only. On (Name) vacating the premises the use shall revert to the lawful use forpurposes.

Reason: In recognition of the special circumstances of the applicant/intended occupier and to accord with policy..... of the London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan 2000.

Relevant policies

Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

- SD1- Quality of life
- SD6- Amenity for occupiers and neighbours
- SD7- Light, noise and vibration pollution
- SD9- Resources and energy
- H1- New housing
- H7- Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing
- H8- Mix of units
- B1- General design principles
- B3- Alterations and extensions
- B7- Conservation Areas
- T3- Pedestrians and Cycling
- T8 - Car free housing and car capped housing
- T9 - Impact of Parking
- E2- retention of business uses
- E4- Live/work units

Assessment

The proposal is for the conversion of the basement and ground floor of the building from live/work unit comprising photographic studio and residential use (sui generis) to a three bedroom self contained residential flat (use class C3). The proposals do not involve any external alteration to the building.

Principle of the change of use

Policy E2 seeks for the retention of business uses where there is potential for that use to continue. The supporting statement submitted with the application outlines the applicant's case for the change of use. The property no longer meets the needs of the current occupier, the reasons given being that the premises is larger than required, with high business rates and stringent parking restrictions which do not allow for the required servicing and loading/unloading. In addition, there is no lift between the two floors of the building. The statement concludes that these limitations would make it difficult to attract another light industrial occupant. Consideration has been given to use as B1 offices, but as there is already an over-supply of such accommodation in the area this is not considered to be viable.

Policy E2 states that the Council would generally require evidence that a property has been unsuccessfully marketed for alternative business occupiers for a period of two years to support an application for the loss of the use. Such evidence has not been provided in this case. However, the poor servicing arrangement and the fact that the upper floors of the building are now in residential use are considered to limit the suitability of the premises for continued light industrial use and it is considered likely that the property would become vacant when the current occupier vacates.

Whilst more evidence could have been provided to support the change of use, it is considered that the loss of the business use in this case is acceptable in terms of policy E2.

Policy H1 welcomes the creation of additional residential accommodation within the borough, provided that it meets acceptable standards. The proposals would involve the creation of an ample three/four bedroom flat over ground and basement levels with a floor area of 300 sqm. The bedrooms and central living space would be located at ground floor level whilst a large open plan kitchen/living space would occupy the basement level from which there is an existing access to a small rear external patio space. The accommodation would provide family sized accommodation that would greatly exceed the minimum space standards as outlined in the CPG. The proposal is therefore considered to be in line with policies H1 and H8.

No details have been submitted in accordance with policy H7 Lifetime Homes. Policy H7 requires that new housing including conversions are accessible to all and meet the lifetime homes standards. Whilst the proposal is for the conversion of an existing building and accommodation is arranged over two levels, it is considered that a number of the requirements could be incorporated in this case. It is therefore recommended that an informative be attached to any permission encouraging the inclusion of lifetime homes measures.

Amenity

The proposed unit would have a fairly close relationship across the back garden space with the rear of the listed residential terrace along Acton Street. A degree of overlooking between facing windows and the neighbouring gardens already exists. However, the relationship is existing and would not be altered as a result of the proposals. The basement and ground floors of number 27 already has a live/work arrangement and the shift to full residential is not considered to result in an unacceptable level of amenity in terms of privacy for both neighbours and potential occupants.

The proposed unit would be located at ground and basement level within the building and the aspect to the side and rear is limited by the surrounding built context. Whilst daylight and sunlight may be restricted, most rooms are served by more than one window. The overall level of daylight is considered to provide an adequate level of residential amenity and the situation is existing so any future occupant would be aware of the levels of daylight received.

The east flank wall of the property faces immediately onto the railway and the front of the property faces onto the red route of Swinton Street. In these circumstances the potential noise implications in relation to the residential amenity of the residential occupants should be considered. No noise study has been submitted as part of this application; however, as the property already comprises a mixed residential/photographic studio at ground and basement levels and the upper floors are fully in residential use, it is not considered to be a requirement in this case and the site is considered to be suitable for residential occupation.

The proposals are therefore considered to be compliant with policy SD6.

Transport

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 highly from parking stress. No parking is proposed as part of the application. It is therefore recommended that the development be designated as car-free through a S106 agreement in line with policies T8 and T9.

UDP policy T3 requires developments to sufficiently provide for the needs of cyclists, which includes cycle parking. Appendix 6 of the Unitary Development Plan states that 1 storage or parking space is required per residential unit. The proposal is for 1 residential unit; therefore 1 cycle storage/parking space is required. The applicant has not included provision for the required amount of cycle storage/parking in the proposed design. However, the proposals are for a large self-contained flat with ground floor access and a cycle can easily be stored within it if required, and therefore Camden's parking standards for cycles are considered to have been met.

The scope of construction work required for this proposal is limited to the erection and removal of internal partitions. The pressure on the surrounding road network for delivery/construction vehicles etc. is therefore unlikely to be significant. However, the site is located on a red route and it is therefore likely that any vehicles would have to stop in the nearby residential parking bays. This would require permission from the Council's Highways Department for the suspension of a bay. It is recommended that an informative be added to any permission to this effect.

Design and appearance

The submitted statement specifically states that no external works are proposed. However, there are currently access doors at ground floor level onto Swinton Street which appear on the proposed floor plans to be changed into a window. No elevation details have been submitted in relation to this. As this affects the main frontage of the building that is highly visible within the public realm, it is considered to be highly important that any alterations to the frontage do not harm the overall character and appearance of the host property or the conservation area. It is therefore recommended that a condition be attached to any permission requiring the submission and approval of details of any proposed alterations to the front entrance. Any works thereafter should be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Recommendation:

Grant planning permission subject to a section 106 agreement.

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