

Delegated Report (Members Briefing)		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:	26/09/2007
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:	10/09/2007
Officer			Application Number(s)		
Tom Webster			2007/3508/P		
Application Address			Drawing Numbers		
32 Maple Street London W1T 6HB			See draft decision notice.		
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature		
Proposal(s)					
Change of use from office use (Class B1) to residential use (Class C3) to create one 1-bed unit at basement level and one 2-bed unit at upper and lower ground floor levels linked by an existing courtyard and associated works to include a new window to the front of basement, the insertion of rooflights and glazed façade.					
Recommendation(s):		Approval subject to S106 Agreement			
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission			

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:						
Consultations						
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
			No. Electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>A site notice was displayed on the 20/08/2007. The consultation period expired on the 10/09/2007. The following objection was received.</p> <p>Dan Films Ltd objected for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial implications and impact the cost of the move will have on a small business • The company's location has been established at these premises for nine years and known within the very competitive industry it operates. • The difficulty of finding similar sized premises within the area where for commercial reasons the company has to operate. • The difficulty in securing alternative premises, which also give the flexibility of space which these premises offer within the local area. <p><i>*It should be noted that these are not planning considerations and the prospect of the loss of commercial use (Class B1) has been addressed in the main body of the report.</i></p>					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify	<p>Bloomsbury CAAC: Without further information they object to the proposed ground floor window –they did not see any of the elevations</p>					

Site Description

The application site consists of a 6 storey building that is currently used for residential (Class C3) and commercial (Class B1) purposes, although the original use of the building was that of residential. The building is not listed but does lie within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. There is a small courtyard to the rear that links with a single storey extension.

Relevant History

M12/40/5/15620 -Conversion into 3 self-contained dwelling units, use of basement for offices and erection of rear extension to form bathrooms at 32 Maple Street, W.1 – Granted -26/06/1973

Relevant policies

Set out below are the UDP policies that the proposals have primarily been assessed against, together with officers' view as to whether or not each policy listed has been complied with. However it should be noted that recommendations are based on assessment of the proposals against the development plan taken as a whole together with other material considerations.

Adopted Unitary Development Plan 2006

S1 Strategic policies

SD6 Amenity for occupiers and neighbours

B1 General design principles

B3 Alterations and extensions

B7 Conservation Areas

T3 Pedestrians and Cycling

T7 Off Street Parking

T8 Car Free Housing

E2 Retention of existing business uses

Camden Planning Guidance (Adopted December 2006)

Conservation Areas

Assessment

Planning permission is sought for the change of use from office use (Class B1) to residential use (Class C3) to create one 1-bed unit at basement level and one 2-bed unit at upper and lower ground floor levels linked by an existing courtyard and associated works to include a new window to the front of basement, the insertion of roof lights and glazed façade

The main considerations when assessing this application are:

- 1) Principle of the change of use;**
- 2) Impact on the character of the building and conservation area;**
- 3) Amenity;**
- 4) Residential parking.**

1) Principle of the change of use

The loss of a business use is covered by policy E2 of the adopted UDP, which states that when a site is not suitable for continuation of any business use other than B1 (a) office, as an exception to the general approach, the Council may allow a change to other uses. In such cases, the Council will seek a change to permanent residential or community uses.

The building accommodates second-hand office space as it was originally in residential use and is not purpose-built office floor space. Its location on the upper floors limits the suitability of the space for other employment uses. There is currently an oversupply of office space in the Borough, and good quality modern office space is available within the area. For these reasons, it is considered that the exception clause in the policy E2 can be applied and change from an employment use to residential would not conflict with policy E3C relating to accommodation for small firms.

Moreover, the provision of additional residential stock is a central aim of the Camden UDP. Policy H1 states that the Council regards housing as a priority use and will seek to secure additions to the housing stock wherever possible, and that this can be achieved by increasing the amount of land in residential use, and to make the fullest use of under-utilised sites and buildings considered suitable for residential development.

2) Impact on the character of the building and conservation area

The additional window to the front elevation of the basement is considered to be an improvement. Presently, there is one window here, and adding the second one, the front of the basement will be in keeping with the character and appearance of the upper floors; the fenestration will be identical in appearance and layout. As the windows can be seen at street level immediately above the basement, it is considered what is proposed here would also respect the character and appearance of the conservation area. Similarly, the proposed rooflights are considered to be an improvement on the existing projecting skylight. They will be modest in size, sensibly located and a welcomed addition. Equally, the removal of part of the rendered wall to the flank elevation of the rear building and its replacement with glass would enhance the existing character of the host building.

3) Amenity;

The proposed change of use will not have any negative impacts on the amenities of the surrounding residents. The number of occupiers/visitors will likely be less than the number who used the building for office space. The front window to the basement faces out onto the lightwell wall, the height of the ceiling to floor means that the occupiers can only see directly above them through the skylights and the glass windows to the flank elevation face onto a white rendered wall with no windows and so

overlooking/loss of privacy is not an issue.

With regards to the amenities for potential occupiers of the flats, the amount of habitable space is considered to be acceptable. The basement flat would offer a floorspace of 40.2m², which exceeds the minimum standard of 32m², and the standard of accommodation proposed is considered to be acceptable. Moreover, with an angle of light of 40 degrees over the top of the outside wall (the wall of the lightwell), it is considered that the flat will receive adequate natural light. Additionally, at 2.5m, the room height is also considered to be acceptable. The bedroom flat would receive light from an existing window in the rear wall.

Turning to the 2-bed flat at upper and lower ground floor level, the floorspace of 69m² exceeds the amount required for 2 or three persons. Bedroom 1 has a floor space of 9.4m², which is more than appropriate for one person, whilst the second bedroom at 11m² is acceptable for two persons, thus overall the standard of accommodation is considered to be appropriate.

4) Residential parking.

Policy T7 and guidance within appendix 6 requires on-site car parking of between 0.5 and 1 space for a single dwelling for changes from non-residential to residential use. No car parking spaces are proposed as part of the scheme. In appropriate circumstances the Council would consider designating development as car free. The site meets the criteria for car free development being easily accessible by public transport (the application site is in close proximity to Kings Cross underground station), there being a range of amenities/services accessible to shops, lack of residential parking within the immediate vicinity, and the surrounding streets are designated as being part of a CPZ with identified parking stress.

The proposed conversion does not incorporate dedicated cycle parking, however, the proposed flat has sufficient internal space for cycle storage.

Subject to a car-free housing agreement no objections are made in relation to residential parking.

Conclusion

It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to an s106 agreement. The Heads of Terms is for car-free housing.

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