

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		19/11/2007	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		01/11/2007	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Carlos Martin				2007/4072/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
14/15 Mandela Street London NW1 0DU				Refer to Draft Decision Notice			
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Change of use and works of conversion from studio warehouse units (Class B8) to create 6 one bedroom and 1 two bedroom "live/work" units (sui generis), incorporating 3 integral garages, plus erection of a 2nd floor front roof extension and front elevational alterations.							
Recommendation(s):		Refuse Planning Permission					
Application Type:		Full Planning Permission					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	17	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
Summary of consultation responses:		None					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>		None					

Site Description

The application site relates to a two-storey studio-warehouse (Class B8) building located on the east side of Mandela Street. The building adjoins other two/three storey buildings and backs onto the rear gardens of a row of terrace houses. To the front, the site faces an employment site.

The site is not located within any conservation area.

Relevant History

None

Relevant policies

UDP (2006):

SD1 (Quality of life)
SD2 (Planning obligations)
SD6 (Amenity for occupiers and neighbours)
SD9 (Resources and energy)
SD12 (Development and construction waste)
H1 (New housing)
H7 (Lifetime homes and wheelchair housing)
B1 (General design principles)
B3 (Alterations and extensions)
T3 (Pedestrians and cycling)
T8 (Car free housing and car capped housing)
T9 (Impact on parking)
E2 (Retention of existing business uses)
E4 (Live/work units)

Camden Planning Guidance.

Assessment

Planning permission is sought for change of use and works of conversion from studio warehouse units (Class B8) to create seven 2-bed live/work studios (sui generis), plus erection of a 2nd floor front roof extension and front elevational alterations.

Retention of business uses

UDP policy E2 aims to protect business uses on sites where there is potential for that use to continue. The proposed scheme would change an existing warehouse into a use that is Sui Generis. Although a studio element is included in the proposed new units, its size varies between units and in some cases is very small and almost insignificant. It is considered that the nature of the units is primarily residential with only minimal space devoted to B1 workspace uses and thus the introduction of the residential element would significantly change the character of the premises from an employment use. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the existing B8 use is not suitable or viable, and thus the proposal is therefore considered contrary to E2.

However, if it can be demonstrated, in accordance with policy E2, that the premises are not suitable for continued employment use, a solely residential scheme may be acceptable. It is possible to use C3 dwellings for a range of business purposes provided the property's overall character as a dwelling is not changed.

Live/work units

Policy E4 states that planning permission will be granted for live/work developments provided that they do not, inter alia, result in the loss of sites in office, warehouse or industry use where there is potential for that use to continue. Paragraph 7.37 states that the Council will not normally permit the loss of sites that it considers can be retained in wholly business use. As discussed above, it is considered that this has not been demonstrated. Therefore the proposed scheme is not considered to be in accordance with policy E4.

It is usual for the Council to use legal agreements to ensure that the live/work units are occupied as a single integrated unit and that the work element is not used for residential purposes. It is not considered that it would be possible to properly secure the employment element in this way for the proposed scheme as the live and work elements are inter-mingled (the kitchenette is on a mezzanine level down stairs from the first floor studio, separated from the rest of the living accommodation.). As discussed above, given the small size of the residential elements, the lack of a living room and the vertical mixing of the live and work elements, it is appears likely that the first floor studio areas would be used as living rather than studio space.

New Housing & residential standards

Policy H1 promotes the provision of new housing provided that the accommodation reaches acceptable standards. Detailed standards for residential development are set out in Camden Planning Guidance.

The total size of the proposed live/work units varies between 107 and 153sqm and it is not clear from the plans if the units are one or two bedroom sized, as some rooms have been labelled as bedroom/study. In addition the 1st floor rooms are designated as studios rather than living rooms. Some of the second bedrooms (units 1 and 3) are smaller than the minimum bedroom sizes in Camden Planning Guidance and are unacceptable; if the units are treated as 2 bedroom 3 person units, the overall sizes of the units are also unacceptable. On the basis that the 1st floor is used as residential space as living rooms and the 2nd bedroom is classified as a study, the 2 person units will meet minimum space standards in CPG. However any alternative arrangement will not meet these minima and the units need to be redesigned internally to provide a satisfactory mix between living and work space to adequately meet the criteria for live-work units and meet the appropriate standards.

Design

The existing two-storey building was constructed in brickwork with single-glazed steel windows and sliding doors and abuts other similar buildings to the north and south. The proposed amendments to the exterior would use materials to match existing and the new fenestration would follow the existing in detail.

The alterations at roof level would increase the height of the building at the front, although it would maintain the overall height of the building. The roof of the extension would be visible from street level, but would be set behind the existing front parapet, which would be retained. The site is not within any conservation area and, given the context of buildings adjoining, the increased bulk of the roof and its design together with the proposed front façade alterations, are considered acceptable in design terms. In this respect, the proposal complies with policies B1 and B3 of the UDP.

Amenity

No impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties is expected in terms of loss of light, outlook or privacy. The units do not have any windows to the rear, apart from rooflights facing upwards, and the new front extension and new residential habitable room windows would face an employment site, thus there will be no impact on amenities opposite.

Lifetime homes standards

A full Lifetime homes statement should be submitted. The 'design and access statement' contains minimal information on Lifetime homes and access issues. As they are working within the constraints of the existing building they may not be able to achieve all the standards but should be able to incorporate a significant amount. An informative should be added to ensure this information is provided in the event of a resubmission.

Sustainability

No details of any specific measures to conserve energy and resources have been provided. The proposal is therefore, contrary to policy SD9. In particular, the proposal needs an Eco-homes assessment for 5+ dwellings as, for the purposes of policy E4, live-work units should be treated as residential dwellings, and thus the appropriate thresholds for policy compliance are triggered.

In this respect, contributions would also be expected for educational facilities and amenity open space, which the proposal does not provide either, contrary to policies SD2 and N4. It is calculated that this scheme would need to contribute £3148 (based on the 1 x 2bed unit) for education and £5527.50 (based on the 8 bedrooms) for POS.

Refuse storage

No details of refuse storage have been provided, but it is possible to accommodate this internally. An informative is added to require details in any resubmission.

Parking

Camden's Parking Standards for cycles states that 1 storage or parking space is required per residential unit. The proposal is for 7 residential units; therefore 7 cycle storage/parking spaces are required. No details of refuse storage have been provided, but it is possible to accommodate this internally. An informative is added to require details in any resubmission.

Car parking has been proposed for 3 of the units, which comply with standards. It would be preferred that all units were completely car-free due to the accessible location of the site, and the advantage of removing the garages would be to increase the space available for a workspace element given the lack of living room (as discussed above). However in the absence of car-free or car-capped legal agreement, the proposed development should be refused due to its potential for parking congestion.

Recommendation

The scheme would involve the loss of dedicated employment use, contrary to UDP policies E2 and E4. There are also detailed concerns about the sustainability and accessibility of the new use and the provision of carparking. The acceptability of the live/work units is also questionable due to the unbalanced mix of work and residential elements and the standard of residential accommodation provided as the “live” element.

It is recommended that planning permission be refused.