

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		25/07/2007	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		11/07/2007	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Elaine Quigley				2007/2374/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
74 Cleveland Street London W1T 6NA							
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Change of use of the basement from travel agency (A1 use) to 1 no. self-contained residential unit (C3 use).							
Recommendation(s):		To refuse planning permission.					
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	01	No. of objections	01
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		No letters received following display of site notice (expired 11/07/2007)					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify		Bloomsbury CAAC – objects A flat with only one window looking into basement staircase would provide poor standard of accommodation and detracts from the character of the conservation area.					

Site Description

The application site is located on the east side of Cleveland Street within a terrace of 11 properties. It comprises a four-storey building with basement accommodation. The basement is currently used as a travel agency (A1 use), the ground floor as a dental practice (D1 use), the first floor as a one bedroom flat and the second and third floor as a two-bedroom maisonette.

The site falls within a Cleveland Street Neighbourhood Centre, the Central London Area and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Relevant History

8600552

Planning permission was granted on 20/08/1986 for a change of use of basement store to residential accommodation to be used in connection with residential use on upper floors.

8900632

Planning permission was granted on 07/06/1990 for the change of use and works of conversion of the existing upper floors dwelling into a first floor flat and a second and third floor maisonette together with the rear extension of the existing ground floor travel agency the opening up of the front basement area the erection of railings around the front basement area and the use of the basement as an extension to the ground floor travel agency.

PSX0004652

Planning permission was granted on 21/08/2000 for the change of use of the ground floor from travel agent (Class A1) to a dental practice (D1) and the removal of the additional condition 01 of planning permission 8900632R1.

Relevant policies

The Replacement Unitary Development Plan 2006

SD6: Amenity for occupiers and neighbours, B7: Conservation areas, T8: Car free housing and car capped housing, H1: New housing, R7B: Neighbourhood Centres.

Camden Planning Guidance 2006

Car-free and car capped housing; Conservation areas; Residential development standards.

SPG for Central London: food, drink and entertainment, and specialist and retail uses

Assessment

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the basement from a travel agency (A1 use) to 1 no. self-contained residential unit (C3 use). The applicant has not provided any information relating to the vacancy of the unit. It is proposed to provide a self-contained unit would include a bathroom/shower, a kitchen and a bedroom/living/dining area. It would create 30.75 sq.m of additional residential floor area.

The main issues to consider as part of the application are:

- The loss of retail floorspace
- The principle of residential unit
- The standard of residential accommodation
- Traffic Implications

The loss of retail floorspace

The site lies within a neighbourhood centre. The proposal would result in the loss of retail floor space and is therefore subject to assessment under Policy R7B of the replacement UDP that seeks to protect local shops that retain the character, function, vitality and viability of the centre. From the retail survey it would appear that within the Cleveland neighbourhood centre some 20% of properties are retail units and approximately 37% are within A3 uses. Policy R7B specifically relates to changes of use of the ground floor of the premises. The proposal relates to the basement area where there is a very restricted window display. It must be noted that there are a range of retail and service uses directly opposite the application site within Clipstone Mews that is within the Borough of Westminster. It is considered that the loss of retail floorspace at basement level would have little impact on the function, vitality or viability of the neighbourhood centre and would be considered acceptable.

Principle of residential accommodation

The principle of residential accommodation would be considered acceptable and would comply with Policy H1.

The standard of residential accommodation

The proposal would create an additional residential unit that would have an overall floor area of 30.75 sq.m. This would fall below the Council's minimum floor area requirement for a one bedroom flat of 32 sq.m. In addition, it would appear from the submitted floor plans that the proposed bedroom area would not meet the Council's minimum size requirements of 11 sq.m for a first and double bedroom as the bedroom/living/dining area measures 14.1 sq.m. This would be considered to provide an unsuitable standard of residential accommodation.

It must also be noted that the proposed flat would be served by one window only that is located in the front elevation. The window is located approximately 1m from the underside of the pavement and is partially obscured by the staircase that is located directly in front of the window. The outlook from this window and potential light into the basement area appears to be currently restricted by the staircase and the minimal depth of the lightwell. The CPG states that all habitable rooms, including basements, must have an external window with an area of at least 1/10 of the floor area of the room. As the dimensions of the window are not clear from the drawings it is difficult to assess the area of the external window. However having visited the site it is evident that any outlook from the basement flat would be restricted by the position of the access stair which covers approximately half of the window. Taking this into consideration, and also the limited depth of the lightwell it is considered that any

outlook from the flat would be very restricted. The amount of daylight and sunlight to the interior of the building would be restricted to the front section of the flat. This would result in a dark and unpleasant environment for the future occupier and would not be considered unacceptable.

Traffic issues

The scheme is deemed suitable for a S106 agreement, given its accessibility to public transport, its proximity to amenities including shops and leisure activities and is also within a congested controlled parking zone, therefore meeting the policy objectives of TR16 of the adopted UDP and policy T8 of the replacement UDP.

Conclusion

Although the proposal would be considered acceptable in terms of the loss of the retail use at basement level the standard of accommodation provided would not comply with the Council's minimum floor area requirements in terms of the overall size of the flat and the level of daylight and sunlight that would be afforded to the flat. The proposal would therefore be recommended for refusal.