

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

SITE AT 6 BUCKLAND CRESCENT, LONDON NW3 5DA

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of the planning application by Jowell Properties Limited for the change of use of the property at 6 Buckland Crescent, London NW3 from use as a bed and breakfast hotel to use as two dwellings, for the demolition of the existing two storey rear extension, and for the associated construction of side, rear and roof level extensions.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The application site is located in a conservation area on the west side of Buckland Crescent, a short distance to the south of the junction with Belsize Park. The site is occupied by a three storey plus basement detached Victorian building which was last used as a bed and breakfast hotel.
- 2.2 The premises, which have been vacant since 2002, are in a generally poor state of repair, and have been the subject of series of unsympathetic alterations including the construction of a timber clad, two-storey rear extension, and the insertion of various non-original windows. In addition, window bars have been installed on a number of openings on the rear elevation.
- 2.3 The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, and features a relatively consistent pattern of detached and semi-detached residential properties of similar age, design and scale. A number of the properties have been extended to the side and rear, and many include loft

conversions with associated dormer windows. The rear and northern boundaries of the site adjoin the rear gardens of properties in Belsize Park. The front boundary of the application site is enclosed by a decorative wall incorporating balustrading, and a mature tree is located within the site's front garden adjacent to the boundary with 8 Buckland Crescent.

- 2.4 Buckland Crescent links Swiss Cottage in the south-west with Belsize Park in the north-east. Buckland Crescent and nearby side roads are subject to a controlled parking scheme providing bays for use by resident permit holders only.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Planning Permission was granted on 18th July 2006 under reference 2006/2386/P for the change of use of the subject property from use as a hotel (Use Class C1) to use as a dwelling house (Use Class C3). The approved scheme proposed no changes to the external appearance of the building.
- 3.2 A planning application (ref: 2006/2467/P) for the change of use of the premises from a hotel to two self-contained dwellings with associated side, rear and roof level extensions was withdrawn on 19th July 2006 to allow negotiations to take place relating to the form and height of the proposed side extension. Prior to withdrawal, sketch revisions to the scheme had been submitted which addressed and resolved earlier objections raised by officers with regard to the stepped form of rear extension, the design of the ground floor extensions, and the proposed front dormers.
- 3.3 Following the withdrawal of application 2006/2467, a pre-application meeting was held with Mr Charles Thuaire of Camden Planning Department at which the form and size of the proposed side extension were discussed. Mr Thuaire stated that the principle of a side extension at

basement and ground levels was acceptable given the range of styles and forms of side extensions to properties elsewhere in Buckland Crescent. It was further agreed that other elements of the emerging proposal were acceptable to officers, namely (i) the proposed rear extension at basement level, (ii) the proposed rear bay extensions at ground floor level, (iii) the proposed rear extension at first and second floor levels, and the associated alterations to the roof, and (iv) the proposed rear dormer windows.

4. THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The application scheme involves the change of use of the premises from a hotel to use as two, four bedroom dwelling houses. The conversion comprises the vertical division of the property into a pair of semi-detached houses, and the associated construction of side, rear and roof level extensions.
- 4.2 The proposed side extension, which will occupy the basement and ground floor levels, will be located on the building's southern elevation. At basement level, the extension will replace an existing single storey side projection which is located flush with the building's front elevation. The proposed ground floor extension, which will be recessed behind the front building-line by 2 metres, will accommodate the entrance hall to the left-hand dwelling, and will be served by a new set of external steps. The appearance of this new entrance will closely resemble that of the building's existing entrance which will be retained and which will serve the right-hand dwelling. The previous proposal for the incorporation of a half storey to the side extension at first floor level no longer forms part of the scheme.
- 4.3 To the rear, a partly glazed basement extension is proposed to run across the majority of the width of the building. The extension will be set in from the side of the building by 1450mm on the south side of the building and

by 1250mm on the north flank. The proposed extension, which will have angled corners and a maximum rear projection of 4200mm, is unchanged from that which formed part of the previous planning application. Above this, at ground floor level, each dwelling will incorporate a small bay window extension with a maximum depth of approximately 2.3 metres. These features were introduced at the suggestion of officers in replacement for conservatory-style extensions which were originally proposed at this level.

- 4.4 The left-hand dwelling will be extended at all levels in the south-western corner of the building. At basement and ground floor levels, the extension will replace the existing two storey timber clad extension. Above this at first and second floor levels, the extension will be of reduced bulk and will be set back from the line of the building's main rear elevation by 1.2 metres. The principle of extending the property in this form at first and second floor levels was agreed with officers during the latter stages of consideration of the previous planning application.
- 4.5 The roof of the building, which will be extended over the rear extension to the left hand dwelling, will be converted to provide a bedroom for each dwelling. Small rear dormer windows will serve each of the bedrooms. The overall height, pitch and form of the roof will remain unchanged, and the chimney stacks on each flank elevation will be retained. The principle of these changes at roof level has been agreed by officers.
- 4.6 The extensions will be faced in matching materials, and will be detailed in a manner which will be architecturally sympathetic to the original building.
- 4.7 The rear garden will be sub-divided to provide private amenity space of an appropriate size for each new dwelling. At the front of the site, the existing boundary wall will be retained, and the single entrance to the site will serve both dwellings.

5. DESIGN AND ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The acceptability in principle of converting the application property from hotel use to its original use as residential accommodation has been established through the recent planning consent (ref: 2006/2386/P). The reversion to residential use is considered to be beneficial to the character and appearance of the property and the wider conservation area.

Context

- 5.2 The proposed extensions will respect and be subordinate to the scale, form and character of the building by virtue of their location, bulk and detailed design. This part of Buckland Crescent is characterised by a series of detached and semi-detached Victorian villas which are relatively tightly spaced, and which in many cases have been extended to the side and rear. The application property, in common with 2 Buckland Crescent and 66 and 67 Belsize Park, includes a stepped rear elevation.

The proposed side extension

- 5.3 The proposed side extension at basement level will occupy a similar footprint to the existing side projection which extends up to the front face of the building. At ground floor level, the proposed side extension will be substantially recessed behind the building's front elevation. The proposed entrance feature will accurately replicate the design and appearance of the building's existing main front entrance. The extension will be set two floors below the established eaves level of the property, and its detailed design and appearance will strongly allude to the architectural form of the original building. Taken together, these elements will ensure the deference and subordination of the extension to the parent building. There are a number of examples of side extensions to properties in the vicinity where such development has filled the gap between the flank wall of a property and

the party boundary. Within the street-scene, the extension will appear as a subservient feature in terms of its height and its recessed location. The scale and design of the extension will comply with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (paras. 2.7.11 to 2.7.14 inclusive).

The proposed basement and ground floor rear extensions

- 5.4 At basement and ground floor levels, part of the proposed rear extension to the left hand dwelling will occupy the same area as the existing timber clad extension. The removal of this unsightly existing feature will substantially enhance the appearance of the property and this part of the conservation area.
- 5.5 That part of the proposed basement extension which will project beyond the rear building-line will be a balanced composition which will be set-in from the flank walls of the building. Its visually lightweight appearance, low level position and tapered corners will ensure that it will not harm the character or appearance of the property. Numerous other properties in the immediate locality have been extended in a similar manner. The extension will be largely set below the height of the existing boundary walls to either side of the site, and will in any event only marginally project beyond the rear building-line of 8 Buckland Crescent. As such, the extension will have no material impact on the level of light enjoyed by neighbouring occupiers.
- 5.6 The ground floor level bay window extensions will be of limited bulk in terms of both their width and depth. The detailed design of the bays alludes to that of the building's front bay windows, in particular through the vertical pattern of fenestration, and the visually strong cornice line. The extensions will appear as subordinate features on the building's rear elevation. Small areas of terrace will be provided outside each bay window, and these will be enclosed by appropriately designed metal balustrades which will restrict access to the area of flat roof between each

bay. The position of the bay extensions behind the rear elevation of 8 Buckland Crescent, allied to the absence of side facing habitable room windows in this adjoining property, will ensure that there will be no loss of light or privacy for neighbouring occupiers.

The proposed rear extension above ground floor level

- 5.7 Above ground floor level, the setting back of the extension by 1200mm behind the building's main rear elevation will allude strongly to the building's existing form by retaining the contrast between the recessed and projecting sections of the rear elevation. The limited increased volume of this part of the building will have a very limited impact upon its overall appearance, scale and proportions. This corner of the property is not widely viewed within the locality given the building's orientation on its plot and the deeper overlapping footprint of the adjoining property to the south.
- 5.8 The rear face of the extension will incorporate new window openings which will provide overall balance to the appearance of the rear elevation. The detailed form and design of these openings and the new windows will match those of existing original openings elsewhere on the rear elevation. Furthermore, the scheme offers the valuable opportunity to replace the non-original window at first floor level. Matching brickwork will be used on all elevations.
- 5.9 The existing roof is in a poor state of repair, and the proposal offers the opportunity to re-roof the property whilst providing new habitable accommodation at this level. The height, pitch and hipped form of the roof will not change. However, the roof will be extended over the proposed rear extension to the left-hand dwelling in a manner which will be entirely consistent with the form and character of the existing structure. The proposed rear dormer windows will be symmetrically located, and of modest and subordinate scale. They will be set away from the roof hip,

ridge and eaves lines, in accordance with the advice contained within the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance. Appropriate traditional materials will be used to cover the roof and the dormer windows.

- 5.10 The proposed rear extension above ground floor level will not harm the living conditions of occupiers within 8 Buckland Crescent. This neighbouring building projects beyond the rear elevation of the application property, and does not contain sensitive windows within its flank elevation.

Access considerations

- 5.11 The proposed alterations will comply with Part M of the Building Regulations. The stepped access to the property will be consistent with existing access arrangements, and each step will be no higher than 170mm. Level access into the site will be retained from the edge of the footway.
- 5.12 Buckland Crescent is a bus route, and the application site is located within a short and convenient walking distance of bus and London Underground services along Finchley Road and at Swiss Cottage.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The proposal will bring forward two new additional housing units in a sustainable urban location close to public transport. As such, it will accord with clear local, London-wide and national planning policy objectives. The proposed extensions to the property will relate successfully to the form, proportions and character of the building, and will preserve the property's contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. The scheme will also safeguard the legitimate amenity interests of adjoining occupiers.

6.2 As such, the proposal is considered to comply with adopted UDP Policies B3 and B5, and with relevant advice set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.

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August 2006