

Delegated Report (Member's Briefing)		Expiry Date:	21/03/2014	Officer:	David Peres Da Costa
Application Address	Application Number(s)	1st Signature		2nd Signature	
144 Gloucester Avenue London NW1 8JA	2013/6553/P				
Proposal(s)					
Change of use from office use (Class B1) at basement and ground floor levels to office (Class B1) at ground floor level and to residential (Class C3) at basement level to provide a 1-bed flat, including single storey rear extension at basement level, creation of front lightwell, and installation of front staircase and railings.					
Recommendation(s):	Grant planning permission subject to s106 legal agreement				
Application Type:	Full planning permission				
Consultations	Date advertised	21 days elapsed		Date posted	21 days elapsed
Press notice	30/1/14	20/2/14		Site notice	29/1/14
					19/2/14
	Date sent	21 days elapsed	# Notified	# Responses	# Objections
Adjoining Occupier letters	27/1/14	17/2/14	7	0	0
Consultation responses (including CAACs):	<p>Primrose Hill CAAC – object:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not object to the change of use itself. Object to the design of the proposed front area, which is harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The greater width of the lightwell would not align with the rest of the group of shops, harming the visually significant curve of the street. We are also very concerned that the details of the front railings and the plinth to the front railings should be appropriate for the area – very simple in form and modest in scale, unlike the clumsy, poorly detailed plinth and railings at 148. These should be submitted as details and controlled by condition. We note that the importance of the group of shopfronts was recognized in an appeal in 1989. <p>Following this further discussion was had with the CAAC and they expanded upon their point as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The applicant's drawing GA/11 states, of the front area, 'Railings and external stairs to basement as No. 148 Gloucester Avenue and as granted consent at No. 146 Gloucester Avenue.' The problem is that the implication is that the stairs will be the same width as 148, where the area is larger from front-to-back than is possible at 144, because of the curve of the street. So we were 				

concerned that the area would be larger than appropriate. It is important because of the curve of the street. I understand that this is not so, but have not seen any revised proposal.

- If you are confident that the opening will not be larger than the line of the street would require, and could add a condition or even an informative to state that the new work should be within the line of the rear of the public footway, then we would be happy to withdraw our objection.
- On the details of the railings, it is our very strongly held view that the details of the railings and plinth at 148 are seriously harmful to the conservation area: we doubt whether were built as consented, but that is now too late to remedy. They should not, however, be taken as the model for 144. Again I have not seen a revised drawing, but a simple, modest plinth, with railings as used almost everywhere else in Primrose Hill would be fine, and we would not object.

Officer's comment:

- A full assessment of the depth of the lightwell area is detailed in paragraph 2.8 below.
- It is demonstrated on the proposed plans that the front lightwell area would not be wider than that at the adjoining properties, as such officers are confident that the opening would not be larger than the link of the street, furthermore an informative will be placed on the decision reminding the applicant of this point. On this basis it is not considered necessary for the application to be heard at the Member's Briefing panel as the CAAC have noted they would withdraw their objection if officers were certain of this point.
- Details of the railings are to be secured by condition.

Site Description

The site is 4 storey (plus basement) terrace property on the east side of Gloucester Avenue (close to the junction with Regent's Park Road). The property falls within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area but is not listed.

Relevant History

2007/4216/P: Erection of a third floor roof extension including a balcony, to provide additional accommodation for the top maisonette. Granted 16/10/2007

8903465: Change of use to B1 office use including alterations to the shopfront. Refused 08/11/1989

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8802038: Change of use from shop workrooms and ancillary storage to dwelling house. Granted 19/05/1988

142-144 Gloucester Avenue

9100049: Retention of two existing self-contained maisonettes. Granted 09/04/1991

9003110: Change of use of ground and basement floors to B1 use within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and alterations to the ground floor frontage. Granted 10/09/1990

8802746: Change of use and works of conversion to form two self-contained flats and four maisonettes including alteration to the ground floor shop front and erection of a roof. Refused 08/11/1989

8903061: Change of use of ground floor shops and basement floors to offices within Class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 together with the installation of new frontages to ground floor elevations Appeal received against the Council's failure to issue the decision within the appropriate period. Refused 12/10/1989
19/05/1988

146 Gloucester Avenue

2011/3308/P: Creation of self contained flat at basement and part ground floor level and additions and alterations comprising the erection of a single storey rear basement extension, front basement lightwell with new staircase, access door and windows to front elevation and vaults, and a new shopfront associated with part ground floor office space (Class B1). Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement 02/04/2012

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS1 (Distribution of Growth)
CS5 (Managing the Impact of Growth and Development)
CS6 (Providing quality homes)
CS11 (Promoting sustainable and efficient travel)
CS13 (Tackling climate change through promoting higher environmental standards)
CS14 (Promoting High Quality Places and Conserving Our Heritage)
DP2 (Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing)
DP5 (Homes of different sizes)
DP6 (Lifetime homes)
DP13 (Employment premises and sites)
DP17 (Walking, cycling and public transport)
DP18 (Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking)
DP24 (Securing High Quality Design)
DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage)
DP26 (Managing the Impact of Development on Occupiers and Neighbours)

Camden Planning Guidance

Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement

London Plan 2011

NPPF 2012

Assessment

1. Proposal: Permission is sought for a change of use of the basement office floorspace to a 1 bedroom flat. This would involve the opening up of a lightwell at the front with metal railings and an rear infill extension with glazed roof and full width aluminium bi-folding doors. The extension would be 1.3m deep and 2.9m wide. It would have pitched roof with a maximum height of 2.8m and 2.3m high at the eaves. The front elevation would have 2 timber sash windows.

2. Assessment:

2.1 Loss of B1 office space

2.2 The conversion would involve the loss of 39.8 sqm of office floorspace. The basement of this period property does not provide modern office accommodation. There is only 1 window, so the basement lacks natural light. The applicant has indicated that extensive improvements requiring significant investment, including the opening up of the front lightwell, would be required to bring it up to modern standards. It is currently ancillary space to the ground floor office which would be retained.

2.3 The applicant has confirmed that there are no existing tenants.

2.4 The applicant has provided information which demonstrates there is a good supply of office accommodation in the local area. The Primrose Hill Business Centre (110 Gloucester Avenue) had units available on 16th May 2014 and Utopia Village on Chalcot Road (just to the west of Gloucester Avenue) also has units to rent. In addition, there are a variety of B1 units available locally including on Camden High Street and Chalk Farm Road. It is acknowledged, for the borough as a whole, projected office demand can be met through proposed provision at King's cross, Euston and Tottenham Court Road.

2.5 Given the above information, the loss of office floorspace is considered to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 7.4 of CPG5 (Town Centres, Retail and Employment). In addition, the B1 floorspace meets the criteria listed in paragraph 13.3 of policy DP13. Therefore, given that the floorspace is relatively small and that office floorspace at ground floor level would be retained, the loss of B1 floorspace is considered acceptable.

2.6 Design

2.7 Lightwell and railings:

2.8 The proposal would see the creation of a lightwell with staircase down to basement level and traditional style railings. It is noted that 148 Gloucester Avenue has a lightwell with railings and the adjoining property, 146 Gloucester Avenue was granted planning permission 02/04/2012 for lightwell and railings. Therefore, the proposed lightwell would not be out of keeping with the street or harmful to the conservation area. The depth of the lightwell (0.87m) would be identical to that approved at the adjoining property 146 Gloucester Avenue. As with the neighbouring property, the lightwell would occupy the space between the existing basement and the existing vaults under the pavement. The depth of the lightwell would not project beyond the line of the rear pavement and would not visually harm the appearance of the street. A condition would be included to ensure the detailed design of the railings and plinth would be appropriate.

2.9 The front elevation of the basement flat would have timber sash windows. The windows are appropriately positioned and would be in keeping with the host property.

2.10 Rear extension:

2.11 A single storey glazed infill extension is proposed within the side return created by the existing rear wing, it would measure (2.9m) and depth (1.3m). The extension would have bi-folding doors and the full height glazing would extend the full width of the property (including the existing projecting wing).

2.12 Given its subordinate size, the extension is considered sympathetic to the rear elevation of the host property. The extension would allow for a small rear garden to remain. It is also noted that a very similar alteration to the rear elevation including an extension was granted at the neighbouring property 146 Gloucester Avenue (ref: 2011/3308/P).

2.13 **Residential development standards**

2.14 The 1 bed flat would have a floorspace of 57.5m which exceeds the minimum floorspace for a flat occupied by 2 persons (48sqm) set out in the Council's residential development standards. The bedroom meets the minimum requirement for a 1st or double bedroom (11sqm). The basement flat would have a small rear patio garden (2.1m deep). A daylight / sunlight report has been provided which indicates that both the rear kitchen / living room and the front bedroom would exceed the average daylight factor provided in BRE guidance. It is accepted that sunlight will not significantly benefit the accommodation at the rear of the unit because the rear elevation faces north.

2.15 **Lifetime Homes**

2.16 Lifetime Homes standards are also expected to be met where possible, although it is accepted that conversions may not be able to meet all standards, and some may not be relevant. The proposed flat would not meet all 16 Lifetime Homes standards. Some standards, such as level entrance, would not be achieved due to site constraints. This is considered justified.

2.17 **Car free**

2.18 As the property is within a controlled parking zone and within easy reach of public transport, local development framework policy DP18 requires that the new basement dwelling be car free. A section 106 Legal Agreement will ensure that future occupiers will not be able to apply to resident parking permits.

2.19 **Cycle Parking**

2.20 Given that this is a basement flat it would not be possible to provide accessible cycle parking at ground floor level. Given the site constraints this is considered acceptable.

2.21 **Amenity**

2.22 Given its modest footprint and height within an existing side return, the proposed extension would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of adjoining neighbours.

Recommendation: Grant planning permission subject to s106 legal agreement