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Development Management
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Proposal to convert 65 Gascony Avenue, NW6 4ND

Statement of the situation with respect to lifetime homes standards

This is an existing building originally built over 100 years ago as a single dwelling. The Proposal is to convert by alterations and extensions to provide 3 residential units:- a ground floor flat, a first floor flat and a third unit on the 3rd and 4th floors utilising the attic space.

It is acknowledged that when alteration/refurbishment/conversion work is carried out that where possible, practical and viable improvements should be incorporated to meet improving standards. In this particular instance the 'Lifetime Homes standard'

However being an existing building there are physical, structural and viability limitations on what can reasonably and practically be achieved and this is a relatively minor project.

There is a small basement storage area under the entrance corridor. This space has limited natural ventilation from air vents under the front entrance steps. There is a step down into the very small front garden then steps up to the front entrance. The creation of a level entrance threshold is not possible given that it will cut off the ventilation and cause problems with surface water drainage of the remaining yard and compromise the damp-proof course.

There is an existing structural opening of 920 mm at the front of the building for the main and only building entrance. To alter this would disfigure the building and cause severe structural problems. Allowing for a door frame with stops reduces the effective width further to 810mm – there is no practical purpose in having any door way elsewhere in the building with a clear width greater than the main entrance.

It is acknowledged that with larger scale new works, with significant budgets, are more likely to achieve better overall results, or achieve the Standard, due to the greater potential to strip back the fabric, make substantial alterations, or even extend existing structure. However, even in major refurbishment projects, achieving the requirements of all 16 Criteria may be unrealistic and impractical due to the number of considerations and constraints imposed by the existing building(s) and its(their) surrounds. Constraints may include:

- Fixed floor heights against external levels
- The existing structure of the building
- The footprint of the existing building and its structural components
- The availability of external space
- Planning and conservation considerations
- Existing service runs and connections
- Scope of proposed works and available budget

This is a relatively minor project with limited ability to meet the standard

In terms of the lifetime of this building it has already demonstrated there is some flexibility so that it can be adapted to suit varying lifestyles and age groups. A ground floor flat may be more suitable for the elderly or those with

mobility limitations. The upper floor unit better suited to a family situation. The middle unit may suit single active people.

The standard now requires owners to incorporate so many design features that are impractical within the constraints of the existing layout and fabric. We could not meet the standard without drastic alterations that would disfigure the building.

All we are really doing here is a slight reconfiguration of space but within the same basic use group..

Building regulations also set reasonable standards for any internal reconfiguration of staircases and access, level thresholds etc. that we have to adhere to.

Below is the schedule of the 16 parts to the standard and we have indicated what can be done, what cant be done and why. We trust this is a full and complete report sufficient for the purposes of the Planning application.

1	Parking	<p>There is no on site parking. Impossible to achieve. Street parking is under Local authority control with limited local residents parking by permit only. Therefore no scope to improve the existing situation. The Authority recognises this and has requested an undertaking to make this development car free. As the property currently stands there is no restriction apart from availability of parking spaces locally. We appreciate that dividing the property would result in an intensification and over stretching limited local resources for parking etc. However would request that the status quo be maintained and that an undertaking only be needed for the additional units. Ohterwise the owners would be giving away rights they have acquired over time.</p>
2	Approach to dwelling from parking	<p>See answer above. Floor levels and pavement/road levels fixed. Limited space from pavement to front door step.</p>
3	Approach to all entrances	<p>See answers above Within the building floor levels are fixed.</p>
4	Entrances	<p>a) Be illuminated - [the entrance is illuminated] b) Have level access over the threshold; and –[Floor levels and pavement/road levels fixed. Limited space from pavement to front door step. Adjustment of levels would course problems with existing damp- proof course levels] c) Have effective clear opening widths and nibs as specified below. – [the opening is as wide as it can be but limited by the existing structure] In addition, main entrances should also: d) Have adequate weather protection –[it does have some protection being recessed into the building] e) Have a level external landing.- [it does have a level external landing/front step]</p>
5	Stairs and Lifts	<p>As the building is being converted into flats and there are intermediate floor levels requiring half flights in a ‘dog- leg’ configuration which already takes up a significant width of the existing building it would be impossible to incorporate a lift. Given the physical/structural constraints of the existing building and location of the existing stairway there is only limited scope for improvement. The width is fixed. Some alterations are necessary to some flights and these will have to comply with Building regulation requirements. Also proper means of escape must be provided and maintained.</p>
6	Internal doorways and hallways	<p>Limitations of the existing building please refer to the notes above. As it will not be possible to make provision for wheelchair users there seems little point in provide spatial improvements to facilitate wheelchair access with each flat .However being an old building most of the original doorways are quite wide and would aid those with some mobility limitations.</p>

7	Circulation Space	Again see answers to the previous questions.
8	Entrance level living space	Please see the answers already given above. 2 rooms are accessible on the same level on the ground floor but there is a step at the entrance. The existing floors levels are fixed and staggered.
9	Potential for entrance level bed space.	A bed space is provided on the ground floor but there is a step at the main front entrance. Within each flat it is possible to have a bedroom on the entrance level-but you have to climb stairs to get to them.
10	Entrance level W.C. and shower drainage	Within each flat we can meet the spatial standards required however it is not possible to provide this at the entrance levels to each unit.[because of all the reasons already given]
11	W.C and bathroom walls	Being an old building and very substantially built it will not be a problem to get satisfactory fixing for grab rails etc. New construction will be equally robust.
12	Stairs and potential through floor lift in dwelling	The ground and first floor flats are effectively each at a single level but with parts at an intermediate level [not a full storey height difference. The upper unit does occupy 2 distinct floor levels however given that these are at an upper level and the Existing physical and structural constraints it would not be practical to include for the provision for these facilities.
13	Potential for fitting of hoists to bedrooms and bathrooms	Being an old building and very substantially built it should be possible to support additional loads however each floor will have to be upgraded to satisfy requirements for acoustic insulation and fire separation. These will also take up any spare load-bearing capacity. Also there are a few remaining interesting lathe and plaster ceilings with original moulded coving and ceiling features which would be a shame to loose.
14	Bathrooms	New bathrooms to meet the required spatial standards.
15	Glazing and window handle heights	This is an existing old building with very limited scope for change in this respect. The existing windows sill and head heights have been established so alterations could be very harmful to the external character of the building. Any alterations should carefully match the existing levels and proportions.
16	Location of service controls	This is an existing old building with very limited scope for change in this respect. Services have already been provided. However where practical if any services have to be relocated then the guidance set out in this section- of course this would also be subject to the rules and regulations of the service provider.

Yours sincerely

Christopher G. M. Davy