



PLANNING STATEMENT

In respect of

**134 ½ ABBEY ROAD
LONDON
NW6 4SR**

On behalf of

MR SOMANI

APRIL 2014

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**Approved by:
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of Mr Somani in support of a householder planning application for 134½ Abbey Road, London, NW6 4SR 'the Site'. The proposed development consists of the formation of a basement for use as a private workshop and the installation of a car lift within the existing parking area to access the basement.
- 1.2 It is considered that the proposed development will not lead to any harm to the highway safety or impact on the Conservation Area and will enable the owner to undertake their hobby of restoring classic cars, without an impact to neighbour amenity.
- 1.3 This planning statement will describe the site and surrounding area, planning history, and scheme, and then finally assess the scheme against relevant planning policy. A number of drawings showing the existing and proposed details of the scheme and supporting statements, including a Basement Impact Assessment and Structural Engineers Design Statement, are also submitted in support of the proposal.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 This section describes the site and the immediate surrounding area.
- 2.2 The Site is located on the northern side of Abbey Road, in a predominantly residential area. The neighbouring properties are a three-storey Victorian town house and the garden of a three-storey detached Victorian house located on the corner of Abbey Road and Priory Road Mews of the site to the north. The prevailing building heights range from one to four storeys.
- 2.3 The Site itself is a part two part single storey house which sits to the rear (north) of the site. The property has an area to the front which is walled with a gate. This area consists of hard landscaping used for off road car parking which is accessed from Abbey Road. A 'coach house' is also located within the frontage area and used as ancillary residential accommodation.

Site Designations and Allocations

- 2.4 The site sits within the Swiss Cottage Conservation Area but is not statutorily or locally Listed. The site is not covered by any other designations.

Transport

- 2.5 The Site has excellent transport links as indicated by its PTAL rating of 6a (excellent). It is well served by London Overground stations at Kilburn High Road (approx. 430m to the south), West Hampstead (approx. 700m to the north), South Hampstead (approx. 800m to the east) and Brondesbury (approx. 950m to the west). It is also served by West Hampstead tube station (approx. 600m to the north), Kilburn Park tube station (approx. 750m to the south) and Finchley Road tube station (approx. 950m to the east).
- 2.6 There are excellent bus connections along Abbey Road and Priory Road including the 328, 31, 139 and 189 which provide access into central London and the wider north London area.

- 2.7 The Site is located in the CA-K (Kilburn Priory) Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). This means that parking is limited to permit holders and is restricted from Monday – Friday, 0830 – 1830. The site however, has space for six off road car parking spaces.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The following section outlines the relevant planning history relating to the Site which is available via the Council's online database.

3.2 The planning history search highlights two relevant planning applications. The two planning permissions are as follows:

- **20 May 2008:** Planning permission was granted for the retention of a single-storey extension with a reduction in its height and the addition of new lantern light, retention of porch and terrace areas as built, all at front ground floor level (Abbey Road elevation) in connection with the existing single-family dwelling house (Class C3) (ref. 2008/0505/P).
- **20 May 2008:** Planning permission was granted for the retention of alterations to roof of rear projecting wing including removal of lantern light, remodelling of roof, the installation of two dormer windows in east roof slope and new roof lights in the west and east roof slopes, and alterations to boundary treatment to Wavel Mews including blocking up vehicular and pedestrian entrance gates all in connection with existing single-family dwelling house (ref. 2008/0506/P).

3.3 The above planning history for the Site contains no conditions which would impact on the proposal for the Site.

Local Precedence

3.4 The following section outlines precedents which are considered relevant to this application.

3.5 Planning permission was granted on 23 March 2006 at 62 Frognal, NW3 for the "remodelling of a dwelling house, including erection of 2 storey plus installation of front garden car deck access to basement and of rear garden roof lights to basement room" (ref. 2006/0918/P). The officer's report states that the

basement would have no impact because there are no light wells. The officers report further states that noise impact relating the car lift is conditioned as part of the approval. Parking is not considered an issue.

- 3.6 Planning permission was granted on 4 June 2010 at 3 Holford Road for "excavation to create a rear basement floor level with associated roof lights within rear garden, and installation of car lift within front garden for single family dwelling house" (ref. 2009/4699/P). The site was also located within a Conservation Area, however it was noted in the officers report that the car-lift feature would not be visible from the street elevation while not in use, the front boundary wall of the property would mitigate the visual impact of the lift when in operation. Therefore not affecting the setting of the Conservation Area.
- 3.7 The above demonstrates that the proposed form of development has previously been considered acceptable by the Council and that there is some precedent to support this application.

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposed development is for the formation of a basement for use as a private workshop which the owner would use to restore his classic cars, in order to access the basement, the proposal includes the installation of a car lift within the front parking area.
- 4.2 The applicants (site owner/occupier) hobby for restoring cars is impeded by having to carry out the work in the open due to weather and therefore the proposal will allow for the restoration to continue throughout the year and the cars to be protected.
- 4.3 The basement will only be able to accommodate a single car, with additional space for storage and movement in and out of, and around the vehicle. External steps down to a door accessing the basement with safety railings are also proposed. The car lift proposed will be set well into the site in front of the existing front elevation of the property. When lowered the lift will sit flush with the ground level and will not be visible, with all the mechanics underneath.
- 4.4 Due to the nature of the use of the basement for a workshop to restore classic cars the lift will not be utilised on a regular basis. The car parking area will reduce in number by one space due to the installation of the basement access steps.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.1 The proposal for a new basement and installation of car lift should take account of relevant national, regional and local planning policy.

5.2 In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant development plan for the Site is:

- *London Borough of Camden Core Strategy (adopted December 2010)*
- *London Borough of Camden Development Policies (adopted November 2010).*
- *London Plan (adopted July 2011).*

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING ISSUES

6.1 The following section assesses the planning issues relating to the proposed development.

Proposed Use

6.2 The proposed basement is purely to provide a workshop space for Mr Somani to carry out his hobby of restoring classic cars. The proposal is not a business in any form. Mr Somani has been restoring cars on and off since he was at university in 1978 and now retired wishes to continue his hobby more regularly.

6.3 The cold and rain of the UK weather currently prevents Mr Somani carrying out his hobby all year round. Therefore in consideration of the protection of the cars themselves during the restoration work and also in consideration of protecting the amenity of the neighbours, who he does not want to disturb during the restoration work, plus the constraints of the site which restricts an above ground workshop being built, a basement workshop is considered the best option from all aspects.

6.4 Mr Somani works on the cars when he is able which is approximately 10 to 15 hours a week. Each car can take between 1½ to 2 years to fully restore due to the time the client spends on them plus other factors, such as waiting for spare parts.

6.5 The restoration is just part of Mr Somani's hobby, he then subsequently retains the cars as part of his collection and takes them to car shows and events, as well as just driving them for leisure.

6.6 These cars are in storage off site and the way the workshop would operate would be for the car being worked on to be brought into the workshop where it would remain for the restoration period of up to 2 years. The workshop would not be utilised for an additional regular car parking space for a regular car and there would also not be the regular vehicular movements associated with that use.

- 6.7 In consideration of the proposed use of the basement, it is designed as a workshop, of a size, to accommodate a single car only plus storage space for tools, parts etc and space for moving around the vehicle to work. The car lift itself is purely to provide vehicular access to the workshop and is not suitable or appropriate to be used for a parking space, together with the fact that there is no need or desire to use it as such.
- 6.8 The proposed use is an ancillary residential use which could in itself be carried out at the site without planning permission. The reason behind the description of the use of the workshop is to clarify that it is not a regular or additional parking space.

Basement

- 6.1 The proposed development would involve the formation of a basement within the footprint of the existing building. Development Policy, DP27 (basements and lightwells) states that the Council will require a Basement Impact Assessment, which is provided as part of this application and in accordance with the Council's basement guidance.
- 6.2 Policy DP27 also states that it will not permit development which would harm the built and natural environment, cause flooding or ground instability or which would harm local amenity. The Basement Impact Assessment and Structural Engineers Design Statement conclude that the proposal will not harm the built and natural environment or have an additional flooding issues. The ground movement identified would be negligible to zero and any impact can be mitigated through the engineers design.
- 6.3 DP27 outlines that the Council will consider whether applications for subterranean development will cause harm to the amenity of neighbours. It is considered, that this proposed basement will assist the amenity of neighbours as it would remove the potentially unsightly and noisy, but lawful, restoration of cars taking place on the driveway in the open.

- 6.4 Policy DP27 states that it will consider whether the formation of a basement will lead to the loss of open space. There is no proposed lightwell as part of the proposed basement and the stairwell is of small scale which will not detrimentally impact on the existing open space/private car parking area.
- 6.5 Also in line with Policy DP27, there are no trees lost as part of this proposal. The visual impact and appearance of the proposal would be minimal with only the stair railings visible above ground level permanently and the car lift on the rare occasion it is raised to access the basement. This would not be visible from outside the site due to the existing wall, gates and trees.
- 6.6 The development will not result in the loss of more than 50% of the front garden or amenity area, as required by Policy DP27 and will have no impact on the Conservation Area, in line with Policy DP25.

Transport

- 6.7 Based on the Council's pre-application advice, it would appear that they would consider the proposed development to result in an increase of car parking spaces from the present level of 3 – 4 to between 5 – 6 on completion. In accordance with the Site's location and its Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6a (excellent), this level of parking would be contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS11 and Development Policy DP18 which seek to minimise provision of private parking in new developments.
- 6.8 However, there is in fact a loss of a car parking space due to the proposals and the installation of the basement access steps. The basement itself will be used to store a vehicle whilst it is being restored rather than provide access to a regular parking space.
- 6.9 With regard to the existing car parking on the site, 4 cars can easily be parked within the area in front of the house and within the sites boundaries. In fact an additional 2 cars can be accommodated in the space to the front of the house between the trees and trellis, and the coach house providing a total of 6 spaces in total. This part of the area is not normally utilised for car parking due to the

location of the trees and trellis, which makes it a little awkward to manoeuvre into the spaces, but it is achievable. The submitted photos show the parking area and cars parked within it.

- 6.10 It should also be noted that there are no planning conditions or other controls in place that would prevent the trees and trellis from being removed from the site, which would therefore open up the space to allow easier access for 6 cars to park without the need for planning permission. This is not Mr Somani's intention or desire, but if the requirement was purely about car parking then this is how additional spaces could be achieved and is a much simpler and cheaper option to that of the proposed basement.
- 6.11 Development Policy DP19 – (Managing the impact of parking) states that the Council will resist development which would harm highway safety; hinder pedestrian movement; provide inadequate sightlines for vehicles leaving the Site; add to on-street parking demand or other parking conditions; have a detrimental impact on the Controlled Parking Zone; create a shortfall of public parking; or have a harmful visual impact.
- 6.12 No changes are proposed to the access to the site. In consideration of the private / hobby nature of the use of the garage and the existing parking layout, the proposal would comply with Policy DP19 as it would be no different to the current situation in terms of highway safety, pedestrian movement, vehicle sightlines, on-street parking demand, the Controlled Parking Zone, public parking requirements or visual impact.
- 6.13 Development Policy DP19 outlines the requirement for any off-street parking to preserve a building's setting and the character of the surrounding area; and means of enclosure, trees or other features of a forecourt or garden that make a significant contribution to the visual appearance of the area; and provide adequate soft landscaping, permeable surfaces, boundary treatment and other treatments to offset adverse visual impacts and increases in surface run-off.
- 6.14 The proposed development would have no impact on any of the above. The building's setting is not affected due to the fact that the development would be

largely subterranean and the existing front wall and gate shield any view to the Site from the street.

- 6.15 The Council's pre-application comments referred to policy CS1 and DP18 however it is considered that these policies are more applicable to new development and car free or car capped development. It is not considerate appropriate to relate this policy to an existing, established residential dwelling which already accommodates up to 6 car parking spaces.

Heritage

- 6.16 The site is located within the Swiss Cottage Conservation Area and directly adjacent to the Priory Road Conservation Area. Development Policy DP25 – (Conserving Camden's heritage) states that the Council will only permit development that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.17 This policy also specifically protects trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a Conservation Area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.
- 6.18 As referred to previously the proposal is subterranean with metal stair railings and the lift when it is raised visible. This will only be from inside the site and will not impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. No trees are affected and the front area of the site already consists of hardstanding so there is no reduction of landscaping or green areas.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 To conclude, it considered that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development consisting of the formation of a basement for use as a private workshop to restore classic cars including the installation of a car lift at ground level to access the basement.
- 7.2 The use itself is ancillary residential and does not require planning permission. The proposed basement is for workshop use by Mr Somani for his car restoration hobby, and not for regular car parking. Therefore the proposal would not conflict with the purpose of the Council's policies to encourage sustainable and efficient travel.
- 7.3 The site is an existing dwelling and the proposal does not increase car parking provision on a site where up to 6 spaces already exist. The proposal will not harm highway safety or the surrounding CPZ.
- 7.4 The submitted BIA shows that there will be no harm caused by the basement excavation. The proposed development will preserve the Swiss Cottage Conservation Area and will respect, and potentially improve, neighbour amenity.

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