

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

SITE AT 2 BISHAM GARDENS, LONDON N6 6DD

PLANNING APPLICATION BY MS ANN SADLER-FORSTER

PLANNING STATEMENT

July 2014

CHRISTOPHER WICKHAM ASSOCIATES
Town Planning Consultancy

35 Highgate High Street, London N6 5JT tel: 020-8340 7950 fax: 020-8340 7870

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies the planning application submitted by Ms Ann Sadler-Forster for the '*conversion of dwelling house to two self-contained flats*' at 2 Bisham Gardens, London N6 6DD. The proposal does not include any changes to the external appearance of the property.
- 1.2 This Statement should be read in conjunction with existing drawing/proposed numbers (Ex/P.A) A-10-00, A-10-01, A-10-02, A-10-03, A-10-04, A-15-01, A-20-01, A-20-02 and A-20-03.

2. THE APPLICATION SITE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site is located on the south side of Bisham Gardens, and is occupied by a three storey plus basement, end-of-terrace house which dates from the late Victorian period. The property steps forward from the established building line on the south side of Bisham Gardens, and its front elevation is located on the back edge of the footway. A side access is provided to the east of the property; this leads to a small garden to the rear of the property. There is also direct access to the garden from the basement level via external stairs at the side of the house.
- 2.2 The property, which has a single-bay, gabled front elevation finished in painted brickwork, incorporates a ground floor side entrance as well as a front door set within a largely glazed ground floor front elevation. The ground floor front elevation retains the character of a post-war shop front, reflecting the previous uses of the property (see further below).
- 2.3 Bisham Gardens is a residential street leading south-westwards from Highgate High Street. The road forms part of a controlled parking zone, and the site is served by various bus routes on Highgate High Street.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Planning permission was granted on 15th June 1989 under reference 8903080 for alterations to the shopfront. On the same date, planning consent was granted

under references 8903084 and 8903085 (duplicate applications) for the change of use of the ground floor from a photographic studio to a use within Class A2.

- 3.2 Planning permission was granted on 15th April 2002 under reference PEX0200072 for the change of use of the basement, ground floor and first floor from shop/professional services (Class A2) to dental surgery (Class D1).
- 3.3 Planning permission was granted on 19th March 2012 under reference 2012/0253/P for the change of use from dental surgery (Class D1) on basement, ground and first floor, and a flat on the second floor to use as a single-family dwelling house (Class C3) and for associated alterations to ground floor front elevation including installation of a new door and window. This consent has been implemented in that the property is in use as a single dwelling. However, the approved works to the ground floor front elevation have not been implemented.

4. THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The application is for the conversion of the property to two self-contained dwellings, in the form of a one bedroom unit at basement and ground floors, and a two bedroom unit at first and second floors. Access to the lower unit would be via the existing main front entrance on Bisham Gardens, and access to the upper unit would be via the existing side entrance. The lower unit would have access to the rear garden via the existing external stairs leading from the basement, and the upper unit would have exclusive use of the existing first floor rear balcony. No changes are proposed to the external appearance of the property.
- 4.2 The applicant, who currently lives at the application property, will occupy the lower unit following implementation of the scheme.

5. PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.1 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which is defined to comprise economic,

social and environmental dimensions. The planning system should, inter alia, support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations. Local planning authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends in order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, to widen opportunities for home ownership, and to create mixed and inclusive communities.

The statutory development plan

- 5.2 The statutory development plan comprises the London Plan of July 2011, the Camden Core Strategy which was adopted in November 2010, and the Camden Development Policies DPD which was also adopted in November 2010. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications and appeals to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The London Plan

- 5.3 The London Plan (2011) places a high priority on the provision of additional housing. Paragraph 3.13 states that “*the Mayor is clear that London desperately needs more homes in order to promote opportunity and real choice for all Londoners.....*”. This objective is reflected in Policy 3.3 which states that boroughs should seek to achieve and exceed the relevant minimum borough annual average housing target as set out in Table 3.1. For Camden borough, Table 3.1 identifies a minimum ten year housing target for the period 2011 to 2021 of 6,650 new homes equating to an annual level of 665 units. Policy 3.4 states that, taking account of local context and character, the plan’s design principles, and public transport capacity, development should optimise housing capacity.
- 5.4 The London Plan and the Mayor’s associated Housing SPG (November 2012) lays down a series of detailed requirements for residential unit sizes and layout.

The Core Strategy

5.5 The following policies of the adopted Core Strategy, as summarised, are considered to be relevant to the issues raised by this planning application:-

- Policy CS1 seeks to direct growth in Camden to the most suitable locations. Development should make full use of its site whilst respecting context and taking into account the quality of design;
- Policy CS5 states that the Council will manage the impact of growth and development in Camden;
- Policy CS6 states that the Council will aim to make full use of Camden's capacity for housing which will be regarded as the priority land-use;
- Policy CS13 seeks tackle climate change by promoting higher environmental standards. It promotes the efficient use of land, and patterns of development that minimise the need to travel.

Camden Development Policies DPD

5.6 The following policies of the Camden Development Policies DPD, as summarised, are considered to be relevant to the issues raised by this planning application:-

- Policy DP2 seeks to make full use of Camden's housing capacity;
- Policy DP5 seeks the creation of mixed and inclusive communities by seeking a range of self-contained homes of different sizes. Generally, schemes should include mix of dwelling sizes but there is a high priority need for the provision of 2 bedroom dwellings; and
- Policy DP26 states that the Council will protect the quality of life for occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity.

Camden Planning Guidance

- 5.7 Camden Planning Guidance (Housing) (CPG2) was adopted in September 2013. It lays down a series of standards relating, inter alia, to internal space and layout, outlook/light/sunlight, privacy, amenity space, and Lifetime Homes Standards for new residential development. In the case of the conversion of existing buildings, the guidance acknowledges that full compliance with Lifetime Homes Standards may not be possible.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The main planning issues raised by this application relate to (i) the principle of conversion, and (ii) the quality of the conversion. Given that no extension or other external changes are proposed, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to any adverse impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.

The Principle of Conversion

- 6.2 The application property has an extensive planning history. Having almost certainly been constructed as a dwelling, it was subsequently used for many years as a commercial photographic studio, and still retains the vestiges of its commercial shop front. Prior to the recent conversion to a single dwelling, the top floor of the property was in use as a self-contained flat above the three lower floors which were used as a dental surgery. The property has a very small rear garden, and does not include a conventional arrangement whereby access to the garden is available directly from the rear of the building. The property is therefore not ideally suited to use as a single family dwelling.
- 6.3 The proposed conversion would provide an additional residential unit in a location that is relatively well served by public transport, and would provide a mix of unit sizes, as sought by policy. The proposal would provide two smaller residential units (including a much needed two bedroom unit) in an area that is generally characterised by large, single dwellings. Over recent years, the demand for large homes in areas such as Highgate has eroded the stock of smaller units, and has reduced the overall supply of dwellings. The application proposal would not only

increase housing supply overall but would also contribute to the objective of creating a mixed and inclusive community by increasing the choice of unit types on the local market. These aims are strongly promoted by the NPPF as well as by Core Strategy Policy CS6 and Development Policy DP5.

- 6.4 For the above reasons, the principle of converting the application property to two flats is considered to be wholly supportable in planning policy terms.

The Quality of Conversion

- 6.5 The existing property is sufficiently large to readily accommodate the two proposed flats without internal re-planning or external extension. Each flat would occupy two floors of the building, and would provide sufficient habitable space with satisfactory levels of light, outlook and privacy. The size of each proposed flat and of each habitable room, as shown on the proposed floor plans, would comfortably exceed both the London Plan and Camden Planning Guidance minimum space standards for units of this type.
- 6.6 The lower unit would include a main, open plan living space at ground floor level; this space would have dual aspect. The bedroom for the lower unit would be located at the rear of the property at basement level, with outlook over the rear garden. Kitchen and storage areas would be provided at the front of the basement. The upper unit would retain the existing kitchen and living areas at top floor level, and would provide bedrooms and other habitable space at first floor level. The first floor currently includes a front room served by a narrow window and a cranked internal partition. It is proposed that this room would be used as a study.
- 6.7 The proposed layout and uses of rooms would broadly follow the existing layout associated with the use of the property as a single dwelling. In implementing the proposed conversion, the applicant seeks to minimise intervention in the fabric of the property.
- 6.8 The lower unit would have exclusive access to the small rear garden. The upper unit would make use of the existing private terrace at the rear of the first floor.

- 6.9 For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed conversion will be of a satisfactory standard, and will meet the requirements of policy and associated guidance.

Parking & Access

- 6.10 There is no space within the application site for the provision of off-street car parking. However, the level of car parking demand associated with the use of the property as two flats is unlikely to be substantially different from that associated with its current use as a large, single dwelling. The proposal does not result in any increase in residential floor space. It is therefore unlikely that there would be any material impact on local parking and highway conditions as a result of the conversion scheme. In any event, overnight on-street parking capacity within the immediate area is not fully occupied.
- 6.11 With regard to compliance with Lifetime Homes (LH) standards, it is noted that Camden Planning Guidance states that these will be applied flexibly in the case of the conversion of existing buildings. The following should be noted in respect of LH criteria (1-16):-
1. *Parking provision* – not applicable
 2. *Approach to dwelling from parking* – not applicable
 3. *Approach to entrances* - level access will be provided from the footway to the entrances to each flat
 4. *Entrances* – the entrances could be illuminated but opening widths are subject to heritage constraints
 5. *Communal stairs and lifts* – not applicable
 6. *Internal doorways and hallways* – compliance will be achieved where possible
 7. *Circulation space* – the ground floor living area provides space for turning a wheelchair
 8. *Entrance level living space* – a living space serving the lower unit is provided at entrance level
 9. *Potential for entrance level bed-space* – the ground floor living space serving the lower unit could be used as temporary bed-space

10. *Entrance level toilet and shower drainage* – the existing building does not provide this facility
11. *Toilet and bathroom walls* – walls could provide firm fixing and support for adaptations such as grab rails
12. *Stairs and potential through-floor lift in dwelling* – it would not be realistic to provide a through-floor lift, and the existing stairway is probably too narrow to provide a stair lift
13. *Potential for hoists and bedroom/bathroom relationship* – the existing structure may not be suitable to accommodate a hoist, and bathrooms are located at half-landing level
14. *Bathrooms* – The existing bathrooms are too small to meet accessible bathroom standards
15. *Glazing and window handle heights* – there will be a clear view out of the principal living spaces for people to see out when seated. Accessible window openings will be provided where possible, and subject to heritage constraints
16. *Location of service controls* – new installations will be located at an accessible height.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The principle of conversion is considered to be supportable in policy terms. The scheme would provide a mix of unit sizes, and would increase the quantum and choice of housing. The proposed conversion would meet all relevant standards with regard to space, layout, outlook, light and amenity space.
- 7.2 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the development plan.

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