

No 58 Mill Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 1 NJ
Design, Access and Planning Statement.



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1) Background

The present owners are Mr. N Gilbert & Mr. D Gilbert. The purpose of the report is to illustrate the design approach for the redevelopment and change of use of the ground floor and basement levels from retail (Class A1) to provide x2 residential (Class C3) units (1 x 1, 1 x 3 bed), involving single storey rear extension at ground floor level, creation of front lightwell, and installation of rear rooflight at ground floor level.

2) Design Data

Total existing site area: 115 square metres Existing ground floor shop area: 39 square metres Proposed ground floor office area: 52 square metres Existing basement workshop area: 55 square metres Proposed basement office area: 58 square metres Existing lower ground floor workshop area: 50 square metres Proposed lower ground floor office area: 52 square metres Proposed lower ground floor external area: 11 square metres Total existing internal area: 144 square metres Total proposed internal area: 162 square metres Total proposed external area: 11 square metres Total net internal area gain: 18 square metres

3) Existing Premises

The property is a Victorian mid terrace situated on a shopping parade in Mill Lane. It is comprised of a ground floor shop unit and two residential upper floors. The basement below the shop was converted from the original cellar approximately 30 years ago. The basement conversion adjoins a single storey rear extension at lower ground floor level to form a workshop. The ground floor All shop unit has been vacant since 2004. The former tenant was a florist. The basement and lower ground floor 131 unit has been vacant since 2000. The former tenant was a furniture restoration company. The ground floor shop unit has a single access from the Mill Lane shopfront. The basement and lower ground floor workshop below is accessed via a staircase from the shared entrance with the flats above from Mill Lane. There is an emergency escape door from the workshop leading to Mill Lane via the external yard of No.60-62 Mill Lane. This escape route has existed for approximately 30 years.

4) Demolition and Alteration

As part of the works necessary to comply and therefore previous planning permission consent, the utilises to the ground and basement were disconnected, the stair case from the basement to the ground floor was part disassembled, the roof covering the basement courtyard was demolished and parts of the basement floor were dug up and removed.

Further a hoarding was placed which was ignored to stop further deterioration and therefore hazard parts of the weak concrete at the street frontage where the coal hole and front street light are fell into the basement.

This deterioration had been caused by neighbours driving their vehicles over the curb to park outside their property.

Local commercial estate agent has had this property on there books for quite a long time, however the foot fall and commercial demand for small properties this end of mill lane is poor at best.

Thus there had been no request for showings let alone offers, in fact the ground floor shop has proved very difficult to let and has been vacant for over 10 years.

The 2008 planning permission was an attempt to rectify this though a change of use however we could not get a office tenant to take the space in this location.

To give you an idea of usable space the 2008 planning permission which combined the basement and lower ground floor, could only provided the available workspace accommodate approximately 8 persons.

The scope of the works to the shop and basement are enough to mean this would fall within the original change of use as per the 2008 planning permission thus we have covered the same again with the applied for full planning for the whole scheme, whereas we could have appied for permitted development for the basement and ground floor conversion and planning to the ground floor extension, and loft conversion.

The floor level to the basement area is to be lowered by 1 metre to provide increased ceiling height. This includes the undercroft formerly used as a coal hole. The surrounding brick party walls are to be underpinned accordingly. The floor slab level to the rear workshop is to be lowered by 200mm. The existing access staircase from the shared entrance to the basement is to be demolished and a new partition is to be formed to separate the residential from the commercial access.

5) Proposed Development

A new staircase will reconnect the existing ground floor shop unit with the basement and lower ground floor workshop below to provide a two storey 131 unit. The unit is designed to provide adequate floor space for an organisation of around 8 staff. The ground floor will accommodate a toilet, a cloakroom and a

teapoint with the remainder of the interior to be used as a reception / office space. The basement will accommodate a kitchen, toilet, and external courtyard with the remainder of the interior to be used as office space. The property is to be extended to the south at ground floor level rear so as to align with the rear external wall of No.56 Mill Lane, and to the east so as to align with the existing workshop external wall below (area hatched on plan 553-1-01). A new basement floor slab is to be cast at 1 metre below the existing level. A new lower ground floor slab is to be cast at 200mm below the existing level. The split level spaces will be linked by a low rise stair case. An external courtyard is to be provided in the centre of the lower ground floor workshop. This will provide daylight and natural ventilation to the surrounding workspaces and reduce the requirement for window space facing the adjacent properties. A balcony is proposed above the courtyard accessed from the rear of the ground floor shop level. Small scale clearstorey type windows are proposed at high level on the East and West facades to provide daylight and cross ventilation with consideration of privacy for the occupants of adjoining properties. The emergency escape route is to be relocated approximately 2 metres south of the existing. The tenant of No.60-62 Mill Lane, West Hampstead Community Centre, have been consulted on the proposed development and the Applicant has instructed a solicitor to provide an easement relating to the existing emergency escape route. The setting out and aesthetic of the East elevation has been developed in response to a meeting with the Community Centre management, thus the provision of a "framed space" to provide a canvas for an urban mural.

6) Transport

The premises is situated within walking distance of the underground and overground train stations of West Hampstead and also has local bus connections to additional underground lines. There are no existing or proposed parking spaces for 58 Mill Lane. There are pay and display car parking spaces along the parade.

7) Access

The existing ground floor shop unit is split level with the rear section of the shop unit set 600mm above the front shop space. A new suspended timber joist floor will be reinstated at existing ground floor levels. The level change will be carried through at basement level. This level arrangement has been designed within the constraints of level access from Mill Lane and the fixed threshold level of the lower ground emergency escape route. The proposed stair access and sanitary provision are designed in compliance with Approved Document Part M to provide access for the ambulant disabled. The existing level changes make it impractical to provide wheelchair access throughout. There is level access from Mill Lane allowing visiting wheelchair users access to the reception area. The small steps to the rear of the ground floor could be adapted to accommodate a platform lift. The proposed w.c. to the rear of the shop could be extended to provide full wheelchair access. A future employer tenant could therefore provide a working environment for a wheelchair user but modifications would also be required to the public highway in order to provide reasonable access for wheelchairs from Mill Lane.

8) Construction Methods

Proposed structural works include excavation at basement and lower ground floor levels and underpinning of existing structure that will require removal of approximately 100 cubic metres of underlying soil. The proposed method for removal of the excavation and demolition waste is conveyor belt extraction through the existing coal hole. The belt will feed a lorry parked on a suspended parking bay on Mill Lane. Pedestrian access along the parade will be maintained using a plywood bridge structure that will enclose the conveyor belt and provide a minimum of 2 metres head clearance for the pedestrian below. Tender documents will require a full method statement from prospective contractors to reflect the minimum requirements above and provide a detailed fill disposal plan for all material to be removed from site, in compliance with environmental legislation. The proposed slab to the lower ground floor area is a raft slab that will obviate the need for trench foundations along the rear boundaries and allow the slab to be cast from within the existing premises, minimising disruption to neighbouring occupiers.

9) Planning Policy

The proposed development lies within a Camden Borough Neighbourhood Centre and is subject to the relevant policies in the Camden UDP.

UDP Policy: R7

Protection of Shopping Frontages and Local Shops - Neighbourhood Centres
At ground floor level in the Neighbourhood Centres, the Council:

- a. will only grant planning permission for development that it considers will not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of the centre
- b. will not grant planning permission for development that would prevent the centre from being capable of providing a range of convenience shopping

Protection of Neighbourhood Centres

6.46

Uses that may make a positive contribution to the character, function, vitality and viability of these centres will include shopping, financial and professional services, food and drink uses, launderettes, doctors, dentists and veterinary surgeries. However, not all of these uses will be appropriate in every centre....

6.47

The Council will seek to retain strong elements of convenience shopping in these centres. This will involve resisting the loss of shops if their proportion or number is falling below a level necessary to attract customers. However, the Council is also aware that the number of people shopping locally has fallen, and will take into account any history of vacancy of a shop unit and the prospect of achieving an alternative occupier for a vacant shop.

Protection of local shops

6.50

As the number of people shopping locally has declined, it is unlikely that all shops outside centres will continue to find an occupier. The Council will, therefore, consider granting permission for the loss of shops (Use Class A1), but only where there is alternative provision within 5 - 10 minutes walk, depending on the scale of provision. In the case of loss of a convenience store, the Council will seek to make sure there is another convenience store within walking distance. The Council will take into account any history of vacancy of a shop unit and the prospect of achieving an alternative occupier for a vacant shop.

UDP Policy R8 - Upper Floors and Shopfronts

At ground floor level in centres, the Council will not grant planning permission that involves removal of a shop window without a suitable replacement. The Council will use planning conditions and obligations to ensure that where planning permission is granted involving the loss of shopping and service uses or food and drink uses at ground floor level (Use Classes A1, A2 and A3, A4, A5), a shop window and visual display is maintained

Removal and replacement of shopfronts

6.61

The presence of shop windows and displays enhances the attractiveness and vitality of centres, and the Council will resist their loss. Interesting and attractive windows and displays, particularly where they are continuous, encourage pedestrians to use the footway and visit units in the frontage. Shop windows providing views to and from the premises can attract customers into well-used units and provide natural surveillance of the street. In addition, lighting from shop windows can increase a sense of security during the evening and at night and can help promote natural surveillance, however, this needs to be well-designed so it does not cause light pollution....

The Camden Duty Planning Officer has confirmed that "the council will generally aim to retain at least 50% At use class on Neighbourhood Centre shopping parades."

Consent for a change of use to 131 for the ground floor unit would not result in a loss of more than 50% A1 use class on the parade. There is an existing convenience store opposite the development site and a higher concentration of A1 units further east along Mill Lane as one approaches West End Lane.

The ground floor shop has been vacant for 4 years and has proved difficult to let due to the relatively small internal area. When combined with the basement and lower ground floor, a viable workspace will be provided to accommodate approximately 8 persons.

Natural light and ventilation of the space has been carefully considered to create a high standard of sustainable workspace with the benefit of an external courtyard. The character, function, vitality and viability of the centre would benefit from the return to occupancy of the unit. The unit could provide suitable

accommodation for a small local enterprise and attract staff and visitors that would increase the custom of local shops and food outlets.

The shopfront structure is to be retained and restored in accordance with policy R8 6.61. The awning will be removed and the existing signage and decorative plinth will be cladded with marine ply and painted grey. Any further alterations to the shopfront will be submitted for planning consent under a separate application.