

30th October 2014

STATEMENT - RETAIL USE AND EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION

1. The planning proposal is for change-of-use of the retail basement and ground floor in this listed building to residential use - and to convert the building into a single-family house.

This statement deals with the proposed **loss of retail use and loss of employment** for the basement and ground floor retail unit - the self contained first, second, and third floor maisonette is already in residential use.

Planning Permission 2013/3396/P and Listed Building Consent 2013/4942/L both dated 3rd April 2014, are for the change of use of the basement and ground floors to a self-contained maisonette with ancillary works, retaining the upper maisonette. The current applications differ from this only that instead of the permitted two self-contained maisonettes, the building will be a single-family house.

The loss of retail use and loss of employment was permitted by the previous applications, and was deal with in an Employment Protection Statement dated 1st August 2103, which formed part of the previous applications. This Statement is substantially the same as the previous statement.

2. The current uses of the building are retail and ancillary uses on basement and ground floor, and residential use on first, second, and third floors as a single flat (maisonette). The residential (maisonette) use is not fully self-contained from the retail (shop) use - except for a door at the foot of the stairs.

- 3 More specifically, the current uses are:

Basement Retail Ancillary uses - storage, small photographic studio, and workshop.

Ground floor Retail - entrance to building (shop and flat) and shop front with direct entrance to shop - front shop and rear office, rear rooms used for storage, rear yard/garden (not used).

First floor Maisonette - WC with shower, study, and bedroom.

Second floor Maisonette - living-room with kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom.

Third floor Maisonette - studio, storage loft, and terrace.

4. The present owner has been an antique dealer and restorer for over 40 years, specialising in old musical instruments - and is a member of LAPADA - The Association of Art & Antiques Dealers.
5. The present owner bought the building in 1976 and moved there with his business. The two lower floors were used as a shop/showroom with various ancillary uses, and the upper floors were residential. In 1982, planning permission was obtained for a single-storey rear extension for the shop, which was constructed soon afterwards, and in 1988 planning permission was obtained to convert the loft, which was constructed in 1989 as an extension to the residential floors.
6. In 1999, the building was listed Grade II along with Nos 5, 7, 9, and 13 - for its value as part of this group with The Roebuck Public House also listed Grade II.
7. In the early years, there were some walk-in (retail) shoppers - with most visitors to the shop coming by appointment. In recent years there have been virtually no shoppers in person - and the business has been almost entirely catalogue-led and internet-based.

8. The external environment has changed dramatically over the years with the redevelopment and continuing growth of the Royal Free Hospital. The building with its neighbours is detached from the main South End Green shopping area, and is isolated from significant pedestrian flows, as borne out by the lack of success of the restaurant at No 7 - No 9 is a funeral undertaker partly linked to the hospital, and No 5 is an estate agent.

No 13 was used by the hospital for various ancillary medical uses and also for child-care, and was converted to three maisonettes in 1996/7.

9. The business rates for the shop are currently £7,400 per year. The owner has been advised that there is very little chance if any of obtaining a retail tenant even with a low rent, because of the building's poor commercial location.

The adjoining 'retail unit' at No 9 is an undertaker connected to the Royal Free Hospital - and is rarely open. No 7 has been empty and available to let for three years - it was last used as a cafe/restaurant, with late night opening which was not helpful for the general amenity of the area. No 5 is an estate agent with a separate basement office unit.

10. The musical instrument business is being scaled down, and much as the present owner would like a long-term commercial tenant for the shop, it's more realistic to convert it to residential use, for which the location is excellent. Local demand for this is very strong, and the applicants have arranged to buy the building from the present owner and move there with their young family.

11. The present owner has never employed more than one person in the business - and this is the current situation.

The proposed loss of employment - apart from the present owner - would therefore be one full-time job.

12. I understand that a retail business using the 120 sq m of available retail and ancillary space, could employ up to 5 people. However this is most unlikely in view of the poor commercial location as described above, and as confirmed by the repeated failure of the restaurant at No 7, and the part-time only occupation of the funeral undertaker at No 9.

13. In summary, the 'special' requirement for the retail use is now at an end, the prospect of replacement retail use is non-existent because of the poor location and high business rates, and the employment loss is just one part-time job.

BROD WIGHT ARCHITECTS

75 Haverstock Hill
London NW3 4SL

020-7722 0810
brodwight.co.uk