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Planning Statement

For minor alterations to listed building (Gloucester lodge) and extension to rear. Demolition and replacement of mews building to rear (No. 12 and 13 Gloucester Gate mews)

Title: Planning Statement (Application B)
Project: Gloucester Lodge
Client: Iconic Properties Ltd
Issue: Rev 00 (29th October 2015)
Project No: 1202

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is to support proposals for minor alterations to an existing semi-detached Grade I-listed building formally known as Gloucester Lodge (address: No. 12 Gloucester Gate), and the demolition of its ancillary building, No. 12 Gloucester Gate Mews, at the rear of the site. Following a recent acquisition, the property boundary has been enlarged to include the currently uninhabitable No. 13 Gloucester Gate Mews, which will be rebuilt to consolidate the floor space of the two mews. The proposal seeks to add a new basement level for plant and services directly below the mews. The walled garden on the lower ground floor will be raised to provide a direct link from the ground floor of the main building to the mews. With it includes a new lower ground floor amenity space and a family room at ground level as a part of the linked access.
- 1.2 The existing Gloucester Lodge is a traditional three-storey building with a lower ground floor, which provides access to its subservient two-storey mews through a walled garden leading on to the street level of Gloucester Gate Mews.
- 1.3 It should be added that the site has undergone numerous alterations in the past, as illustrated in the Design and Access Statement. A recent 1993 consented planning application details the extensive changes to the interior of the building and the demolition of an annex which physically connected the main house to the mews. The design recognises the extent of this recent alteration and proposes the new additions to be in line with this precedent to preserve original heritage features.
- 1.4 The site is bounded to the north by No. 14 Gloucester Gate, which forms the second half of Gloucester Lodge. The property is connected to No. 15 Gloucester Gate, which is the current address of Bright Horizon Daycare and Nursery and which also shares a party wall with No. 13 Gloucester Gate Mews. Bounded to the south is No. 11 Gloucester Gate, a residential property and the final building on the north end of John Nash's Grade I-listed Gloucester Gate Terrace. Opposite the two mews on the east are Nos. 217 and 219 Albany Street. The space between these two end terraces forms the entrance into Gloucester Gate Mews from Albany Street.
- 1.5 This proposal has benefitted from continuous informal discussions with a planning officer at Camden Council¹, including a pre-application site visit dated 27 August 2015. However, having waited 12 weeks, the proposal has yet to receive direct feedback or communication from the design/conservation officers. To the applicant's understanding, this has prohibited the provision of any formal pre-application advice, which is contrary to Camden's planning website, which suggests a 15 days return upon site visit. As no definable timescale has been provided by Camden, this application has been submitted without the full enjoyment of the pre-application consultation process.

¹Reference 2015/4221/PRE and further email correspondence

Policy Context

- 1.6 The development plan here consists of the London Plan (March 2015), the Camden Core Strategy (November 2010), and the Camden Development Policies DPD (November 2010).
- 1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) is also an important material consideration in planning decisions.
- 1.8 The site falls within the Regent's Park Conservation Area

2.0 Application supporting information

- 2.1 During pre-application discussions with the planning officer (email correspondence dated 21 October 2015), it was agreed what information was needed to support the submission.
- 2.2 The Design and Access Statement begins with an assessment of the site context and constraints and opportunities, explains the vision for the proposed, and then goes through the alterations of the Grade I-listed component.
- 2.3 Policy DP2 in Camden's Development Policies restricts the net loss of 2 or more units. The proposal is fully compliant to this as it seeks to convert of two dwellings into one. The two dwellings conversion consist of No. 12 Gloucester gate and its ancillary mews and No. 13 Gloucester Gate Mews of an independent title (as illustrated in the Design and Access Statement).
- 2.4 Dr John Martin Robinson, once part of GLC's Historic Building Division and a Historic Building Inspector in Westminster, has provided a detailed assessment in the Heritage Statement. His advice have been a major contributor to the scheme. The proposal is in the spirit of the NPPF paragraph 131: *"In determining planning applications, the local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation."* It was proposed in the pre-application submission that the forecourt would be extensively reconfigured to accommodate the turning radius and parking of modern vehicles. This was omitted from this submission following the planning officer's and Dr Robinson's concern that the forecourt could be a heritage asset. Henceforth, the applicant seeks to retain the existing arrangement and to replace a dead weeping ash significant to the original design with a sample of the same species.
- 2.5 The application is accompanied by a detailed Arboricultural Assessment. This explains that although ten trees in total would be removed, two are dead, three are of low quality and poor form, and five are early mature hornbeams within the walled garden of the property, not visible from the street. They are of little individual significance, with the exception of the large deceased weeping ash previously mentioned. Overall, their loss will not affect the visual character of the area, and the replacement of a new weeping ash will reinstate the forecourt to its former conception. One tree's theoretical Root Protection Areas would be impacted, but this can be mitigated by site investigation and construction techniques. Moreover, the proposals include a new walled garden, which aims to further promote biodiversity through the use of trellises, a tree pit and significant soil depth for planting.
- 2.6 The scheme will take advantage of level differences across the site to extend part of the main house's lower ground floor to the eastern end, thus connecting it with the mews. The scheme will require a basement excavation for the new level beneath the mews. Further information is provided within the submission's accompanied Basement Impact Assessment. It confirms that no specific assessment of contamination would be necessary bearing in mind the history of the site as residential and, before that, agricultural land.

- 2.7 Because the proposed development would not affect the overall height of Gloucester Lodge, and the height of the rebuilt mews will be to existing height, it will not have a negative impact on surrounding buildings in terms of daylight/sunlight/overshadowing. In response to informal comments from the planning officer with regards to the height of the link element's relationship to No.11: this addition has been designed alongside a Daylight Sunlight Consultant to ensure the proposal is sympathetic to its neighbour and passes the BRE daylight and sunlight tests for the surrounding existing buildings.
- 2.8 The application is accompanied by a Construction Management Plan. The plan commits to a minimal impact approach to the proposal's construction and demolition of its surrounding in particular. Camden's CMP Proforma will be adopted in accordance to CPG6: Amenity in order to facilitate the progress of the development.
- 2.9 In terms of car parking, three spaces currently exist on the site and will be replaced by two spaces, which will reduce vehicular activities on Gloucester Gate Mews. This is in line with NPPF's Policy 6.13 and Policy 6.9 regarding cycle provisions.

Conclusion

The reports submitted with this application confirm that the proposal has met all the standards required of it.

3.0 Housing delivery

- 3.1 The first “challenge” the Council faces, as outlined Camden’s Core Strategy, is “Adapting to Camden’s growing population and to social changes”, which includes “...accommodating new and expanded buildings while preserving our valued places and promoting high quality design” (CS20).
- 3.2 This is reflected in Camden’s Community Strategy’s Vision, which includes four themes the first of which is to create “a sustainable Camden that adapts to a growing population” (CS30 and CS6.2). The rebuilding of a dilapidated mews and lateral extension within the existing property would support this.
- 3.3 The Development Policies DPD also makes clear that “housing is regarded as the priority land-use of the Local Development Framework, and the Council will make housing its top priority when considering the future of unused and underused land and buildings” (DP2.8).

Conclusion

This section demonstrates that the proposals accord with the development plan and, in accordance with the NPPF, planning permission should therefore be granted.