

PD10200

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Development Control Manager (Planning)
Camden Council
Camden Town Hall
London
WC1H 8ND

Dear Sir

**1-7 WOBURN WALK, WC1H 0JJ
APPLICATION FOR PLANNING AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
PLANNING PORTAL REF: PP-05197671**

PLANNING STATEMENT

We act on behalf of Instrumel Limited in respect of the above property.

You will recall that planning and listed building consent was granted on 14 December 2015 for conversion of the upper floors of the property to residential use to comprise 1 x 1 bedroom and 2 x 2 bedroom flats (LPA Ref: 2015/4272/P and 2015/4576/L).

We are instructed to submit revised proposals to convert the upper floors to 4 x 1 bedroom flats and 1 x 2 bedroom flat with associated internal and external alterations. Accordingly a revised application for planning and listed building consent has been submitted today via the Planning Portal in this regard (Ref: PP-05197671).

This Planning Statement sets out details of the site and surrounding area (including the extant permissions) and the application proposals. It then provides justification for the revised proposals in terms of national planning policy and the statutory development plan. It is to be read in conjunction with the following documents which form the planning application:

- Application forms
- Ownership Certificate B
- Site Location Plan
- Existing Plans/Elevations and Sections - Drawing Nos: 15/262/20; 21; 22; 23; 24 and 25
- Proposed Plans/Elevations and Sections - Drawing Nos: 15/263/13B; 14B, 15B, 16, 17 and 18
- Design and Access Statement – Martin Ralph Group
- Heritage Statement – The Heritage Advisory

A cheque in the sum of £1,925 is attached in respect of the statutory application fee.

Site and Surrounding Area

The application site comprises 1-7 Woburn Walk. It is located within Bloomsbury approximately 250m south of Euston Station and 500m from Kings Cross and St Pancras Stations.

The site is positioned on the north side of Woburn Walk which is a pedestrianised street located between Upper Woburn Place and Dukes Road. The building is arranged in a terrace which dates from 1822 and comprises basement, ground floor and three upper levels. It forms part of a purposefully designed small scale shopping street at Woburn Walk and Dukes Road.

The application site is a grade 2* listed building. The list description for Nos 1-9 and 9A reads:

'Terrace of 6 shops with accommodation over. C1822. Built by Thomas Cubitt, restored late C20. Stucco with wooden shopfronts. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys and cellars. 1 window each. Part walls of upper floors articulated by narrow recessed bays. Wooden shopfronts, much restored, with pilasters carrying continuous entablature with anthemion and palmette ornament to architrave; projecting, bracketed shop windows with rounded angles and small panes flanked by panelled and half-glazed doors with overlights. Upper floors have segmental-arched windows having plain architraves studded with paterae; 1st floor, 4 lights with cast-iron balconies, 2nd floor tripartite. Parapets with plain bands, Nos 3 & 5 having shallow scrolled pediments above. INTERIORS: not inspected. HISTORICAL NOTE: No.5 was the home of William Butler Yeats, Irish poet and dramatist (plaque). Thomas Cubitt was responsible for the development of the Bedford Estate north and east of Russell Square. The coherently designed group of original shopfronts in Woburn Walk and Duke's Road (ggv) is an exceptional architectural composition and survival.'

The application site is also located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The original building was designed with shop units on the ground floor and residential accommodation above. This arrangement is still evident on the south side of Woburn Walk (Nos 4-18). The ground floor shop units accommodate a mix of A1 and A3 occupiers on long term leases. The upper floor accommodation over three levels provides B1 office accommodation occupied under short term agreements. The conversion to offices took place in the early 1980s when access was provided via a stair core constructed north of the original structure. This has enabled the upper floors to operate independently of the ground floor shops.

The upper floor accommodation provides poor quality office space and is in need of refurbishment. In order to secure a more viable use for the upper floor accommodation that would support significant improvements to the building and reinstate the original residential function, planning and listed building consent was granted on 14 December 2015 to convert the first, second and third floor offices to 2 x 2 bedroom flats and 1 x 1 bedroom flat, accessible from the existing communal stairway (LPA Ref 2015/4272/P and 2015/4576/L).

The site lies adjacent to the New Ambassadors Hotel (west); Central House (a UCL building) is located to the rear (southwest) and upper level residential accommodation is situated at 9 Woburn Walk and 2-12 Duke's Road to the side (east) and rear (northeast).

The site is within Central London within easy walking distance of major transport hubs and other public transport services including bus routes and Underground stations. It has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 6b which is excellent.

Further details of the site and its surroundings are set out within the Design and Access and Heritage Statements.

Application Proposals

The principle of converting the upper floor accommodation from office to residential use has been established by the extant permissions.

The revised proposal seeks to make more efficient use of the floorspace by forming 4 x 1 bedroom flats at first and second floors (instead of 2 x 2 bedroom flats as approved) and formation of 1 x 2 bedroom flat at third floor (instead of 1 x 1 bedroom as approved).

The revised proposal for which planning and listed building consent is now sought comprises:

- Conversion of first floor to comprise 2 x 1 bedroom flats of 53sqm and 55sqm respectively;
- Conversion of second floor to comprise 2 x 1 bedroom flats of 53sqm and 55sqm respectively;
- Conversion of third floor to comprise 1 x 2 bedroom flat of 72sqm;
- Associated internal alterations which follow the principles established by the extant listed building consent;
- External alterations to include extension of the front elevation of the access core over the existing entrance.
- Removal of firescape on rear elevation and replacement with 2 x metal balconies

Further details are set out within the Design and Access and Heritage Statements.

Planning Policy Considerations

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with a statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is also necessary to consider proposed development in the context of national policy which is a material consideration.

The relevant policy framework concerning the application proposal is summarised below:

National Policy

The NPPF published in March 2012 establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development as a thread running through decision making.

The NPPF aims to support high quality housing through sustainable forms of development.

In respect of heritage matters Policy 131 states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- 1) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- 2) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities; and
- 3) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The Technical Housing Standards provide minimum requirements for residential development and conversions to be applied nationally. 1 bedroom flats providing accommodation for 2 persons should be at least 50sqm with 1.5sqm storage. 2 bedroom flats for 3 persons should be minimum 61sqm with 2sqm storage.

Strategic Policy

The revised London Plan was adopted in March 2015 and forms part of the statutory development plan.

Policy 7.4 supports the provision of high quality housing in London which has regard to the pattern of the existing urban area; makes a positive contribution to local character and is informed by the surrounding historic environment.

Policy 7.8 concerns London's heritage assets and historic environment including conservation areas. It states that development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate. Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

Local Policy

The following documents form part of the statutory development plan:

- | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| • Camden Core Strategy | - | Adopted November 2010 |
| • Camden Development Planning Policies | - | Adopted November 2010 |
| • Camden Planning Guidance | | Various |

The relevant policies in respect of the revised proposals are as follows:

- CS6 (Providing quality homes)
- CS14 (Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage)
- DP2 (Making full use of Camden's capacity for housing)
- DP5 (Homes of different sizes)
- DP13 (Employment sites and premises)
- DP17 (Walking, cycling and public transport)
- DP18 (Parking standards and limiting the availability of car parking)
- DP24 (Securing high quality design)
- DP25 (Conserving Camden's heritage)
- CPG2 (Housing) 2015
- CPG5 (Town Centres, Retail and Employment) 2013

Planning Justification

The principle of converting the upper floor accommodation at the application site from office to residential use has been established by the extant permissions. This recent approval is a significant material consideration in relation to the revised proposals. However, we set out below the planning justification for the revised proposal with regard to the above policy considerations.

Principle of Residential Use

The application site occupies a highly accessible Central London location where residential use is encouraged in principle by national, strategic and local planning policies.

There is an extant planning permission for residential use of the upper floors which has established that the loss of the existing office accommodation is justified having regard to the provisions of policy DP13 and CPG5.

Accordingly, the proposed residential use accords with national planning policy and the statutory development plan as a matter of principle.

Housing Matters

The revised proposals seek to make most efficient use of the available floorspace by forming 5 flats. This will maximise the opportunity to provide housing at the site and make a greater contribution to the Borough's strategic housing target than the extant permission.

The extant permission as established that the application premises is capable of providing an acceptable standard of housing having regard to access, layout and amenity. Equally the revised scheme exceeds the minimum nationally prescribed space standards and will provide high quality housing.

The proposal includes a mix of units. In accordance with the targets set out within the development this includes 2 bedroom accommodation in addition to 1 bed flats.

The proposal therefore accords with the provisions of national, strategic and local policy in terms of making most efficient use of a sustainable site to provide housing. The quality and mix of accommodation also accords with the National Technical Standards and the requirements of policies CS6, DP2, DP5 and CPG2 of the development plan.

Heritage Matters

The extant listed building consent has established that certain internal alterations are acceptable where the historic fabric of the building is retained. The approved flat layouts therefore are dictated by location of original dividing walls, original features including fireplaces and window openings. Any further subdivision is provided by new stud partitioning which is reversible and does not affect the historic fabric. Poor quality later additions, such as UPVC windows within the third floor dormers and poor quality suspended ceilings are replaced with more appropriate materials. Return of the upper floor accommodation to a residential function was also determined to be a heritage benefit, representing the optimum viable use.

The revised proposal follows the above principles in terms of layout and beneficial improvements. Additionally it is proposed to remove the metal fire escape to the rear elevation and replace with sensitively designed metal balconies. The unsightly recess above the ground floor entrance will be improved by extending the front elevation of the modern stairwell forward. These are further beneficial improvements to the heritage asset that will not give rise to any significant impacts.

The above matters are further assessed with the Heritage Statement which, in accordance with Paragraph 128 of the NPPF, describes the significance of the heritage asset to be affected in a manner proportionate to both the asset's importance, and an understanding of the potential impact of proposals upon that significance. It demonstrates that the proposals will not give rise to any significant impacts and identifies the clear heritage benefits.

Accordingly, the revised application does not conflict with national, strategic or local planning policies concerning the protection of heritage assets and will give rise to beneficial improvements.

Transport

As previously stated, the site is within a highly accessible Central London location located close to sustainable modes of transport. It is therefore a sustainable location for mixed use development including residential.

Like the extant scheme, the revised proposal will enable suitable provision for cycle parking (1 space per unit). Furthermore, the applicant is willing to enter into a Section 106 agreement to preclude future residents from obtaining parking permits.

The proposal therefore accords with policies DP17 and 18 of the Development Planning Policies document.

Conclusion

The applicant is seeking planning permission and listed building consent in respect a revised proposal to convert the upper floors of 1-7 Woburn Walk to residential use to comprise 4 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed flats. This follows from the extant permissions approved in December 2015.

Having regard to the site, the planning history and the relevant planning policy considerations, we have demonstrated that the revised proposals are acceptable in planning terms as follows:

- the proposals seeks to make most efficient use of the site to provide housing in a highly sustainable location;
- the principle of returning the upper floors to residential use has already been established to be acceptable and beneficial;

- high quality residential accommodation will be provided on the upper floors in line with relevant planning standards;
- the proposed alterations to the building and residential function are acceptable and beneficial in terms of the architectural and historic merit of the building; and
- the proposal will comply with sustainable transport aspirations.

Accordingly, the revised proposal is an acceptable form of development that accords with the NPPF and the statutory development plan and we respectfully request that planning permission and listed building consent are approved.

We trust that you will find the application documents in order and look forward to receiving the validation notice in due course.

Yours faithfully



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