

Our Ref: 16241/MS/ks
Your Ref: PP-05428769
Email: mshearman@firstplan.co.uk
Date: 06 September 2016

Chief Planning Officer
Development Management
Camden Borough Council
Second Floor
5 Pancras Square c/o Town Hall
Judd Street
London
WC1H 8JE

Dear Sir/Madam

**EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS COMPRISING INSTALLATION OF TWO BALCONIES
32-38 SAFFRON HILL, LONDON EC1N 8FH**

We have been instructed by our client, Mount Stuart Trust, to submit the enclosed application (submitted online via Planning Portal, ref: PP-05428769) for proposed external alterations comprising the installation of two balconies at fourth floor level, at the above address.

In accordance with national and local validation requirements the following documents are attached in support of the application:

- Completed application forms and certificates;
- CIL additional requirement form;
- Planning and Heritage Statement (included within this letter);
- Design and Access Statement (included within this letter);
- Site Location Plan (ref: PL E000);
- Block Plan (ref: 16241)
- Existing Fourth Floor Plan (ref: PL E014);
- Existing Roof Plan (ref: PL E016)
- Existing Front Elevation (ref: PL E030);
- Existing Section (ref: PL E040);
- Existing 3D Visual (ref: E050 A);
- Proposed Fourth Floor Plan (ref: PL P014);
- Proposed Roof Plan (ref: PL P016)
- Proposed Front Elevation (ref: PL P030);
- Proposed Section (ref: PL P031);
- Proposed Balcony 3D View (ref: PL P050);
- Aerial View of Site.

The requisite fee of £385 has been paid online via Planning Portal.

Site Description

The application site at nos 32-38 Saffron Hill comprises a six storey office building. Two of the levels are set within the roofspace and comprise dormer windows set within the roofslope. Plant is set out on the flat roof above, at the rear of the property. The building is located to the eastern side of Saffron Hill, between the junctions with St Cross Street and Greville Street.

Saffron Hill is characterised predominantly by office uses, with some residential, pub and retail uses in the wider surrounding area. The buildings surrounding the site are generally between four to six storeys in height, with a single storey building on the opposite side of Saffron Hill. There is no consistent pattern of roof form within the area, and a number of roof alterations are evident including roof extensions, balconies and plant installations.

Planning History

i) Site

Planning permission was granted for the use of the fourth and fifth floors of the building as offices on 8 May 1969 (ref: N16/12/D/7087).

Planning permission was granted for the installation of 3x condenser units at roof level of office building on 25 January 1999 (ref: 2005/3251/P).

There is no other relevant planning history for the site available on the Council's website.

ii) Surrounding Area

Planning permission was granted on 20 July 2012 for the erection of replacement fifth floor, new sixth floor and new part seventh floor for residential use and associated works including external terrace areas with balustrades at sixth floor and seventh (roof) level at 44 Saffron Hill (ref: 2011/5571/P).

The officer's report notes that the seventh (top) floor structures are considered acceptable given the height of the buildings in the area varies and *"there is importantly already a variety of roof forms and clutter at roof level in this part of Hatton Garden."* It also notes the narrowness of Saffron Hill coupled with the height of the host building and others in the locality which prevent the proposals being visible in short views from street level.

Application Proposals

The application proposes the installation of two roof balconies within the existing dormer at fourth floor level. The balconies will each be accessed via new double doors to two existing windows within the dormer. The balconies will be set behind railings, set back from the existing parapet.

Planning Policy and Guidance

The Policies Map shows that the application site falls within the Hatton Garden Area and Hatton Garden Conservation Area, in addition to the designated view of Parliament Hill summit to St Paul's Cathedral. The building is not listed.

Camden Core Strategy 2010-2015

Policy CS5 seeks to protect and enhance the environment, heritage, the amenity and quality of life of local communities, and protect the amenity of Camden's residents.

Policy CS14 requires development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character, preserves and enhances heritage assets, promotes high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces and seeks the highest standards of access in all buildings and protecting important local views.

Camden Development Policies 2010-2015

Policy DP22 states that schemes must demonstrate how sustainable development principles have been incorporated into the design.

Policy DP24 relates to securing high quality design and expects development to consider the following matters:

“a) character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;

b) the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;

c) the quality of materials to be used;

...

h) the provision of appropriate amenity space; and

i) accessibility.”

Policy DP25 seeks to protect and conserve Camden’s heritage assets. Development will only be permitted that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of conservation areas and would not harm the setting of listed buildings.

Policy DP26 states that the Council will protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by only granting permission for development that does not cause harm to amenity. Considerations include visual privacy and overlooking, overshadowing and outlook, sunlight and daylight levels.

Policy DP29 expects that all buildings meet the highest practicable standards of access and inclusion.

Camden Planning Guidance 1 Design

Section 2 sets out that the Council is committed to excellence in design and schemes should consider the context of a development and its surrounding area, the design of the building itself and the materials used.

Section 3 provides guidance on development within conservation areas and affecting listed buildings.

Section 5 relates to roof alterations and balconies. When proposing roof alterations, the main considerations should be the scale and visual prominence, and the effect on the established townscapes and architectural style. Materials that visually blend with existing materials are preferred for roof alterations. In historic areas traditional materials will usually be most appropriate though modern materials may be, but should be used sensitively and not dominate the existing property.

Roof alterations are likely to be acceptable where there are a variety of additions or alterations to roofs which create an established pattern and where further development of a similar form would not cause additional harm. Alterations should also be architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and retain the overall integrity of the roof form.

Balconies should complement the elevation upon which it is to be located. Consideration should be given to the detailed design to reduce the impact on the existing elevation; careful choice of materials and colour to match the existing elevation; and use of setbacks to minimise overlooking.

Camden Planning Guidance 6 Amenity

The document sets out that in order to ensure privacy, there should normally be a minimum distance of 18m between the windows of habitable rooms of different units that directly face each other. This minimum requirement will be the distance between the two closest points on each building, including balconies. All buildings should receive adequate sunlight and daylight, and development should be designed to protect the privacy of existing dwellings and mitigate against overlooking.

Draft Camden Local Plan 2016

Policy A1 seeks to protect amenity.

Policy D1 states that the Council will require development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality which improves the function, appearance, and character of the area. Development should be comprised of materials of high quality, respect local context and character and be of sustainable and durable construction. Development should preserve significant and protected views.

Policy D2 requires development within conservation areas to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

Hatton Garden Conservation Area Statement (1999)

This document highlights conservation issues and design principles for the Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

It sets out that the acceptability of roof alterations will depend on the original historic pattern of roof extension for that particular type of building or group of buildings. Extensions should respect the proportions and architectural treatment of the original building and its relationship and impact upon open spaces, highways, important local views and viewing corridors.

The document notes the sense of enclosure in Saffron Hill arising from the narrow streets and tall buildings, which increases as the road descends towards the river. The Council will seek to refuse roof developments in viewing corridors if the height obstructs the base of the lower drum of St Paul's Cathedral.

The application site building is noted for making a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

Planning and Heritage Statement

This application proposes alterations to the roof, namely the installation of two balconies. The considerations therefore are the principle of the development and the impact of the design of the proposals, with regard to the impact on the Hatton Garden Conservation Area and the impact on amenity.

Principle of development

The area surrounding the site comprises a variety of roof forms and alterations, including dormer windows, balconies and plant. The neighbouring property at no. 41-43 Saffron Hill comprises a fifth floor level balcony together with dormer windows above, and no. 44 Saffron Hill comprises a balcony at fifth floor level. Whilst the form of the balconies differs to that proposed, it demonstrates the acceptability of the principle of balconies in this area.

Alterations to the roof of the application building have already been undertaken with the erection of a small extension and the installation of dormers. In respect of the acceptability of the proposal within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area, given there is no consistent pattern of roof form within the area surrounding the site, and the variety of roof alterations evident, the proposed roof level balconies, which are of relatively minor scale, should be considered acceptable.

Design and heritage considerations

The proposed balconies will comply with the Council's policy and design guidance in terms of scale, design and materials and as such will conserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The proposed balconies are of a relatively minor scale in the context of the host building and wider roofscape, and will not be visible from street level. Each balcony will be positioned at either end of the row of dormers and will comprise a set of glazed doors which will replace an existing dormer window. This will retain the symmetry found within the existing roof form. By reason of this, and the minor scale of the proposal, the proposal will conserve the overall integrity of the roof and wider building, which makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. As such it will reflect the character and proportion of the existing building, and conserve the character of the conservation area, in accordance with Policies DP24 and DP25 respectively.

The Saffron Hill area of the Hatton Garden Conservation Area is characterised by narrow streets and tall buildings which restrict views of the roof from the street. Notwithstanding this, the proposed balconies have been carefully designed in order to reduce their visual prominence in accordance with the Council's guidance. They will be set back behind the parapet and the proposed railing will be lower than the existing front railing. The balconies will project no further than the existing building line, and the existing roof extension comprising the stairwell will also afford a level of visual screening of one of the balconies from certain vantage points. As such, the balconies will not obstruct any strategic views and will remain subordinate to the host building. As such the scale is considered to be in keeping with the wider building and other roof alterations within the conservation area. The proposal will therefore conserve the character and appearance of the conservation area in accordance with Policy DP25.

The proposal also incorporates the use of high quality materials. The railings will incorporate powder coated metal and will have a lightweight appearance by means of the limited number of railing bars, in order to reduce the visual prominence further.

As such the proposal will be entirely in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area, in accordance with Policies CS5 and DP25.

Amenity

The positioning of the proposed doors to the balcony will reflect that of the existing windows, and therefore the outlook will remain similar to existing. The installation of full length doors will contribute to additional natural light to the property, which will improve the amenity for the occupiers in accordance with Policy DP26.

The balconies will be set back from the parapet which will minimise overlooking. Sufficient distance from the balcony edge to the windows of the nearest properties will be maintained, in order to reduce overlooking in accordance with the Council's guidance. As such, there will be no adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding occupiers in accordance with Policy DP26.

Design and Access Statement

Use

The proposal will not affect the existing use of the building.

Scale and Amount

The proposal incorporates the installation of two balconies at fourth floor level. The minor scale of the balconies will be subservient to the wider building.

Layout

The two balconies will be positioned at either end of the row of dormers, replacing two of the existing windows. They will be set back from the existing parapet.

Appearance

The proposed balconies will be discreetly located and there will be no views of the balconies from street level, by reason of the height of the buildings within the locality and narrowness of the street. The balconies will be set back from the existing parapet, in order to minimise views further. Notwithstanding this, the balconies are considered have limited visual prominence given that the proposed doors will be in keeping with the symmetry and appearance of the existing windows and the balcony railings are spaced out. There are a number of balconies present in the surrounding area and as such the appearance and character of the conservation area will be preserved.

Access and Landscaping

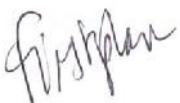
Access to the proposed balconies will be provided by installation of two sets of doors. The application proposals will retain the main entrances to the building. Landscaping is not included as part of the proposals.

Conclusions

The principle of balconies is established in this area and the application proposals have been carefully designed in order to conserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. Notwithstanding the limited views of the balconies, which will not be visible at all from street level, the design of the balconies by reason of their scale, materials and detailing will respect that of the host building and wider area. The proposed balconies are not considered to adversely impact the amenity of surrounding occupiers, in accordance with Policy DP26 and the Council's guidance, and indeed will enhance the natural light received to the building and provide outdoor amenity space.

Overall, it is therefore considered that the proposals are in compliance with the Council's policies and should be supported. I trust that you have sufficient information in order to validate the application, however, should you have any queries then do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



MARK SHEARMAN
Director

Enc.