

Our Ref: DS/JM/JLQ0113
Your Ref:

E-mail: simmondsd@rpsgroup.com
Date: 21 February 2018

Head of Planning
London Borough of Camden
Planning Services
Judd Street
London
WC1H 8NJ

Dear Sir,

SUMMIT HOUSE, HIGHGATE
CHANGE OF USE APPLICATION BY MR JEFFREY STUART SALMON

I am instructed by Mr Jeffrey Stuart Salmon to submit to you the enclosed application for change of use from offices (Class B1) and/or medical consultancy rooms (Class D1) to a single dwelling house (Class C3). The application site is Summit House, 40 Highgate West Hill, Highgate.

Accordingly, I now enclose a copy of the following documents that comprise this application:-

- a) completed application forms, including Certificate A;
- b) site location plan (red line) plan, ref: JLQ0113/1;
- c) existing floor plans, ref: A100/01, A101/01 and A102/01;
- d) proposed floor plans, ref: 14239/PL01, PL02 & PL03;
- e) planning consent (ref: 2014/4931/P), dated 15 July 2015;
- f) lifetime homes assessment
- g) this covering letter.

Additionally, I understand the appropriate planning application fee to be £462. This will be paid to the Council by telephone.

The application proposals are for the change of use of Summit House to a single dwelling house. Summit House is currently used for a mixture of both serviced offices (Class B1) and medical consultancy rooms (Class D1), although the precise mix changes from time to time. The application proposals do not involve any external alterations to the property. The application is for the renewal of the planning permission granted by the Council on 15 July 2015.

Site and Surrounding Area

Summit House is two storey (plus basement) nineteenth century red brick detached building, set back from Highgate West Hill. The property is also known as The Summit. The property is accessed from a private drive from Highgate West Hill, which also serves the residential properties of 38a, 38b and 38c, immediately to the west of Summit House. To the front of the property is 10 car parking spaces, all of which serve Summit House.



Summit House falls within the Highgate Conservation Area. However, Summit House is not a listed building.

This part of Highgate is predominantly residential in character. Indeed, Summit House is the only non-residential building in the immediate area.

Planning History

Summit House's planning history is highly relevant to these application proposals. The property was used for a number of years purely as offices. However, planning consent was granted on 22 December 2005 for the following:-

'Change of use from offices (Class B1) to alternative uses as offices (Class B1) or medical consultancy rooms (Class D1).'

This December 2005 consent was by its nature a very flexible consent, as confirmed by an informative attached to the consent:-

'If implemented, the alternative use permission gives flexibility of use for 10 years from the date of this permission. After 10 years the lawful use would become the use split which is taking place at the time.'

In simple terms, the consent enabled Summit House to be used for either offices (Class B1), for medical consultancy rooms (Class D1), or for a mixture of the two. In other words, the building could continually change between a B1 and a D1 use, including a mix of the two, without the requirement for a planning consent. This position as at December 2015 continued to be for a mix between B1 and D1 use.

In March 2006 and February 2008, the Council granted consents to relax the hours condition. Collectively the consents related to both the B1 and D1 use, and also to the ancillary use of the basement as a gymnasium. The effect of the two consents was to allow the gymnasium to be used between the hours of 0600 – 2200 hours and for the offices and medical consultancy rooms to be used from 0800 – 2200 hours.

In July 2015, the Council granted planning permission for change of use from offices and/or medical consultancy rooms to single dwelling (ref: 2014/4931/P). This application is for renewal of the July 2015 consent. Importantly, this consent remains extant and can be implemented. Indeed, it remains the intention of the applicant to implement the consent. However, the applicant requires the flexibility of timing. Whilst it is the intention to implement in the near future, this application is submitted as a safeguard.

Policy

The Government's policy guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), issued in March 2012. At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Amongst other things, paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that for decision making, the presumption means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. The same paragraph goes on to state that where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission

should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so were to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

As addressed in the next section, the development plan is broadly supportive of the application proposals. In any event, it is considered that the application proposals are of merit and do not give rise to any 'adverse impacts.' Rather, the application proposals will bring forward benefits, especially to nearby residential properties.

The NPPF is also relevant insofar as it encourages the creation of new homes. Notably, as set out in para 47, the NPPF seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing. Para 49 goes on to state that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Significantly, para 50 emphasises that local planning authorities should seek to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes.

The development plan is the Camden Local Plan, adopted in July 2017. The proposals map, confirms the position of Summit House within the Highgate Conservation Area.

One of the key objectives of the Local Plan is to provide an increase in housing in Camden. Notably, Policy H1 seeks to maximise housing supply and aims to secure a sufficient supply of homes to meet the needs of existing and future households. Policy H7 aims to secure a range of homes, including a mix of large and small homes.

Policy D2 of the Local Plan seeks to preserve and enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas. Notably, the policy requires that development within conservation areas should preserve or, where possible, enhance the character or appearance of the area.

Planning Issues

The principle of residential use on the application site is wholly acceptable. First, policies in the development plan are supportive of new housing and notably, recognise the need to provide for a variety of housing types. So a large dwelling house, as proposed by the application, can be supported as a matter of policy. For the avoidance of doubt, the application proposals cannot be considered to be a conventional employment/B1 building.

By nature of Summit House's position in a predominantly residential area, the application proposals are worthy of support. A residential use will be beneficial in terms of residential amenity, certainly when compared to the existing use. This is particularly the case for the adjoining residential properties of 38a, 38b and 38c Highgate West Hill. On this point, it should be noted that Summit House (including ancillary gymnasium) can operate from 0600 – 2200 hours, as a result of the consents granted in March 2006 and May 2008. The comings and goings, especially in the evening, are not desirable in terms of residential amenity.

As explained, the proposed residential use will be in the form of one residential dwelling. Traffic generated from the dwelling will be low. Certainly, any traffic generation will be far lower, than that generated by the serviced offices and medical consultancy rooms. The reduction in traffic is beneficial both in terms of residential amenity, and also in relation to highways matters. In relation to highways matters, the current arrangement whereby vehicles associated with the offices/medical consultancy rooms turn into the private access from Highgate West Hill is far from ideal. Indeed, this manoeuvre is made particularly problematic as a result of both the narrow width and the steep gradient of Highgate West Hill at this point.

The application proposals do not involve any physical alterations to the property itself. Consequently, there are no direct effects upon the conservation area, in visual terms. However, the ability to provide a use which is consistent with the character of the area, and the reduction in traffic along Highgate West Hill, both represent benefits which will enhance the character of the Highgate Conservation Area. Consequently, the application proposals are beneficial in terms of the property's designation in the conservation area.

Most importantly, there exists a live planning permission to change the use of the property to a residential dwelling. This permission can still be implemented. It is considered that there is no material change in circumstances since the grant of this consent back in July 2015. Accordingly, it is respectfully considered that the consent should be renewed.

For information, it should be noted that the July 2015 consent was the subject of a Section 106 Agreement, requiring that residents of the property be prevented from purchasing a residents parking permit. The applicant is prepared to enter into the same agreement.

Summary

The application is for the change of use from offices and/or medical consulting rooms to a single dwelling house. The application is for the renewal of a planning permission granted in July 2015. The application proposals are in accordance with policy and have merit, in particular in relation to benefits to both residential amenity and the Highgate conservation area. Importantly, there has not been a material change in circumstances since the consent was granted in July 2015 and it is therefore considered the consent should be renewed.

I look forward to discussing the application further with you and your colleagues.

Yours faithfully



DANNY SIMMONDS
Planning Director

Enc.