

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet	Expiry Date:	07/11/2018
		N/A / attached	Consultation Expiry Date:	11/11/2018
Officer			Application Number(s)	
Kristina Smith			(i) 2018/4394/P (ii) 2018/4910/L	
Application Address			Drawing Numbers	
36 Lancaster Grove London NW3 4PB			<i>Refer to Draft Decision Notice</i>	
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature	
Proposal(s)				
(i) Conversion of former fire station tower (Sui Generis) to 1-bed residential unit (C3) including installation of balustrade at roof level and removal of chimneys (ii) External and internal alterations associated with conversion of former fire station tower to residential unit including removal of chimneys, infill of central void and replacement of staircase				
Recommendation(s):		(i) Refuse planning permission (ii) Refuse listed building consent		
Application Type:		(i) Full Planning Permission (ii) Listed Building Consent		

Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:	Refer to Draft Decision Notice			
Informatives:				
Consultations				
Adjoining Occupiers:	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
Summary of consultation responses:	<p>2018/4394/P</p> <p><u>Publicity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A site notice was displayed on 17/10/2018 (consultation end date 10/11/2018) and a notice was displayed in the local press on 18/10/2018 (consultation end date 11/11/2018). • No responses were received from adjoining occupiers. <p>2018/4910/L</p> <p><u>Publicity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A site notice was displayed on 17/10/2018 (consultation end date 10/11/2018) and a notice was displayed in the local press on 18/10/2018 (consultation end date 11/11/2018). • No responses were received from adjoining occupiers. <p><u>Statutory Consultees</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the substantial demolition proposed, Historic England are a statutory consultee for the Listed Building Consent. They have provided the following comments: <p>Significance</p> <p>The application property is a grade II* listed former fire station designed by Charles Canning Windmill in 1912-15. The building retains many highly significant features which serve to tell the story of the former use of the building and are considered to be of architectural interest in their own right, including the original watch tower with its iron spiral stair and hose drying chamber, which is a vertical shaft that rises from ground floor level up to the full height of the building. Within the tower, the original series of rooms are retained and focus on the hose opening, which is bounded by railings. These rooms comprise simple brick boxes with chimney stacks passing through and small windows on the west elevation.</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>The proposal is to create a self-contained residential dwelling within the tower. This would involve subdivision of the principle staircase landing space at second floor level with a new glazed partition, infill of the vertical hose shaft within the tower, removal of the existing iron staircase and insertion of a new larger staircase, removal of the solid brick partitioning around the existing staircase, removal of all existing internal chimney stacks, insertion of new partitioning, insertion of a new access hatch to the roof and new handrail to the inner side of the parapet.</p> <p>Position</p> <p>The proposals are considered to cause a high degree of harm to the significance of the listed building by reason of the loss of significant historic fabric, which includes the circular staircase, chimney stacks and brick partitioning, and the loss of plan form of the building, particularly in relation to the subdivision of the second floor landing and the loss of the vertical hose shaft. We cannot see that the proposals create any public benefits that would sufficiently outweigh the proposed harm and</p>			

	<p>would support any recommendation of refusal of listed building consent for this application.</p> <p>Recommendation Historic England has serious concerns regarding this application on heritage grounds.</p> <p>We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 195 and 196 of the NPPF.</p> <p>In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.</p>
<p>CAAC response:</p>	<p><u>2018/4394/P</u></p> <p>No objection received from Belsize CAAC</p> <p><u>2018/4910/L</u></p> <p>Belsize CAAC made the following comments:</p> <p>‘We would have no objection to the removal of the chimneys and stack on the tower, however we would object strongly to the removal of the other two chimney and indeed to any alterations to the external appearance of this fine building.’</p>

Site Description

The application site refers to a five storey Grade II* listed tower associated with the former Belsize Fire Station, also Grade II* listed. Both buildings were designed by Charles Canning Windmill in 1912-15.

The tower was designed to perform the twin roles of drying hoses, which were dangled through a series of apertures in the centre of each level and of training firemen in moving through dark, confined spaces, to which end it was designed to present a series of tight, winding staircases and claustrophobic spaces

Of the tower, the Historic England list description reads, '*...Also impressive is the monumental tower, which does not disrupt the domestic character despite its height and breadth; the segmental arched and lattice work recessed panels in the brickwork soften its bulk.*'

The building is located in the Belsize Conservation Area.

Relevant History

Belsize Fire Station

2016/5813/P - Change of use of part of former fire station (Sui Generis) to provide 5 self-contained residential units (Class C3) and installation of cycle parking enclosure. **Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement 28/06/2017**

2016/6119/L - Internal alterations associated with the change of use of part of former fire station (Sui Generis) to provide 5 self-contained residential units (Class C3) and installation of cycle parking enclosure (Ref no. 2016/5813/P). **Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement 04/07/2017**

2016/0745/P - Part change of use of former fire station (Sui Generis) to provide 11 self-contained residential units (Class C3) including replacement single storey side extension to east elevation and erection of two single storey side extensions to west elevation and insertion of roof dormers, with associated external alterations, landscaping and parking. **Granted 04/07/2017**

2016/1228/L - Demolition of existing side extension and replacement with single storey side extension to east elevation and erection of two single storey side extensions to west elevation and insertion of roof dormers, with associated external alterations, landscaping and parking associated with planning application for the change of use of former fire station (Sui Generis) to provide 11 self-contained residential units (Class C3) (Ref no. 2016/0745/P). **Granted 04/07/2017**

Relevant policies

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

London Plan 2016

Draft London Plan 2017

Camden Local Plan 2017

A1 Managing the impact of development

A3 Biodiversity

H1 Maximising housing supply

H4 Maximising the supply of affordable housing

H6 Housing choice and mix

H7 Large and small homes

D1 Design

D2 Heritage

C2 Community facilities

CC1 Climate change mitigation

T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

T2 Parking and car-free development

Camden Planning Guidance

CPG1 Design (2013) - Section 3 (Heritage)

CPG Amenity (2018) – Section 7 (Overlooking, privacy and outlook)

CPG Housing

CPG Transport (2015) – Section 9 (cycling facilities)

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Statement (2002)

Assessment

1 Proposal

1.1 The application seeks planning permission for internal and external alterations in association with the conversion of the fire tower (Sui Generis) to a 1-bed residential unit (Use Class C3).

1.2 No revisions have been undertaken during the course of the application.

2 Assessment

2.1 The main considerations in the determination of the application are:

- Land use
- Standard of residential accommodation
- Affordable Housing
- Design and Heritage
- Amenity of neighbouring occupiers
- Transport considerations
- Sustainability
- Biodiversity

2.2 As the application site is situated within the Belsize Conservation Area and the building is Grade II* listed, the statutory provisions relevant to the determination of these applications are Section 16, 72 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

2.3 Section 16 requires that in considering whether to grant listed building consent for development which affects a listed building, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building, its setting and its features of special architectural or historic interest.

2.4 Section 66 of the Act requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building, its setting and its features of special architectural or historic interest.

2.5 Section 72 of the Act requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development in a Conservation Area, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

2.6 The NPPF terms listed buildings designated heritage assets. Section 12 of the NPPF provides guidance on managing change to designated heritage assets through the planning system, including avoiding or justifying harm to the special architectural or historic interest of listed buildings. Paragraph 134 states that "less-than-substantial harm" to a designated heritage asset must be outweighed by the public benefits secured by the proposals, including heritage benefits to the assets.

3 Land use

3.1 Self-contained housing is regarded as the priority land-use of the Camden Local Plan and Policy H1 states that the Council will make housing its top priority when considering the future of unused and underused land and buildings. The proposal would provide an additional 1-bed residential unit (Use Class C3) and is therefore compliant with policy H1 in terms of land use.

3.2 Policy H7 seeks to provide a range of unit sizes to meet demand across the borough and regards 2 and 3 bed units as high priority whilst 1-bed are identified as lower priority. Given the heritage

constraints of the building, however, there is no scope for enlarging the size of the unit and therefore the proposed unit size is considered acceptable.

3.3 The fire station tower is now redundant for its original purpose. The loss of the Sui Generis floorspace has been established under planning refs. 2016/0745/P and 2016/5813/P, which involved the conversion of the fire station to 16 residential units in total.

4 Standard of residential accommodation

Space standards

4.1 CPG2 requires development to provide high quality housing that provides secure, well-lit accommodation that has well-designed layouts and rooms.

4.2 The London Plan introduced new Nationally Described Space Standards in March 2015, setting out minimum gross internal floor areas (GIA) and accommodation standards for new/converted residential units. The GIA standards for a 1-bed unit as proposed, are as follows:

1 bedroom 1 person flat – 39 sqm

1 bedroom 2 person flat – 50 sqm

4.3 The proposed unit would provide 54.6 sqm of living accommodation (entrance lobby excluded as door would lead directly onto staircase). The space standards require additional space to be provided when dwellings are provided over a number of floors – in this case three – although the sizes over multiple floors are not specified for a 1-bed. On balance, whilst slightly short of what may be sought for a unit over three floors, heritage constraints prevent it from being extended and so in this instance the proposed floorspace is considered acceptable.

4.4 The space standards also require a minimum of 2.3m headroom across 75% of the dwelling. The proposed unit would provide headroom of 2.53m at third floor level, 2.22m at fourth floor level and 2.19m at fifth floor level. The headroom would therefore be substandard and shall form part of a reason for refusal.

Daylight/ sunlight

4.5 As a minimum, a dwelling should have at least one habitable room with a window facing within 30 degrees of south in order to make the most of solar gain through passive solar energy. There are south-west facing windows on the building; however these are 80 degrees of south and therefore would not comply. Due to heritage constraints; however, there is no scope to install additional windows.

4.6 All habitable rooms should have access to natural daylight. Each floor and accordingly each room (living room, kitchen/dining and bedroom) would each be served by a south-west facing window which is considered to be of an insufficient size relative to the floor plan to enable each habitable room to receive adequate daylight. In the absence of a daylight assessment to demonstrate how much internal daylight would be received, it is not clear whether the rooms would meet the ADF standards (1% bedrooms; 1.5% living rooms and 2% kitchen/dining).

Outlook

4.7 CPG2 encourages new residential dwellings to be designed to achieve a good level of visual amenity. The dwelling would essentially be single aspect with the one window of 1.2 sqm serving the living room, kitchen and bedroom. This is considered insufficient to provide the dwelling with a good level of outlook.

4.8 Whilst there is scope for a degree of flexibility on the standard of residential accommodation, especially in listed buildings where there are typically heritage constraints, the cumulative impact

of the various aforementioned factors would result in a poor standard of residential accommodation for future occupants.

5 Affordable Housing

5.1 Policy H4 expects a contribution to affordable housing from all developments that provide one or more additional homes and involve a total addition to the residential floorspace of 100sqm GIA or more. Taken on its own, the proposal would not trigger an affordable housing contribution as the uplift of residential floorspace is only 57.6 sqm. Policy H4; however, includes a provision for split or related sites and states that the Council will use planning obligations to ensure that all parts and/or phases of a site make an appropriate contribution to the affordable housing supply.

5.2 Taken together, the two previous permissions provided an affordable housing contribution in the form of 2 intermediate units provided on site (with an additional 0.5 units dismissed as an acceptable marginal shortfall). Were the consented development and the application for the tower to come in as one application, the affordable housing contribution would have been greater, based on the total uplift of residential floorspace. To support this argument, the previous Committee report for planning application ref. 2016/0745/P recognised that the application sought to convert only part of the building and as such, agreed with the applicant that any further change of use of the remainder of the floorspace would trigger a requirement for additional affordable housing based on the whole scheme.

5.3 Under policy H4, for developments with a capacity of less than 25 units, the affordable housing contribution is based on a sliding scale with the target starting at 2% for an additional home (at 100sqm) and is increased by 2% for each home added to the capacity. Based on the floorspace uplift (rounded to the nearest 100sqm), for the development excluding the tower, the affordable housing contribution would be 28% (based on a GIA of 1406 sqm), and for a development including the tower, the affordable housing contribution would be 30% (based on a GIA of 1464 sqm). The difference between the two scenarios results in an affordable housing contribution of an additional 2%. This 2% is then applied to the proposed gross external area (GEA) of the scheme including the tower (GIA of 1464 sqm multiplied by the standard multiplier of 1.25), resulting in 36.6 sqm. This value is then multiplied by £2,650 (the multiplier factor to calculate payment-in-lieu for a market residential scheme) to get the required additional affordable housing contribution of £96,990.

5.4 Were the scheme to be supported, the additional affordable housing contribution would be secured via a S106 legal agreement upon approval of the proposal. In the absence of a legal agreement to secure the affordable housing contribution, the proposal cannot be supported as this would not assist the Council meet housing needs for households in the borough that are unable to access market housing. The lack of affordable housing contribution shall therefore constitute a reason for refusal.

6 Design and Heritage

6.1 The proposal would largely retain the external appearance of the fire station with the external alterations being confined to the removal of three chimney stacks and the installation of a balustrade behind the existing parapet to ensure the proposed terrace is compliant with Building Regulations. The balustrade would measure 25cm and would be installed behind the parapet, with only 8cm exceeding the parapet height. The external alterations would not be perceptible from ground level and therefore the character and appearance of the Belsize conservation area would be preserved. Nevertheless, the demolition of the chimney stacks would constitute loss of historic fabric and is unacceptable in heritage terms.

6.2 The proposed internal alterations are more invasive and would involve the removal of substantial historic fabric as well as changes to plan form. The tower has been designed to provide deliberately cramped access conditions and confined spaces at each level to aid employee training. At present, this unique plan form survives entirely intact, and its purpose-built historic use

is therefore wholly legible.

6.3 The proposal involves infilling the hose drop void and removing the associated iron railings and iron spiral staircase (and surrounding floor) in order to install a larger staircase to enable more comfortable circulation throughout the tower. To ensure compliance with fire safety regulations, steel-and-glass fire lobbies would be inserted on each floor.

6.4 Three chimney breasts and several dividing walls at third, fourth and fifth floor levels would be demolished to provide the desired internal space, eradicating the legibility of the plan form.

6.5 To enable the installation of kitchen and bathroom servicing, it is proposed to dryline the north-eastern wall. This would alter the character of the space, transforming what is currently utilitarian brick to a domestic environment, which is at odds with the building's intended function.

6.6 To allow for a roof terrace it is proposed to replace the existing roof access hatch with a larger one and the installation a new staircase. A balustrade would also be installed behind the parapet. These works alone represent a relatively minor intervention that would not harm the special interest of the tower.

7 Planning balance

7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policies for decision making on development proposals. At the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development'. The protection and enhancement of the historic environment forms one of three core objectives that defines sustainable development.

7.2 Paragraphs 195 and 196 refer to proposed development leading to harm to the significance of heritage assets and the need to weigh this harm in the balance when coming to a decision, including any public benefits of the proposals.

7.3 The proposal would result in the loss of a large volume of historic fabric and would erode the legibility of the intact plan form. In doing so, the building would no longer be understood for its original intended purposes of drying hoses and providing a purpose designed training facility.

7.4 It is recognised that the proposal would bring about harm to the special interest of the Grade II* listed building. In order to support heritage harm, the Council has to identify tangible public benefits arising from the scheme that would outweigh the harm. In this instance, the public benefit would be the provision of one additional residential unit to the Borough's housing stock. This is not considered a sufficient public benefit to outweigh the heritage harm.

8 Impact on the amenity of surrounding occupiers

8.1 There are no external changes proposed to the building's envelope that could result in an adverse impact on daylight/ sunlight or outlook of surrounding residential occupiers. Given the terrace would be five storeys high above ground, there would be no material increase in overlooking of nearby gardens and windows of residential occupiers.

9 Transport Considerations

9.1 In line with Policy T1 of the Local Plan, the Council expect cycle parking at new developments to be provided in accordance with the standards set out within the London Plan. The planning permissions for the adjacent fire station (ref: 2016/0745/P and 2016/5813/P), which is currently underway, has overprovided in terms of cycle parking and therefore it is accepted sufficient accessible, covered and secured cycle parking would exist for the proposed unit.

9.2 Policy T2 requires all redevelopment schemes to be car-free in order to reduce air pollution and congestion and improve the attractiveness of an area for local walking and cycling. The applicant

has indicated that they would be willing to enter into a legal agreement for a car-free development; however, in the absence of a legal agreement being in place at the time of determination, the lack of such agreement shall constitute a reason for refusal.

10 Sustainability

10.1 The submitted planning statement discusses the sustainability merits of the wider development; however, there is a lack of information regarding the sustainable development principles and achievements of the tower alone. Should permission be granted at appeal, the Council would ask that information is provided regarding how the tower would be integrated into the overall sustainability strategy as presented within the planning application documentation. Given that the floorspace uplift is only 57.6 sqm the current application would not trigger the need for a specific BREEAM assessment or target and therefore the lack of information on the sustainability credentials of the proposed development shall not constitute a reason for refusal.

11 Biodiversity

11.1 The applicant undertook a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) on 18th January 2018 which determined that the property had potential to act as a bat roost site based on the condition of the building and the number of potential bat access points including lifted, missing or broken roof tiles, gaps under hanging tiles and in brickwork, and gaps around window frames and air vents. A recommendation of the PRA was to conduct a series surveys to establish bat activity at the site.

11.2 A bat activity survey has been submitted with the application that concludes that no bat roosts were present in any part of the building.

12 Recommendation

12.1 Refuse Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent