



PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSAL: RECONFIGURATION OF THE EXISTING LOWER GROUND 1 X 1 BED FLAT + CREATION OF PROPOSED 1 X 1 BEDROOM FLAT AND 1 X STUDIO FLAT

AT

Norfolk Mansions, Lithos Road, London, NW3 6DU

May 2019

RJS PLANNING

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2.0 THE SITE



Application site and surrounding area

- 2.1 The application site relates to the basement/lower ground level of a detached four storey property which is positioned to the southern side of Lithos Road and is currently subdivided into flats. The area is predominantly residential in character, however, the site is not within a conservation area and the application property is not within the curtilage of a listed building.



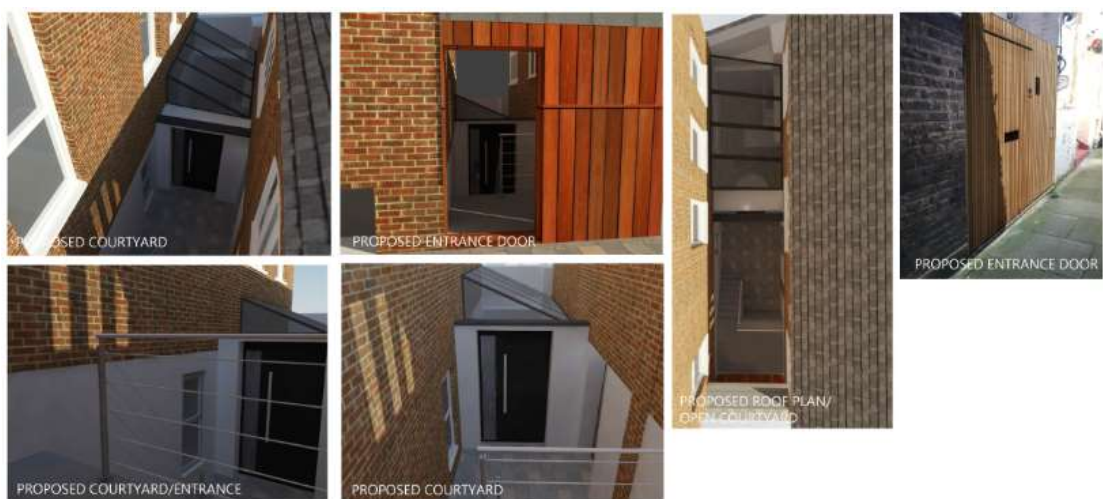
Application property

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3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The application seeks planning permission for the reconfiguration of the existing lower ground 1 x 1 bed flat plus the creation of a proposed 1 x 1 bedroom flat and 1 x studio flat.
- 3.2 The existing flat was approved following application ref 2009/1154/P which gained permission for the change of use of the lower ground floor from office (Class B1) to one x 1 bedroom self-contained flat (Class C3) on 1st July 2009. The existing flat has a GIA of 69m² and the remaining areas of the lower ground floor are used for storage.
- 3.3 The existing 1 bedroom flat, labelled unit 1, would be reconfigured to provide a GIA of 50.1m² whilst unit 2 would provide a studio flat with a GIA of 40.4m² and unit 3 would provide a 1 bedroom unit with a GIA of 50m².
- 3.4 Each flat would benefit from dedicated storage cupboards and would have an efficient layout with regular shaped rooms in order to provide practical living spaces. The layout has also been carefully considered in order to gain most benefit from the existing fenestration whilst additional windows, skylights and lightwells would ensure the internal space benefits from natural daylight and an adequate outlook.
- 3.5 A communal open air courtyard would be provided, as shown below, and unit 3 would also have access to a private courtyard area. The communal courtyard would also provide secure storage for cycles whilst the front curtilage of the property would continue to provide bin storage which is capable of managing the waste requirements of the two additional units.



- 3.6 As demonstrated above, all works would be completed to a high standard utilising appropriate matching material in order to ensure that the scheme produces high quality accommodation and complements the character of the area.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

4.1 The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of the relevant local policies and the relevant guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework. The paragraphs are in a hierarchical order relative to national and local planning policy.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018)

4.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The following sections and paragraphs make reference to the parts of the NPPF which are directly relevant to this application.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

4.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For plan-making this means that:

- a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Decision-taking

- 4.4 Paragraph 38 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- 4.5 Section 5 of the NPPF supports the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes stating that "*it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay*".

Making effective use of land

- 4.6 Section 11 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses. Mixed use schemes should be encouraged and substantial weight given to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, whilst also promoting and supporting the development of under-utilised land and buildings especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained.

Achieving well-designed places

- 4.7 Section 12 of the NPPF refers to design, with paragraph 124 describing how the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, stating that "*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.*"
- 4.8 Paragraph 127 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
 - a) *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*

- b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

4.9 Paragraph 130 states:

“where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development”.

The London Plan

4.10 The London Borough of Brent embraces the sentiments of the London Plan which sets a clear context for considering development needs at local level taking full account of the council’s character. Policies 3.4 and 3.5 are considered relevant.

Policy 3.4: Optimising housing potential

4.11 Taking into account local context and character, the design principles in Chapter 7 and public transport capacity, development should optimise housing output for different types of location within the relevant density range shown in Table 3.2. Development proposals which compromise this policy should be resisted.

Policy 3.5: Quality and Design of Housing Developments

4.12 Policy 3.5 requires housing developments to be of the highest quality internally, externally and in relation to their context and to the wider environment, taking account of strategic policies in the London Plan to protect and enhance London’s residential environment and attractiveness as a place to live. New homes should incorporate minimum space standards and provide layouts which are functional and fit for purpose and meet the changing needs of Londoners over their lifetimes.

Camden Local Plan (2017)

- 4.13 The Camden Local Plan sets out the Council's planning policies and replaces the Core Strategy and Development Policies planning documents (adopted in 2010). Policies D1, G1, H1, H3, H6, H7 and T2 are considered relevant.

Policy D1: Design

- 4.14 The council will seek to secure high quality design in development which amongst other criteria respects local context and character and for housing, provides a high standard of accommodation.

Policy G1: Delivery and location of growth

- 4.15 The Council will create the conditions for growth to deliver the homes, jobs, infrastructure and facilities to meet Camden's identified needs and harness the benefits for those who live and work in the borough.

Policy H1: Maximising housing supply

- 4.16 The Council will aim to secure a sufficient supply of homes to meet the needs of existing and future households by maximising the supply of housing and exceeding a target of 16,800 additional homes from 2016/17 - 2030/31, including 11,130 additional self-contained homes. The council will seek to achieve this by a number of means including on sites which are underused or vacant.

Policy H3: Protecting existing homes

- 4.17 The council will aim to ensure that existing housing continues to meet the needs of existing and future households by resisting development that would involve a net loss of residential floorspace.

Policy H6: Housing choice and mix

- 4.18 The Council will aim to minimise social polarisation and create mixed, inclusive and sustainable communities by seeking high quality accessible homes and by seeking a variety of housing suitable for Camden's existing and future households, having regard to household type, size, income and any particular housing needs.

Policy H7: Large and small homes

- 4.19 The Council will aim to secure a range of homes of different sizes that will contribute to creation of mixed, inclusive and sustainable communities and reduce mismatches between housing needs and existing supply.

Policy T2: Parking and car-free development

- 4.20 The Council will limit the availability of parking and require all new developments in the borough to be car-free.

5.0 THE PLANNING CASE

Introduction

5.1 This section will demonstrate that the proposal for reconfiguration of the existing lower ground 1 x 1 bed flat plus the creation of a proposed 1 x 1 bedroom flat and 1 x studio flat is acceptable in terms of the principle; affordable housing; the living standards for future occupiers; the design; impact on neighbour amenity; transport; and, refuse and recycling.

5.2 As such, the main considerations in the assessment of this application relate to:

- Principle of development;
- Affordable housing;
- Living standards for future occupiers
- Design
- Impact on neighbour amenity;
- Transport;
- Refuse and Recycling.

Principle of development

5.3 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework the council is committed to the supply of new dwellings and sets out ways in which this can be achieved. Policy H1 (Maximising housing supply) states that the council will aim to secure a sufficient supply of homes to meet the needs of existing and future households by maximising the supply of housing and exceeding the targets set.

5.4 The proposal seeks to reconfigure the existing flat to continue to provide a 1 x 1 bedroom unit whilst utilising underused space and storage areas to provide two further self-contained units comprising 1 x 1 bedroom flat and 1 x studio flat.

5.5 The principle of providing additional residential accommodation at a site which already contains residential flats and thus, maximising the supply of additional homes in the borough is therefore, considered appropriate.

5.6 Given the above points, it is stated that the proposed scheme should be considered acceptable in principle subject to the conversion according with other relevant national, regional and local planning policy and guidance.

Affordable housing

5.7 Local Plan policy H4 (Maximising the supply of affordable housing) states that the council will expect a contribution to affordable housing from all developments that

provide one or more additional homes and involve a total addition to residential floorspace of 100m² GIA or more.

- 5.8 Whilst the proposal would create two additional residential units there would only be a 71.5m² increase in floorspace and therefore, according to the requirements of policy H4 an affordable housing contribution would not be required.

Living standards for future occupiers

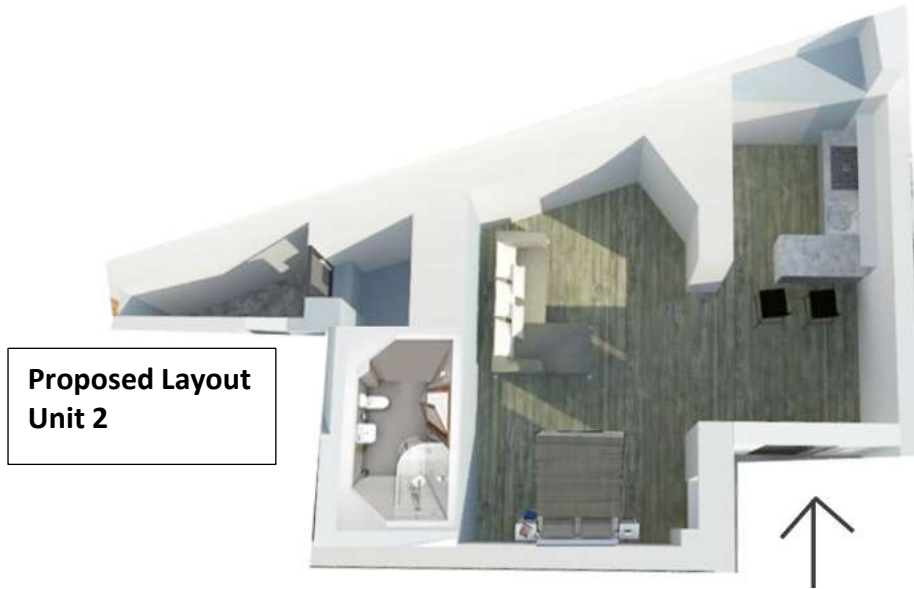
- 5.9 London Plan policy 3.5 (Quality and design of housing developments) seeks to ensure that housing developments are of the highest quality internally, externally and in relation to their context and to the wider environment. Table 3.3 demonstrates the minimum space standards required for new dwellings taking into account the number of bedrooms, occupants and storeys proposed.

- 5.10 The proposal seeks to reconfigure the existing flat and introduce two additional units of accommodation which would achieve the recommended floor areas as demonstrated below.

5.11	Unit 1	1 bedroom 2 person	GIA 50.1m ²
	Comprising of:	Kitchen/living/dining room	27.0m ²
		Bedroom	13.5m ²
		Bathroom	3.5m ²
		Storage cupboard	1.5m ²



5.12	Unit 2	Studio flat 1 person	GIA 40.4m ²
	Comprising of:	Bedroom/kitchen/living/dining	32.7m ²
		Bathroom	3.5m ²
		Storage cupboard	3.0m ²



5.13	Unit 3	1 bedroom 2 person	GIA 50.0m ²
	Comprising of:	Kitchen/living/dining room	27.0m ²
		Bedroom	13.8m ²
		Bathroom	2.8m ²
		Storage cupboards	1.5m ²



5.14 As demonstrated above, each unit would benefit from an efficient layout with regular shaped rooms in order to allow easy placement of furniture with sufficient

circulation space. Whilst each unit would comply with the national space standards in terms of gross internal areas the floor to ceiling height would be maintained throughout at 2.4m to ensure the development is of adequate quality especially in terms of a sense of space.

- 5.15 Existing windows would be retained and additional windows added; large skylights and lightwells would also be installed to improve daylight within each unit and to ensure adequate ventilation as shown on drawing no. P-04 '*Proposed Site Plan Roof Plan*'.
- 5.16 Furthermore, a communal area of external amenity space of 8.4m² would be provided in addition to a private lightwell accessed from unit 3 that would provide 4m² of space.



Proposed lightwell area for unit 3

- 5.17 In summary, the proposed development is considered to provide good living standards for future occupiers and would thus, comply with the aims of the London Plan, the Nationally Described Space Standards and the council's Planning Guidance Housing.

Design, Scale and Appearance

- 5.18 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that “*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*”.
- 5.19 Local Plan policy D1 (Design) seeks to secure high quality design in development that respects local context and character comprising details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character.
- 5.20 The scheme does not seek to make any significant alterations to the building although as described proposes to install a new window within the west facing elevation to serve a bedroom. The window would match the existing side windows at this level in the property.
- 5.21 An existing side entrance door would also be replaced with a high quality unit and the courtyard area would be enhanced through refurbishment whilst the introduction of the large glazed rooflights would maximise light capture and also produce a contemporary appearance to the property.



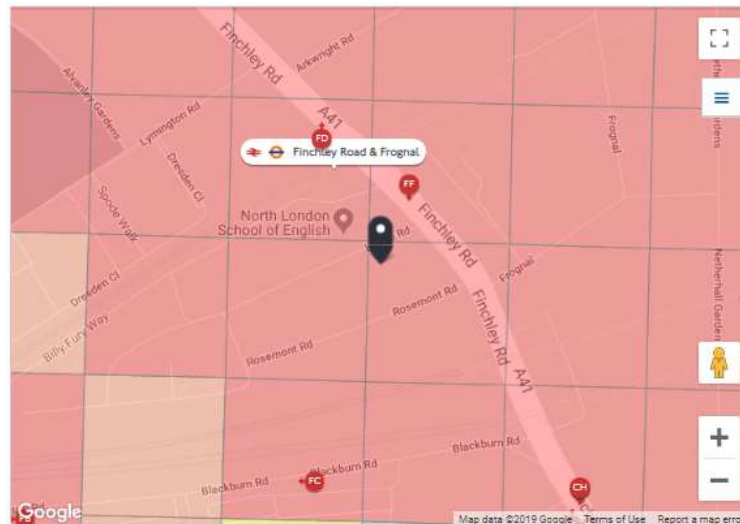
- 5.22 All internal work would be completed to a high standard utilising high quality fittings whilst planting schemes would be introduced into the lightwell areas in order to improve outlook and provide pleasant living conditions.
- 5.23 Overall, the changes to the property are considered to conform to the design aspirations of the NPPF, the London Plan as well as Local Plan policy D1 (Design).

Impact on neighbour amenity

- 5.24 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 5.25 Local Plan policy A1 (Managing the impact of development) states that the council will seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours in regard to privacy, outlook, noise, artificial lighting levels, daylight and overshadowing requiring mitigation measures where necessary.
- 5.26 Given the modest changes proposed the development would not lead to any unacceptable impacts in regard to outlook, daylight and overshadowing. In addition, the new windows and proposed rooflights would not unacceptably impact upon neighbouring privacy and lighting within the units would only illuminate the intended area and not affect or impact on the amenity of neighbours.
- 5.27 Although the development seeks to introduce two additional units of accommodation given the scale of the conversion it would not lead to a significant increase in comings and goings and therefore, noise levels would not be so great to impact on nearby residential units.
- 5.28 However, the applicant is willing to install any mitigating measures deemed appropriate in the circumstances of the case in order to protect neighbouring amenity.
- 5.29 In summary, the proposed development would adhere to the aims of the NPPF as well as Local Plan policy A1 (Managing the impact of development) by protecting the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours.

Transport

- 5.30 The London Plan aims to reduce the need to travel by offering alternatives to the car and is committed to improving the environment by encouraging more sustainable means of transport. Policy 6.9 (Cycling) states that new development should provide secure, integrated, convenient and accessible cycle parking facilities in line with the minimum standards set out in Table 6.3.
- 5.31 Local Plan policy T2 (Parking and car-free development) states that the council will limit the availability of parking and require all new developments in the borough to be car-free.
- 5.32 The application site has a PTAL rating of 6a indicating it is within a highly accessible location with excellent access to sustainable modes of transport.



You can click anywhere on the map to change the selected location.

PTAL output for Base Year 6a

NW3 6DU
Lithos Rd, West Hampstead, London NW3 6DU, UK
Easting: 526105, Northing: 184978

- 5.33 Consequently, no on-site parking is proposed as part of the scheme and the applicant would be willing, if necessary, to enter into a legal agreement to secure the car free development and to restrict the ability of future occupiers from obtaining on-street parking permits.
- 5.34 Drawing no. P-03 '*Proposed lower ground floor plan*' illustrates that the scheme would provide sufficient secure cycle storage for all occupants of the flats in accordance with the requirements of table 6.3 of the London Plan which requires 1 space per studio and 1 bedroom unit.
- 5.35 Given the above points, the proposed development would not lead to any detrimental impacts on highway safety and would provide an adequate level of cycle storage for the proposed number of occupants.

Refuse and Recycling

- 5.36 A bin storage area is proposed for the units and would be contained within the front curtilage of the site. This arrangement would be in keeping with the existing situation and follow the pattern used at neighbouring properties where access to the rear is unavailable.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed conversion would optimise the potential of the site and support the need for new homes of all proportions within the borough as the development would result in the net gain of two additional units of accommodation. This development would go some way in assisting the council to achieve their aims of providing much needed smaller units of accommodation which contribute to the requirement for the provision of an adequate mix of dwelling types in the context of changing social circumstances.
- 6.2 It is evident that the proposed reconfiguration and conversion would provide a high standard of accommodation that conforms with the Nationally Described Space Standards. The application site can also comfortably contain the cycle parking, waste and storage requirements necessary to accommodate the future needs of each unit without detrimentally impacting upon the visual amenity of the character of the area and furthermore, the development would not result in any negative impacts on neighbouring amenity.
- 6.3 In regard to a car-free development the applicant would be willing to enter into a legal agreement to secure the car free development and to restrict the ability of future occupiers from obtaining on-street parking permits.
- 6.4 Therefore, it is asserted that this proposal is entirely acceptable in planning terms and that there can be no objection to the broad principle of the development. However, the applicants are willing to work proactively with the council in order to make any additional changes that may possibly be required to reach a successful outcome and gain planning consent upon the site for the proposed reconfiguration of the existing unit and the introduction of two additional self-contained units.
- 6.5 Mindful that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible and that applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, for the above reasons, it is politely requested that this application is granted planning permission at the earliest opportunity with any conditions deemed appropriate to the circumstances of this case.