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BRANCH HILL, FORMER CARE HOME SITE, NW3 7LS

Introduction

This pre-application advice follows our site meeting of 11 June 2018 and our subsequent meeting of 04 July 2018.

The site

The Branch Hill House site is located on the western side of Branch Hill and covers approximately 0.63 hectares in area. The site is located approximately 250m west of the Hampstead Town Centre. The site is bound by Heysham Lane to the north, Branch Hill to the east, some allotments to the south and the Grade II listed Spedan Close Estate to the west. There is an access road which dissects the site into two distinct halves which is known as Spedan Close.

The premises is currently owned by the London Borough of Camden and has been in use as a care home (Use Class C2 – Residential Institutions) until 2015 from which time the site has been vacant.

In terms of the site's designations, the following are relevant to the site:

- Within the Hampstead Conservation Area;
- Archaeological Priority Area;
- The triangular portion of land and much of the surrounding area north of Spedan Close is identified as a Site of Important Nature Conservation (SINC) - (A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) was previously served on this area (Ref no. C1170 2016) however as the TPO was not 'confirmed' the SINC designation protects the trees in planning terms);
- There are also two underground constraints on site including slope stability and groundwater flow;
- The site is covered by an Article 4 direction removing certain permitted development rights;
- The main building to Branch Hill House is recognised as making a positive contribution to the conservation area whilst the extension, which was built some time in the late 1960s, is considered to detract from the setting of the conservation area.
- The Spedan Close Estate, bordering the site is grade II listed.

Documents submitted:

'Pre-application meeting no. 1' (Duggan Morris Architects), 'Outline Heritage Statement' (Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture) June 2018.

Proposals

At present there have been no concrete proposals presented. The scheme is likely to be a residential development, involving the demolition of the 1960s extension to Branch Hill House, the conversion of this house to Class C3 residential and the erection of new buildings, also for Class C3 purposes. The form and layout of these buildings is in discussion and we look forward to working with you on this.

Planning History

The following planning history is relevant to this site:

CTP/D6/11/A/3232 – The erection of a two storey wing for use as an Old Peoples' Home. – Granted 12/04/1967.

D6/11/A/6322 – Demolition of part of the 4 chimney stacks. – Granted 22/01/1969.

CTP/D6/11/A/13934 – The erection of a one-bedroom experimental house in the grounds of Branch Hill Lodge, Branch Hill, N.W.3. – Granted 22/08/1972.

8500299 – Enclosure of a car parking area as shown on drawing No.S2034/SS1D. – Granted 22/10/1986.

9500756 – Erection of a two storey glazed infill extension between the main house and the side wing as shown on drawing numbers BM/01 10A 20 and 21A. – Granted 08/12/1995.

Loss of care home use

Loss of care home use

The lawful use of the site is as a residential care home which falls within the C2 Use Class (Residential Institutions) allowing for the possibility to continue to use the site as a care home by a new occupier.

The change of use of the premises would need to be justified in accordance with policy H8 – (Housing for older people, homeless people and vulnerable people). The policy notes that the Local Planning Authority seeks to protect such uses and will therefore need to be satisfied that development involving the loss of care home is justified. A change of use application would need to be evidenced and assessed against the policy and criteria as set out within policy H8 (points (f) to (j)).

The re-provision of the previous care home facilities (off-site) at Branch Hill House, as part of the Council's wider strategy, provides a strong basis for a potential change of use but satisfactory evidence will still be required in support of an application against policy H8. I understand that the home was reprovided at Wellesley Road. The loss of the care home on the Branch Hill site would be considered acceptable subject to providing satisfactory evidence in line with the above policy.

If the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the loss of the care home is justified it will be expected to create an equivalent amount of floorspace for an alternative form of supported housing, or for permanent self-contained housing for people with support needs or for general needs (in Use Class C3), including an appropriate amount of affordable housing, having regard to Policy H4.

Proposed residential use

Introduction

Camden Local Plan policies H1, H2, H4, H6, H7 and Camden Planning Guidance 2 (Housing) are relevant with regard to the provision of housing, including affordable housing. Residential use is the Council's priority land use and is welcomed in principle.

Tenure

Under London Plan policies 3.10, 3.11 and 3.12, and the above Camden Local Plan policies, 50% of housing provision should be affordable and our expectation is that this target is achieved. The split of the affordable housing provided should be 60% social rented and 40% intermediate. In terms of the nature of the intermediate accommodation it should be in line with the Council's adopted Intermediate Housing Strategy.

Mix

Policy H7 requires homes of different sizes to meet the priorities set out in the Dwelling Size Priorities Table (see below). The proposed unit mix should broadly accord with this table, although the Council will be flexible when assessing development.

Table 1: Dwelling Size Priorities

	1-bedroom (or studio)	2-bedroom	3-bedroom	4-bedroom (or more)
Social-affordable rented	lower	high	high	medium
Intermediate affordable	high	medium	lower	lower
Market	lower	high	high	lower

Unit sizes

The proposed residential accommodation should meet the National Space Standards, which are outlined below. Any discrepancies should be strongly justified.

Number of bedrooms	Number of bed spaces	Minimum GIA (m ²)			Built-in storage (m ²)
		1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	
1b	1p	39 (37)*			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0

Notes to Table 3 3

- * Where a one person dwelling has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m² to 37m², as shown bracketed.
- The Gross Internal Area of a dwelling is defined as the total floor space measured between the internal faces of perimeter walls¹ that enclose a dwelling. This includes partitions, structural elements, cupboards, ducts, flights of stairs and voids above stairs. GIA should be measured and denoted in square metres (m²).
- The nationally described space standard sets a minimum ceiling height of 2.3 meters for at least 75% of the gross internal area of the dwelling. To address the unique heat island effect of London and the distinct density and flatted nature of most of its residential development, a minimum ceiling height of 2.5m for at least 75% of the gross internal area is strongly encouraged so that new housing is of adequate quality, especially in terms of light, ventilation and sense of space.

Amenity of the proposed flats

All residential developments are required to be designed and built to create high quality homes. The Council will seek to ensure that residential development, in both new build and change of use:

- is self-contained and has its own secure private entrance;
- has good ceiling heights and room sizes;
- is dual aspect except in exceptional circumstances;
- has good natural light and ventilation;
- has good insulation from noise and vibration;
- has a permanent partition between eating and sleeping areas (studio flats are acceptable where they provide adequate space to separate activities);
- 3+ bed units should separate kitchen and living areas;
- incorporates adequate storage space;
- incorporates outdoor amenity space including balconies or terraces; and
- is accessible and adaptable for a range of occupiers.

The London Plan Housing SPG (March 2016) requires all flats to have private amenity space as follows:

Standard 26

- A minimum of 5sqm of private outdoor space should be provided for 1-2 person dwellings and an extra 1sqm should be provided for each additional occupant.

Standard 27

- The minimum depth and width for all balconies and other private external spaces should be 1500mm.

A daylight/sunlight report should be submitted with any future applications demonstrating that the proposed flats would receive sufficient daylight. A noise report should be submitted as part of any future application and should include the impact on proposed residential accommodation as well as existing residential accommodation (see 'Amenity of neighbouring properties' below).

All housing should meet Part M4(2) building regulations. We require 10% of units to be wheelchair homes or easily adaptable.

A noise report should be submitted as part of any future application and should include the impact on proposed residential accommodation as well as existing residential accommodation (see 'Amenity of neighbouring properties' below).

You will be required to include mitigation and offsetting measures to deal with any negative air quality impacts associated with your development proposals. At the same time your development should be designed to minimise exposure of occupants to existing poor air quality. An Air Quality Assessment would be required as part of any future application.

Conservation and design

Policies D1, D2 and CPG1 (Design) of the Camden Local Plan are relevant to conservation and design. The proposals should preserve and/or enhance the character of the conservation area.

We generally agree with the assessment of the contribution the building makes to the conservation area in the outline heritage statement (starting on page 62), which clearly concludes the Edwardian building does make a positive contribution. However, one area where we differ in opinion with this document is the section relating to landmark quality. Whilst there have been modifications over time, our view is that the Edwardian building is a distinguishing feature in the landscape and the legibility of the site as a brick built mansion (marking the site and location of Branch Hill House) set in a large garden and with an entrance way marked by a (listed) gatehouse is really important and also reflects the historical development of Hampstead.

We consider that the sense of openness and the verdant character of the site are very important and that any new structures would need to maintain the historic character of a mansion set in generous grounds with a logical access point leading from the gatehouse.

With regards to height, for any increase in height above the mansion to be considered, the above character would need to be preserved and the design would need to be articulated well- i.e. it shouldn't read as a solid block. We note that the Flitcroft designed portion of the house had a taller tower element.

We consider that the options presented so far in terms of the access road routes are all potentially workable and worth exploring, as well as the development options (with the exception of the demolition of Branch Hill House). The acceptability of the proposals will of course depend on the impact/scale/massing.

Amenity of neighbouring properties

Policy A1 and CPG6 (Amenity) of the Camden Local Plan are relevant with regards to the amenity impact on neighbouring properties.

A daylight/sunlight assessment should be submitted as part of any future application to demonstrate that there would be no material impact on neighbouring properties. Whilst student accommodation may not be afforded the same protection as Class C3 residential, the impact on the student flats to the north should also be tested and should not be materially affected. Overlooking should also be addressed.

Details of all plant and ventilation, including equipment related to the proposed station entrance, are required and a noise report should be submitted as part of any future application.

Transport

Car parking

Camden Local Plan policy T2 is relevant with regards car parking. All new developments

At our recent meeting, you stated that car parking was envisaged on a 1:1 basis. This would be contrary to policy T2 and would not be considered acceptable. I note that there is existing car parking on site, however, this served the care home and these spaces would not be allowed for Class C3 housing.

The proposal would be secured as car free under a Section 106 Agreement.

Cycle parking

Cycle parking should be provided in line with the standards laid out in the London Plan 2016 for both the residential and commercial elements. The residential standards are:

- 1 space per studio and 1 bedroom unit
- 2 spaces per all other dwellings.

Nature conservation and biodiversity

I have emailed Caroline Birchall to see if she is happy with the approach and am still awaiting a response. I will update you when I hear back.

As stated above, the verdant nature of the site is of the utmost importance. Any impacts on the SINCs and trees in the area would need to be detailed and justified. Improvements would be expected where possible.

Sustainability

Camden Local plan policies CC1, CC2 and CC3 are relevant with regards sustainability and climate change. You must demonstrate how your development complies with these policies.

Conclusion

The loss of the care home use would require justification.

The provision of housing is welcomed. Affordable housing should be provided in line with policy and any discrepancy should be justified.

We are open to working with you on the proposed development options, including the approach routes.

The SINCs and trees on and around the site should be maintained and enhanced.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The development would be subject to the Mayor of London's Crossrail CIL at £50 per sqm of new floorspace (net uplift) given that more than 100sqm increase in floorspace is proposed.

The proposal by its size and land use type will be liable for the London Borough of Camden's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) at £250 per sqm of new floorspace introduced on the 1st April 2015 to help pay for local infrastructure.

Section 106 Obligations

Policy CS19 and CPG8 (Planning obligations) are relevant with regards to planning obligations.

The section 106 obligations below are likely to be included in an agreement. Please note that this list is not exhaustive – especially given the very initial stage of the pre-application.

Potential s106 terms

- Car free
- Sustainability/energy
- Construction Management Plan
- Highways contribution
- Pedestrian, Cycling and Environmental contribution
- Public Open Space
- Affordable housing
- Employment and training

You are encouraged to undertake public consultation, including with local groups, before the submission of any planning applications. The details of any should be provided within a Statement of Community Involvement.

Information to be submitted with any planning application (not exhaustive)

- Planning Statement
- Regeneration Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Health Impact Assessment
- Architectural drawings (existing and proposed floorplans, elevations, sections and roofplans)
- Demolition plans (if necessary)
- Design and Access Statement (DAS) (inc. The Lifetime Homes Statement, waste storage and collection and Crime Impact Assessment)
- Viability Assessment (if scheme is not policy compliant on affordable housing)
- Affordable Housing Statement
- Heritage Statement and photographs
- Structural Report (TBC)
- Basement Impact Assessment
- Archaeological Assessment
- Biodiversity survey and report
- Tree survey / arboricultural statement
- An Air Quality Assessment (if over 75 units)
- Daylight and sunlight assessment
- Sustainability Statement (design and construction)
- Flood Risk Assessment

- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Strategy
- Transport assessment and travel plan
- Servicing Management Plan
- Construction Management Plan
- Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA)
- Noise Report

Please note that failure to provide all of the above information with any planning application is likely to lead to delays in the application being validated. Please note, this list is not exhaustive, and other documents may be required to validate the application if they are considered necessary at a later date.

Disclaimer:

This document represents the Council's initial view of your proposals based on the information available to us at this stage. It should not be interpreted as formal confirmation that your application will be acceptable nor can it be held to prejudice formal determination of any planning application we receive from you on this proposal.

If you have any queries about the above letter or the attached document please contact **David Fowler** on **020 7974 2123**.

Thank you for using Camden's pre-application advice service.

Yours sincerely,

David Fowler
Principal Planning Officer