

**112 Cleveland Street, London, W1T 6PA**

**Planning application for the conversion of the existing residential premises (first to third floor) to provide 3 self-contained residential units (Use Class C3).**

**Planning, Design and Access Statement**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 On behalf of the owner of the above property please find enclosed a planning application for the conversion of the existing residential premises at first to third floor level to provide x 3 self-contained residential units (Use Class C3) together with associated works.
- 1.2 The property as a whole comprises a retail unit at ground and basement level and residential floorspace above. The premises are vacant and need to be fully refurbished in order to secure both new commercial and residential tenants. This application is one of a number of applications being brought forward by the new owners which holistically are intended to optimise the use of the property, providing improvements both in terms of operation and appearance that will, by meeting local demand ensure the long-term occupation of the property.

## **2.0 Description of application site and surroundings**

- 2.1 This application relates to the first, second and third floors of 112 Cleveland Street which is currently vacant. The first, second and third floors have a long-term residential use. The existing premises are laid out in the form of a 1x 1 bed residential unit at first floor and a 2x bed residential unit over second and third floors. Both units are self-contained and maintain the general layout that was shown on the 'as built plans' submitted as part of application Ref 2013/5159/P which showed self-contained units (Use Class C3).
- 2.2 The wider property is three storey mid –terrace building with basement and mansard roof addition. To the rear is the now separate 10 Warren Mews. The basement and ground floor level of the shop has a retail use (Use Class A1) and is currently vacant. The upper floors of the premises have a shared with the ground floor.
- 2.3 In terms of the wider area the north-west side of Cleveland Street is largely residential at ground floor whilst the north east side is largely commercial in character with a mix of retail, restaurant and office. The upper floors are in a mix of residential and ancillary commercial uses.

## **3.0 Relevant planning history**

- 3.1 On 26 June 2014 planning permission (Ref 2013/5159/P) was granted for the retention of retail unit and ancillary storage space at basement and ground floor levels (Class A1) and proposed change of use from HMO (Class C4) on ground, first, second and third floor levels to 1 x 1 bedroom self-contained flat and 1 x 3 bedroom self-contained maisonette (Class C3).
- 3.2 The Planning Officers Report recognised that further to the changes to permitted development rights the change of use from bedsits under Use Class C4 to residential under C3 would not be resisted in principle.
- 3.3 In describing the premises, it was stated that the upper floors lawfully accommodate four bedsit units with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities but that from the findings of the site visit in October 2013 the entire building had been converted into self-contained residential units. The 'as build' plans submitted with this application show three self-contained residential units at first to third floor level (1 x bed first floor rear, 1x bed first floor front and 1x 2 bed at second and third floor).
- 3.4 We understand that on 13 September 2012 an enforcement notice was issued in respect of the conversion of the ground and basement floor retail unit (Class A1) to 2x self-contained flats, alterations to shopfront and conversion of four non self-contained 'bed sitting' accommodation units with shared facilities to 3x self-contained flats (Class C3) at first to third floor levels. This notice required the previous owner to make good the works including re-instating the 'bed sitting accommodation'.
- 3.5 On 24 September 2008 planning permission was refused (Ref 2008/2688/P) for the change of use from 4 x non- self-contained units (HMO) (with double garage) to 3 x non-self-contained units and one self-contained studio flat (with single garage), alterations to the front and rear fenestration, installation of a roof light at rear second floor level and reinstatement of front

basement lightwell with railings and bridge to provide access to existing ground floor retail unit.

- 3.6 The planning officers report stated that the upper floors accommodated four bedsit units with shared kitchen facilities. The existing plans submitted showed 2 x bedsit rooms at first floor, one to the front and one to the rear (now the separate Warren Mews) and a bedsit at second and third floor respectively.
- 3.7 Planning application 2007/6437/P was submitted and subsequently withdrawn on 20 March 2008 for the change of use from 3 x non self-contained units (HMO) to 3 x self-contained units (1x studio, 1 x 2 bed and 1x 3 bed) including works of conversion comprising erection of a rear extension at second floor level with a balustrade above for use of the roof as a terrace; new and replacement windows to front and rear, including a new shopfront window; and opening up of the front light well and provision of railings.

#### **4.0 Proposals**

- 4.1 The proposal seeks the conversion of the existing residential floorspace on the upper floors to provide 3 x self-contained residential units (Use Class C3). The existing accommodation is in a poor state of repair and the premises are in need of full renovation.
- 4.2 The proposed layout provides 3 self-contained 1 person units each with shower room. The units are dual aspect. The living accommodation is to the front with the bedroom to the rear.
- 4.3 Access remains unchanged and is via the shared access from Cleveland Street.
- 4.4 The disposal of waste and recycling would be via on-street collection as per the existing situation.

#### **5.0 Relevant Planning Policy and Material Planning Considerations**

- 5.1 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2014 applications are to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for the site comprises the London Plan (2016), Camden Local Plan (adopted 3 July 2017) and Fitzrovia Area Action Plan (2014).
- 5.2 In terms of emerging policy, the New London Plan is at an advanced stage. Policies contained in the Intend to Publish (ItP) London Plan published in December 2019 are a material planning consideration.

##### **NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) adopted 2019 is a material consideration in decision making. In seeking to achieving sustainable development the planning system has three overarching objectives economic, social and environmental. The social objective is – *“to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being”*.
- 5.4 Chapter 5 supports the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes. Paragraph 59 states that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, and that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements need to be addressed.
- 5.5 Paragraph 61 promotes a mix of size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes.

## LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

### Land Use Designations

- 5.6 The Site is located within the Growth Area, Central London Area and Fitzrovia Area Action Plan. It is within the Cleveland Street District Centre and within the Fitzroy Square Conservation Area.
- 5.7 The wider terrace 108-126 (even) which includes the application property is identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the immediate surroundings and to the Conservation Area as a whole. The closest listed buildings are at Nos 68 and 106 Cleveland Street.

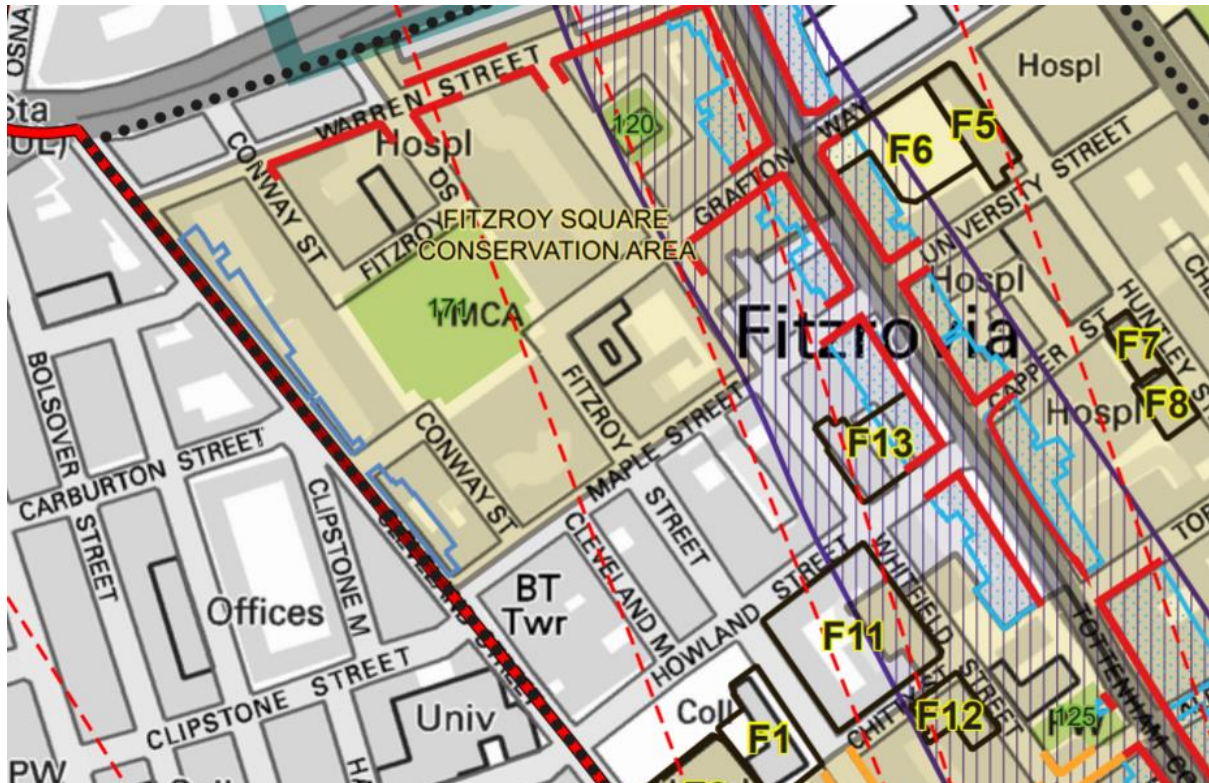


Fig 1. Extract from Camden Local Plan Adopted Proposals Map (2017)

### Housing Policy

- 5.8 London Plan Policy 3.3 *Increasing Housing Supply* promotes opportunity and promotes choice for all Londoners in ways that meet their needs at a price they can afford.
- 5.9 London Plan Policy 3.5 *Quality and Design of Housing Developments* requires residential development to be of the highest quality internally. This should be considered in relation to their specific context and to the wider environment, taking account of strategic policies in this Plan to protect and enhance London's residential environment and attractiveness as a place to live.
- 5.10 Supporting text at 3.36 recognises the importance of the size of new homes and sets out the minimum space standards. However, additionally it is acknowledged that this is not the only factor. Design and functionality are also considerations and single person dwellings of less than 37 square metres may be permitted if the development proposal is demonstrated to be of exemplary design and contributes to achievement of other objectives and plan policies.
- 5.11 Camden Policy H1 *Maximising Housing Supply* seeks to maximise the supply of housing in the borough including the target for the provision of 11,130 additional self-contained homes. Self-contained accommodation is identified as a priority land use.

- 5.12 Camden Policy H1 seeks to exceed the target for additional homes, particularly self-contained homes by *inter alia* working to return vacant homes to use and ensure that new homes are occupied. Where sites are underused or vacant, the maximum reasonable provision of housing that is compatible with any other uses needed on the site is expected.
- 5.13 Policy H1 recognises the need for flexibility with regard to the type and mix of housing sought, having regard to the financial viability of development, the sales or capital value of different house types and tenures, and the needs of different groups.
- 5.14 Supporting text also acknowledges this flexibility and states that in negotiating the range of housing types and sizes on individual sites, regard will be had to, the characteristics and constraints of the site and the area, progress towards meeting Camden's overall housing target, the financial viability of the development, the contribution the development makes to the creation of mixed communities, and the Council's other Local Plan objectives (para 3.39).
- 5.15 Camden Policy H3 *Protecting Existing Homes* supports development where there is no loss of existing residential floorspace. Under Policy H3 the loss of one dwelling is permitted.
- 5.16 Camden Policy H4 *Maximising the Supply of Affordable Housing* requires a contribution to affordable housing from developments that provide one or more additional homes and (our emphasis) involve a total addition to residential floorspace of 100sqm GIA or more.
- 5.17 The aim of Camden Policy H6 *Housing Choice and Mix* is 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.
- 5.18 Additionally, Policy H6 *inter alia* encourages design of all housing to provide functional, adaptable and accessible spaces and expects self-contained homes to meet the nationally described space standard.
- 5.19 Supporting text acknowledges the need for flexibility and states that where dwellings will be created from conversions or changes of use, the Council will apply the nationally described space standard flexibly taking into account the constraints arising from conversion of existing buildings, particularly listed buildings and other heritage assets (para 3.144).
- 5.20 Policy H7 *Large and Small Homes* seeks to secure a range of homes of different sizes that contribute to meetings the priorities set out in the Dwelling Size Priorities Table; and include a mix of large and small homes.
- 5.21 This policy takes a flexible approach to assessing the mix of dwelling sizes proposed in each development having regard to *inter alia*:
- "d. any evidence of local needs that differ from borough wide priorities;
  - e. the character of the development, the site and the area, including the impact of the mix on child density; and
  - f. site size, and any constraints on developing the site for a mix of homes of different sizes."

#### Other relevant Policy

- 5.22 Camden Policy A1 *Managing the Impact of Development* supports development where there is no unacceptable harm to amenity. Policy supports developments that ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected and that development contributes towards strong and successful communities by balancing the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities.
- 5.23 Camden Policy D2 *Heritage* seeks to preserve designated heritage assets including conservation areas. Residential uses are recognised as being part of the character of the area particularly at the upper floors.



- 5.24 Camden Policy TC2 *Camden's Centres and Other Shopping Areas* criterion (d) support and protect Camden's Neighbourhood Centres. In Neighbourhood Centres policy supports the retention of convenience shopping at street level and the provision of housing on upper floors.
- 5.25 Policy T2 *Parking and Car- Free Development* seeks to limit the availability of parking and requires all new residential development in the borough to be car free.

#### Material Planning Considerations

##### *Emerging New London Plan*

- 5.26 Emerging London Plan GG4 *Delivering the homes for Londoners* seeks the creation of mixed and inclusive communities, with good quality homes that meet high standards of design that provide for identified needs.
- 5.27 *Criteria E of Policy SD6 Town centres and high streets* supports a diverse range of housing in town centre locations, including smaller households, (our emphasis) Build to Rent, older people's housing and student accommodation.
- 5.28 *Criteria A of Policy D3 Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach* requires all developments to make the best use of land by following a design-led approach that optimises the capacity of sites. The design-led approach requires consideration of design options to determine the most appropriate form of development that responds to a site's context and capacity for growth.

##### *London Borough of Camden Strategic Market Housing Assessment (February 2016)*

- 5.29 Real house prices in Camden are currently significantly above long-term average trends and out of line with the rest of London (para 3.123).
- 5.30 The SHMA therefore identifies the Full Objective Assessed Need for Housing in Camden to be 16,800 dwellings over the 15-year Plan period 2016-31, equivalent to an average of 1,120 dwellings per year. This includes the Objectively Assessed Need for both Market and Affordable Housing (para 5.55).
- 5.31 Overall, housing need for market housing comprises 6,600 additional homes; mainly three-bedroom properties. Housing need for affordable housing comprises 10,200 homes, mainly two- and three-bedroom properties. If larger homes are not provided to alleviate overcrowding, many households will continue to occupy their smaller homes – so these properties will not be vacated, and there will continue to be pressure from new households applying to live in 1- and 2-bedroom properties.
- 5.32 This Housing Needs Assessment identifies need in line with the definitions of the NPPF. Therefore, it only considers whether households are in need and does not distinguish between relative levels of need.
- 5.33 With regard to vacant properties the SMHA identifies that in October 2013, almost 1,300 homes in Camden had been vacant for 6-months or more, approximately 1.3% of the borough's housing stock, compared with 0.6% across London.

Figure 96: Market and affordable housing mix for Camden 2016-31 (Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding)

	Housing Need		TOTAL CHANGE 2016-31
	2016	2031	
<b>MARKET HOUSING</b>			
1 bedroom	18,200	19,200	1,000
2 bedrooms	19,500	21,900	2,400
3 bedrooms	20,400	23,100	2,700
4+ bedrooms	8,700	9,100	400
<b>Total Market Housing</b>	<b>66,700</b>	<b>73,300</b>	<b>6,600</b>

Table from London Borough of Camden Strategic Market Housing Assessment (February 2016)

#### *Fitzroy Square conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy*

- 5.34 The conservation area audit describes “shops and public houses are a common feature of the streets that surround the square. They reflect a growth in commercial activity, with shopfronts inserted into the ground floor of the existing terraces. There are many examples of high-quality shopfronts of varying dates” (par 3.10).
- 5.35 The appraisal states that “The area retains a broad mix of residential uses, generally small-scale businesses and independent retail premises. There is significant amount of residential accommodation on the upper floors of buildings which contributes to the levels of activity and sense of community within the area” (par 4.8).

## **6.0 Planning Considerations**

### Housing Provision

- 6.1 The premises have a long history of residential use and are currently in need of refurbishment to allow the premises to be re-occupied. The proposal provides improvements with the provision of 3 x self-contained residential units (Use Class C3) that will support maximising housing supply in accordance with Policy H1.
- 6.2 Given the pressure on the housing stock, it is recognised that returning vacant homes to use is a high priority. The latest Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2017/2018 identifies that at 31 March 2018 there were 1,471 properties of all tenures in Camden that had been vacant for more than 6 months which represents an increase of 96 long term vacant dwellings over the year. The proposals will therefore help meet the target to reduction the number of dwellings which are vacant for more than 6 months which is currently not being met.
- 6.3 The premises are in a central location with access to a mix of employment, business and entertainment uses. The residential accommodation in the locality is predominantly a mix of smaller self-contained units or shared HMO accommodation that caters for typically a younger demographic, either singles or couples looking to experience living in the heart of the capital. The area does not typically attract families thus there is limited demand for larger family units (3 bedrooms).
- 6.4 The proposed units are smaller than the National Space Standards, however the intention is to provide high quality living space which would be attractive to a single professional but at the same time would remain more affordable market housing compared to similar self-contained units in the vicinity. Such accommodation meets a need for those that do not want to live in shared accommodation but maybe priced out of the areas existing self-contained accommodation. As an example, the proximity of UCLH and need for local accommodation from medical staff is considered to be the type of tenant that would want in to live in such accommodation. Both the NPPF and Policy H1 support the need for the provision of a range of accommodation to meet the needs of different groups and the need for flexibility to achieve this. Further, Policy H6 recognises that unit size is not the only factor and that flexibility can be applied when considering the acceptability of conversions.

- 6.5 The proposals maintain the same amount of residential floorspace and do not result in the loss of any residential units. Proposals therefore comply with Policy H3. There is no requirement for an affordable housing contribution and Policy H4 does not apply.
- 6.6 In terms of unit mix Policy H7 allows a flexible approach. Whilst the priority table does overall prioritise larger units there still remains identified need across all unit sizes including 1 person units. The table provides a blanket assessment of need across the borough and does not consider site specific circumstances. The specific site characteristics and location mean that in this case smaller units are the most optimal.

#### Other Considerations

- 6.7 The property has existing residential floorspace and there will be no changes in terms of privacy or outlook and impact on neighbouring amenity. There would also be no detrimental impact in terms of occupier amenity. Units are all dual aspect. There will be no detrimental changes to existing light levels. At first floor light levels will be improved with a new window. Proposals are considered to comply with Policy A1.
- 6.8 Policy TC2 recognises that residential uses on upper floors help to support the function of designated centre. Thus, proposals that help bring a vacant building back into beneficial use therefore supports the aim of this policy. Emerging London Plan Policy SD6 further supports the introduction of small households in such locations.
- 6.9 In terms of heritage, the residential uses in the area are considered to form part of the character of the conservation area. Therefore, improving on the existing residential accommodation and seeking to secure the long-term use of the premises supports the objective of Policy D2 to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **7.0 Conclusion**

- 7.1 These proposals are intended to bring an existing residential property back into beneficial use providing self-contained accommodation in a form that is considered to provide the most optimal use in the context of the existing building and its location.
- 7.2 In summary this application provides the following planning benefits:
- Provision of 3x self-contained units to assist with maximising housing supply;
  - Supports meeting targets to getting vacant residential floorspace back into use;
  - Smaller units which provide more affordable market housing that meets specific needs of the local market;
  - Refurbishment of existing premises which is tired and dated;
  - Supports the function of the neighbourhood centre; and
  - Retains a use that supports and character and appearance of the conservation area