

Planning Statement

Solicitor's Offices and Premises at 1st to 3rd Floors at 108 Kilburn High Road, and Loft flat at 110 Kilburn High Road, London, NW6 4HY

Revised planning application following refusal of application 2019/5282/P

1. The Evolution of the Proposed Revised Scheme:

The revised design has been guided by Mr Richard Coleman of City Designers. Mr Coleman has considerable experience of high quality design and has applied this experience to inform the proposed revisions to the front and to the rear elevations.

The revisions are described in Mr Coleman's Support Statement, September 2020, which is submitted with this application.

In accordance with his Support Statement, the external appearance from both front and rear is revised. The internal arrangement is unchanged. The access from Quex Mews is unchanged.

The concerns, which led to the refusal, have all been carefully considered below at Paragraph 3.

2. Matters acceptable to the council:

The Delegated Report lists the following matters as acceptable and these are therefore not discussed further in this Statement:

Loss of A2 Units is considered acceptable.

The provision of residential at first floor level and above would not affect the use of the ground floor unit.

All units would meet the nationally described space standards

The single aspect units would all be studios and which is thought to be acceptable

The proposed sash windows would be appropriate detailing.

The proposed green roof over the existing ground floor extension is a welcome addition that would improve the ecological and drainage qualities of the site;

The mansards are considered to be acceptable additions.

The proposal is to restore the original elevation at first floor to match those properties at 110-114, reinstating brickwork with two sliding sash windows and rendered surrounds. These works represent a welcome improvement to the building that would correct the building's relationship with its neighbours and its contribution to the streetscene.

The proposed extensions to the rear and roof would, by virtue of their scale, position and relationship with neighbouring windows, avoid an adverse impact on amenity.

There is an existing close relationship between the roof of the ground floor extension which acts as the entrance area for the residential units, and the first floor windows of properties along Quex Mews to the north east and Birchington Road to the south east. Through associating 7 more residential units to this area, the proposal would intensify its use increasing the number of comings and goings; however, in the context of the existing situation, it is considered the additional impact would be absorbed without bringing about additional adverse impact.

3. Concerns:

The Delegated Report on the refused scheme 19/5282/P states the following concerns:

- a) The design of the rear extension;
- b) The dwelling mix and;
- c) The access route via Quex Mews.

These are discussed in more detail:

3.1 Rear Extension:

The design of the rear extension and of the host properties 108 and 110 has been reviewed meticulously by Mr Richard Colman and described fully in his Support Statement.

The refused design showed the extension only in relation to No 108 and failed to integrate the extension into the terrace of 108-114.

The revised design assimilates 110 into the design by the new mansard roof over both 108 and 110.

The existing mansard roof over 110 would be removed. A new double slope mansard with hipped ends and side valley gutters would be constructed which would attractively and visually link 108 and 110 into one.

The extension is further integrated into the new design by the redesigned dormer windows, by their new zinc cladding, and by the alignment of the eaves and redesigned fascias and soffits across both 108 and 110.

The extension is further integrated into the loft zone by the addition of a new glazed patio.

The extension is now believed to be well designed and an enhancement to the rear elevation.

3.2 Dwelling Mix:

The dwelling mix remains 6 x new studio flats, 1 x 2 bedroom 3 person new flat and 1 x 1 bedroom extended existing flat.

Policy H7 seeks a mix of large and small homes. Describing the potential mix, the policy states ***'We will take a flexible approach to assessing the mix of dwelling sizes proposed in each development'***.

Paragraph 3.188 is relevant: “The Camden SHMA indicates that the greatest requirement in the market sector is likely to be for two- and three-bedroom homes, followed by one-bedroom homes/studios. The council’s own document confirms that there is an important demand for the studio and 1 bedroom flats and that such accommodation would be policy compliant for this particular site.

In this case, the 2 bedroom flat meets the preferred size of home. Even so, the policy recognises the need for studio and 1 bedroom homes.

The council agrees that this location is not suitable for family accommodation as the garden space is surrounded by some 15 flats, whose amenity would be harmed by family use of the garden space.

The floor plate of 6m x 14m technically provides enough floor space but does not provide enough daylight for the necessary 27 sq m combined living room lit as it is by the single sash window. The studio flats enjoy two sash windows to light the 7 m depth.

The applicant’s estate agent has provided a letter confirming a strong market for the studio and 1 bedroom flats.

The mix is believed to be appropriate and policy compliant.

3.3 Access Route

At paragraph 2.32 the Delegated Report confirms that the access route via Quex Mews is acceptable.

However, at paragraph 2.12 this is contradicted.

The support described at paragraph 2.32 is believed to be the appropriate advice as discussed:

Policy C6 (access for all) seeks disabled access, but this is qualified by the words ‘*where practicable*’.

The proposal is the most ‘practicable’ solution.

The existing staircase is steep and has no safety half landings. The narrowness of the staircase and the lack of any wider space close to the front entrance from Kilburn High Road make it impossible to add a lift. The long lease of the ground floor and the expensive fit out of the tenant render it impossible to renegotiate the lease of the ground floor to enable a lift to be provided. If a lift were to be provided the ground floor tenant would lose valuable frontage space.

The existing staircase has no capacity to be a viable access for all.

The more logical solution is to abandon the existing staircase so that:

1. In the future the frontage of the ground floor unit can be increased bringing a viability benefit to the shopping centre.

2. If this staircase is abandoned it enables the floor plate to enjoy a much reduced amount of common access space, as this element would be reduced from 25% to as little as 9% of the floor plate.

3. The access across the first floor flat roof from Quex Mews can be utilised. This access was approved by the council in 2004. The access is attractive and safe. Photographs of the Mews access are shown in Mr Coleman's Support Statement. The Mews access is presently used by 15 other flats so that the increase would be modest. Mr Coleman finds no adverse impacts from this access but indeed describes it as charming.

4. The Proposal:

The application is for:

- a) Conversion of upper floors of 108 Kilburn High Road from solicitor's office (Class A2) to C3 Residential comprising 6 x studio self-contained flats and constructing an infill extension at each level between the existing structures at 106 and 110 Kilburn High Road
- b) Associated lateral conversion for access between 108 and 110 Kilburn High Road via Quex Mews;
- c) Erection of additional floor at No 108 with a front and rear mansard roof to create 1 x 2 bedroom self-contained flat;
- d) Erection of a front extension with a mansard roof to 110 Kilburn High Road to extend the floor area of the existing 1 bedroom self-contained flat;
- e) Alterations to the front elevation at 108 Kilburn High Road comprising revised fenestration and render details to match 110 Kilburn High Road and revisions to the shop front of the ground floor unit at 108 Kilburn High Road;
- f) Addition of a green roof finish to the rear flat roof above 108 and 110 Kilburn High Road.
- g) Rear extension at 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors, 2.5m deep, between the existing walls of the staircase of No 110 and the flank wall of No 106.

The location plan shows edged blue the applicant's other ownerships adjoining the application site. The right of access via Quex Mews is shown edged brown.

These flats, together with the applicant's other flats in Quex Mews and Birchington Road, form a permanent portfolio of flats let to the general public. The new flats in the application properties would be added to the rental portfolio.

5. Design and Access Statement:

Design evolution, use, amount, layout, scale, appearance, green roof and access have been discussed in Mr Coleman's Support Statement and above.

The remaining design and access matters are reviewed:

5.1 Refuse and recycling

There is an existing covered store for refuse and recycling materials at the rear of 116 Kilburn High Road. The store serves 116 Kilburn High Road and the flats in Quex Mews and on the upper floors of 110-114 Kilburn High Road. There is ample capacity to serve the additional flats.

5.2 Parking and cycle storage

The new units would form a car free development. The occupiers of the new flats would not be entitled to resident's parking permits. This would be secured by a S106 agreement.

The extended existing 1 bedroom flat above 110 would not create additional parking stress and would retain its current right to a resident's parking permit.

Cycle parking; Cycle storage on site is very impractical. The financial contribution towards the provision of a kerbside hangar is acknowledged and would be acceptable as part of the S106 agreement.

6. Planning obligations/ Community Infrastructure Levy

The following Section 106 planning obligations area acknowledged as being required should planning permission be granted:

- b) Affordable housing contribution; to be agreed by means of a viability assessment.
- d) Community Infrastructure Levy: The usual CIL form has been completed.

7. Conclusion

The proposal for the conversion of the upper floors from a solicitor's office to 6 studio flats and 1 new 1 bedroom 2 person flat and the extension of the existing 1 bedroom 2 person flat above 110 Kilburn High Road should be approved.

The proposal has the following design attributes and benefits;

Seven new self-contained flats and an extended existing flat and this is a reasonable mix of studios, and 1 and 2 bedroom flats.

The removal of the existing staircase increases the usability of the floor plate from 75% to 91%.

The removal of the existing staircase enables the ground floor unit to gain 1.2m of valuable zone A retail space in a primary shopping centre frontage.

The new rear extension improves the appearance of the rear elevation and is complementary to the existing projections at 104-106, 110 and 112-114.

A significant improvement to the street scene by the alterations to the front elevation, the removal of the excessively high shop front and the removal of the balustrade above No 110.

A new, secure, private, quiet access to the upper floors of No 108.

New green roof finishes to the roof areas of No 108 and No 110 would greatly increase mitigation of rainwater discharge.

The new green roof over the flat roof above the rear ground floor of No 108 and 110 would improve visual amenity without affecting the privacy and quiet enjoyment of neighbours.

Stuart Cunliffe
September 2020