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80-83 Long Lane,
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Via Planning Portal only

15th January 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

HOUSEHOLDER PLANNING APPLICATION - THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

INSTALLATION OF AN AIR CONDITIONING UNIT IN ACOUSTIC ENCLOSURE AND WITH ASSOCIATED TIMBER SCREEN

10 FERNCROFT AVENUE, LONDON, NW3 7PH

Please accept this covering letter as an accompaniment to this full planning application for the installation of an air conditioning unit in acoustic enclosure and with associated timber screen to the rear garden of 10 Ferncroft Avenue, London, NW3 7PH. This letter provides a summary of the site and the proposed development.

Please also find enclosed a completed application form, a full set of existing and proposed plans and an Environmental Noise Assessment prepared by Pace Consult Ltd.

The Site:

The application site comprises a large detached 3 storey dwellinghouse located on the north side of Ferncroft Avenue. Ferncroft Avenue is characterised by street frontage residential development predominantly of semi-detached houses but with detached houses dispersed throughout the street.

The property is not listed but the site is located within the Redlington Frogna Conservation Area and considered to have a positive contribution to the area. The properties either side of the site at No's 8 and 12 are grade II listed properties.

Relevant Planning History

On the 4th August 2020 full planning permission (**reference 2020/0113/P**) was granted for the erection of single storey rear extension and enlargement of rear garden terrace; installation

of one dormer window to the front and one dormer to the rear roof slope; replacement of pebbledash to front bay window with hanging tiles; re-paving of driveway.

The Proposal

Full planning permission is sought for the installation of an air conditioning unit at the far end of the rear garden to no.10 Ferncroft Avenue, adjacent to the rear boundary of the site. The air conditioning unit will serve the property at no.10 and to comply with the Council acoustic requirements, the proposed unit will be housed within an enclosure so that it complies with the prescribed limits of quietness.

To limit the visual impact of the proposed works, a timber screen is proposed in front of the enclosed a/c unit. Due to its wooden finish, the screen will have the appearance of a domestic garden structure which will be seen as a perfectly natural use of space at the end of any rear garden.

It should further be acknowledged that the proposed a/c unit to the rear garden is to enable the removal of the 4-existing a/c units to both side elevations of the property.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which incorporates three specific strands – economic, environmental, and social. The following sections are relevant to the consideration of this application; Section 11 (making effective use of land), Section 12 (achieving well designed places), and Section 16 (conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

Local Planning Policy

For the purposes of this application, the adopted Development Plan for the London Borough of Camden (LB Camden) comprises the London Plan (2016), the Camden Local Plan (2017) and the Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) Documents.

Planning Assessment

Principle of development

Law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The application site comprises a building in active residential use and no changes are proposed to the established use class. In such locations, there are no development plan or

national planning policies that restrict the extension or alteration of residential properties in principle, subject to the consideration of all other detailed matters, as set out below.

Overall Heritage Impact

Case law dictates that decision makers are required to give *great weight* to any harm to the significance of a heritage asset and how this should be applied is set out in section 16 of the NPPF. This refers to the historic environment and requires the decision maker to consider whether the proposal sustains and enhances the significance of the heritage asset, making a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

In terms of heritage context, the site is located within the Redlington Frogna Conservation Area and the neighbouring properties either side of the site, 11 and 13 Ferncroft Avenue, are both grade II listed. The existing property at no.10 is however not listed or locally listed.

The proposed air conditioning unit is proposed to the north west corner of the rear garden and is to be screened by a 2-metre-high horizontal slatted fence. The air conditioning unit with enclosure will measure 2.5m x 1.5m and has a maximum height of 1.6m. By virtue of the modest scale of the unit and surrounding screening and the proposed neutral painted finish to match the boundary fence colour, the proposed screening would give the air conditioning unit the appearance of typical domestic paraphernalia and which would be in keeping with its rear garden setting.

In order to reduce the overall visual impact, the proposed unit has also been sited to the north west corner of the rear garden, to an area of the garden which is sited as far away from the property/neighbouring properties as possible, behind a new garden shed and to the most densely landscaped part of the garden. Views of the proposed works will therefore be limited from within the site and out of public view. A laurel hedge which runs along the rear boundary of the site is to be retained which will further mitigate the visual impact of the unit. The proposed siting and retention of existing landscaping will therefore ensure the unit and associated screening has a minimal visual impact on the green and undeveloped appearance of the garden. In light of the structure's location and overall scale, the proposed works will not be visible from outside the property or neighbouring properties, thus further reducing its overall impact. The proposed ductwork from the air conditioning to the property will be underground and will not be visible.

Finally, the proposed works will allow for the removal of the existing a/c units from the side elevations of the property which are unsightly and add visual clutter to these elevations, and as a result, have a positive impact on the appearance of the property.

For the reasons outlined above, the proposal by virtue of the size, location, design, and materials, will protect the visual amenity of the site, and will have no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings. The proposal will therefore have an acceptable visual impact and is in accordance

with Policies D1 and D2 of the Camden Local Plan, the 'Altering and extending your home' CPG, and the guidance within Redlington Frognall Conservation Area Statement.

Effect on Neighbouring Amenity

Policies A1 and A4 of the Camden Local Plan seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours, with specific regard to outlook and noise. This is echoed in guidance contained within the NPPF and the London Plan. Further guidance is provided in CPG Amenity which sets specific standards of development.

Firstly, having regard to the modest size and scale of the proposed works, and its suitable domestic design and appearance, the proposal will have no adverse impact on neighbouring amenity from a loss of outlook. The proposed a/c unit is sensitively located whereby it is not located in the direct sightline of neighbouring properties or gardens.

In support of the application, and as required by the 'Amenity' CPG, a noise assessment has been submitted with the application prepared by Pace Consult Ltd (dated 25th November 2020). The noise assessment concludes that subject to the proposed a/c unit being located within an acoustic enclosure, as proposed, the calculated specific sound sources are 10 Db below the typical measured background levels and therefore, compliance with the acoustic criteria recommended by the relevant acoustic guidelines will be achieved.

Furthermore, the proposed works will allow for the removal of the existing a/c units to the side elevations of the property and thus remove an existing noise source away from directly adjacent the neighbouring properties either side.

The proposal will therefore have an acceptable impact on residential amenity and complies with Policies A1 and A4 of the Camden Local Plan and the guidance contained within the 'Amenity' CPG.

Sustainability

Policy CC2 of the Camden Local Plan states that all development should adopt appropriate climate change adaptation measures such as measures to reduce the impact of urban and dwelling overheating.

Cooling is required at the property in certain rooms where a comfortable temperature cannot be achieved. The use of natural ventilation is not currently sufficient to reduce heat build-up to the upper floors of the property. Whilst windows are openable, during summer months, it is not considered that this would be sufficient to create a comfortable internal temperature for residents. Alternative measures including additional shading to existing windows have been considered, however, due to the sensitive heritage context of the site it is considered that the shading of existing windows would have a far more significant visual impact on the character and appearance of the property, the wider Conservation Area and the neighbouring listed buildings than that of the discretely located air conditioning unit proposed. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposed air conditioning unit is the most feasible option to achieve comfort cooling for the property.

Furthermore, it should be acknowledged that the existing property currently has air conditioning units, and the proposed works seeks to replace these units which are currently dated and less energy efficient than the one unit proposed as part of this application. Therefore, the proposed works by virtue of updating existing poor performing equipment would have an overall benefit on climate change measures, whilst clearly having an overall improved visual impact.

Summary

The proposed installation of an air conditioning unit in an acoustic enclosure and with associated timber screen to the rear garden of 10 Ferncroft Avenue, by reason of its design, scale, location, and materials will have an acceptable visual impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the proposal will have an acceptable impact on neighbouring amenity. The proposal is compliant with all relevant national and local planning policies and the Council are respectfully requested to grant planning permission.

I trust the commentary above is clear but if you require any points of clarification or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Stuart Minty
Director
SM Planning