

Design and Access
Statement
16 Swains Lane, N6 6QS

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1 DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

To accompany planning application for Change of Use from Business (B1) to Residential (C3A) for the Ground Floor.

This building was designed and built for the Plasterers' Union in the 1930s, with offices on the ground floor and a two bedroom flat on each of the two upper floors which cover the front section of the building. This union was taken over by the Transport and General Workers Union in the 1950s, and the ground floor became offices for their Retired Members' Branch. In 1994 the union decided that the building was surplus to requirements, and it was sold to a firm of architects, who have used the ground floor as their offices until March 2020, when the government ordered that all who could, should work from home. Improvements have been made to the building, both internally and externally since 1994, and the flats on the first and second floors are currently occupied.

The 3-storey section at the front of the building was well designed, is unique on the street, and is well regarded. The single storey section at the rear was poorly designed and detailed, and has large rooflights which do not face north. Both sections of the building have rendered and painted elevations, with Crittall W20 steel window frames.

As the ground floor is no longer used as offices, the owners are in their 70s, and the wife is registered disabled, with rheumatoid arthritis, the hope is to convert the use of the ground floor from offices (B1) to residential (C3A), so that all accommodation would be on the ground floor, with a level floor finish, door openings of adequate width, and appropriate bathroom facilities. All this can be undertaken without affecting the external elevations, and the proposed plan indicates how this can be achieved.

The property falls within the Dartmouth Conservation Area.

There is residential accommodation on either side of this site, as well as above, and the current use of the ground floor as offices could well be regarded as an anomaly.

2 CONCLUSION

As the demand for offices has reduced significantly, the demand for residential use remains high, the specific occupants for an amended ground floor area are agreed, and the building's appearance within the Conservation Area does not need to alter, it is hoped that this proposed change of use should not prove controversial.