



Chartered Town Planners & Architectural Technicians

## **DESIGN & ACCCESS / PLANNING STATEMENT**

Change of use from office to residential.

**Property Address:** Unit 4, Apollo Studios, Charlton Kings Road, London, NW5 2SW, Camden.

**June 2022**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** This Design and Access / Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of the applicant in respect of a planning application for the change of use from an office to a residential unit. This Statement should be read in conjunction with other drawings and documents accompanying the planning application.

**1.2** This Statement comprises:

- A description of the application property and surrounding area;
- A description of the proposed development;
- A summary of relevant planning history; and,
- An assessment of the proposed development against relevant planning policy.

## **2.0 APPLICATION PROPERTY AND SURROUNDING AREA**

**2.1** The application property is a three storey located off Charlton King's Road. Unit 4 was last used as an office. There are other residential flats on floors below.

**2.2** The immediate surrounding area is 'mixed use' in character but residential is the main use in the immediate vicinity. There are a wide variety of commercial uses nearby. With regards social and commercial services, within walking distance there is: two corner / convenience shops, a commercial parade nearby on Brecknock Road, schools, a nursery, several religious buildings, GP practice, and public park.

**2.3** The site is well provided for in terms of transport and accessibility and has a PTAL rating of 5. There are many bus routes within walking distance in addition to Tuffnell Park tube station and Kentish Town train station.

**2.4** The site is within walking distance of facilities, services and amenities all of which are connected to the premises via a network of footpaths. The surrounding road network is favourable towards encouraging cycling.

**2.5** The site is in flood zone 1 and at low risk of flooding. The building is not listed nor located within a conservation area.

**2.6** The application property is a second-floor premises with residential below and on the adjacent floor level. Access is via shared domestic stair core and small lift. It was purchased in 1989 and at the time of purchase, the unit and others had been ear-marked for residential pursuant to a planning permission granted in 1985 which was ultimately not implemented. Since an original refurbishment in 1988 many units have been changed to residential and the character of the building is now predominantly residential and not commercial. 10 out of 17 units in the building are now homes with further applications currently being considered by other owners.

**2.7** The Unit has been vacant for the past 2 years and underused by 40-50% for the previous 5 years with changes to working practices. The premises is now in disrepair and will require excessive expenditure to bring it up to acceptable standards including water penetration, floor sinking and replacement of electric heating systems that create high energy bills. Now, post Covid, former staff at the premises are actively dispersed around the country and working mostly from home. It is the applicant's intention to operate a work from home policy with regular weekly workplace meetings in smaller accommodation nearer to the King Cross area which is more readily accessible to staff and clients.



*Figure 1 – Existing Building.*

### **3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

**3.1** The proposed development is for a change of use of the existing vacant office to a 3 bed residential flat. It would have a gross internal floor area of 180m<sup>2</sup>. No alterations are proposed to the external elevations.

**3.2** All habitable rooms would be served by at least one window.

**3.3** There is ample space for storage of refuse / recyclable materials within the flat and/or the overall building until waste collection days. There would be space to store a bicycle within the flat and/overall building. The unit has 1 designated off road parking slot in the courtyard and 3 on street business parking permits.

### **4.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

**4.1** There is no recent planning history for the unit in question. It is noted however that other units in the building have been changed to residential including:

- Unit 13: Planning permission Ref. No. 2020/4896/P.
- Unit 12: Planning permission Ref. No. 2016/4040/P.
- Unit 10: Planning permission Ref. No. 2015/5689/P.
- Unit 7: Planning permission Ref. No. 2015/4069/P.
- Units 11&12: Planning permission Ref. No. 2014/0806/P.
- Units 1, 2 and 5: Planning permission Ref. No. 2014/0544/P.
- Units 8 &9: Planning permission Ref. No. 2013/4190/P.
- It is understood unit 3 was converted to residential under a 1998 permission.

### **5.0 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (2021)**

**6.1** The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) seeks to promote a wide choice of house types and home ownership. Para. 59 states:

*“To support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.”*

***The proposed development would enhance the range of house types and house tenures available in the area.***

**6.2** Para. 122 of the NPPF states that:

*“Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:*

*...  
the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use”*

***National planning policy promotes car-free type development where public transport and sustainable travel are in place.***

### **The New London Plan (2021)**

**6.3** The new London Plan (2021) encourages the optimisation of housing (Policy D6), and requires that housing be of the highest quality internally and externally (Policy D4, D5, and D8). The importance of different sizes and types of dwellings is also recognised (Policy H10). Table 3.1 of the London Plan sets out minimum space standards for new dwellings. ***The proposed residential unit meets the London Plan floorspace requirements.***

Table 4.1 of the London Plan states that a minimum target of 10,380 dwellings must be provided in Camden by 2029. A significant proportion of this is to be achieved by way of small sites (as per Table 4.2). London Plan policy H2 (small sites) states that:

*“Boroughs should pro-actively support well-designed new homes on small sites (below 0.25 hectares in size) through both planning decisions and plan-making in order to:*

*1) significantly increase the contribution of small sites to meeting London’s housing needs*

*...*

*Boroughs should:*

*1) recognise in their Development Plans that local character evolves over time and will need to change in appropriate locations to accommodate additional housing on small sites*

*...”*

**6.4** Policy H2 is expanded upon in para. 4.2.4 where it is stated:

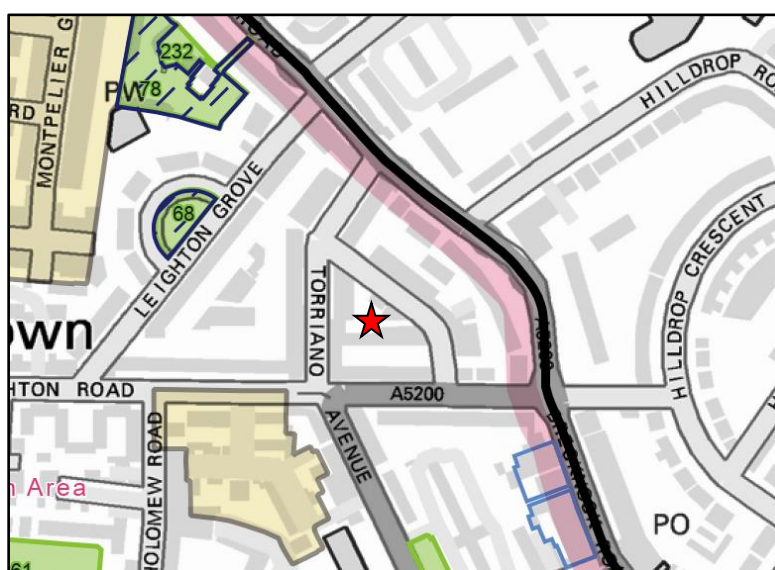
*“Incremental intensification of existing residential areas within PTALs 3-6 or within 800m distance of a station or town centre boundary is expected to play an important role in*

*contributing towards the housing targets for small sites set out in Table 4.2. This can take a number of forms, such as: new build, infill development, residential conversions, redevelopment or extension of existing buildings, including non-residential buildings and residential garages, where this results in net additional housing provision”*

***It is considered the proposed development is wholly in compliance with new London Plan policies. Small sites such as the application site are hugely important to enhancing housing supply. The new London Plan is clear that in order to provide new housing, local character will evolve and change over time.***

### **Camden Local Plan (2017)**

**6.5** According to the Local Plan Policies Map, the site is not affected by any adverse planning designations / policies - see Figure 1 below. It is however within the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan area.



**Figure 2** – Extract from Camden Policies Map. Approximate location of site is indicated by red star.

**6.6** Policy H1 (Maximising Housing Supply) of the Camden Local Plan seeks to provide new homes by, amongst other means, developing underused sites. Policy H6 (Housing Choice and Mix) seeks the design of all housing to provide functional, adaptable and accessible spaces. Policy H7 (large and small homes) seeks to provide a range of residential units.

***The proposed development is considered to comply with the above policies and makes efficient use of an under-utilised property in so far as is feasible. The flat meets required space standards.***

*Carbon reduction measures will be detailed at building regulations stage. Habitable rooms are dual aspect and this it is hoped will avoid the need for mechanical cooling equipment as natural air flow will be provided for (no mechanical cooling equipment is proposed as part of the planning application). The following sustainable development measures will be amongst those incorporated into the development: floors to the property will be fitted with insulation as necessary; energy efficient lighting and smart heating controls; and low flow bathroom fixtures.*

**6.7** Policy D1 (Design) of the Local Plan seeks to secure high quality design in development. Policy D2 (Heritage) seeks to preserve and enhance heritage assets.

*No alterations are proposed to external elevations.*

**6.8** Policy H4 relates to affordable housing and requires an affordable housing contribution from all developments that provide one or more additional homes and involve a total addition to residential floorspace of 100sqm GIA or more. The applicant accepts that a housing contribution may be required and awaits the assessment of this at application stage.

**6.9** Policy E2 (Employment Premises and Sites) states:

*“We will protect premises or sites that are suitable for continued business use, in particular premises for small businesses, businesses and services that provide employment for Camden residents and those that support the functioning of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) or the local economy.*

*We will resist development of business premises and sites for non-business use unless it is demonstrated to the Council’s satisfaction:*

*a. the site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business use;*

*and*

*b. that the possibility of retaining, reusing or redeveloping the site or building for similar or alternative type and size of business use has been fully explored over an appropriate period of time”.*

***With regards this policy it is submitted:***

- ***The site is not within a growth area nor the CAZ.***
- ***The unit in question is no longer suitable for office use (refer to section 2 of this Statement above)***

## **7.0 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY AND TRAFFIC / TRANSPORT**

**7.1** Table 6.2 of the London Plan sets out maximum parking standards. For dwellings with less than 1-2 beds, the parking requirement is for less than 1 parking space per unit. This site is well

accessible by public transport and centrally located to neighbouring services, facilities and amenities. The site is located in an area with a high PTAL level. Accordingly it is not considered there would be any adverse traffic / parking impacts. The unit has 1 dedicated car space in the courtyard. Notwithstanding, a car-free legal agreement is submitted to accompany the planning application.

**7.2** It is not considered there would be any adverse impacts to residential amenity for either existing neighbours or future occupants of the flat. There are many residential flats in the building at present.

**7.3** The proposed flat meets and exceeds London Plan space standards, and all habitable rooms would have access to daylight and ventilation. The site is less than five minutes' walk from public amenity areas.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

**8.1** The application site is within a mixed use area, and within walking distance of day-to-day facilities, services and amenities. The site is accessible and sustainable in terms of access and transport.

**8.2** The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with NPPF policies and also the new London Plan which seeks better utilisation of small sites and which acknowledges that the character of areas must evolve and adapt.

**8.3** The proposal is also considered in compliance with the Camden Local Plan (2017).