

Palm Tree Court – Design and Access Statement

job	Palm Tree Court
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subject	Design and Access Statement
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Notes

Palm Tree Court – Design and Access Statement

This planning application is for proposed works to the ground and first floor at Palm Tree Court, 4 Factory Lane, London, N17 9FL.

The purpose of the following statement is to demonstrate the design principles of the proposal at Palm Tree Court. The proposal seeks to change the use of one B1 office space to a C3 residential apartment with associated works, the conversion of another B1 office space into a small office and residents communal lounge, and the conversion of a small first floor communal lounge into a 1 bedroom 1 person apartment. This statement will explain how the proposal considers relevant planning policy, advice, and current building regulations.

The existing building provides 23 sheltered accommodation units, 100sqm of B1 office space to the ground floor and a small communal lounge (25sqm) at first floor level.

Design Principles

As illustrated on drawing numbers 05-0002 and 05-0003, the proposal seeks to convert two vacant B1 commercial spaces at ground floor level and a small 1st floor residents lounge office into the following.

- 1no. One Bedroom Ground Floor Apartment (50sqm) which will be compliant with Nationally Described Space Standards, The London Plan and Part M4(2).
- 1no. Residents lounge (42sqm) – to provide much needed amenity for existing residents.
- 1no. One bedroom First Floor apartment. (54sqm). To match the apartments above
- Provision of a staff office (8sqm) at Ground Floor adjacent to the resident's lounge.

The original building provided 100sqm of B1 office space at the ground floor which was previously let to Community Investors Development Agency. This space has been vacant and unoccupied since June 2018. The existing building has lacked communal facilities for residents since its construction and this vacant space has provide the opportunity for Hornsey Housing Trust to provide much needed accommodation and amenity for the existing residents and overnight stay accommodation for their relatives. The current first floor office has been relocated to the ground floor, adjacent to the residents' lounge to provide a more functional location for the administration team.

The proposal ensures minimum disruption to the fabric and external envelope of the existing building to provide this accommodation. The only changes to the existing façade would be providing patio door to access a ground floor terrace in lieu of french doors (as shown in drawing 05-0004). The proposal also includes low planting in front of the ground floor apartment to provide defensible space.

Relevant Planning Policy, advice, and current building regulations

We have sought advice from the local authority via pre application advice in June 2022.

The following feedback has been provided by John McRory, Team Leader, Major Applications for Haringey Council (December 2022);

I have now looked at the plans and the history of the site re Pam Tree Court office. Looking at the original permission for the office suite - 1996/1500 there doesn't appear to be any conditional restriction on use beyond it being designated as B1 office. I do therefore think that you could submit a Prior Approval application on that basis. There are certain restrictions and conditions within the legislation to comply with and I would advise that you seek the services of a planning consultant to advise you further about the Prior Approval route and submit the application on your behalf. I have attached a link to the planning portal which provides guidance on this type of application:

<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/planning/planning-applications/consent-types/prior-approval>

Should you go down the planning permission route then I am of the opinion that the principle of the conversion would be acceptable. The loss of the office use would need to be squared off against planning policy. The room sizes appear to comply with policy criteria in the Local Plan and DM DPD. There is also private external amenity space which is welcomed. There were no plans I could see that proposed external changes. If this is to be the case then such plans would be required with any submission.

What I haven't been able to assess is the quality of outlook, whether the rooms would have adequate daylight / sunlight and if there would be any overlooking / loss of privacy issues (the plans do not show enough context and I have not seen the property on site) so this needs taking into consideration.

The above advice is made of course made without prejudice to the outcome of any future application that may be submitted.

Thank you,

John

Planning Response

Feedback

The loss of the office use would need to be squared off against planning policy.

Response

The existing 100sqm office space has been unused since June 2018. The relocation of the first floor staff office to the ground means a net loss of 92sqm of office space. However, considering the length of time the office has been unoccupied we would consider the conversion to be appropriate in this instance.

Feedback

There were no plans I could see that proposed external changes. If this is to be the case, then such plans would be required with any submission.

Response

Drawing nos. 05 0002 and 0004 demonstrate external changes that we are proposing. These changes are the following;

Provision of a patio door to access a ground floor terrace in lieu of french doors (please refer to drawing 05-0004). The proposal also includes low planting in front of the ground floor apartment to provide defensible space.

Feedback

What I haven't been able to assess is the quality of outlook, whether the rooms would have adequate daylight / sunlight and if there would be any overlooking / loss of privacy issues (the plans do not show enough context and I have not seen the property on site) so this needs taking into consideration.

Response

Quality of Outlook

The proposal would look onto a landscaped courtyard which screens the parking court to the South of the site. At present the existing south facing apartments have the same outlook.

Daylight / Sunlight

The ground floor apartment is south facing, maximising the path of the sun. The apartment is shallow allowing light to penetrate and all habitable rooms are located along the southern façade ensure high quality habitable spaces.

Overlooking / loss of privacy

Drawing no. 05 0002 demonstrates there is no other habitable room within the curtilage of the site directly overlooking the proposal. There is a landscaped courtyard and parking court to the south of the site. The proposal would therefore add a level passive surveillance. Additionally, the proposal is a ground floor apartment with units above. The recently completed infill has had no such comments regarding overlooking either and therefore we don't see overlooking as a reason to not determine this application.

Current Building Regulations

One bedroom apartment

It should be noted that the One Bedroom Apartment situated on the Ground Floor of the proposal is compliant with part M4(2) building regulations and The London Plan (2019) and is South facing with a private amenity space. The proposed 1-bedroom flat and residents lounge are accessible via step free access.

Residents' Lounge

The proposal takes the opportunity to ensure the existing toilet facilities within the proposed residents lounge are redeveloped to ensure Part M4(2) compliance.

Conclusion

When considering the proposal objectively, the building has operated as sheltered housing with a very small communal lounge on first floor since its inception. The vacant office presents an excellent opportunity to provide a meaningful residents lounge. The proposal provides much desired residential and visitor accommodation. By introducing an improved residents lounge the proposal provides a shared amenity for existing residents. The minimal impact on the existing building envelope should also be considered when assessing this application.