



HIGHGATE
SOCIETY

10A South Grove, London N6 6BS

June 17th 2023

Eunice Huang, Case Officer,
Haringey Planning Service,
6th Floor River Park House,
225 High Road, Wood Green,
London N22 8HQ.

By email

Dear Ms. Huang,

Re: HGY/2023/1125, Flat A, 214 Archway Road, London N6 5AX

This is an application for retrospective planning permission for alterations to an existing outbuilding to provide home office space for the occupants of the flat on the ground floor and basement of 214 Archway Road. According to the application form the work to be approved commenced on 01/01/23 and was completed on 01/04/23. The declaration on the application form is dated 24/04/2023.

The original structure was a “single storey outbuilding/shelter at the rear of the back garden” of 214 Archway Road. The planning application for its erection, HGY/2011/2303, was for “a wooden open air shelter on an existing deck at the rear of the garden.” It was to be built of “wood posts with wooden cladding and a waterproof green felt lining on the roof. The cladding will be of a similar colour to the existing fence.” The application was granted.

The present application seeks to transform this openair shelter into an enclosed office for the use of the residents of the ground floor and basement flat at 214 Archway Road. The dimensions of the altered outbuilding appear to be identical to the original, with new roofing, timber cladding and new windows and door in front.

Although the permission sought might appear unobjectionable, it should be considered in the context of the planning history of 214 Archway Road. The original three-storey property had a shop on the ground floor, with commercial accommodation to the rear, and a basement used by the shop, and residential accommodation on the upper two floors. The ground floor use was subsequently, with approval, changed to a café.

Permission was granted on 19/05/2009 for the conversion of the existing 1st and 2nd floor accommodation into two self-contained flats (HGY/2009/0600). A previous application, HGY/1989/0288, for conversion into three self-contained flats had been rejected.

In 2019 an application was made, HGY/2019/0933, for the conversion of the basement until then used as part of the commercial premises above, into a 1-person studio flat. This was refused. Objections had been submitted alleging substandard form of accommodation; loss of employment space; impact on the character of the conservation area; overlooking and noise and disturbance from construction work. The decision cited the undesirability of creating an additional residential unit out of existing commercial space, and the unsatisfactory living conditions for a future occupier due to inadequate outlook, sunlight/daylight, natural ventilation and stacking.

This history shows a continuous pattern of attempts to subdivide the living accommodation at 214 Archway into more and more self contained residential units, thus increasing unacceptably the density of occupation in this part of the Highgate Conservation Area, and possibly leading to substandard accommodation.

A new problem is the fact that the new rules which came into effect on 1 August 2021 extended permitted development rights to include change of use from commercial to residential accommodation. It appears that since then the commercial use of part of the ground floor and the basement of 214 Archway Road has been altered to residential use, since the applicant in the present case is the owner of Flat A, described as a ground floor and basement flat. There is no planning application or building control application relating to this change.

Was Haringey made aware of a change of use? Since no Article 4 Direction has been made by Haringey either with respect to the Highgate Conservation Area, or in cases of change of use from commercial use to residential use, there is no effective control on the housing density of the Highgate Conservation Area or, indeed of other parts of the borough not protected by Article 4 Directions. This could have very damaging effects in Haringey.

We consider that there are serious problems which prevent the granting of this application at present. A visual inspection of 214 Archway from the street reveals that much of the ground floor continues to be used as a café. The present application seeks permission for the use of the one-storey openair garden structure authorized under HGY/2011/2303 as an enclosed office for the use of the residents of “Flat 1A, 214 Archway Road,” described as a ground floor and basement flat. It is thus unclear what Flat 1A includes. Permission to convert the basement into a one-person studio flat was refused under HGY/2019/0933 on the grounds that (i) it would be undesirable to create an additional residential unit out of existing commercial space and ii) it would create unsatisfactory living conditions for an occupier because of inadequate outlook, sunlight/daylight, natural ventilation and stacking. It is difficult to see from the information provided with this application what, if anything has changed since 2019.

We note that the present application is for works entirely carried out prior to its submission. This is not a practice to be encouraged, and suggests that unauthorized building work has taken place on that part of the ground floor behind the café and that part of the basement ancillary to the café above, but only an inspection will reveal the

true picture. If such unauthorized work has been carried out it is highly likely that it has resulted in substandard accommodation.

The Highgate Society strongly objects to the granting of this application before Haringey has had an opportunity to inspect Flat 1A Archway Road. Only then will it be possible to consider it adequately and determine whether illegal construction has taken place, and whether the use of the garden structure as an office is actually ancillary to the occupation of an existing lawful basement and ground floor flat at 214 Archway Road.

Yours sincerely,

Arlene Polonsky, Planning and Environmental Committee,
Highgate Society.

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