

Officer's Report

Application Number	HGY/2023/1304
Type	Lawful development: Existing use
Location	346 High Road, Wood Green, London, N22 8JW
Proposal	Certificate of Lawfulness for existing use of the first and second floors of the property at 346 High Street, N22 8JW as four self-contained flats (Flat A, Flat B, Flat D and Flat E).
Case Officer	Daniel Kwasi
Valid Date	16/05/2023
Applicant	FATMA KEMAL
Agent	ALI KOSELE

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT CERTIFICATE

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

The application is for a certificate of lawfulness for existing use of 4no. self-contained flats at Flat A, Flat B, Flat D and Flat E at First and Second Floor level, at 346 High Street, London, N22 8JW

The subject site is a mixed use building that comprises commercial use at ground floor level and 4 self-contained flats on the upper floors. The surrounding area comprises commercial uses at street level and residential uses on the upper floors on A105/High Road, and predominantly residential on Lyndhurst Road. The site is not within any conservation area nor is it in the curtilage of listed building.

RELEVANT PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

HGY/2004/0994 GTD 26/5/2004 Partial re-building of existing ground floor, new first floor extension with roof terrace, alterations and change of use to single family dwelling house.

HGY/2004/0421 REF 24/3/2004 Change of use to residential and erection of rear extension at first floor level, and alterations to elevations to create single dwelling house.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

LBH Council Tax: No response

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The application has been made under section 191 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). Section 191 of the 1990 Act provides for anyone to apply to the local planning authority (LPA) for a lawful development certificate (LDC). A certificate is a statutory document certifying the lawfulness, for planning purposes, of existing operations on, or use of land, or some activity being carried out in breach of a planning condition.

By virtue of section 191 (2), uses and operations are "lawful" if no enforcement action may be taken against them and they are not in contravention of any enforcement notice which is in force. And, by virtue of section 191(3), a failure to comply with any condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted is "lawful" if the time for taking enforcement action in respect of the failure has expired and it does not constitute a contravention of any enforcement notice or breach of condition notice which is in force.

Development or other activity on land is lawful for planning purposes if it is within one of the following categories and does not involve a failure to comply with a condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted:

- (1) it is not within the definition of "development" in section 55(1) and (1A) of the 1990 Act. (This might be because it is so insignificant that it can be disregarded (a "de minimis" operation, use or activity); or because it involves a change of use which is not, as a matter of fact and degree, materially different, for planning purposes, from a previous lawful use of land.); or
- (2) it is specifically excluded from the definition of development by section 55(2) (for example, a use of land for the purpose of "agriculture"); or
- (3) it is within the definition of "development" in section 55, but is exempted from the need for planning permission by the provisions of section 57; or
- (4) it benefits from an extant grant of planning permission under Part III of the 1990 Act (or the equivalent Parts of preceding Acts); or
- (5) it benefits from a general planning permission granted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (SI 1995/418), or by a simplified planning zone or enterprise zone scheme; or
- (6) it benefits from deemed planning permission, whether under section 90 or by virtue of compliance with the requirements of an effective enforcement notice; or
- (7) it took place before 1 July 1948 (the "appointed day" Country Planning Act 1947); or
- (8) it is development by or on behalf of the Crown; or
- (9) the time for taking enforcement action has expired.

"Taking enforcement action" is defined in section 171A of the 1990 Act. It is the issue of an enforcement notice or the service of a breach of condition notice. The section also defines a "breach of planning control" (against which it is possible to take enforcement action) as the carrying out of development without the required planning permission, or failing to comply with any condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted.

Section 171B of the 1990 Act specifies the time-limits for taking enforcement action which are as follows:

- (1) Where there has been a breach of planning control consisting in the carrying out without planning permission of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, no enforcement action may be taken after the end of the period of ten years beginning with the date on which the operations were substantially completed.
- (2) Where there has been a breach of planning control consisting in the change of use of any building to use as a single dwellinghouse, no enforcement action may be taken after the end of the period of four years beginning with the date of the breach.
- (3) In the case of any other breach of planning control, no enforcement action may be taken after the end of the period of ten years beginning with the date of the breach.
- (4) The preceding subsections do not prevent—
 - (a) the service of a breach of condition notice in respect of any breach of planning control if an enforcement notice in respect of the breach is in effect; or taking further enforcement action in respect of any breach of planning control if, during the period of ten years ending with that action

being taken, the local planning authority have taken or purported to take enforcement action in respect of that breach.

ANALYSIS/ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION

This is not a planning application and the planning merits are not relevant to this submission. Rather the applicant seeks to prove by the submission of evidence that the metal container has been in place as a container and used for storage purposes for continuous use for a period in excess of 10 years and is therefore immune from enforcement action.

Section 191 of the Act indicates that the burden of proof lies with the applicant, but the relevant test is 'the balance of probability'. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are advised that unless the applicant's evidence is imprecise or ambiguous, or the LPA has evidence of its own which contradicts or undermines the applicant's version of events, a certificate should be issued.

The applicant must prove that the use referred to in the application was lawful for planning purposes on the date of the application. The application form accompanying this application asserts that the use and/or activity of Flat A, Flat B, Flat D and Flat E at First and Second Floor level, at 346 High Street, London, N22 8JW for use as four self-contained flats commenced on or before 01/01/2018.

In this case, a Certificate is sought on the grounds that Flat A, Flat B, Flat D and Flat E at First and Second Floor level, at 346 High Street, London, N22 8JW have been in use four self-contained flats for a continuous period of 4 or more years.

ANALYSIS/ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION

Section 191 of the Act indicates that the burden of proof lies with the applicant, but the relevant test is 'the balance of probability'. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are advised that unless the applicant's evidence is imprecise or ambiguous, or the LPA has evidence of its own which contradicts or undermines the applicant's version of events, a certificate should be issued.

This is not a planning application and the planning merits are not relevant to this submission. Rather the applicant seeks to prove by the submission of evidence that the residential use of four self-contained flats has been in place for a period in excess of 4 years and is therefore immune from enforcement action.

The relevant test of the evidence is "the balance of probability" if a local planning authority has no evidence itself, nor any from others, to contradict or otherwise make the applicant's version of events less than probable, there is no good reason to refuse the application, provided the applicant's evidence alone is sufficiently precise and unambiguous to justify the grant of a certificate.

Information provided by Applicant

1. Tenancy Agreements - Tenancy Agreements for all four flats / Notices
2. Electric National Database; This certification clearly shows that the building was converted in 4 flats and used as such.
3. The Electrical Installation Condition Report
4. Electricity Meters
5. Utility Bills - Electricity Bills

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The evidence presented to substantiate the statement of case is considered comprehensive in nature. On the balance of probability therefore it is considered that the evidence submitted by the

applicant and following consultation, unambiguously demonstrates that the use of Flat A, Flat B, Flat D and Flat E at First and Second Floor level, at 346 High Street, London, N22 8JW have been used as four separate self-contained flats for a continuous period of four years and more before the date of this application. Therefore, it has become immune from enforcement action and is therefore lawful.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT CERTIFICATE