

Date: 5 December 2023

Ref: M23047

LB HARINGEY: 5 COOLHURST ROAD, LONDON N8 8EP

PLANNING STATEMENT

Background

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies a planning application for the amalgamation of 4 flats (Use Class C3) at the above address to form a single dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) together with the replacement of the front boundary with a "lava" brick wall to match neighbouring houses.
- 1.2 The application is submitted without prejudice to the applicant's view that the proposed amalgamation does not constitute a material change of use requiring planning permission. This matter is being pursued by the applicant via a planning appeal against the Council's refusal to issue a Certificate of Lawfulness to confirm this.

Site and surroundings

- 1.3 The application property, 5 Coolhurst Road, was built as a single-family dwelling. The Council Tax records suggest it was converted into 4 independent self-contained dwellings prior to 1993. It forms part of a handsome terrace (nos 1-7) comprising elegant 2-storey, red-brick, houses with accommodation at basement level and within the roof.
- 1.4 Coolhurst Road is a residential street that comprises a mix of purpose-built family dwellings, purpose-built flats and houses converted to flats. It forms part of the Crouch End Conservation Area. The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal (2010) states:

Coolhurst Road is wide road heavily parked with cars on both sides that rises at its northern end to meet Shepherd's Hill and Wolseley Road. There are no street trees, but the many mature trees in front gardens give it a tree-lined appearance. It retains its original granite kerbstones, but the pedestrian pavements are now surfaced with patched tarmac and the original cast iron lamp standards have been replaced with modern lighting columns. The road is flanked by large detached and semi-detached Victorian villas with mature gardens behind many original boundary walls, although these are interspersed with some 20th Century houses and apartment blocks.

- 1.5 With respect to 1-7 Coolhurst Road the Appraisal states:

This group of properties have front gardens behind boundary walls with some mature trees and planting that partially screen their frontages. They make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

Planning policy

- 1.6 The adopted Haringey Local Plan primarily comprises the Strategic Policies 2013 – 2026 (March 2013, Consolidated with alterations since 2017) and the Development Management DPD (July 2017). These Local Plan documents do not make any explicit reference to the amalgamation of flats within former houses to re-instate family dwellings.
- 1.7 Policy DM16, *Residential Conversions*, seeks “to maintain a supply of larger family homes to meet Haringey’s housing need”. The supporting text at paragraphs 3.36 and 3.37 notes that there has been a “significant loss in the availability of family housing for which there is strong need” and “the Local Plan is not reliant on conversions to meet its strategic housing target”. The aims of Policy DM16 are to ensure “the Council can protect the remaining existing stock of family houses (3+bedrooms) and that, across the Borough, the range of Haringey’s housing needs can be met”.
- 1.8 Policy DM12: *Housing Design and Quality*, seeks high quality housing which is “required to meet or exceed the minimum internal and external space standards of the London Plan and the Mayor’s Housing SPG”.
- 1.9 Under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local planning authorities are required to pay special attention to “the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance” of conservation areas. This is reiterated by Local Plan Policy DM9.

Assessment

- 1.10 The proposal would provide a family dwelling within a property originally designed as a single dwelling that benefits from a good-sized rear garden. This would replace four 1-bedroom self-contained dwellings, three of which are duplex units arranged over two floors. Due to this arrangement and the limited availability of private amenity space, these units provide sub-standard living accommodation.

- 1.11 The provision of a family unit in this location, together with an improved quality of residential accommodation, accords with the aims of Policies DM16 and DM12.
- 1.12 The front boundary of the application property is formed by tall railings and brick piers. This wholly inappropriate style of enclosure is very clearly at odds with the original “lava” brick front boundary walls and the far more informal and less prominent replacement boundaries in the street. The proposal includes the removal of the tall railings and piers and their replacement with a low wall to match those in front of Nos 1 and 3 Coolhurst Road and elsewhere in the Crouch End Conservation Area. This would very clearly enhance the character and appearance of the Area.
- 1.13 The change of use to a single dwelling would revert the building back to its original use which would also enhance the character of the Conservation Area. As would the likely a reduction in the amount of paraphernalia associated with residential use, namely refuse and recycling bins, cycles and cars parked in street, together with potentially improved upkeep of the grounds. .
- 1.14 The proposal therefore accords with Policy DM9 and the statutory requirement for development in conservation areas.

Other matters

- 1.15 Whilst it is recognised that planning applications should be dealt with on their individual merits, it is noted that permission was granted in September 2021, under the current development plan, for the conversion of 33 Coolhurst Road “from four self-contained flats to a dwelling house” (ref: HGY/2021/2112). The officer report states:

The reinstatement of a single dwelling typology will help to reinforce the overall family residential character of this street and protect the character and appearance of the conservation area. the conversion of the current floorspace within this property back into a single-family dwelling would not cause conflict with policy and is acceptable in planning terms, mindful in specific of the planning merits of the case here.

- 1.16 No. 33 Coolhurst Road is a large detached property. Unlike No.5 it contained a 3-bedroom family unit on the ground floor plus a pair of 2-bedroom units and a 1-bedroom flat on the upper floors. As such, the scheme for No.33 did not provide an uplift in family accommodation – the

application proposal is superior to the approved 2021 scheme in this respect.

Conclusion

- 1.17 For the reasons set out above planning permission should be granted for the replacement of the front boundary wall and the proposed change of use of 5 Coolhurst Road to enable its reversion back to its original use as a single-family dwelling.