

Director of Placemaking and Housing
Placemaking and Housing Directorate
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Your ref: HGY/054304

Our ref: 2483

Via Planning Portal (PP-12810115)

20th February 2024

Dear Sir / Madam

Nos. 21 – 26 Sheba Court, Altair Close, Tottenham N17 0DE
Planning Application – Reconfiguration of Units and Installation of Lift

I write on behalf of my client, Hornsey Housing Trust (the Trust), to apply for planning permission for:

Reconfiguration of six bedsit units to create three one-bedroom units and installation of internal lift between ground and first floors.

The following documents have been submitted to the Council via the Planning Portal:

- i. Planning application forms
- ii. CIL Additional Information form
- iii. Application drawings schedule
- iv. Location plan
- v. Block plan
- vi. Existing, demolition and proposed plans
- vii. Design and Access Statement

The application fee of £1,734 has been paid to the Council via the Planning Portal.

The application proposals primarily relate to six bedsit units located on the first floor of the northernmost block of the Trust's Sheba Court development. The proposals also include the construction of a lift between ground and first floors of this building.

On 12th January 1999, the Council granted planning permission for:

Demolition of existing buildings and the erection of a three storey building, comprising 16 flats (4 x 3 bedroom flats and 12 x 1 bedroom flats) and a separate two storey building comprising 8 x 1 person studio flats plus two rooms with shared facilities, catering for young people leaving care and providing skills for independent living

In addition, on 11th August 1999, the Council agreed that an amendment to increase the ridge height of the roof by 1.2 metres on the north elevation to accommodate a bed platform level within the bedsit units was non-material and did not, therefore, require a separate permission. The development was completed by the Trust in 2002.

The six bedsit units were initially designed to provide accommodation for young people leaving care. The tenants are nominated by the Council, with the Trust owning and managing the accommodation. The units are identical, and photographs of a typical unit are included within the Design and Access Statement (see page 17).

While they are self-contained, they are very small (20sqm GIA) (17sqm below current space standards), they are on the first floor but have no lift access, and the mezzanine sleeping area is accessible only via steep, alternating stairs (akin to a bunkbed ladder). As a result, for a long time, the units have proved to be difficult to let.

The letting history of the six units can be summarised as follows:

Unit 21	-	Vacant since November 2020.
Unit 22	-	Occupied but previously vacant for two years.
Unit 23	-	Vacant since October 2019.
Unit 24	-	Vacant since June 2019.
Unit 25	-	Occupied.
Unit 26	-	Occupied by previously vacant for one year.

Given the pressing housing need for supported living for residents with learning disabilities, the high vacancy rate and unsuitability of the units is a great concern for both the Trust and the Council. The Trust's loss of rent income compromises its ability to maintain the block, compounded by the increased Council Tax levied on the vacant units despite their obsolescence.

The high level of long-term vacancies and unsuitability of the units has prompted discussions between the Trust and Council's Adults, Health and Communities team about how the space occupied by the six bedsits can be optimised as quality accommodation for supporting residents with learning disabilities. With the support of the Adults, Health and Communities team at Haringey, proposals have been developed to amalgamate the six bedsits to create three one-bedroom units. In addition, an internal lift is proposed between ground and first floors to ensure accessibility.

In contrast to the bedsit units, which are just over half the size required by the London Plan, the proposed one-bedroom units would exceed London Plan and NDSS standards. The new units would be identical in their size and layout, and the areas for each unit compared to the standards are as follows:

Table 1 – Unit Sizes versus Standards

Unit	Overall Size			Bedroom area			Bedroom width		
	Standard	Actual	+/-	Standard	Actual	+/-	Standard	Actual	+/-
1	37	41	+4	7.5	13	+5.5	2.15	3.55	+1.4
2	37	41	+4	7.5	13	+5.5	2.15	3.55	+1.4
3	37	41	+4	7.5	13	+5.5	2.15	3.55	+1.4

The quality of the accommodation would be transformed. Unlike the current accommodation, the new units would appeal to wide range of people with support needs, with the additional internal space, arranged over a single level, and provision of a lift, removing many of the obstacles to letting which are currently in place.

The proposals reconfigure the existing accommodation and, given, the removal of some internal walls, would result in an increase in 3sqm of GIA floorspace. While there is a loss of units overall, in accordance with Policy DM10 (Housing Supply), there is no loss of residential floorspace.

There would be no meaningful change in the overall unit mix, with one-bedroom units replacing bedsits. There would, therefore, be no conflict with Policy DM11 (Housing Mix).

The size of the proposed units would comply with Policy DM12 (Housing Design and Quality).

The proposals are, therefore, considered to represent the best use of this currently underutilised part of the building, the purpose of which is to provide much needed affordable housing.

I look forward to hearing from officers in due course.

Yours faithfully



Jon Dingle

On behalf of Jon Dingle Ltd