

Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2024/0204
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Address:	851-853 High Road, Tottenham, London, N17 8EY
Proposal:	Change of use of ground floor shop premises 851 and 853 High Road to two single bedroom dwellings with rebuilding and enlargement of ground floor rear extensions and replacement of existing shopfronts. Refurbishment of two existing upper floor dwellings including new dormer extension in rear roof pitch at attic level and replacement of all windows.
Case Officer:	Oskar Gregersen
Valid Date:	24/01/2024
Applicant:	4 Mr Mark Howard
Agent:	Mr Paul Evans

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

Refuse planning permission

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposed development

This is an application for the proposed conversion of two existing shopfronts on Tottenham High Road from commercial to residential, along with ground-floor rear extensions to facilitate said conversions and external alterations such as change of windows. Additionally permission is sought for the formation of a rear dormer roof extension to extend a one of two flats shown on existing drawings.

Site and Surroundings

The application site is a pair of mixed-use locally listed buildings with commercial use at ground floor level with residential above. The site is located within Tottenham High Road Conservation Area, with the surrounding area being comprised of similar typology with the ground floor appearing as an established, albeit neglected, shopping parade. The site is located with Site Allocation area NT-5 (High Road West), which has sites allocated for up to 1200 high quality homes and expanded local shopping centre and improved community infrastructure.

The Conservation Area Appraisal for this sub-area of Tottenham High Road states that the application site is comprised of 'buildings of early 18th century origin with an attic storey with small dormer windows, but they have lost most of their traditional features and now have painted brick facades.' However, it states that they are a positive contributor to the continuity of scale of the area.

Relevant Planning and Enforcement history

The most recent planning history in relation to the site is as follows.

HGY/2000/0594 | 851 High Road | Conversion of upper floors into one self-contained flat
Approve w/ Conditions

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- No Responses

LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

The application has been publicised by way of 1 site notice displayed in the vicinity of the site and 26 letters. The number of representations received from neighbours, local groups, etc in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

- No responses

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

1. Principle of development;
2. Design and appearance;
3. Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area;
4. Standard and quality of residential accommodation;
5. Impact on neighbouring amenity;

Principle of development

DPD Policy DM1 'Delivering High Quality Design' requires development proposals to relate positively to their locality, while Local Plan (2017) Policy SP11 requires the highest standard of design that respects local context and character and historic significance, which is equally supported by London Plan (2021) Policy D6.

DPD Policy DM44 states that the use of ground floor premises for appropriate town centre, community and economic uses will be supported where an active frontage is provided, or if this is not possible, a window display or other appropriate town centre frontage. Changes of use from this will be supported from retail to other appropriate uses where: (a) It is demonstrated that the unit has been marketed for a minimum of one year and there is no prospect of it being used for its town centre use, and (b) there are adequate alternative shopping facilities for local residents within reasonable walking distance of 400m. The aim of this policy is to protect local parades for a range of town centre uses.

Permission is sought for the change of use of two existing shopfronts, within Tottenham High Road Conservation area, from retail use to residential use. The local context of the area is that of an historic shopping parade, with a variety of uses and retail units on offer. It can be seen from historic

street view imagery that the residential unit at No. 851 continues to be in constant use as a hair salon, whilst No. 853 has been closed since roughly 2015-2016.

No evidence has been submitted with this application to suggest that either of the retail units have been on the market for more than one year, with the unit at No. 851 seeming to operate consistently for approximately a decade. The surrounding area is consistent in retail units being maintained at ground floor level, and these uses maintain an integral part of the character of this area. As such, lack of demonstration that the retail units have been on the market, and proposed change of use would have an adverse impact on the character of the area contrary to DPD Policies DM1 and DM44.

Additionally, the site is located within site allocation NT-5 (High Road West). The site requirements of the Site Allocation state that development should accord with the principles set out in the most up-to-date Council-approved masterplan. The principles seek to enhance the high road and its heritage to provide commercial uses to meet residents needs and provide high quality homes. This proposal would not be in accordance with the principles of the masterplan.

The Tottenham Area Action Plan (2017) highlights has this area capacity for 1,200 high quality residential units, described as an area Masterplanned for residential led mixed-use development including a new high quality public square, an expanded local shopping centre, supported by an uplift in the amount and quality of open space and improved community infrastructure. This area already has sufficient provision for housing, and as such the residential units proposed in this application do not contribute positively to the area and would undermine the retail offer needed to support this substantial housing growth.

The LPA acknowledges that there is a need for housing in the borough and is currently deficient in its five-year housing land supply (5YHLS). However, in terms of small sites contributing to the 5YHLS, over the past 4 years, approximately 200 units per annum contribute to this housing target (conversions, small site infills etc). This is not a substantive amount in the context of a 1,592-unit target.

Additionally, the Council's position is that the 5YHLS shortfall is 'limited'. This is noteworthy as the nature of the shortfall can have a direct impact on the weight to be afforded to the 'tilted balance' which given the shortfall is limited, the tilted balance should be given little weight as it is a weak material consideration when considering what weight to attribute to housing policies.

The Council has appointed a development partner who has secured permission for a nearly 3,000 new homes on this site allocation and this proposal would harm the retail offer needed to support that proposal.

Overall, the proposed residential units would be detrimental to the character of the area as an historic shopping parade, contrary to DPD Policy DM1. The provision of new residential units within Site Allocation NT-5 has been accounted for elsewhere such that these small units contribute insignificantly to housing provision. The loss of retail units at ground floor level would detract from the aims to deliver a mixed use residential neighbourhood within the site allocation area and the proposal should be refused.

Design and appearance

DPD Policy DM12 'Housing Design and Quality' states that extensions or alterations to residential buildings, including roof extensions will be required to be of a high, site specific, and sensitive design quality, and respect and/ or complement the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics, detailing of the original building, including external features such as chimneys, and porches. High quality matching or complementary materials should be used appropriately and

sensitively in relation to the context. DPD Policy DM1 'Delivering High Quality Design' requires development proposals to relate positively to their locality, while Local Plan (2017) Policy SP11 requires the highest standard of design that respects local context and character and historic significance, which is equally supported by London Plan (2021) Policy D6.

The application seeks permission for external alterations to the front of two shops, to facilitate change of use to residential, as well as the erection of rear extensions and formation of a rear dormer roof extension finished in materials similar to that of the host building. Additionally, permission is sought for the replacement of low quality uPVC windows with timber sash units more appropriate to the area.

The proposed alterations to the shopfronts would remove existing shopfronts, consisting predominantly of glazing, with timber faux 'shopfronts' that would appear more traditionally appropriate for the area. Additionally, the proposed drawings show it is proposed to reinstate stucco cornice detailing that is seen in place at No. 849 High Road. It is also proposed to replace low quality uPCV window units with timber framed sash units.

These changes to the shop fronts would overall be aesthetically beneficial to the character of the area, however, do not outweigh the harm to the character of the area caused by the loss of two retail units to an historical shopping parade. The LPA would prefer if these alterations were made, and the retail units were maintained.

The proposed rear extensions would see a marginal increase in scale over the existing, creating small courtyard/patio spaces in the middle for potential residents. The proposed rear dormer would be 5.4m wide by 1.6m tall, and 1.76m deep, leading to a proposed volume of 7.56 cubic metres. These extensions would be finished in similar materials to the host building and overall would not have a detrimental effect on the host building.

Overall, in terms of design and appearance the changes would be welcomed, as they would reinstate period features to the shopfronts, and ameliorate negative changes made over time. However, when considering the proposed change of use as part of this application, the loss of retail units is detrimental to the character of the surrounding area which is typified by retail units at ground floor level.

Impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area

London Plan Policy HC1 seeks to ensure that development proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings, should conserve their significance. This policy applies to designated and non-designated heritage assets. Local Plan Policy SP12 and DPD Policy DM9 set out the Council's approach to the management, conservation and enhancement of the Borough's historic environment.

DPD Policy DM9 states that proposals affecting a designated or non-designated heritage asset will be assessed against the significance of the asset and its setting, and the impact of the proposals on that significance; setting out a range of issues which will be taken into account. In relation to extensions or alterations to residential buildings, including roof extensions, Policy DM9 requires proposals to be of a high, site specific, and sensitive design quality, which respect and/ or complement the form, setting, period, architectural characteristics, detailing of the original buildings, including external features such as chimneys, and porches. The policy also requires the use of high-quality matching or complementary materials, in order to be sensitive to context.

As stated in the above paragraphs, proposed alterations to the existing shopfronts would reinstate features that would be typical for historic shopfronts of the area including timber framing and

stucco cornices. These changes would be more period appropriate and could be seen as a beneficial change to the character of Tottenham High Road Conservation Area.

However, this portion of the High Road Conservation Area is characterised by its nature as an historic shopping parade, specifically with ground floor commercial units comprised of a mix of various heritage styles. As such, the use of the ground floor for retail is seen to be an integral part of the character of the area and should be retained.

As such, although the proposed exterior changes would benefit a pair of locally listed heritage assets, the character of this portion of the Conservation Area is typified by the mixed-use nature with retail at ground floor level. A deviation from this use as proposed would be overly detrimental to Conservation Area and there are no public benefits to outweigh this harm contrary to Local Plan Policy SP12 and DPD Policy DM9.

Standard and quality of residential accommodation

London Plan Policy D6 requires housing developments to be of high quality design, providing comfortable and functional layouts, benefiting from sufficient daylight and sunlight, maximising the provision of dual aspect units and providing adequate and easily accessible storage space as well as outdoor amenity space. Table 3.1 sets out the internal minimum space standards for new developments, while Table 3.2 of the London Plan provides qualitative design aspects that should be addressed in housing developments.

Currently, the application sites are two ground floor retail units, with existing drawings showing two, small, one-bedspace flats on the upper levels. It is noted that the planning record only shows permission granted for a single flat on upper levels (granted under permission HGY/2000/0594). The flats above are shown on drawings to be 39.5sqm and 32sqm respectively.

As stated above, permission is sought to convert two ground floor retail units into single bedroom studio flats which would be 40.2sqm and 40.3sqm respectively. This floor space at ground floor level will be achieved the erection of larger ground floor extensions to facilitate single bedspace bedrooms. The top floor flat as shown on the plans would be expanded to 50.5sqm through the addition of a rear dormer as discussed above.

The proposed floor plans of the ground floor units would meet the quantum for floor space of a 1 person 1 bedspace flat, where the minimum is 39sqm and best practice would be 43sqm according to table 3.1 of London Plan (2021) D6. The ground floor flats would each be served by a small patio area at the rear between the main living space and bedrooms, with a rear window lighting the living/dining area. There would also be light entering the proposed flats through the converted shopfronts.

It is noted that the applicants did not submit a daylight/sunlight assessment with the proposal, and so it is difficult to assess whether the habitable spaces of the proposed ground floor flats would have sufficient access to light. Additionally, the internal layout of all proposed would be awkward, with flat four being split over two levels with just a bedroom at first-floor level.

Overall, it is deemed that despite meeting the minimum space standards for a 1 bedroom 1 person flat for each flat, the internal layouts would be awkward with more documentation needed to support that the habitable spaces would have sufficient access to light in accordance with BRE Guidelines. Therefore, it is deemed that the proposal would not comply with London Plan Policy D6 and should be refused.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

London Plan Policy D6 outlines that design must not be detrimental to the amenity of surrounding housing, in specific stating that proposals should provide sufficient daylight and sunlight to surrounding housing that is appropriate for its context, while also minimising overshadowing. London Plan Policy D14 requires development proposals to reduce, manage and mitigate noise impacts.

DPD Policy DM1 'Delivering High Quality Design' states that development proposals must ensure a high standard of privacy and amenity for a development's users and neighbours. Specifically, proposals are required to provide appropriate sunlight, daylight and aspects to adjacent buildings and land, and to provide an appropriate amount of privacy to neighbouring properties to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy and detriment to amenity of neighbouring resident.

The proposed extensions, by virtue of the character of surrounding buildings, where to the north is a wood yard, with large industrial use to the east, and retail storage to the south would likely not have any adverse impact on neighbouring amenity. Additionally, it is deemed that the proposed alterations would appear sub-ordinate to the host building and would be modest in size. Therefore, the LPA deem that with respect to neighbouring amenity the proposal would comply with DPD Policy DM1.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered not acceptable as it would adversely impact the character of Tottenham High Road Conservation Area by removing retail units from an historic shopping parade, introducing residential units that are deemed to be insufficient in terms of layout and access to light. As such, the proposal would not comply with relevant policy and should be refused.

The site requirements of the Site Allocation state that development should accord with the principles set out in the most up-to-date Council-approved masterplan. The principles seek to enhance the high road and its heritage to provide commercial uses to meet residents needs and provide high quality homes. This proposal would not be in accordance with the principles of the masterplan.

All other relevant policies and considerations, including equalities, have been taken into account. Planning permission should be refused for the reasons set out above. The details of the decision are set out in the RECOMMENDATION

CIL APPLICABLE

The increase in internal floor area would not exceed 100 sq.m. and therefore the proposal is not liable for the Mayoral or Haringey's CIL charge.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE PERMISSION

For the following reason(s)

1 – The proposed development, by virtue of introduction of residential units in an historic and established shopping parade would introduce a feature incongruous to the nature of a designated conservation area, negatively affecting the character of a heritage asset with no public benefits to outweigh this harm contrary to Development Management DPD (2017) Policy DM9

2 – The proposed development, by virtue of proposed change of use of a non-designated shopping frontage to residential use, would remove viable retail frontage from the surrounding area without demonstrating being marketed for a minimum of one year, this would harm the viability of this town centre and fail to meet the needs of current and future residents contrary Development Management DPD (2017) Policy DM44.

3 – The proposed ground floor residential units would not have appropriate access to light, as the conversion of existing retail space to residential would create awkward internal spaces with inadequate outlook from habitable rooms and would therefore fail to provide high quality residential accommodation contrary to London Plan (2021) Policy D6 and Development Management DPD Policy DM1.

4 – The proposal, by reason of its proposed conversion, would result in a development that is contrary to the principles set out in the most up-to-date Council-approved Masterplan and the requirements for site allocation NT-5 (High Road West) it would therefore undermine the delivery of a high quality new residential area and fail to provide the retail and services required to meet residents needs.

Refusal Reasons:

The proposed development, by virtue of introduction of residential units in an historic and established shopping parade would introduce a feature incongruous to the nature of a designated conservation area, negatively affecting the character of a heritage asset with no public benefits to outweigh this harm contrary to Development Management DPD (2017) Policy DM9

The proposed development, by virtue of proposed change of use of a non-designated shopping frontage to residential use, would remove viable retail frontage from the surrounding area without demonstrating being marketed for a minimum of one year, this would harm the viability of this town centre and fail to meet the needs of current and future residents contrary Development Management DPD (2017) Policy DM44.

The proposed ground floor residential units would not have appropriate access to light, as the conversion of existing retail space to residential would create awkward internal spaces with inadequate outlook from habitable rooms and would therefore fail to provide high quality residential accommodation contrary to London Plan (2021) Policy D6 and Development Management DPD Policy DM1.

The proposal, by reason of its proposed conversion, would result in a development that is contrary to the principles set out in the most up-to-date Council-approved Masterplan and the requirements for site allocation NT-5 (High Road West) it would therefore undermine the delivery of a high quality new residential area and fail to provide the retail and services required to meet residents needs.