



Officer Report

Application Number:	HGY/2024/0774
Application Type:	Full planning permission
Address:	54 Wightman Road, Hornsey, London, N4 1RU
Proposal:	Conversion of the ground and basement levels of the building from an existing retail unit and four studio flats into two 2-bedroom flats (Class C3 Use).
Case Officer:	Neil McClellan
Valid Date:	15/10/2024
Applicant:	4
Agent:	Mrs Alison Sandamas Mr Peter Ottery

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposal

Conversion of the ground and basement levels of the building from an existing retail unit, and four studio flats into two 2-bedroom flats.

Site Description

The site is a 4-storey, end of terrace building, with the 4th storey located within the gabled roof. In addition, the building also has a basement floor. This application relates to the basement area, which is currently in use as three residential studio/bedsits, and to the ground floor, the rear part of which is in residential use as a studio/bedsit, with a small commercial unit to the front. The upper floors do not form part of the current application

The building forms part of a non-designated local shopping parade. Of the 5 ground floor units that formed the parade, two have been converted to residential use, the unit immediately next to the site and the one at the opposite end of the parade. The remaining two appear to be still in use. The application sites commercial unit is currently vacant, its last known use was a shop selling car parts, although it may have been used as a café for a short time after this, although this isn't certain. It appears to have been vacant for a number of years.

The site is not located within a conservation area and is not within or close to the curtilage of any listed buildings.

Planning and Enforcement History

There have been numerous applications on this site over the years. The most relevant are set out below:

HGY/2023/2754 – Planning permission refused for the change of use of the property from shop & associated storage (Use Class E) to form 2 x self-contained 1-bedroom flats at lower ground floor and ground floor level and 1 x maisonette to rear lower ground floor and ground floor level (Use Class C3). Appeal dismissed 08/10/2024.

HGY/2023/2753 – Certificate of Lawfulness approved for the existing use of the first, second, and third floors as 6 self-contained flats.

HGY/2019/1998 – Planning permission granted for the conversion of the basement and ground floor from ancillary A1 storage to provide one 1-bedroom self-contained flat with rear terrace area and privacy screening.

HGY/2018/3329 – Planning permission refused for the conversion of part of the ground floor and the lower ground floor to create one 2-bedroom self-contained flat.

HGY/2017/1379 – Certificate of Lawfulness refused for the existing use of the property as eight self-contained flats.

In addition, there have been the following past enforcement actions:

HMO/2022/00535 – Enforcement investigation into the change of use of part of the building from flats into an unauthorised HMO. Given the existing established lawful use of the upper floors of the building as 6 small and substandard flats, their licensing as an HMO was not considered to be substantially different from the lawful use, and it was not considered expedient to pursue enforcement action. Case closed 14/10/2022.

COU/2016/00896 – Enforcement investigation into the alleged unauthorised conversion of the building into ten self-contained flats. The unauthorised use was found to be immune, and the case was closed on the 30/11/2017.

HMO/2015/00744 – Enforcement investigation into the alleged use of the property as an unauthorised HMO. Case closed 24/09/2015.

REPRESENTATIONS

No representations have been received in response to notification and publicity of the application.

CONSIDERATIONS

The main planning considerations raised by the proposed development are:

1. Principle of development.
2. Standard and quality of residential accommodation.
3. Transport & servicing.
4. Other matters.

Principle of development

The basement is already in residential use as three separate studio/bedsits, granted permission under application reference HGY/2019/1998. The principle of converting these three sub-standard dwellings into a single larger 2-bedroom unit is considered acceptable in principle.

The remaining retail space at ground floor would be converted to residential use and amalgamated with the existing, again substandard, studio/bedsit unit to the rear to form a 2-bedroom flat. Given the length of time the retail unit has been vacant, its small size, poor condition, location and given that two neighbouring units in this small undesignated parade have already been converted to residential use, the principle of converting the remaining retail space to residential use is acceptable.

In terms of unit number, the proposal does result in the net loss of residential dwellings, with the number of units reducing from four to two. Policy DM10 states that Council will resist the loss of all existing housing unless housing is replaced with at least equivalent new residential floor space. The proposal does not result in any net loss of residential floor space. However, it is acknowledged that, amalgamations of flats into single units have the potential to impact on Haringey's housing targets, set out in Policy SP2 of its Local Strategic Policies. Whilst such conversions in Haringey remain relatively rare, there has been a noticeable increase, and the Council is monitoring the situation.

In this case the loss of the four substandard units, all well below the relevant floor space standard, and their replacement with two larger dwellings that all exceed the relevant floor space standards is considered acceptable in principle.

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.

The dwellinghouse would essentially revert back to the original bedroom floor space prior to being converted (while noting the additional space provided by the extension to the ground floor) which exceed the space standards, as well as providing a good standard living space, an acceptable overall layout and large garden. As such, the standard of accommodation provided within the conversion is considered acceptable and in accordance with The London Plan (2021) Policy D6 Housing quality and standards.

Basement Flat would be a 2-bedroom/3-person unit with a GIA of approximately 93sqm, significantly above the relevant standard of 61sqm.

The proposed ground floor unit would also be a 2-bedroom/3-person unit with a GIA of approximately 76sqm, also well above the minimum standard.

While neither unit would have access to private or communal amenity space, the fact that both significantly exceed the relevant minimum internal floor space standards mitigates this absence.

Both units will be dual aspect. While the outlook and daylight of the proposed basement/lower-ground unit will be reduced at the front of the unit due to it facing onto a relatively constrained lightwell, this is not the case to the rear.

Overall, both proposed dwellings are considered a significant improvement on the four studio/bedsits they will be replacing. The proposal also overcomes the reasons for refusing the previous scheme, which was for three units, which were considered to offer a poor standard of accommodation due to their poor layout and the fact that two of the units were single aspect with poor outlook.

Transport & servicing

The site has a PTAL rating of 4. Harringay station with mainline services into Central London is a short 5-minute walk from the site. Harringay Green Lanes overground station is less than 500 metres from the site as are the frequent bus services and amenities of Green Lanes. The site is therefore considered to be an accessible location well served by public transport.

Cycle storage

No space exists for external cycle storage, however given that both proposed units significantly exceed the relevant internal floor space standard, by 32sqm and 15sqm, there would be sufficient space to store bicycles with the flats, either on wall mounted fixtures or within a suitably sized storage area. While not ideal such solutions have been agreed on previous applications where no alternative existing and the dwellings are considered to be of sufficient size.

Carparking

The replacement of the existing four studio flats and retail unit with 2 x 2-bedroom dwellings, with no increase in floor space is not considered likely to result in any materially significant increase in vehicular movements or demand for on-street carparking. As such, it is not considered that there would be material harm to the capacity of the surrounding highway network.

Refuse storage and collection

No external space exists within the site to provide dedicated refuse storage. The upper floors of the building are in use as residential accommodation which is served by the Council's bagged refuse collection service. This is the situation for other flats located within the parade. Furthermore, the lower-ground floor/basement and rear part of the ground floor have established lawful use as 4 studio flats. Therefore the proposal would not place additional demands on the service.

Other matters

The only change to the exterior is the enlargement of an existing window into the front lightwell. This is minor alteration that would not impact on the character and appearance of the area resulting from the proposed development.

The proposal is not considered likely to result in any material impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties compared to the existing situation.

Conclusions

The proposal is considered acceptable for the reasons set out above.

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

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

There is no increase in floor space and the scheme is therefore not CIL liable.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION subject to conditions.

Conditions:

- 1 The development to which this permission relates must be begun no later than three years from the date of this decision notice, failing which the permission shall be of no effect.

Reason: This condition is imposed by virtue of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and drawings listed in this decision notice, other than where those details are altered pursuant to the conditions of this planning permission.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives:

INFORMATIVE: Hours of Construction Work

The applicant is advised that under the Control of Pollution Act 1974, construction work which will be audible at the site boundary will be restricted to the following hours: -

8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday
8.00am - 1.00pm Saturday
and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

INFORMATIVE: Land Ownership

The applicant is advised that this planning permission does not convey the right to enter onto or build on land not within their ownership.

INFORMATIVE: Party Wall Act

The applicant's attention is drawn to the Party Wall Act 1996 which sets out requirements for notice to be given to relevant adjoining owners of intended works on a shared wall, on a boundary or if excavations are to be carried out near a neighbouring building.