

Committee Report
Planning Committee on 15 December, 2010

Item No.
Case No.

12
10/2484

RECEIVED: 30 September, 2010

WARD: Queen's Park

PLANNING AREA: Kilburn & Kensal Consultative Forum

LOCATION: 66 Wrentham Avenue, London, NW10 3HG

PROPOSAL: Change of use from House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis) to two self-contained flats (1x 2-bedroom and 1x 3-bedroom), removal of side door and two side windows and formation of three new side windows and rear door, installation of replacement windows and formation of landscaping to front and rear gardens

APPLICANT: L&Q Beacon Homes

CONTACT: Churchill Hui

PLAN NO'S:
See condition 2

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

EXISTING

The subject site, located on the south-eastern side of Wrentham Avenue, is occupied by a part two, part three-storey property. The main loft space has been converted and the property is currently used as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) providing approximately 9-10 bedrooms. The subject site is located within a designated Area of Distinctive Residential Character

PROPOSAL

See above

HISTORY

On the 27th April 1989, planning permission (89/0918) was approved for the conversion of the loft space and the change of use of the property to a "Group Shared Home". The permission was subject to a condition which meant that the approved accommodation could only be used by Ujima Housing Association, or any other registered Housing Association, for the purposes of providing dispersed hostel accommodation for not more than 9 people. As Members may be aware, Ujima Housing Association no longer exists and the property has been inherited by the current applicants, London & Quadrant (L&Q) Housing Association.

The applicants have stated that the property has been vacant of Housing Association clients since the last tenants of the shared hostel moved out in June 2009. At present the property is partially occupied on a temporary basis by Adhoc Property Guardians who have been brought in to occupy

the property on a temporary basis in order to protect the property from vandalism and squatting. The current application seeks to convert the property into larger self-contained accommodation to help meet the demand of L&Q's main business which is providing family housing.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

London Borough of Brent Core Strategy 2010

CP2 Population & Housing Growth
CP21 A Balanced Housing Stock

London Borough of Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004

BE6 Public Realm: Landscape Design
BE7 Public Realm: Streetscape
BE9 Architectural Quality
BE29 Area of Distinctive Residential Character
H6 Protection of Existing Affordable Housing (Including HMO's)
H12 Residential Quality - Layout Considerations
H18 The Quality of Flat Conversions
H19 Flat Conversions Access and Parking
TRN23 Parking Standards - Residential Developments

Supplementary Planning Guidance 17:- Design Guide For New Development

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

N/A

CONSULTATION

EXTERNAL

Consultation letters, dated the 14th October 2010, were sent to 17 neighbouring owner/occupiers. In response 7 letters of objection have been received. The primary concern of the objectors relates to the proposed installation of an external spiral staircase to the rear of the property which formed part of the original submission. Particular concerns related to the impact of the stairwell on adjoining occupiers, in terms of overlooking and noise disturbance, and the impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. However, on the advice of Officers, the applicant has revised the scheme to now omit both the spiral staircase and the second set of stairs in the lightwell from the proposals which is considered to address these concerns. The other concerns of the objectors include:-

- the impact of the proposal on parking and traffic conditions in the surrounding area.
- the increased requirement for the storage of refuse generated by the development
- whether the proposal would involve the installation of suitable sound insulation between the subject and adjoining properties
- the installation of a boiler flue to the first floor flat would harm the character and appearance of property.
- The proposed shared use of the garden would cause disturbance to neighbouring occupiers (revisions to the scheme mean that the garden is no longer shared)

INTERNAL

Transportation Unit

The Council's Transportation Unit do not consider that the proposal would generate an unacceptable demand for on-street parking within the locality of the site and have raised no objection to the proposals. Conditions requiring further details of refuse/recycling/cycling storage have been recommended.

Landscape Design Team

The Council's Landscape Design Team have raised no objection to the proposals in principle.

REMARKS

CONVERSION OF EXISTING HMO TO FLATS

As discussed in the 'History' section of this report, the property has been used as a Group Shared Home or House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) since 1989 when planning permission was granted to Ujima Housing Association to assist with meeting an identified demand, at that time, for hostel type accommodation. However, the property has since been transferred to L&Q Housing Association who now apply to convert the property, now vacant, into two self-contained flats.

The applicants have stated that they seek to convert the property into two self-contained units in order to help meet the current demand for the provision of affordable family accommodation. Whilst the applicants have not provided specific evidence of this demand alongside their application, it is noted that these claims are broadly in line with the Council's recently adopted Core Strategy which also identifies the demand across the Borough for accommodation suitable for family occupation. As such, it is considered that, in principle, the proposed conversion of the property would constitute an appropriate substitution of one form of affordable accommodation for another and that subject to general planning considerations the development should be accepted. Practical consideration of the conversion is considered below.

RESIDENTIAL QUALITY

The proposed development would see the conversion of the property into a self-contained two-bedroom garden flat with an internal floor area of approximately 70m² and a first and second floor 3-bedroom maisonette with an internal floor area of approximately 125m². Both units exceed the Council's minimum internal floor space standards, set out in SPG17, and the vertical stacking relationship between the proposed units is generally good. The ground floor flat would enjoy sole use of the rear garden (in excess of 180m²) and although the first and second floor maisonette would not benefit from external amenity space it is considered that this adequately compensated for by the generous internal space (approximately 43m² above the minimum standard). The proposed layout ensures that all habitable rooms are provided with sufficient outlook and daylight.

At present refuse/recycling bins are stored in the front garden of the property although not within the existing purpose built store which is no longer of a sufficient size. The proposal indicates that refuse/recycling bins will continue to be stored within the front garden and that the existing store will be demolished which is generally considered acceptable in principle. However, the proposal indicates the treatment of the front garden with an excessive area of hardstanding, beyond what would reasonably be required to store and manoeuvre the refuse/recycling bins, and without any form of screening to the bins storage area. As such, it is recommended that any permission should be subject to a condition requiring the submission of further details with respect to the layout of the front garden and the storage of refuse/recycling bins.

EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS

The proposed conversion of the property would also involve a number of external alterations and the general refurbishment of the property. The proposed external alterations would generally involve the blocking/opening up of new window/door openings and the replacement of existing windows. An originally proposed installation of a short stairway providing access from the ground floor flat to the garden has been deleted from the scheme.

The proposed alterations to the window/door openings to the property would generally reduce any overlooking towards the neighbouring properties from existing levels as a number of existing side facing habitable room windows would be replaced with obscure glazed bathroom windows. All original windows to be replaced will be replaced with double glazed painted timber sash windows which would be in keeping with the character of the existing property. The adjoining property at 68 Wrentham Avenue has two existing habitable room windows which overlook the side passage, a rear facing window to the main body of the property at the higher level and a side facing window kitchen window set at the lower level. Views into both of these windows from the garden of the subject site are already possible and the proposal is unlikely to cause detrimental harm to the privacy of occupiers of the adjoining property. An existing pedestrian door will be removed from the side wall of the building and access to the garden will instead be via the bedroom to the rear.

Other more minor works include repointing and cleaning of the existing brickwork, renewal of existing roofing materials and the renewal of existing rainwater goods. The proposal would also involve the installation of a new boiler flue to the roof of the property for the first floor flat. All of these works are considered to have relatively minor impact on the character and appearance of the property which is not located within a Conservation Area.

TRANSPORTATION

The subject site is located on Wrentham Avenue, a local access road, which is defined as being heavily parked. The location of the site enjoys a moderate public transport accessibility level (PTAL3) and on-street parking is controlled in the surrounding area between 08:00-18:30 on Monday to Friday.

The maximum parking standard for the existing HMO is relatively low given that car ownership amongst occupants of an HMO is generally expected to be low. The proposed conversion of the property into self-contained accommodation would result in a general increase in the overall maximum parking standard for the site. Where a proposed flat conversion would result in an increase demand for on-street parking in a heavily parked street, policy H19 of the UDP sets out to restrict the number of units permitted within the conversion scheme to one unit per 75m² of original floor area that the property possesses. In this case, the original property would have an original, unextended, floor area of approximately 180m² which is sufficient to satisfy the provisions of policy H19 in terms of the proposed conversion of the property into two flats. As such, it is considered that the proposed conversion would constitute a reasonable balance between making the most effective use of the site for providing housing whilst maintaining a reasonable impact on parking and highway conditions within the locality of the site.

No dedicated cycle storage has been identified for the flats but it is considered that should occupants of the ground floor flat require storage for cycles that this could be accommodated by erecting a small shed in the rear garden. Whilst it is acknowledged that no dedicated cycle storage is indicated for occupiers of the first floor flat, this is not considered to be uncommon in this type of conversion scheme. Whilst dedicated cycle storage could be provided in the front garden of the property there are concerns that this could result in additional clutter which would harm the streetscene.

IMPACT ON ADJOINING OCCUPIERS

In general, it is considered that the proposed development would encourage a less intensive occupation of the building than the existing use as a 9-10 room HMO. The proposals would be subject to Building Regulations which would include provision of sound insulation to the units. Furthermore, the scheme has been amended since submission to remove the shared access to the rear garden of the property. The direct impacts of the external alterations to the property on the amenity of adjoining occupiers have been discussed above.

CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS

The concerns raised by the objectors have been addressed in the report above.

CONCLUSION

Overall it is considered that the proposed development would result in the provision of a form of residential accommodation for which there is an identified demand within the Borough. The proposed accommodation would generally meet with the Council's standards in terms of residential quality and has been designed to respect the amenity of future and neighbouring occupiers. As such, approval is recommended.

REASONS FOR CONDITIONS

RECOMMENDATION: Grant Consent

REASON FOR GRANTING

(1) The proposed development is in general accordance with policies contained in the:-

Brent Core Strategy 2010
Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004
Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 17 - Design Guide for New Development

Relevant policies in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan are those in the following chapters:-

Built Environment: in terms of the protection and enhancement of the environment
Housing: in terms of protecting residential amenities and guiding new development

CONDITIONS/REASONS:

(1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning on the date of this permission.

Reason: To conform with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

(2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:-

- 4601-E01
- 4601-E02
- 4601-E03
- 4601-W01A

- 4601-W02
- 4601-W03B

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

- (3) All new external work shall be carried out in materials that match, in colour, texture and design detail those of the existing building.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development which does not prejudice the amenity of the locality.

- (4) The three new window openings on the flank wall of the building shall be constructed with obscure glazing and be non-opening or with openings at high level only (not less than 1.7m above floor level). These windows shall be permanently maintained in that condition thereafter unless the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority is obtained.

Reason: To minimise interference with the privacy of the adjoining occupiers

- (5) Notwithstanding the approved plans, further details for the landscaping of the front garden area, including details of soft and hard landscaping and screening of an area for the storage of refuse/recycling bins, shall be submitted to and approved in writing prior to the commencement of works. The approved landscaping details shall be implemented in full prior to the occupation of the development, hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory setting for the development

INFORMATIVES:

None Specified

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

London Borough of Brent Core Strategy 2010

London Borough of Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004

Supplementary Planning Guidance 17:- Design Guide For New Development

7 letters of objection

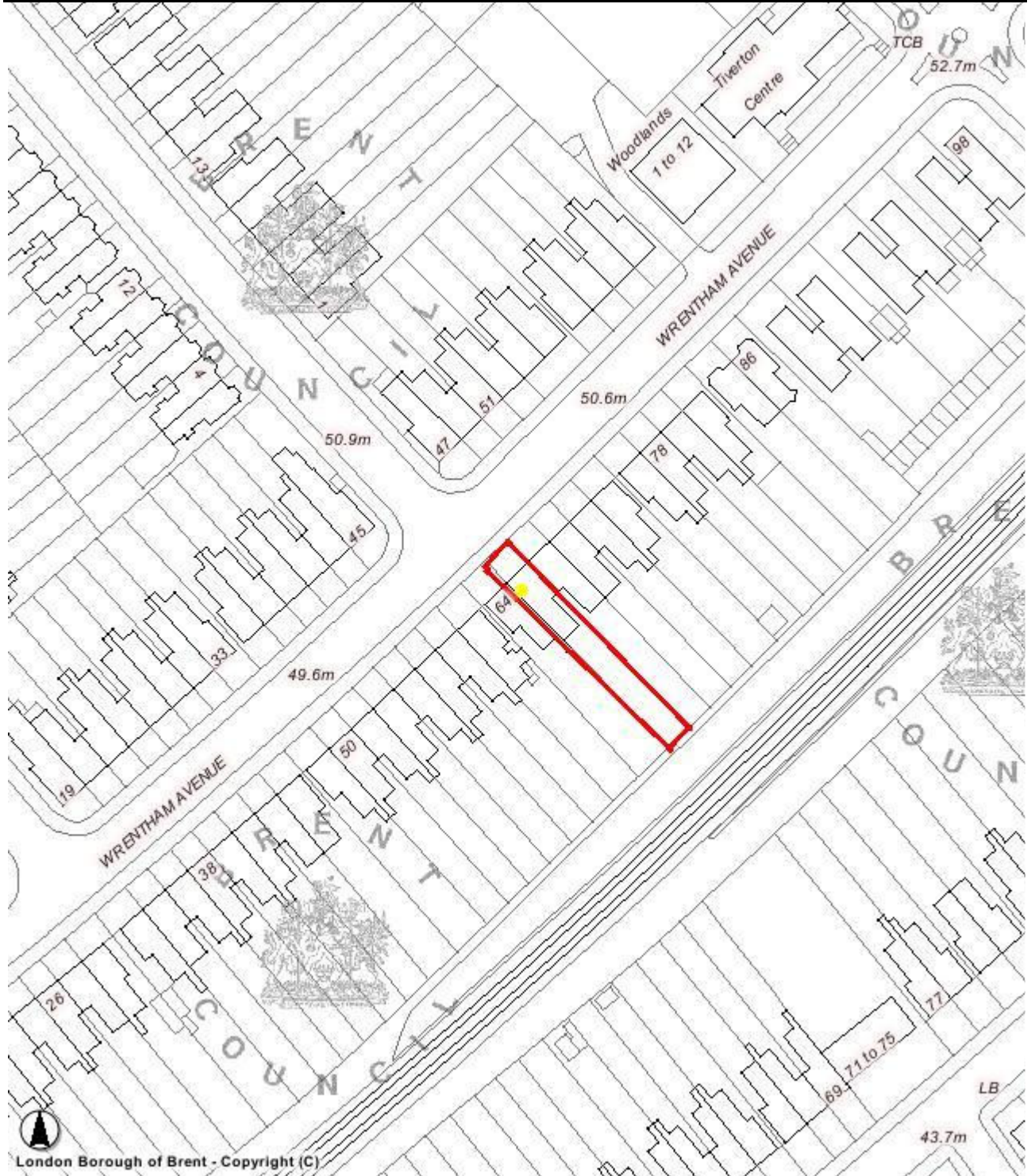
Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Ben Martin, The Planning Service, Brent House, 349 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 6BZ, Tel. No. 020 8937 5231



Planning Committee Map

Site address: 66 Wrentham Avenue, London, NW10 3HG

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