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To:
Planning
Manchester City Council
PO Box 532, Town Hall
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03rd November 2019

Dear Sirs

Planning application: Conversion of the basement into an apartment, 3 Oak Avenue, Chorlton, M21 8BB

PLANNING STATEMENT

I refer to the above site. I set out below the details of the proposed development along with our assessment of relevant planning issues.

THE SITE

The application relates to an existing semi-detached building, which has been sub-divided into 3 no. Apartments. The apartment building is located on the north side of Oak Avenue, a cul-de-sac road, located off Barlow Moor Road. Oak Avenue is residential in character, although there is a high concentration of commercial premises in Barlow Moor Road.

THE PROPOSAL

Planning permission was granted on 11th October 2019 for the "*Conversion of basement to form additional accommodation for Flat 1 and installation of light wells and associated balustrading at the front and rear*."

This proposal subject of this planning application involves the creation of an additional self contained apartment in the basement area. To facilitate this conversion, external alterations would be required to the front and rear elevations of the building, comprising, reinstatement of some existing windows, the provision of additional widow openings, the bricking up of one existing window, and the installation of new lightwells to the front and rear elevations.

We are aware that there have been previous applications for the creation of an additional apartment in the basement, most recently planning application reference 117043/FU/2017, refused in 2017. It should be noted that this proposal does not propose a principal entrance to the apartment (thereby directly addressing reason for refusal no.2 of that decision).

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The Development Plan in Manchester comprises:

- Core Strategy 2012 - 2027, adopted July 2012
- Unitary Development Plan (UDP) - The Core Strategy replaced much of the UDP but some UDP policies are extant
- The Greater Manchester Joint Waste Plan, adopted 01 April 2012
- The Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan, adopted 26th April 2012

<u>Core Strategy</u>

- The Core Strategy replaces significant elements of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). A number of UDP policies have been saved until replaced by further development plan documents.

- Policy SP1 - Spatial Principles sets out the key spatial principles guiding development in Manchester. It sets out the core development principles that all development should have regard to and states that development in all parts of the City should:-
    - Make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including:-
    - Creating well designed places that enhance or create character
    - Making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents
    - Considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income
    - Protect and enhance the built and natural environment
    - Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.
    - Access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

- Policy DM 1 - Development Management states that all development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document:-
    - Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.
    - Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development. Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.
    - Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality and road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.
    - Accessibility: buildings and neighbourhoods fully accessible to disabled people, access to new development by sustainable transport modes.
    - Community safety and crime prevention.
    - Design for health.
    - Adequacy of internal accommodation and external amenity space.
    - Refuse storage and collection.
    - Vehicular access and car parking.

- Effects relating to biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage.
- Green Infrastructure including open space, both public and private.
- Flood risk and drainage.
- Existing or proposed hazardous installations.

- Policy EN1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas says that development in Manchester will be expected to have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located. Opportunities for good design should be fully realised, particularly on major radial routes.
- Policy H11 requires new flat developments to provide a high standard of accommodation.

Unitary Development Plan

- The site is unallocated in the Plan

- Citywide Development Control Policies form part of Part 2 of the UDP and seek to apply detailed development control policies in relation to, inter alia, residential extensions.

- UDP policy DC5 deals with flat conversions. It sets down the criteria to be considered in determining applications for flat conversions.

Other Material Considerations

Guide to Development in Manchester

- The Guide sets out the design principles that development in Manchester should follow. It advises that high quality design is a vital attribute of successful neighbourhoods, the design of streets should promote neighbourliness and design should respect and be informed by location. The guidance also advises that buildings should relate well to each other and building heights should be carefully considered. Neighbourhoods should

contain a mix of housing. Safety and security are vital elements of the urban area, the impact of parking areas should be minimised and new developments should maximise access for disabled people.

Manchester Residential Design Quality Guidance

- The Manchester Residential Quality Guidance seeks to provide: "*clear direction on what is required to deliver sustainable neighbourhoods of choice where people will want to live and also raise the quality of life across Manchester*."

- The document provides detailed guidance and sets out key requirements for applicants.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- The NPPF will be referred to as appropriate in this statement.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

The PPG will be referred to as appropriate in this statement.

CASE FOR THE APPLICANT

The principal issues for consideration by the Council are compliance with policy, and impact on: the character of the area; residential amenity, and; car parking and highway safety.

Principle

The development would conform to the principal aim of the planning system, as set out in the NPPF, to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; in that it would contribute to economic vitality; serve the community in contributing to a wider choice of much needed housing, by virtue of providing an additional apartment; and enhance the environmental quality

of the locality by the provision of improvements to an existing building, built to a high quality of design and to modern standards.

The proposed additional apartment would contribute to the diversity and mix of housing provision in the locality. The site is located in the South Manchester area which Core Strategy policy H6 envisages will accommodate around 5% of new residential development over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. There is a variety of housing types in this residential area but a predominance of semi-detached properties, many of which are converted to flats, in the immediate area. The proposed works would provide an additional 2 bedroom apartment, within an existing apartment building, adding to this mix, contributing to meeting the housing needs of the area.

The site is in an established residential area and in a sustainable location, with social and community facilities, such as schools, parks etc in reasonably close proximity.

The proposal complies with the relevant provisions of Core Strategy Policy DM1 and UDP Policy DC5.

In considering UDP Policy DC5, it is notable that the proposal meets the criteria set out in that policy in that:

a. there would be a high standard of accommodation for the intended occupiers of the premises;

b. there would be no adverse impact on adjoining houses as a result of noise from flats passing through party walls and affecting adjoining houses;

c. there is adequate car parking and the proposal would not result in undue off-street car parking.

d. flat conversion schemes are an established feature of the immediate area, the proposal avoids the loss of front gardens and the retains existing trees and shrubs;

e. there would be adequate private outdoor amenity space;

f. the apartment would be accessible for all

g. there would be satisfactory provision of refuse storage and collection facilities.

These considerations are dealt with in more detail below.

Design

Both the NPPF and local planning policy encourage good design.

The key elements identified in the Guide to Development in Manchester and the Manchester Residential Quality Guidance have been important factors in the evolution of the proposed development. The external alterations would be appropriate to the building, matching and complementing the existing building in terms of design and use of materials. The alterations to the front elevation are relatively minor in scale and would have little impact on the streetscene. The alterations to the rear are similarly relatively minor in scale and would not be significantly open to wider view. Figure 1 shows the alterations to the front elevation.

Figure 1: Alterations to the front elevation



Existing



Proposed

The proposal has been carefully thought through to ensure that regard has also been given to security and accessibility in the detailed design and layout of the property and accommodation. As stated above, it should be noted that in this proposal the main entrance to the apartment is from the front of the building, not the rear.

Residential amenity and impact on the character of the area

The proposed development would only increase the number of apartments in the property by one. This would not have any significant impact on the adjacent properties or the area generally, which is characterized by a large number of properties converted into apartments.

The proposal would not significantly intensify the use of the property. It would enable the addition of only two new bedrooms, which is only one more than the accommodation approved under planning application 124594/FO/2019, which was approved as recently as October 2019. The existence of that planning permission is a valid ‘fall-back’ position, as clearly established in case law and is a material consideration in the determination of this application. The provision of only one additional bedroom would result in only a very minimal increase in general comings and goings and noise generation. Even if consideration was to be given to the provision of two additional bedrooms, the scale of any increase in likely activity is, in the context of the property’s location, likely to be minimal. It is significant that, unlike the proposal in 2017, this proposal does not propose access to the apartment from the rear. That proposal

would have necessitated additional comings and goings to the side and rear of the property, no doubt a cause of concern to the Council at that time and a consideration which no doubt weighed against that proposal, leading to reason for refusal No. 1 of that decision.

In the context of the property's location, the proposal would have little or no impact on the character of the area. The area is characterized by a large number of conversions. This will continue to be the case. The proposed alterations to the building would not have any noticeable impact on the character of the building or the streetscene. No alterations are required to the front garden area to accommodate the development e.g. increase in hard surfaced area.

The adjacent property is also understood to have basement accommodation. The juxtaposition of rooms with that adjoining basement accommodation is such that it would not give rise to noise transmission issues between the two properties, as it is essentially a repetition of the existing layout of the ground floor where no problems with noise transmission arise. The works will comply with building control regulations for airborne and impact noise transfer.

We note that the officer report for the application for the proposed conversion in 2017 made it clear, in its conclusion, that the decision to refuse permission on the grounds of the development being 'over intensive' was a weighed and balanced conclusion i.e. the report says that the conclusion was reached 'On balance....". It is our view that this proposal is sufficiently different to that refused in 2017 for the Council to conclude that the weight that can be applied to the various considerations has now shifted towards a positive outcome for this application.

Other Matters

There are no highways issues arising from this low key development, which will have no adverse impact on the local highway network. Access and car parking arrangements would remain as existing. There would be no significant increase in demand for car parking on site or in the wider area. Referring once again to the 'fall-back' pertinent to this case, the provision of

only one additional bedroom over and above what is already permitted will have no significant impact on the overall demand for car parking provision in the area. We note that in the officer report for the application in 2017, the LHA advised that it had: “No objection in principle as this is a sustainable location.” That conclusion equally applies in this case.

Conclusion

The proposed development will be beneficial development, making effective use of urban land. The development will be well designed, making a positive contribution to the area and will have no adverse impact on the character of the area or the amenity of adjacent residents. The proposal represents a sustainable form of development that is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and policies set out in the development plan for Manchester. Planning permission should therefore be granted.

Yours sincerely
Kieran Howarth MRTPI
Kieran Howarth Planning Limited