

Planning statement

This planning statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for a change of use from single family dwelling to two self-contained flats, located at 43 Queens Avenue, London N3 2NN. This application simply seeks the addition of one single dwelling to an existing one.

The property was originally divided into two flats in 2017 and has a building regulation certificate (attached to this application). However, this development was deemed ‘unlawful’ by the council and led to the re-conversion of the property into a single dwelling in 2018.

The proposed conversion is in accordance with local and national space, amenity and parking standards and provides a good standard of living for future residents; it meets current housing needs in a road that has already a small number of conversions of houses into two flats (10%) and therefore contributes to Barnet’s Core strategy of providing quality homes and housing choice by providing one additional good quality self-contained unit suitable for a couple or a small family.

This statement seeks to demonstrate that the proposed development is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local planning policies and should be granted planning consent.

Site Description

The application site is located at 43 Queens Avenue. The plot size is 230m². The property is within walking distance of amenities such as general shops, Church End library, Manorside primary school, Tudor primary school and other schools, Victoria park, Vue Cinema complex with Finchley Lido Swimming pool and a number of restaurants, Finchley Memorial Hospital, and with good connection to Finchley Central Tube Station (15 mins walk) and public buses (382 from Squires Lane and 263 from the High Road, plus busses from Ballards Lane).

Queens Avenue consists predominantly of similar terraced single family properties from the early 20th century. Of these, approximately 10% have been converted into two apartments.

The property has benefitted from two one-storey rear extensions (in the 1980s and in 2016) as well as a loft conversion (2016). It does not require any additional extensions or alterations. These recent alterations, in line with comparable developments of neighbouring properties, have allowed a full refurbishment and upgrade of the property, with new sound and heat insulation, while preserving and being sympathetic to many characteristics of the original features (such as Victorian tiling in the entrance hall, original skirting boards, fireplaces on the first floor and high ceilings).

The exterior character of the property has also been maintained and the proposed change of use does not alter in any way the façade of the house, which preserves the original single front door (Please see attached drawings).

The property benefits from a private driveway at the front of approx. 45m² (7,00m x 6,40m) which already allows parking space for two cars and waste bins, and a rear garden with fencing and mature bushes.

The property does not lie within a Conservation Area and is not a listed building.

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The London Plan (2016)

Relevant Barnet Local Plan Core Strategy

CS4 – Providing quality homes and housing choice in Barnet

CS5 – Protecting and enhancing Barnet's character to create high quality places

CS13 – Ensuring the efficient use of natural resources

Relevant Barnet Local Plan Development Management Policies

DM01 – Protecting Barnet's character and amenity

DM02 – Development standards

DM03 – Accessibility and inclusive design

DM08 – Ensuring a variety of sizes of new homes to meet housing need

DM17 – Travel impact and parking standards

Supplementary Planning Documents: Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2016)

Supplementary Planning Documents: Residential Design Guidance SPD (2016).

Design Principles and Concept

The proposal seeks the approval of the addition of one single dwelling unit to an existing single family house. The proposed conversion does not involve further internal or external alterations and the external appearance of the building will remain unaltered – with the original single front door. We propose re-paving the drive at the front in order to improve its appearance and maximise space.

A number of properties in Queens Avenue (around 10%) have already been converted into two units. The current property is suitable for conversion, would not constitute overdevelopment and would not alter the general higher proportion of single dwelling houses in this road.

Quality of Accommodation for Future Occupants

The internal layout, altered and upgraded during the recent refurbishment, provides spacious and flexible accommodation, and was designed by local RIBA architectural firm MK Architects. Both flats are self-contained and satisfy internal space standards set out in the Residential Design guidance and London Plan (2016)

Ground Floor apartment (62m²)

Kitchen/Living room: 22m²

Bathroom/Shower room: 3,7m²

Bedroom 1: 16m²

Bedroom 2: 11,5m²

Upstairs apartment (91m²)

Kitchen/Living room (loft space): 35m²

Bedroom 1: 16m²

Bedroom 2: 17m²

Study : 6,7m²

Bathroom: 7m²

There are no internal changes in level (all rooms are step-free but, of course, the upstairs flat has two flights of stairs) and rooms are independently accessible from a landing.

Electricity meters are located in the communal hall, neatly boxed; gas meters at the front (but discreetly placed on the far side of the building, close to the ground); water meters outside, close to the pavement.

The kitchen/living room of flat 2 is placed on the top floor and therefore not above any of the bedrooms of flat 1 and not in contact with neighbouring properties. Stairs are carpeted and sound-proofing has already been installed to ensure that noise transfer is minimised to meet current British Acoustic Sound Standards for residential properties.

The council's Residential Design Guidance asks that consideration is given to the amount of sunlight received to habitable rooms. The layout of the bedrooms ensures that direct morning and afternoon sun is received into all bedrooms and living areas. The large glazing to the rear of the loft kitchen/living room has been fitted with 'Sun 25' protection, which reduces overheating.

Amenity Space

Section 8.4 of Barnet's Residential Design Guidance (and the council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD) sets out that all dwellings should have access to outdoor amenity space that is not overlooked from the public realm and provides a reasonable level of privacy. The ground floor flat has direct access to a patio and the garden via the kitchen/living space, which offers a good level of privacy from neighbouring premises. The upstairs flat can access the garden from the rear gate, through a gated alleyway which runs from the side of 35 Queens Avenue. The garden can EITHER be used as a communal amenity space OR divided for the use of the two flats (see drawing 'possible garden allocation'). In addition, Victoria Park (and other public amenities) is located less than 5 minutes away, while the large glazing in the kitchen/living room of the upstairs flat offers a light, airy and pleasant feel, giving a feel of closeness to the outdoors, together with plenty of ventilation, all of which compensates for the lack of immediate access to outdoor space.

Table 2.3 within the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD indicates that for flats, outdoor amenity space should be 5m² per habitable room (habitable rooms, according to the SPD, include bedrooms, living rooms and kitchens). The rear garden is ca105m² and therefore exceeds the combined requirements of the two flats (35m²).

Neighbouring Amenity

There will be no additional overlooking or loss of privacy to next door neighbours.

Parking Provision

Policy DM17 requires one car parking space for each single-family dwelling. The current drive (approx. 45m²) already provides sufficient space for two cars. We propose to maximise space through re-paving.

There is sufficient space at the front of the property for bike racks and additional bins for waste collection (see attached drawing for a visualisation of the various possibilities)

Conclusion

The recent refurbishment, the scale of development and minimal internal re-design of this

house into two flats, have been carried out to a high specification, in harmony with the character and scale of the original building, outdoor space, and other comparable neighbouring developments in the area. Furthermore, it has provided quality, spacious and flexible accommodation in keeping with Council policies, guidelines and building regulations.

The current proposal for a change of use does not alter the exterior of the property in any way, does not place additional demands on parking, does not have detrimental impact on the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers and does not generally harm the residential character of the area; it contributes to Barnet's Core strategy of providing quality homes and housing choice by providing one additional good quality self-contained unit suitable for a couple or a small family.