

DESIGN + ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

for

CONVERSION OF FLAT 16C TO CREATE TWO FLATS

to

16C OXFORD STREET, WOODSTOCK, OXFORDSHIRE, OX20 1TS

Introduction

Panton Design has been appointed to provide an architectural service and seek Planning Permission for the change of use and conversion of an existing former retail store building (A1 non trading area) into 1 x bedsit flat and 1 x two bed flat (C3 residential). The building currently benefits from an unexpired development consent for the change of use to form a single one bed flat only spanning both floors which was granted as part of a wider application in 2016. This conversion has not taken place and the building remains unaltered as a former retail store building.

The design brief is as follows:

- Prepare design proposals and seek development consent for two domestic flat units.

Property history

The existing two storey building with integral garage was granted Planning Permission and Listed Building consent, 05/0301/P/FP and 05/0302/P/LB respectively, as a replacement of an earlier store building to the rear of retail premises 16, 18 and 20 Oxford Street. These retail premises were occupied by The Real Wood Furniture Company as one tenant and the new replacement building provided ancillary retail storage.

In 2016, Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent, 16/02207/FUL and 16/02208/LBC respectively, was granted for the return of these premises into three separate retail units fronting Oxford Street. Consequently, the rear store building was not required and, under the same 2016 applications, approval was granted for the change of use of the store building to form a single one bed flat, referred to as flat 16C to become available on the open rental market along with the formation of flat 16B to the rear of 16 Oxford Street.

Only part of the approved works of the 2016 applications has been executed; that is the formation of the three separate retail premises and these are currently occupied. Approved flat 16B to the rear of 16 Oxford Street and flat 16C within the former store building have not been executed and their consents remain valid.

The building is not a designated Listed Building and is located within the Woodstock Conservation Area. Nos.16, 18 and 20 Oxford Street are designated Grade II Listed Buildings.

On-site car parking serving the current retail and residential accommodation is accessed from Union Street.

Design

Applications 16/02207/FUL and 16/02208/LBC did not provide proposed floor plan design details of the change of use to a single domestic flat, 16C, as it was deemed that the proposed conversion would not require alteration of the building envelope.

This application now seeks consent to form two separate ground and first floor flats with proposed flat 16D being located on first floor level with flat 16C on the ground floor. There is an existing internal stair within the unconverted store building providing access from the ground to first floor level and it was considered that its removal would achieve an increase to the internal floor area to both floors thus making the conversion into two flats more viable.

Ground floor flat 16C will provide a bedsit level of accommodation and the larger first floor level accommodation would achieve two bedrooms and retain the integral garage as a dedicated parking space. With flat 16C being more suited for a single person, it is considered that with the good bus transport links along Oxford Street, the nearby public car park and local residents parking permit scheme recently introduced to Woodstock, a dedicated on-site car parking space will not be required.

An external painted galvanised steel stair similar to the existing external stair to the rear of 16 Oxford Street will provide access to first floor flat 16D. This is located to the north east gable elevation without impeding on the existing car parking provision within the application site.

Flat 16D is served with two bathrooms and each will be provided with a proposed single conservation rooflight on the south east elevation. To avoid potential loss of privacy and overlooking, these will be positioned such that their sill levels will be no less than 1.6m above the first floor level thereby restricting views. A further new rooflight on the north west elevation will provide daylight to the kitchen area. The three existing rooflights on this elevation will be replaced with taller units to improve internal daylight levels and will become an internal design feature. The replacement rooflights serving bedrooms 1 and 2 will be fire escape compliant. There are no loss of privacy and overlooking issues with these north west elevation units.

Existing ground floor opening to the south west elevation has been removed and blocked up to provide privacy between flat 16C and the existing domestic residential accommodation to the rear ground floor of 20 Oxford Street. First floor door opening to the same elevation has been modified to become a bedroom window for flat 16D.

Existing ground floor external door to the north west elevation is redundant in the proposed layout and has been removed with the opening modified to form a window serving the open plan layout of flat 16C.

The flats will benefit from the wider local amenities that Woodstock provides to include annual permits available to Blenheim Park. Flat 16C has a courtyard garden as part of the proposed conversion for immediate amenity.

Access

Both flats are on a single level with flat 16D requiring an external stair.

External areas surrounding the site are level throughout and there is level access to Union Street with the public car park opposite. In addition, there is level pedestrian access to Oxford Street via a covered passageway between 20 and 22 Oxford Street connecting with the public transport stops.

The site plan also describes the designated refuse store areas for waste and recycle bins to remain unchanged as this was deemed acceptable under consideration of the 2016 applications.

No other access matters have been considered in this proposal.

Heritage Statement

The former retail store building is curtilage Listed as it forms part of the existing 16 Oxford Street which is a Grade II Listed Building. The store building was granted Listed Building Consent 05/0302/P/LB as a replacement of an earlier structure. This is a modern early C21 replacement designed as a simple traditional building to compliment the vernacular aesthetic. As such, its impact upon the Listed Building is deemed low. The building fabric is of low significance and of a higher significance in the wider context in relation to its siting to the rear of the range of Grade II Listed Buildings fronting Oxford Street.

The proposal does not seek to alter the building fabric and its wider context significance. The proposed modifications to the existing rooflights and the insertion of new rooflights have minimal relevance in terms of impact upon the existing surrounding buildings. In addition, the introduction of an external metal staircase to the north east elevation is similar to an existing staircase to the rear north east elevation of 16 Oxford Street. The site is not visible from the wider Conservation Area and the conversion and operation as two flats will not alter the buildings status within the curtilage of the Listed Building.

Conclusion

Nos. 16, 18 and 20 Oxford Street have a long Planning History such that the site is now presented with all retail accommodation fronting Oxford Street and the rear accommodation of the site all being domestic residential. As such, there is an obvious logic to retain the former retail store building as a domestic residential unit and the proposal seeks to gain permission for the formation into two flats.

To enable this level of accommodation to be formed there is minimal external alteration required with only the addition of an external stair. There is no proposed new build or increase in building volume and the external appearance remains primarily unaltered thus having no detriment to the wider Woodstock Conservation Area.

It is considered that the formation of two flats within the former retail store building, which currently benefits from an unexpired change of use consent to form only a single one bed flat spanning both floors, is a positive addition to the open rental market within Woodstock where such units are rarely available.

On this basis, we hope the proposal is able to be supported and Planning Permission granted.

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