

# David Lees Architects

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23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024

**Application for Prior Approval  
for Class MA Permitted Development  
Part Second Floor  
Dancastle Court  
14 Arcadia Avenue  
London  
N3 2JU**

## **Introduction**

The subject property is a purpose built office building probably dating from the 1980's. The symmetrical elevation comprising of lower and upper ground, first and second floors. sits on the northern side of Arcadia Avenue.

The applicant is bringing this application forward to seek Prior Approval using the Class MA Permitted Development route, to convert a vacant part of the building into residential use.

## **Dancastle Court**

The building is a concrete framed, brick clad structure, with a pitched roof, central open courtyard, two lightwells and lower ground floor car parking area.

Arcadia Avenue falls to the east, such that the upper ground floor can be easily accessed via a shallow ramp from the west side of the elevation where the road is higher, whilst towards the centre of the building there is a stair rising up from road to the upper ground level, whilst a ramp drops into the lower ground parking area.

The primary access into the building is at upper ground level, via a controlled access gateway which leads into the central open-air lightwell which rises up through the building.

There is accommodation laid out over the upper ground, first and second floors. The upper ground floor has two residential apartments at the rear of the building, (facing north) and two office units.

From this level there are two principal stair cores one with a lift.

At first floor level, the stair and lift arrive at a central balcony which runs around the central courtyard, accessing all the units. The plan is laid out in a similar manner to the floor below- with two apartments to the rear of the building facing north, and two office units, one to each side of the building. Additional lightwells on the eastern and western sides of the building, allow additional light into the units.

The second floor follows the same pattern as the first floor, however the floor footprint is very slightly smaller due to setbacks in the elevation on the western and eastern elevations.

### **Proposed Change Of Use.**

On second floor level, on the western side of the building, is a self-contained office unit.

In order to find sustainable future uses for the property in a challenging commercial market where such properties are hard to lease, this application is being brought forwards to request permission to convert the space from the current commercial Use Class E, into residential Use Class C3.

The property is well suited to conversion, being a solid concrete construction, with good vertical circulation and good access to light and air as demonstrated by the supporting reports.

The site location is very accessible, benefiting from a PTAL score of 4, with Finchley Central Station within walking distance, and numerous bus routes connecting into central London and surrounding areas.

The building benefits from an on-site car-park and it is proposed that spaces formerly assigned to the office space will be available for the future residents, such that each dwelling would have one parking space.

The ground floor parking undercroft is secure and offers the residents opportunities to securely park bicycles.

A communal refuse store is also provided in the undercroft area.

The building and the local area is not in a conservation area, it is in a low risk Flood Risk Zone 1 and an area at low risk of contamination, therefore well suited to residential conversion.

The applicants team has discussed the proposal informally with the planning policy team to ensure that there are no Article 4 notices which would prevent the implementation of a Class MA Change of Use. It was confirmed that no such restrictions are in place, and the applicant decided to progress with this application.

## **Design**

The proposal converts the second floor west side office unit into two flats. This level is accessible by both stair and by lift, creating a level access to both dwellings. After arriving at the second floor level, one walks across the covered, but external balcony access to reach the entrances to each unit.

Flat 1 is a 71.0m<sup>2</sup>, 2 bedroomed apartment designed for three people. The rooms have been designed to comply with the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards providing a large single bedroom and a large double / twin bedroom. The flat has access to a small external terrace, facing east. The dwelling benefits from good natural light from south and eastern elevations.

Flat 2 is a 52.6m<sup>2</sup>, 1 bedroomed apartment designed for two people. The flat is simply laid out with the all rooms meeting the Nationally Described Standards. The bedroom also benefits from a small section of the existing external terrace. The apartment also receives light from several directions, from the south and west and also from the windows facing the open lightwell / courtyard to the east.

A small ancillary space will become redundant once anticipated plant changes are made, and will be used as residential space, for storage, cleaners store etc.

Daylight. A separate report accompanies this application which has calculated the daylight likely to be received by each dwelling, and the report concludes that each dwelling would receive good daylight.

Noise. As the proposed dwellings sit above an office space, consideration has been given to the possibility of noise transfer from the office to the dwelling. Due to the robust construction, the quiet location and the relatively low risk posed by an office, it is unlikely that the dwelling will suffer any harmful noise from the neighbour. The attached report considers the risks and proposes construction approaches which will minimise any potential for harm.

### **Summary**

This application has been carefully assembled to consider all the factors which would affect the proposed residential use to result in the creation of two high quality, sustainable dwellings being created.

The supporting investigations and reports demonstrate how the proposal would perform, and deliver these much needed new homes.

Following due consideration the applicant trusts that this application will be supporting and Prior Approval be granted for the proposed conversion.

The project team is committed to a collaborative approach and welcomes any questions or comments the planning officers may have whilst considering these proposals.

Any questions should be addressed to the Agent for the application, David Lees Architects Ltd.

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Below: Dancastle Court, viewed from Arcadia Avenue, west unit highlighted:



Below: Second floor access balcony, looking towards unit.

