

Old Boiler Room, Lauderdale Mansions, London, W9 1LX Planning Statement



Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Site and Surroundings	5
3	Planning History	8
4	The proposals	9
5	Planning Policy Framework	10
6	Planning Assessment	12
7	Summary and Conclusions	19

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

Figure 2 – Existing Front Facade

Figure 3 – Surrounding Location Map

Figure 4 – Maida Vale Conservation Area and Location of Application Site

Figure 5 – Proposed layout plan

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Forward Planning and Development Limited (“FWPD”) has been instructed by Guestfleet Ltd (“the applicant”) to submit an application for planning permission for the conversion and extension of the existing boiler house to create a one bedroom dwelling house and associated alterations.
- 1.2 This Planning Statement has been produced to support the submission of the enclosed planning application.
- 1.3 Planning permission (ref: 16/08909/FULL) was first granted on 2 November 2016 and later renewed in November 2019 (ref: 19/05386/FULL) for an identical proposal. The planning permission has not been implemented and therefore this application now submitted seeks a renewal of the previous permission.
- 1.4 Planning permission is sought from the City Council in respect of the following proposal: -
- “Conversion and extension of the existing boiler house to the rear of 96-116 Lauderdale Mansions to create a one bedroom dwelling house and associated alterations”.**
- 1.5 The sections of this planning statement are set out to provide:
- **Section 2 – Site and Surroundings** - A description of the site and surrounding context.
 - **Section 3 – Planning History** - Details of the planning history of the building.
 - **Section 4 – Development Proposals** - Details of the proposed works for which planning permission is sought.
 - **Section 5 – Planning Policy** – A summary of the relevant planning policy framework.
 - **Section 6 – Planning Considerations** – An assessment of the key issues associated with the proposals.
 - **Section 7 - Summary and Conclusions.**
- 1.6 This planning statement provides a review of the relevant national, regional and local planning policy and guidance relevant to the nature of the proposals and the specific degree

to which the proposed works accord with the policies of the statutory development plan and legislative framework.

2 Site and Surroundings

2.1 The Old Boiler House is located in the communal garden area of the Lauderdale Mansion block on the north side of Lauderdale Road.

2.2 The property is shown on the location plan below.

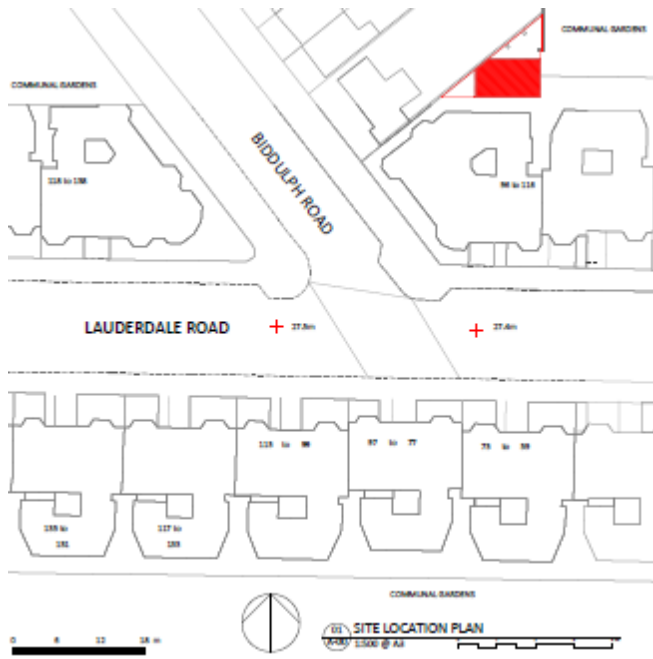


Figure 1: Location Plan

2.3 It is a single story brick built structure and has been vacant for some time. It previously was used as the boiler room for the block, housing hot water tanks and pumps but was vacated some time ago when the heating system of the mansion block was decentralised. See Figure 2.



Figure 2: Existing front façade of the Old Boiler House



Figure 3: Map showing location of the property in relation to the surrounding area (blue arrow shows approximate location of the Old Boiler House)

- 2.4 The mansion block itself forms part of a development of three mansion blocks, one on the south side of Lauderdale Road and two on the north side of Lauderdale Road.
- 2.5 To the rear of the mansion block is a mature communal garden in which the Old Boiler House is located. A number of the flats within the mansion block look out onto the communal gardens.
- 2.6 The building is not listed (neither the Mansion Block nor the Old Boiler Room) but is located within the Maida Vale Conservation Area.

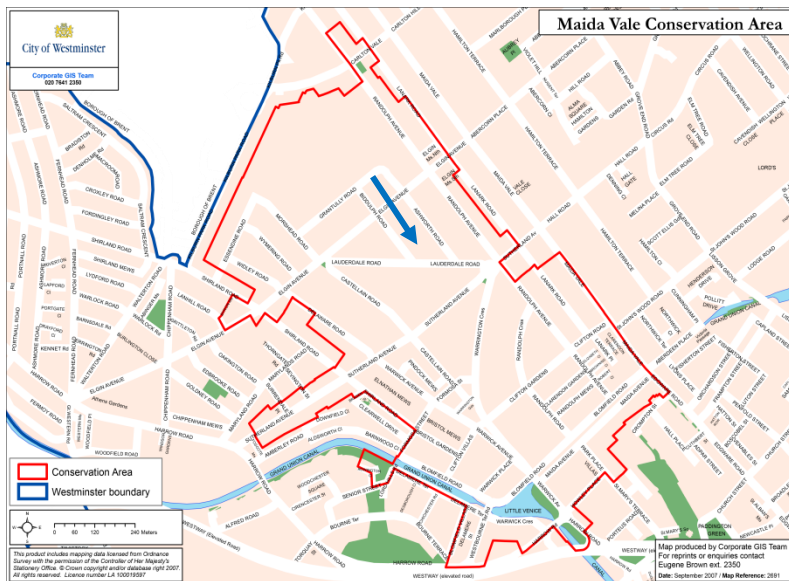


Figure 4: Map showing the extent of the Maida Vale Conservation Area (arrow shows approximate location of the Old Boiler House)

- 2.7 The area is characterised by predominantly red brick mansion blocks and terraced houses. It is primarily a residential area with a small number of retail uses at ground floor level along Elgin Avenue.
- 2.8 The area is well served by public transport being equidistant to Maida Vale and Warwick Avenue underground stations which are served by the Bakerloo Line. A number of bus routes also serve the area running along Elgin Avenue and Sutherland Avenue

3 Planning History

- 3.1 A review of the online Statutory Register of Planning Applications held by the Westminster City Council has been carried out.
- 3.2 The online search reveals the following planning permissions for surrounding buildings and the Application Site that are considered relevant to this proposal.
- 3.3 Of particular interest is the 2019 planning permission issued. This current application seeks identical permission for development. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, it was not possible to implement the permission within 3 years.
- 3.4 The 2019 permission was also an exact update of an earlier permission in 2016 that was allowed to expire.

Ref: 19/05386/FULL - Permission granted in Nov 2019 for *'Extension and conversion of the existing boiler house to the rear of 96-116 Lauderdale Mansions to create a one bedroom house and associated alterations.'*

- 3.5 We have also undertaken research into the conversion of other garden structures into use and have identified a few examples which may be relevant to the consideration of this proposal.
- 3.6 74 Portland Place (15/06925/FULL) – Planning permission was granted in July 2015 for the demolition of an existing boiler room and erection of a 3 storey residential dwelling with terrace.
- 3.7 15 Buckingham Gate (15/02130/FULL and 15/02131/LBC) – Planning permission was granted in August 2015 for the use of the building as a single family dwelling and erection of a 2 storey garden building.
- 3.8 76 Westbourne Park Villas (12/10985/FULL) – Planning permission was granted in April 2013 for the replacement of the rear garden outhouse with a single storey studio building.
- 3.9 Open space Belgrave Square (05/00506/FULL) – Planning permission was granted for the erection of a single storey building for use as gardeners' machinery store and offices, staff facilities and garden users' toilets.

4 The proposals

4.1 It is proposed to convert the existing Boiler Room into a one bedroom house

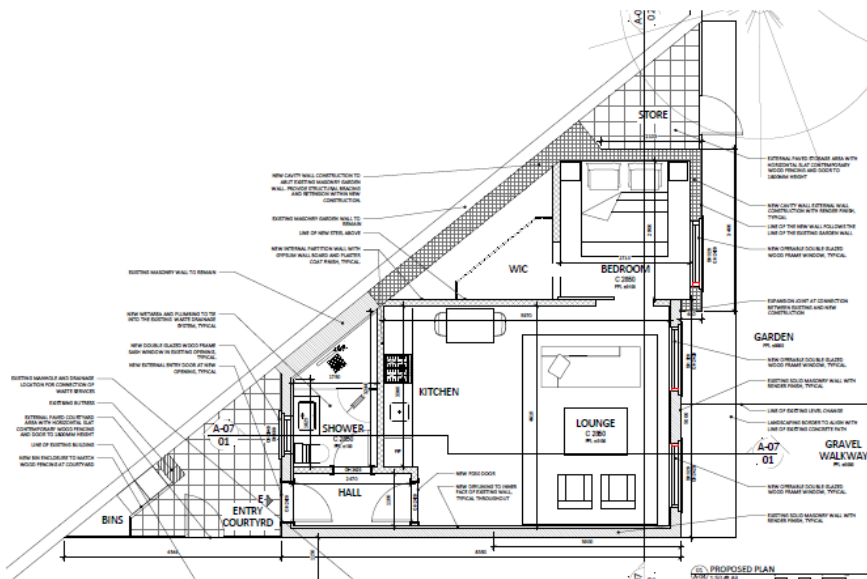


Figure 5: Proposed Plan

4.2 This will involve some minor alterations to the building including:-

- An extension of 15 sqm to the rear of the existing building to accommodate the bedroom and storage space.
- Raising of part of the roof level to create a uniform roof level;
- Insertion of new windows in the east elevation;
- Alterations to the west elevation including relocation of existing entrance door and insertion of a new window;
- New fencing to create an entry courtyard;
- Addition of a green roof.

4.3 Planning permission is therefore sought for:-

“Extension and conversion of the existing boiler house to the rear of 96-116 Lauderdale Mansions to create a one bedroom house and associated alterations

5 Planning Policy Framework

- 5.1 National Policy Guidance is produced by Central Government in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), most recently updated in July 2021. This is a material consideration when determining planning applications.
- 5.2 The Statutory Development Plan comprises of the policies set out in the London Plan 2021 (March 2021) and the Westminster City Plan (2021-2040) adopted in 2021.
- 5.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4 The Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the legislation that is used to assess the impact of proposals on listed buildings and conservation areas.

National Planning Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (2021)

- 5.5 The NPPF document sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It summarises in a single document, previous national planning policy statements. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.6 The NPPF introduces the presumption in favour of sustainable development although it makes plain that the development plan is still the starting point for decision making.
- 5.7 The following sections of the NPPF are considered relevant to the consideration of these proposals:-

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

London Plan (2021)

- 5.8 The more recent update of the London Plan was published in March 2021. Set out below are those policies considered to be of most relevance to the determination of this planning application:

- Policy D4** **Delivering Good Design**
Policy HC1 **Heritage conservation and growth**

Local Planning Policy

- 5.9 The Westminster City Plan was adopted in 2021. It is the key document for determining planning applications in Westminster.
- 5.10 The following adopted policies from the City Plan are considered relevant to the consideration of the proposals:

- Policy 7** **Managing Development for Westminster's People**
Policy 8 **Housing Delivery**
Policy 12 **Housing Quality**
Policy 24 **Sustainable Transport**
Policy 27 **Parking**
Policy 34 **Green Infrastructure**
Policy 38 **Design Principles**
Policy 39 **Westminster's Heritage**
Policy 40 **Townscape and Architecture**

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Document

- 5.11 The following documents are considered relevant to the consideration of this application:
- **Maida Vale Conservation Area Information Leaflet (May 2004)**
 - **Maida Vale Conservation Directory No.3**

6 Planning Assessment

6.1 This section of the Planning Statement assesses the key planning considerations associated with the proposals.

6.2 These are:-

- a) Land use and the principle of additional residential accommodation
- b) Alterations – Principle of Development
- c) Townscape and impact upon the Conservation Area
- d) Residential Amenity
- e) Greening/Landscaping
- f) Sustainable Transport

Principle of the Development – Additional Residential Floorspace

6.3 The proposal involves the creation of additional residential floorspace (a one bedroom, 50 sqm house) within a vacant building.

6.4 Both the NPPF and the London Plan seek to significantly boost the supply of homes and to promote the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

6.5 Paragraph 1.3 of the City Plan states in order to *‘deliver additional growth in the city, it will be necessary to intensify existing urbanised areas. This includes optimising opportunities for infill development and extensions to existing buildings, up as well as out. This plan encourages high quality, creative and contemporary design solutions to deliver additional growth.*

6.6 Policy 8 of the City Plan seeks to encourage the provision of more residential floorspace including the creation of new residential units, especially where it involves optimising site densities.

6.7 The proposal represents the efficient and effective use of land by bringing back a vacant building into use.

6.8 The proposal will meet the nationally described minimum space standards as explained in the Design and Access Statement.

6.9 There is, therefore, a policy presumption in favour of the proposed development.

6.10 The principle of the proposal to create new additional residential accommodation is supported at all levels of planning policy.

Proposed extensions and alterations – Principle of the proposed development

- 6.11 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF states that the “the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”.
- 6.12 City Plan Policy 38 sets out a series of principles relating to design including:
- Responding to Westminster’s context
 - People centred design
 - Sustainable design
 - Promoting excellence in contemporary design
- 6.13 Central to delivering the right kind of growth that underpins the City Plan is ensuring that new development embodies the highest quality of design that will deliver sustainable development. The Council considers it is essential to ensure equally high-quality architecture and urban design in all new developments. Policy 40 of the City Plan sets out a number of key design policy including that *‘development will be sensitively designed, having regard to the prevailing scale, heights, character, building lines and plot widths, materials, architectural quality and degree of uniformity in the surrounding townscape’*
- 6.14 Part C of Policy 40 of the City Plan relates specifically to alterations and extensions and states that *‘alterations and extensions will respect the character of the existing and adjoining buildings, avoid adverse visual and amenity impacts and will not obscure important architectural features or disrupt any uniformity, patterns, rhythms or groupings of buildings and spaces that contribute positively to Westminster’s distinctive townscape.’*
- 6.15 Part D of the policy related specifically to proposed roof extensions and states that they will be supported in principle where they do not impact adversely on heritage assets and where part of a terrace or group already characterised by roof additions or alterations, be of appropriate design, following an established form which would help to unify the architectural character of the existing terrace or a group.

Assessment

- 6.16 The proposal will convert an existing, poor quality, vacant building into a one bedroom house.

- 6.17 The proposal will improve the space around the existing building by significantly enhancing the appearance of the building itself. This will benefit the users of the communal gardens as the existing boiler house currently detracts from the outlook from the gardens and the flats which look out onto the gardens.
- 6.18 A number of alterations are required to the existing structure to enable it to be successfully converted into a one bedroom house including a small extension of 15 sqm and the addition of further windows in the east and west elevations.
- 6.19 The extension will not visually dominate the existing building, indeed it is located within a partially enclosed courtyard area. It is in scale with the existing building and reflects the design of the existing building.
- 6.20 The extension, being only 15 sqm does not occupy an excessive part of the garden. It will occupy an area behind the existing boiler house that is currently neglected and untidy. The area of the existing garden will not be reduced as a result of the proposals.
- 6.21 No significant gap between buildings will be lost.
- 6.22 The building will be re-clad in brick to ensure it has a neutral finish. The windows onto the garden have been designed to ensure they represent a traditional appearance.
- 6.23 The lower part of the roof will be raised to match the existing higher level of the higher part of the roof. This will create a single level flat roof. The roof will be a green roof to improve the appearance of the roof when viewed from neighbouring properties.
- 6.24 Overall it is considered that the proposed extensions and alterations are in keeping with the existing building and the mansion block as a whole and accord with the City Council's policies relating to alterations. This was accepted by the City Council in approving the 2016 and renewed 2019 application.

Townscape and Impact upon the Conservation Area

- 6.25 Section 72(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area when considering applications relating to land or buildings within that Area. The effect of this section of the Act is that there is a statutory presumption in favour of the preservation of the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Considerable importance and weight should be attached to their preservation.

- 6.26 Chapter 16 of the NPPF sets out the Government's policies relating to the historic environment.
- 6.27 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 6.28 Locally, Policy 39 of the City Plan deals with Westminster's Heritage. Part B of the policy sets out basic design principles in relation to the historic environment including:
- ensuring heritage assets and their settings are conserved and enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance;
 - securing the conservation and continued beneficial use of heritage assets through their retention and sensitive adaptation;
 - placing heritage at the heart of place making and good growth, maintaining the unique character of our heritage assets
- 6.29 It sets out policy in relation to Conservation Areas stating that 'Development will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Westminster's conservation areas. Features that contribute positively to the significance of conservation areas and their settings will be conserved and opportunities taken to enhance conservation areas and their settings, wherever possible.'
- 6.30 Part B of Policy 40 states that 'Spaces and features that form an important element in Westminster's local townscapes or contribute to the significance of a heritage asset will be conserved, enhanced and sensitively integrated within new development, including important architectural details, boundary walls and railings, historic roof forms or structures, open lightwells, historic or characteristic shopfronts and street furniture, as well as squares, parks and gardens. Where possible, lost or damaged features will be reinstated or restored

Assessment

- 6.31 Significance can be defined as the value of a heritage asset and those qualities which contribute to its value.
- 6.32 In this case, the Designated Heritage Asset (DHA) is the Maida Vale Conservation Area and the Heritage Asset (HA) is the Mansion building itself. It is not considered that the old boiler room forms part of the significance of the building.
- 6.33 The main focus of the significance of this building as a Heritage Asset and its contribution to the significance of the DHA is the elegant architectural treatment of the front elevation of the building.
- 6.34 The old boiler house as it currently exists is considered to detract from the significance of the DHA and makes a negative contribution to both the Conservation Area and the significance of the building itself.
- 6.35 The key assessment is whether the proposals lead to any harm to or loss of significance of either the Conservation Area or the building itself and also whether the proposal enables the statutory duties of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area to be upheld.
- 6.36 It is considered that the proposal alterations and upgrading of the existing boiler house will enhance the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.

Residential Amenity

- 6.37 Policy 7 of the City Plan sets out standards with regards to issues concerned with residential amenity. According to this policy development will be neighbourly by both protecting and where appropriate enhancing amenity, by preventing unacceptable impacts in terms of daylight and sunlight, sense of enclosure, overshadowing, privacy and overlooking

Assessment

- 6.38 The protection of the amenity of surrounding residents has been carefully considered as part of the design development.
- 6.39 New windows are proposed in the west and eastern elevations of the existing structure.
- 6.40 No windows are proposed on the southern elevation which directly faces the existing flats within the mansion block.

- 6.41 Whilst the proposal does introduce new windows that face the communal gardens, there is already a significant number of windows overlooking the garden, including at ground floor level. As a result, it is not considered that the proposal will result in a material increase in overlooking of the gardens over and above that which currently exists.
- 6.42 The proposal will not lead to any overlooking issues with any other properties.
- 6.43 In terms of loss of privacy, the Council has previously considered that the ground floor flat may experience a loss of privacy due to people accessing the new residential unit will walk past these windows.
- 6.44 There are two access routes to the new dwelling; through the mansion block itself and through the side gate that currently provides access to a single flat (Flat 16B). The access to the side gate is not exclusively for the use of Flat 16B, all residents of the mansion block have access to the side gate and can walk past the windows.
- 6.45 The proposed dwelling is a one bedroom unit which can accommodate two people. Therefore, it is not considered that there will be a material increase or intensification in the number of people using this access route as a result of the proposal.
- 6.46 The new unit will have sufficient acoustic insulation to minimise noise including double glazing and insulation.
- 6.47 The impact of the proposed raised roof level has been tested by the project Architects and shown not to materially affect the windows to the rear facing flats adjacent to the Old Boiler House
- 6.48 It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the provision of Policy 7 of City Plan. This was accepted by the City Council in approving the renewed 2019 application.

Biodiversity and Greening

- 6.49 Policy 34 of the City Plan states that *'developments will, wherever possible, contribute to the greening of Westminster by incorporating trees, green walls, green roofs, rain gardens and other green features and spaces into the design of the scheme'*.

Assessment

- 6.50 The proposal incorporates a green roof in order to address Policy 34.

Sustainable Transport and Parking

- 6.51 Part C of Policy 24 of the City Plan states that development must *'positively contribute to the reduction of the dominance of private motor vehicles both in terms of traffic and congestion, whilst not worsening the excessive levels of on street parking and tackling poor air quality.'*
- 6.52 Policy 27 of the City Plan states that 'the parking standards in the London Plan will apply to all developments'. Annex 10.3 of the London Plan states that all developments located in the Central Activities Zone Inner London Opportunity Areas, Metropolitan and Major Town Centres and all areas of PTAL 5 – 6 and Inner London PTAL 4 will be car free.
- 6.53 The proposal will create a one bedroom unit
- 6.54 Onsite parking provision is physically impossible and the existing mansion block does not provide any off-street parking. However, the site is extremely well served by public transport with Maida Vale and Warwick Avenue Underground stations within short walking distance (Maida Vale Station is a three minute walk away from the site). There are also numerous bus routes in the vicinity of the development and a number of Zipcar locations in close vicinity of the development
- 6.55 Furthermore the central and highly accessible location of the Application Site means that a parking space is not necessitated and the proposal meets the parking standards set by the London Plan.
- 6.56 It is envisaged that the provision of secure cycle storage could be secured by condition and there is ample space to provide this in the entry courtyard area.

7 Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposal will provide additional residential accommodation within a sustainable location. The proposed new unit will comply with space standards.
- 7.2 The existing boiler house is a vacant structure that is under-utilised and neglected. The proposal will bring back this vacant building into use representing efficient use of brownfield land.
- 7.3 The proposed alterations are minor in scope and have been carefully designed to respect the surrounding context and the Conservation Area as a whole.
- 7.4 The proposal will have limited visual impact. Only a small part of the boiler house can be seen from the street from one vantage point on Biddulph Road.
- 7.5 The proposed alterations will be visible from the windows of the properties which look out onto the gardens but the existing structure detracts from the gardens as existing and the alterations will enhance the appearance of this existing structure. It is considered that the proposal will improve the visual impact of the boiler house from the mansion block itself.
- 7.6 As a result, it is not considered that the proposal leads to any harm or loss of significance to the Mansion Block as a heritage asset or the Conservation Area as a Designated Heritage Asset.
- 7.7 Therefore the proposals are considered to uphold the statutory duties in relation to the conservation area and to comply with the provisions of National, Regional and local policies relating to design and heritage.
- 7.8 Matters relating to amenity have been carefully considered to ensure that the proposal does not lead to a loss of privacy to adjoining occupiers as a result of overlooking and any adverse impacts relating to noise and disturbance.
- 7.9 Planning permission was granted for an identical proposal in November 2016 and again in November 2019. There has been no material change in circumstance or policy since the latest grant of planning permission.
- 7.10 It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in planning terms and planning permission should be granted.

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