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Supporting Planning Policy Statement

Proposed Sub-Division of Office to a Self-Contained Flat

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Acting as agents for

G W Properties Ltd

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Planning and Listed Building Consent are being sought from Glasgow City Council by our client, G W Properties Ltd, for the conversion of existing office accommodation to one residential flat. The property was purchased in 2021.
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the appropriateness of the current proposals to the current Planning process.

2.0 Site Description and Local Context

- 2.1 The application site consists of an office on the first floor of a listed property, Grade B, within the Park Conservation Area.

The site, 15 North Claremont Street, is located within a tenemental block of mainly residential flats.
- 2.2 The property was converted to office accommodation about 25 years ago. Without permission, windows were removed and replaced with UPVC windows. A suspended ceiling has been erected and it appears that the majority of the architectural character of the property was lost.
- 2.3 The property is located within the Park Conservation Area, with the surrounding area being principally residential in nature.
- 2.4 In its current form the accommodation consists of six offices, one kitchen, one ladies toilet and one gents' toilet.
- 2.5 To the rear of the flat there is direct access to a private car park, which has two spaces reserved relative to this flat. There is also adequate space for locked bicycle parking.

Also, directly off this area, there is a dedicated refuse storage area with bins for use by all owners of 15 North Claremont Street.

3.0 The Development Proposals

- 3.1 The current proposals would convert the office accommodation into a residential flat comprising of living room, kitchen, master bedroom with en suite, two further bedrooms, bathroom/shower room and a utility room.
- 3.2 All original cornicing and skirtings would be fully reinstated, as would original panelled doors following their upgrading.
- 3.3 Access to the flat off the common stair would be provided to the front and rear of the property.
- 3.4 No external alterations to the front and rear are proposed except for a 150 x 75 grille for kitchen ventilation and replacement of windows.

- 3.5 In this case, the development plan comprises the approved Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan and the adopted Glasgow City Development Plan (2017). However, for the purposes of this proposed development, it is the policies of the adopted City Development Plan and relevant Council Supplementary Guidance that are of most relevance. This is discussed below.
- 3.6 Policies CDP1 (The Placemaking Principle) and CDP2 (Sustainable Spatial Strategy) are overarching policies which, together with their associated Supplementary Guidance, must be considered for all development proposals to help achieve the key aims of the City Development Plan. This is very much a design-led approach to the assessment of all development proposals but understandably has more of a focus on new-build projects, as opposed to residential conversions such as this case. Nevertheless, we would contend that these current proposals meet the standards required by these policies in that they will assist in making the City a more appealing place to live, respect the historic environment and the qualities and character of this property, provide a high quality level of amenity for the new residents, be located conveniently to public transport corridors, contribute to the development of a vibrant and accessible residential neighbourhood and bring back into appropriate use a property which is currently lying empty.
- 3.7 Policy CDP9 (Historic Environment) and Supplementary Guidance SG9 (Historic Environment) aim to ensure that development proposals are fully respectful of the architectural and historic qualities of the City's listed buildings and conservation areas by providing design guidance to developers. In this context, we would contend that these current proposals will:-
- protect and enhance the character of this listed building;
 - respect the original form of the building;
 - not result in the loss of historic fabric;
 - use traditional materials to reflect the period, style and architectural character of the building;
 - replace missing and damaged traditional features and remove inappropriate features;
 - preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of this conservation area.
- 3.8 The City Council has produced Supplementary Guidance (SG) to cover in more detail topics which are important to the assessment of proposals. Statutory (adopted) Supplementary Guidance is a material consideration in the determination of applications and carries equal weight as the policies in the local development plan. SG9 (Historic Environment) has already been referred to and discussed above. SG1 (Placemaking) contains guidance on the conversion and subdivision of properties to residential use, set out firstly as general standards and then specifically related to the Glasgow West Conservation Area. The following assesses these current proposals against these required standards.

(1) General Standards.

“All dwellings should, ideally, have dual aspect.” – each of the proposed flats will have front and rear aspects.

“All habitable rooms should receive natural daylight and ventilation. No residential accommodation should be formed solely in basement cellars or under-buildings. A minimum of 18 metres should be provided between habitable room windows directly facing windows in buildings on adjacent sites, wherever possible.” - the current proposals fully comply in this regard. Ceiling heights at lower ground level meet the requirements for acceptable living space.

“there should be internal access from each dwelling to both the front and the rear of the building to enable occupants to reach refuse/recycling facilities and private/communal amenity space” - in this instance, to avoid unnecessary and inappropriate internal alterations to principal rooms and spaces of architectural significance, the inclusion of a small external staircase at the rear to give direct access from the first and second floor flats is considered to be the preferred option. This will be inoffensive in appearance as compared with the existing rear external fire escape and will not, as highlighted above, be visible from any public area. Given such, it is considered that a departure from this standard is justifiable in this instance.

“parking provision should accord with SG11 (Sustainable Transport)” – car parking is available to both the front and rear of the property in line with the requirements of this guidance.

(2) Local Area Policies

In respect of the Glasgow West Conservation Area, the guidance, where it is relevant to these proposals, states that the Council will not support proposals which:-

“exceed a maximum of 2 dwellings in a 4 storey terraced property”- as this subdivision would create 3 self-contained flats in a 4 storey terraced property it is therefore at odds with this requirement. It should be remembered that this is Council guidance and not something that cannot be altered if appropriate justification is demonstrated. In this case the reason is financial viability. The facts are that the cost of acquisition of the property, together with the costs of conversion/subdivision would result in a financial loss to the developer and, therefore, in these circumstances could not be progressed. The breakdown of these costs forms a separate part of this submission. This form of justification has been accepted in certain cases elsewhere in this conservation area for similar projects, allowing a relaxation of this policy requirement. The creation of three large family sized apartments of varying size would meet the policy’s aim of providing a greater range of dwelling size. Accordingly, we would maintain that our client’s proposal can be so justified.

“seek to form parking space(s) in the rear of terraced properties (in order to preserve the use for garden purposes and refuse/recycling storage.” – it is not our client’s intention to provide rear garden parking spaces and the garden area would be retained in its entirety as communal amenity space for the residents.

4.0 Other Material Considerations

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

- 4.1 As a statement of Scottish Government policy, this is an important material consideration that carries significant weight.
- 4.2 SPP sets out four outcomes to support the vision of a growing, low-carbon economy with progressively narrowing disparities in well-being and opportunities, these being:-
- 1 a successful, sustainable place;
 - 2 a low carbon place
 - 3 a natural, resilient place; and,
 - 4 a more connected place.

It is considered that these proposals are in keeping with each of the above outcomes by promoting residential development in a sustainable centrally positioned high quality location which affords transport options and by enhancing the quality of the built environment by bringing this listed building back into appropriate use.

- 4.3 SPP highlights that the planning system should *“enable positive change in the historic environment which is informed by a clear understanding of the importance of the heritage assets affected and ensure their future use. Change should be sensitively managed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the fabric and setting of the asset, and ensure that its special characteristics are protected, conserved or enhanced.”* These proposals will sensitively restore this listed building to appropriate use, removing inappropriate alterations carried out previously and repairing important interior and exterior architectural features, thereby supporting this aim of SPP.
- 4.4 SPP further comments that *“Change to a listed building should be managed to protect its special interest while enabling it to remain in active use”* and that *“Enabling development may be acceptable where it can be clearly shown to be the only means of preventing the loss of the asset and securing its long-term future.”* The *“enabling”* development in this case is in allowing this 4-storey property to be subdivided into 3 flats, as opposed to 2 flats as required under SG1 (as above), given the economic case as set out, which forms a separate part of our client’s submission. By allowing this relaxation of policy guidance, the building will still be sensitively restored and put to an appropriate future use.

Historic Environment Policy For Scotland (HEPS).

- 4.5 HEPS is a material consideration for planning proposals that might affect the historic environment and requires to be taken into account when deciding on the merits or otherwise of a proposal. The following HEP policies have relevance to these proposals:-
- HEP1 – Decisions affecting any part of the historic environment should be informed by an inclusive understanding of its breadth and cultural significance;
 - HEP2 - Decisions affecting the historic environment should ensure that its understanding and enjoyment as well as its benefits are secured for present and future generations;
 - HEP4 – Changes to specific assets and their context should be managed in a way that protects the historic environment. Opportunities for enhancement should be identified where appropriate; and,

- HEP5 – Decisions affecting the historic environment should contribute to the sustainable development of communities and places.

As previously stated, these proposals will sensitively convert and restore this fine building to a use which can be enjoyed by present and future generations. In so doing, current features which adversely impact on the architectural quality of the property (e.g. internal partitioning in principal apartments, external rear fire escape staircase) will be removed and repairs undertaken. Moreover, the site's location in the heart of the city's West End will encourage sustainability principles, given that it is within easy walking distance from public transport infrastructure, shops and services.

Managing Change in the Historic Environment – Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings.

4.6 This document forms part of a series of non-statutory guidance notes with regard to managing change in the historic environment and is of relevance to these proposals, given the nature of the development affecting a listed building.

4.7 Whilst acknowledging the principles and aims as set out in SPP and HEPS, the document comments:-

“For a building to stay in use over the long term, change will be necessary.”

“A building's long-term future is at risk when it becomes hard to alter and adapt it when needed. Proposals that keep buildings in use, or bring them back into use, should be supported as long as they do the least possible harm”

“In certain circumstances, adaptation can provide opportunities to restore the appearance and special interest of a listed building. Conservation-based approaches can involve removing later additions of little interest on the exterior of a building. It can also include positive changes internally, such as reinstating missing features or taking down later partitions and suspended ceilings”

These current proposals fully support the above objectives.

5.0 Conclusions

6.1 To summarise, we would highlight that our client's proposals:-

- have been designed to the highest standards appropriate to this listed building and the locus;
- can be justified in respect of the relevant policies and guidance in the City Development Plan;
- are in accord with Scottish Planning Policy, Historic Environment Policy For Scotland and Managing Change In The Historic Environment; and,
- would result in the careful restoration of a fine listed building and its appropriate use for present and future generations.

6.2 Accordingly, we would respectfully request that these proposals receive the support of Glasgow City Council.

