

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 12/02914/FULL3

Ward:
Penge And Cator

Address : 2 Torr Road Penge London SE20 7PS

OS Grid Ref: E: 535723 N: 170180

Applicant : Mr M Barraclough

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Conversion of existing commercial unit to single 2 bedroom residential dwelling

Key designations:

London Distributor Roads

Proposal

Permission is sought for the conversion of the existing commercial unit into a single 2 bedroom residential dwelling.

Location

The application site comprises a two storey vacant commercial building, set on the western edge of Torr Road. The surrounding locality is predominantly residential in nature, although there are some commercial units which front Green Lane to the north.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and representations were received which can be summarised as follows:

- pleased to see that the conversion would not result in overlooking
- would like assurance that nothing would be attached to the adjacent garage
- side gate is recessed and could result in fly tipping

Comments from Consultees

Waste advises that refuse and recycling should be left on the edge of curb prior to collection.

Thames Water raises no objection.

There are no Highway Drainage comments.

There are no technical Highway objections, as the site has a high PTAL of 5 and is easily accessible by public transport.

Environmental Health state that the internal layout is unsatisfactory where the bedrooms at first floor are accessed by the open plan kitchen living room and the living/ dining room suffers from insufficient outlook.

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan

BE1 Design of New Development
H2 Housing Supply
H7 Housing Density and Design
H12 Conversions of Non-Residential Buildings to Residential Use
EMP3 Conversion or Redevelopment of Offices
EMP5 Development Outside Business Areas
T3 Parking

There is no planning history

Conclusions

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the character of the area and the impact that it would have on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties.

Policy H12 states that the 'Council will permit the conversion of genuinely redundant office and other non-residential buildings to residential use, particularly above shops, subject to achieving a satisfactory quality of accommodation and amenity'. The text to this policy states that where such conversions are proposed (para 4.56) the applicant must be able to demonstrate that the premises are genuinely redundant.

Although there is no formal clarification as to the usage of the property, it has been used as a business premises. Policy EMP5 states that redevelopment of business premises outside designated areas will be permitted provided that 'the size, configuration, access arrangement or other characteristics make it unsuitable for uses B1, B2 or B8 use and full and proper marketing of the site confirms its unsuitability and financial non-viability'.

In this instance, the applicant has submitted estate agent adverts which show the unit being marketed for rent from August 2012 without any prospective occupiers being found. Further correspondence from the applicant has stated that there has been no interest, even following a reduction in the rental value given the size and condition of the unit and local competition.

The unit is vacant (since March 2012) and in obvious need of repair, where it currently detracts from the streetscene. An internal inspection of the unit was carried out, and this is too in a very poor condition, which would not be suitable as a contemporary working environment. A conversion to residential would not result in a loss of employment in this instance, and accords with EMP3 and EMP5.

It is also noted that para 51 of the NPPF states that 'Local Authorities...should normally approve planning applications for change to residential use and any associated development from commercial buildings (currently in the B classes) where there is an identified need for additional housing in that area, provided that there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate'.

Torr Road is residential in character and the unit here is separated from the commercial uses which front Green Lane and Penge High Street, where the conversion of the property to create a dwelling would not unduly harm the character of the area and is considered to be acceptable in principle.

With regard to amenity, it is proposed to convert the unit into a 2 bedroom, 3 person dwelling with a GIA of 70.4 square metres. Policy 3.5 of the London Plan does not provide space standards for this type of dwelling but states that 2 bed, 3 person flats should have a GIA of 61 square metres and 2 bed, 4 person houses a GIA of 83 square metres. The proposal here falls between these two standards which is considered acceptable.

Internally, the dwelling is arranged with an open plan kitchen/ living and dining room with two bedrooms at first floor. The property has an orientation towards the garden with a flank window facing the access. The ground floor front elevation is blank, incorporating faux door and garage door to replicate the existing building. Although concern is raised from Environmental Health, as this is a conversion and incorporates acceptable space standards the layout is considered acceptable for a small scale dwelling. In terms of access, it is proposed to remove the existing front door, and relocate the access from the property via the rear into the kitchen by the existing side passage way. This would be secured by an entry gate fronting Torr Road. The access is considered acceptable, although unusual, where the flank window of the living room overlooks the passage way and as such raises no objection.

There is an enclosed garden to the rear which is of an acceptable size and practical layout for everyday use.

No extension to the building is proposed, existing windows are to be replaced for new units, and doors replaced at ground floor. The only addition to the building is a roof light over the stairs, which raises no objections. Given that no additional first floor windows are proposed, there would be no increase or change in overlooking of neighbouring properties than currently exists. In any event, the first floor window to the rear has views over the garden and neighbouring gardens, which is typical, view from a bedroom in this location.

No parking is provided, although the site has a high PTAL of 5 and is within close proximity to Penge East and Kent House railway stations; while Green Lane to the north is also has bus stops. Given the accessibility of the site, no highway objections are raised, subject to a condition which requires details of cycle parking.

The application site was visited by the case officer and the aims and objectives of the above policies, national and regional planning guidance, all other material planning considerations including any objections, other representations and relevant planning history on the site were taken into account in the assessment of the proposal.

Having had regard to the above it was considered that the siting, size and design of the proposed extension is acceptable in that it would not result in a significant loss of amenity to local residents nor impact detrimentally on the character of the area.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file ref. 12/02914/FULL1, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 ACA01 Commencement of development within 3 yrs
 ACA01R A01 Reason 3 years
- 2 ACC04 Matching materials
 ACC04R Reason C04
- 3 ACK01 Compliance with submitted plan
 ACC01R Reason C01
- 4 ACH22 Bicycle Parking
 ACH22R Reason H22
- 5 ACI02 Rest of "pd" Rights - Class A, B,C and E
Reason: In order to accord with Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.
- 6 AJ02B Justification UNIQUE reason OTHER apps

Policies (UDP)

- BE1 Design of New Development
- H2 Housing Supply
- H7 Housing Density and Design
- H12 Conversions of Non-Residential Buildings to Residential Use
- EMP3 Conversion or Redevelopment of Offices
- EMP5 Development Outside Business Areas
- T3 Parking

INFORMATIVE(S)

- 1 You are advised that this application may be liable for the payment of the Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010) and the Planning Act 2008. The London Borough of Bromley is the Collecting Authority for the Mayor and this Levy is payable

on the commencement of development (defined in Part 2, para 7 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010)). It is the responsibility of the owner and /or person(s) who have a material interest in the relevant land to pay the Levy (defined under Part 2, para 4(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2010)).

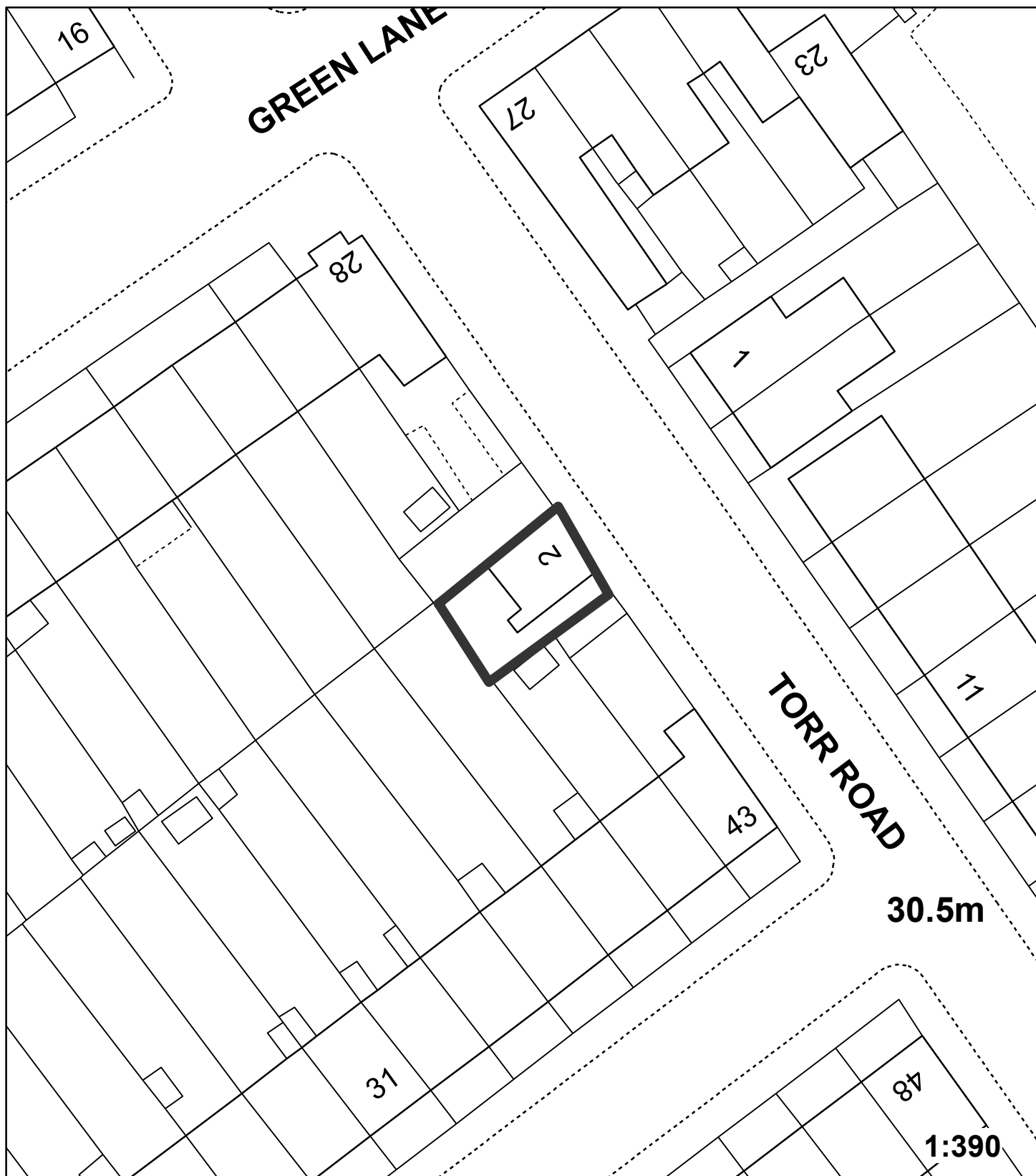
If you fail to follow the payment procedure, the collecting authority may impose surcharges on this liability, take enforcement action, serve a stop notice to prohibit further development on the site and/or take action to recover the debt.

Further information about Community Infrastructure Levy can be found on attached information note and the Bromley website www.bromley.gov.uk/CIL

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"This plan is provided to identify the location of the site and should not be used to identify the extent of the application site"

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