

Section '3' - Applications recommended for PERMISSION, APPROVAL or CONSENT

Application No : 13/04032/FULL2

Ward:
West Wickham

Address : Global House Rear Of 38 - 40 High
Street West Wickham BR4 0NJ

OS Grid Ref: E: 538150 N: 166005

Applicant : Mr J Gandhi

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Change of use from class B1A (office) to use class C3 (residential) to create a 2 one bedroom flats and 3 one bedroom flats with study, external alterations to building including new doors, windows and alteration to external finishes.

Key designations:

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Birds
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area
London City Airport Safeguarding
London City Airport Safeguarding
Open Space Deficiency

Proposal

The proposal is for the change of use of Global House, located to the rear of 38-40 High Street West Wickham from Class B1A (Office) to Use Class C3 (Residential). The proposal will create 2 one bedroom flats and 3 one bedroom flats with a study. External alterations to the building are also proposed including new doors, windows and alterations to the external finishes.

In terms of materials, the existing brick façade will be maintained. Timber cladding and additional glazing will be incorporated into the existing north façade.

Two off-street car parking spaces will be provided to the front of the building as part of the development, one will be designed to be accessible for disabled users.

Pedestrian access is from Ravenswood Avenue and this will not be changed from the existing.

The application includes a parking assessment (that has been carried out in accordance with the Lambeth Methodology). The outcome of the assessment

indicates that kerb side car parking within the proximity of the proposal is well within its maximum capacity and that, based on the results of the car parking survey, the impact of the development on existing parking stress is expected to be immaterial.

A letter from Stuart Edwards Fullermoon (Commercial and Residential Estate Agents), has also been provided. This states that the office market for premises in West Wickham is limited as West Wickham is not considered to be a major office centre, particularly as the accommodation is situated to the rear of the retail premises in the High Street with limited car parking. It suggests that demand for the premises is likely to be poor and advises that the majority of tenants are looking for open plan office accommodation on single floors with cooling and handling facilities incorporated within the accommodation.

Location

The site is located to the rear of Units 38-40 High Street which are on the north side of the High street. The site has a rear access from an alleyway off Ravenswood Avenue and backs on to Sainsbury's car park.

Comments from Local Residents

One letter of representation has been received from the occupiers of No.42A High Street, the comments contained in this letter are summarised as follows:

- the proposal results in overlooking - 42A falls within the 45 degree angle used in the applicants assessment. The angle shown on the plan has been taken from the wrong position as it does not accurately show the viewing angle of all windows of the property;
- there are views from 42A directly into several of the Global House windows;
- the proposal for car parking should be reviewed against land registry deeds;
- the assessment of car parking availability (using the Lambeth methodology) during the hours of 0030-0530 does not accurately show the impact of additional vehicles to roads already over-used by workers, shoppers and commuters.
- the validity of the recycling and waste collection facilities is questioned.

Comments from Consultees

Highways - No objection subject to conditions

Thames Water - No objections

Transport for London comments to be reported verbally at the meeting

Environmental Health - No objections

Housing - No comments

Planning Considerations

BE1 Design of New Development
H7 Housing Density and Design
T1 Transport Demand
T3 Parking
T18 Road Safety
H12 Conversion of Non-Residential Buildings to Residential Use
EMP5 Development Outside Business Areas

Other planning considerations include the London Plan including the Mayors Supplementary Planning Guidance on the quality of housing design and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning History

- 92/01535 Planning permission was granted for alterations to the external appearance of the building.
- 86/03176 Planning permission was refused for a third floor extension to the building
- 83/02799 Planning permission was granted for a first floor rear extension to provide additional office accommodation (details pursuant application ref. 84/00143)
- 83/01730 Outline permission was granted for an extension to provide additional office accommodation.

Conclusions

The proposed development comprises the conversion of the building from B1a Offices to 5 residential units. In terms of the principle of the change of use, Policy EMP5 states that the redevelopment of business sites or premises outside of the Designated Business Areas will be permitted provided that; i) the size, configuration and access arrangements or other characteristics make it unsuitable for use classes B1, B2 or B8, and ii) full and proper marketing of the site confirms the unsuitability and financial non-viability of the site or premises for those uses.

Under Policy H12 the Council will also permit the change of use of genuinely redundant and other non-residential buildings to residential use, subject to achieving a satisfactory quality of accommodation and amenity.

The applicants have advised that the B1 office market in the area is currently experiencing a difficult period. All of the existing leases either have expired or will expire in the first half of 2014 and "the tenants are already seeking alternative accommodation which better meets the modern need for open plan working". Tenants now favour open plan office accommodation on single floors with cooling facilities incorporated in the accommodation.

The applicants have advised that "with no prospective tenants the building is likely to be left unoccupied making it harder to maintain". They suggest that other offices in the area are already significantly underutilised. A statement has been provided from the applicants commercial estate agents (as set out above) indicating that the

condition of the building hampers its letting potential for offices in what is already a challenging market.

It is also noted that the Government introduced changes to the General Permitted Development Order that came into force in May 2013. One of the changes that was introduced at this time was to allow changes of use from office (Use Class B1(a)) to dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) subject to a prior approval process (until 30 May 2016).

The prior approval process requires the developer to apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required only in respect of the following issues:

- The transport and highways impacts of the development;
- The contamination risks on the site; and
- Flooding risks on the site.

Therefore the developer could have sought prior approval from the Council in respect of whether the proposed development is permitted development.

Whilst limited material has been provided to demonstrate that the premises has been marketed and the non-financial viability of the site, it is considered that, on balance, taking into consideration the fact that the applicant could have sought the prior approval of the Council for this development under the new provisions contained in the GPDO, the evidence supplied is sufficient to support the principle of the change of use in this case.

In terms of the design of the scheme, it is noted that the occupiers of No.42A have objected to the proposal on the grounds of overlooking. Whilst it is accepted that there will be additional fenestration on the western flank elevation of the building it is considered that sufficient separation exists from No.42A and the other surrounding residential properties to ensure that unacceptable levels of overlooking do not occur.

In view of the location of the building and its separation from adjoining residential properties the proposed elevational alterations are considered acceptable and will not be detrimental to the streetscene or the occupiers of surrounding residential properties.

It is noted that the application refers to three of the flats as having one bedroom with study and that it is possible that the studies in these flats could be used as a single bedroom once the proposal is implemented. The floor area of the studies is 7.5m², which is 0.5m² above the minimum floor area for a 1 person bedroom as set out in the GLA's Housing Space Standards.

In terms of highways and car parking issues, Bromley Council standards require that 5 car parking spaces should be provided, but only two spaces are provided as part of the scheme. However, the applicant has undertaken two car parking stress surveys indicating that there are on-street car parking spaces available during the hours of maximum residential car parking demand. On the basis of the evidence

provided Highways has no objection to the proposal subject to conditions being imposed should the application be granted planning permission. The level of car parking provision is therefore considered to be acceptable.

It is noted that the site is within a low PTAL area, and therefore residents are likely to own their own cars. Transport for London has therefore been consulted and its comments will be reported verbally at the meeting.

The provision of the waste and recycling facilities is considered sufficient to service this development.

The change of use of this B1a office accommodation to residential is considered to be appropriate in this location and will not result in a detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the area or the amenities of the occupiers of surrounding residential properties.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file ref. 13/04032, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION

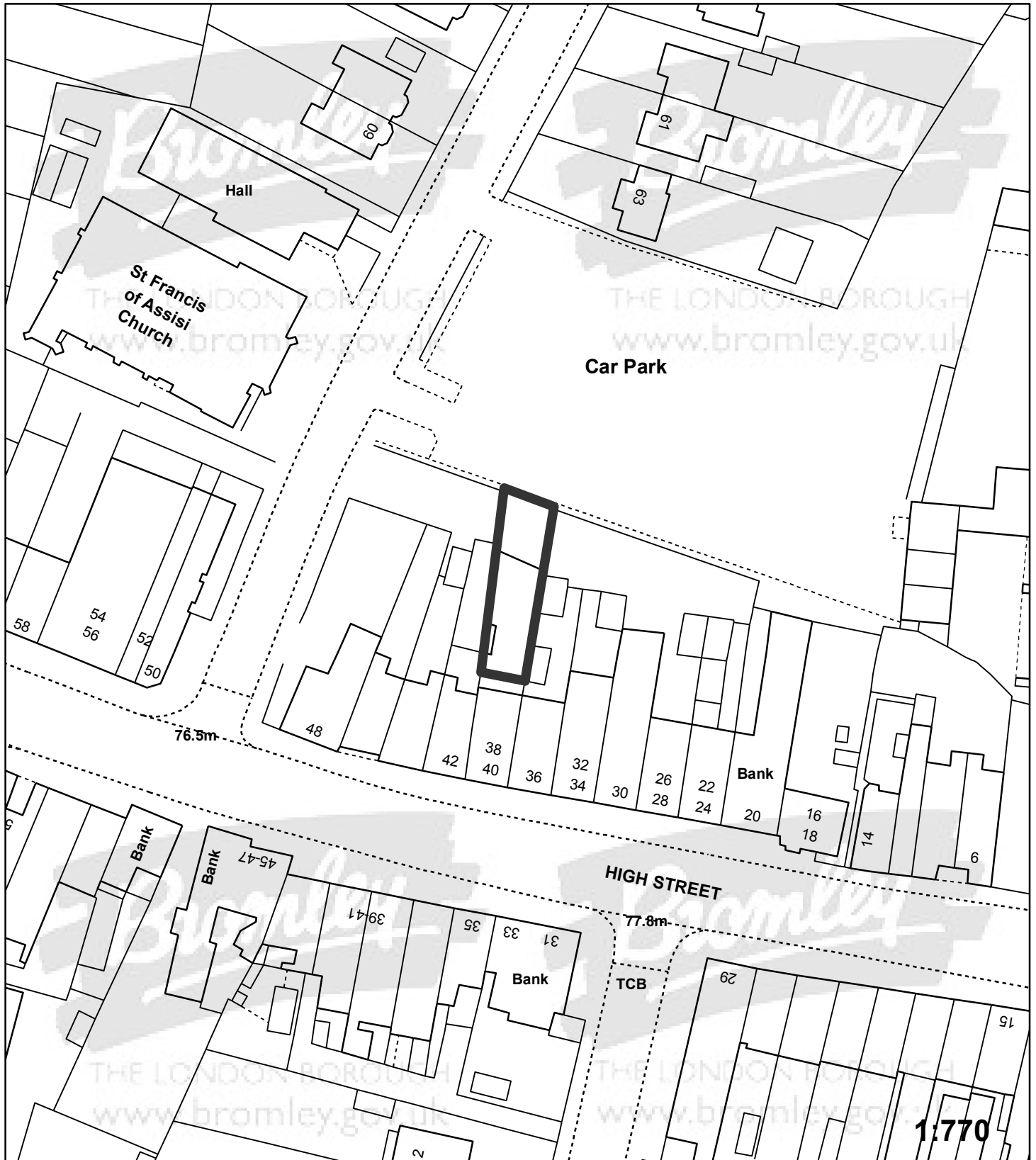
Subject to the following conditions:

- | | | |
|---|--------|------------------------------------------|
| 1 | ACA01 | Commencement of development within 3 yrs |
| | ACA01R | A01 Reason 3 years |
| 2 | ACC01 | Satisfactory materials (ext'nl surfaces) |
| | ACC01R | Reason C01 |
| 3 | ACK01 | Compliance with submitted plan |
| | ACC04R | Reason C04 |
| 4 | ACH01 | Details of access layout (2 insert) |
| | ACH01R | Reason H01 |
| 5 | ACH22 | Bicycle Parking |
| | ACH22R | Reason H22 |
| 6 | ACH32 | Highway Drainage |
| | ADH32R | Reason H32 |

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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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