

Item No. 1/1	Classification OPEN	Decision Level PLANNING COMMITTEE	Date 07/09/2004
From INTERIM DEVELOPMENT & BUILDING CONTROL MANAGER		Title of Report DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	
Proposal (04-CO-0042) Conversion of 3-storey house into 1x 1-bed ground floor flat and 1x 4-bed maisonette on 1st and 2nd floors, including the demolition and rebuilding of the front bay and porch for underpinning works and demolition of single-storey rear addition.		Address 42 Grove Park, SE5 Ward South Camberwell	

PURPOSE

1. To consider the above application which is for Planning Committee consideration as it is for development proposed by the Council and because of the number of objections received.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Grant Planning Permission

BACKGROUND

3. The application property is a two storey semi-detached dwelling, with habitable accommodation in the loft space. The existing dwelling has six bedrooms and three reception rooms, and a large rear garden amenity area. The dwelling is currently vacant and poorly maintained, with metal boards on the windows and doors and an overgrown garden. Grove Park is part of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area, and is characterised by detached and semi-detached residential dwellings, with a couple of small block of flats on the south and west sides of the road.
4. A planning application for the conversion of the dwelling into 3 self contained flats with off-street parking in the front garden was withdrawn in March 2001. There is no other planning history relevant to this site.
5. Planning consent is sought now to convert the dwelling into 1x 1-bed ground floor flat and 1x 4-bed maisonette on the upper floors. The conversion will also involve the demolition and rebuilding of the front bay and porch for underpinning works and the demolition of single-storey rear addition which will not be relaced.
6. A separate amenity area for each dwelling will be provided at the rear of the property, with direct access from the ground floor flat, and an accessway along the side of the property to the amenity space for the upper floor maisonette. Both flats will be accessed from a common internal hall utilising the existing front entrance door. Refuse storage is to be provided within a designated bay in the front garden of the property, together with a new 900mm open slatted timber fence along the curtilage at the front of the property. No off-street parking is proposed. The proposal also involves the removal of all existing birch trees and saplings in the front garden.

7. The application as originally submitted included the erection of an external staircase at the rear to provide access to the garden from the first floor dwelling. This staircase has now been deleted from the proposal and this enables an existing window in the rear elevation to be retained as well as an increase in the size of the ground floor flat and its amenity area to be achieved.

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

Main Issues

8. The main issues in this case are the acceptability of the principle of the conversion of the property into flats and the impact of the proposal on the character of this Conservation Area, the amenity of the neighbouring residential properties, and on the appearance of the property in the streetscape.

Planning Policy

9. Southwark Unitary Development Plan 1995 [UDP]:
 - E.2.3 Aesthetic Control - complies, the architectural character of the dwelling will be maintained with the majority of original features retained, and the streetscene unaffected.
 - E.3.1 Protection of Amenity - complies, there will be no loss of sunlight, outlook or privacy to the adjoining properties
 - E.4.1 Conservation Areas - complies, the architectural character of the dwelling will be preserved so as not to have an adverse effect upon the Conservation Area.
 - E.4.3 Proposals Affecting Conservation Areas - complies, the architectural character of the street will not be affected by the proposal. The loss of the trees will be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area.
 - H.2.1 Rehabilitation and Improvement of Housing - complies, the proposal refurbished a vacant and poorly maintained property.
 - H.3.2 Environmental Effects of Conversions - complies, there are no significant adverse impacts upon the neighbouring properties.
 - H.3.3 Dwelling Mix for Conversions - complies, a mix of dwellings sizes is proposed.
 - H.3.4 Standards for Conversions - complies, minimum room standards are met and refuse storage provided.
 - Standards, Controls and Guidelines for Residential Development SPG - complies
 - Conservation Areas SPG - complies
10. The Southwark Plan [Revised Deposit Unitary Development Plan] March 2004
 - 3.1 Environmental Impacts - complies, there are no significant adverse impacts upon the neighbouring residential properties.
 - 3.2 Protection of Amenity - complies, there will be no loss of sunlight, outlook or privacy to the adjoining properties
 - 3.11 Quality in Design - complies, matching materials and finishes are proposed for the external works to enhance the existing architectural character.
 - 3.13 Urban Design - complies, the scale and architectural character of the dwelling will be maintained and the streetscene unaffected.
 - 3.15 Conservation of the Historic Environment - complies, the architectural character of the dwelling will be preserved so as not to impact upon the Conservation Area.
 - 3.16 Development in Conservation Areas - complies, the majority of original features are to be retained, and the architectural character of the streetscene will not be affected by the proposal.
 - 3.18 Setting of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas - complies, the proposal will not significantly impact upon the architectural character of the Conservation Area.
 - 4.2 Quality of Residential Accommodation - complies, the proposal creates a good quality living environment with appropriate accessibility, privacy, ventilation, sunlight and outdoor space.
 - 5.6 Car Parking - complies.
 - Residential Design Standards SPG - complies

Heritage Conservation SPG - complies

Consultations

11. Site Notice: 13/5/04

Press Notice: 20/5/04

Consultees:

Conservation Officer

41A, 41B, 41C, 43 Grove Park, SE5 8LG

17, 18 Grove Park, SE5 8LH

Replies from:

12. Conservation Officer:

The conversion and reuse of this property (unlisted, within a CA) is welcomed as the property is on the Buildings at Risk Register. To bring it back into occupied use in principle is generally encouraged. The amended drawings are in accordance with the advice given by the Design and Conservation Team, and the advice offered from the Conservation Area Advisory Group. The alterations that have been made are generally considered to improve the scheme and to protect and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

Therefore, the amended drawings reach the approval of this team and the recommendation is to approve the application based on these revisions. The boundary treatments need appraisal. The Camberwell Grove Conservation Area Appraisal discusses the importance of boundary treatment, identifying the standard boundary treatment as hedges and refers to other treatment (including fences) as a discontinuation of this, which undermines consistency. It is therefore the recommendation of this team that hedges be planted up as the principle boundary treatment.

The Camberwell Society

- Poor internal layout - the four bedroom flat, where up to six children may be living, does not have ready access to the garden.
- The new external staircase would cause overlooking from the upper to the lower flat.
- Demolition of the single storey scullery and conservatory would make this the only house of this type in the street where there are no single storey rooms giving access to the garden. This also compromises the layout to the ground floor.
- The proposed new kitchen and french doors for the rear elevation are out of keeping with the character of the house. They do not respect either the existing openings or the style of the other windows.

51 Grove Park

I notice that application has been made to turn the above property into flats, which you admit is in contravention of the conservation area regulations.

I therefore object; it is absurd for the Council to maintain a conservation area on the one hand, and then want to break the rules on the other.

45 Oatlands Chase, Surrey

I am writing to register my opposition to the proposed conversion of the above property. I believe the property would better serve the Borough of Southwark's Housing needs if it was converted to a single bedroom ground floor flat and a further two two-bedroom flats. As an emergency service worker based at Old Kent Road Fire Station, I would like to move closer to my place of work, but I am currently having problems locating a suitable two bedroom property.

43 Grove Park

We object to the planning application to develop the traditional family house at 42 Grove Park within the Grove Park CA into a flat and a maisonette. Two families rather

than one would create a greater degree of noise than we would wish in this CA, particularly impacting us as we live next door.

Two families rather than one would add to the parking problems in the road.

It would spoil our aspect of the property, where at the rear it is proposed that a brick extension be demolished and a metal fire escape be erected.

The Council has left this valuable public asset empty and allowed it to deteriorate since the previous tenants were asked to leave (almost two years ago).

Given the housing shortage in London, it is appalling that the Council has allowed this public capital to devalue and are now contemplating adding to that irresponsible financial management by spending huge amounts of public money to convert a derelict property into two units when an equivalent amount could be used to provide many more units elsewhere. This house should be sold to a private sector developer and the proceeds used to provide modern, insulated, easily maintained accommodation.

The nuisance and threat that the empty property has caused us as a family has been considerable over the years with the constant threat of squatters and other unsavoury characters breaking in.

We do not understand how, in a Conservation Area, Council can permit itself to allow a property in that area to become the eyesore that it is now. The boards at the doors and windows, decay and degradation, the overgrown garden and now the fly-tipped rubbish contravene the area's status.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of Conversion.

13. The proposal involves changing the use of the property from a single family dwelling to a one bedroom flat and a four bedroom maisonette. This proposed conversion will provide additional housing accommodation within the Borough without increasing the size of the property. The proposal also improves what is currently a vacant and poorly maintained property, whilst retaining the architectural and residential character of the neighbourhood.
14. The size of the existing dwellinghouse [220sq.m. floor area] meets the floor space requirements for conversion as set out in the Development Plans. No objection is therefore raised to the principle of the conversion in land-use planning terms.

Scale and Form

15. The proposed development does not enlarge the dwelling, by footprint or height, and in fact reduces the ground floor space by approximately 18 sq.m as a result of the demolition of the single storey rear addition. The scale of the proposal is therefore acceptable and will not be out of proportion or overbearing to the adjoining properties.
16. The form of the dwelling is therefore retained with the front bay and porch being rebuilt in the same architectural style, and the replacement windows being identical in style and materials to the original openings. A single door opening to the flank elevation will be infilled with salvaged bricks to match the existing facade, and a set of double doors and windows is proposed to the rear elevation to provide direct access from the ground floor flat to the designated amenity area. Existing roof slates will be re-used or second hand slates used for repairs to the roof.

Effect on Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

17. With the exception of some minor alterations to openings and the demolition of the small extension on the rear elevation of the property, the exterior of the dwelling will be unchanged as a result of the proposal. Matching brickwork and timber frames are proposed to ensure that the architectural character of the property is retained and the change of use will be unrecognisable from Grove Park. Given the existing dilapidated

state of the property the proposed development will improve its appearance and in turn enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

18. The demolition of the single storey rear addition is justified predominantly on structural grounds, as well as the fact that it is not an integral feature of the home that contributes significantly to the Conservation Area and it is not visible from the street and the public domain.
19. The proposed loss of trees in the front garden is not considered to be acceptable and no reasons have been put forward to justify their removal. It is therefore considered that these trees should be retained and a condition is recommended to be imposed to secure their retention.

Residential Amenity

20. The proposal does not involve the erection of any new extensions to the dwelling or any additional openings to the external elevations. The sunlight access and privacy of the adjacent dwellings will therefore be maintained and unaffected by the proposal. The environmental effects of the proposal will also be minimal and there will be no loss of garden space to the front of the property or impairments to road safety.
21. A new 1.8 metre high close boarded timber fence is proposed around the rear amenity space of the ground floor flat, which will provide screening and privacy for occupants and neighbours alike. A new 0.9 metre high slatted timber fence is proposed along the curtilage at the front of the property to replace the existing dilapidated fence. A refuse storage area is also proposed within a designated bay at the front of the property which will ensure that refuse is screened from public view and does not impact upon the appearance of the streetscene.

Design Standards

22. The mix of a proposed one bedroom flat and a four bedroom maisonette is in accordance with Council's Policy H.3.3, which seeks to provide housing accommodation for both families and single persons, together with access to private amenity areas.
23. The layout and room sizes of the proposed one bedroom and maisonette flats comply with the standards of the Council's SPG. A common entrance hall is provided from which separate entrance doors are proposed, and separate amenity spaces are also provided for each dwelling in accordance with Council's standards. The revised layout also provides a larger amenity space for the one bedroom ground floor flat (60sq.m compared with the previous 40 sq.m).

Access and Parking

24. Access to the property is via a footpath from Grove Park, which leads to a common front entrance and hall. An existing ground floor flank door will be removed and replaced by matching brickwork, and a new set of doors added to the rear elevation to provide direct access from the ground floor flat to the rear amenity space.
25. No off-street parking is proposed for the flats. However, on-street parking is readily available on Grove Park. This lack of on-site parking also complies with Policy 5.6 of Council's Deposit UDP where there is a maximum requirement of 1 on-site parking space for residential dwelling in a Urban Zone. The harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by the creation of off-street parking in the front garden is considered to be far greater than any harm to amenity from an increase in on-street parking resulting from the conversion of the house into two flats.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

26. Not accessible for disabled persons.

LOCAL AGENDA 21 [Sustainable Development] IMPLICATIONS

27. The refurbishment of the building will bring the premises back into residential use. The proposal will not adversely affect the quality of life of adjoining residents.

LEAD OFFICER	James F Sherry	Interim Development and Building Control Manager
REPORT AUTHOR	Jacqui Carter	Planning Officer [tel. 020 7525 1137]
CASE FILE	TP/2154-42	
Papers held at:	Council Offices, Chiltern, Portland Street SE17 2ES [tel. 020 7525 5402]	