

Healthy Homes? Thirty Examples of Permitted Development Conversions



**Analysis by Dr Ben Clifford, assisted by Maclean Timmer and
Yanzhen Zhu with support from Dr Jessica Ferm**

Bartlett School of Planning, UCL

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Introduction

This document contains 30 examples of buildings converted to residential use through permitted development rights. 29 of the buildings have been converted from office to residential use, and one is an example of light industrial to residential change of use.

The schemes were suggested to the TCPA and the researchers through the TCPA's *Healthy Homes* campaign. The 30 buildings reviewed do not provide a comprehensive or systematic review of all the schemes typical in any particular area, but rather have been provided as exemplars of the types of schemes that are possible through permitted development rights.

For each suggested building suggested, the UCL research team conducted a site visit to see if the building had indeed been converted to residential use following the submission of a prior notification and any notable features of the building's location. These were conducted in summer 2019.

A detailed desk analysis was then conducted to look at some common measures of residential quality for each scheme: compliance with national space standards, the mixture of unit types, the provision of amenity space, access to daylight, and location in relation to green or open space. None of these issues can be considered through a prior approval process.

This document overviews the detailed findings for each building, before an overall summary of findings is provided.

Note on copyright

The floorplan extracts included are from the publicly accessible local authority planning databases, and the rights remain with the applicants for prior approval. The Ordnance Survey map extracts are provided from Edina Digimap, used for research purposes, and the rights remain with the Crown. The satellite extracts are from Google maps and are reproduced under their general permissions. The site visit photographs are taken by the researchers from UCL and copyright remains with them.

The Examples

1. 1-2 Drake's Courtyard, Kilburn High Road, London, NW6 7JR

A prior notification was submitted in May 2017 to convert from office to residential use as 39 studio flats. This was approved, but there seem to have been a judicial review in relation to that. A second prior notification was then submitted in September 2017 to convert to 39 studio flats. This was approved. In the officer report, there was a note that implementation would depend on a separate planning application in relation to windows, but that this was not a reason to refuse prior approval. In February, June and August 2019, applications were submitted to make minor non-material amendments in relation to the 2017 prior approval's conditions relating to the location of cycle storage and rooflights.

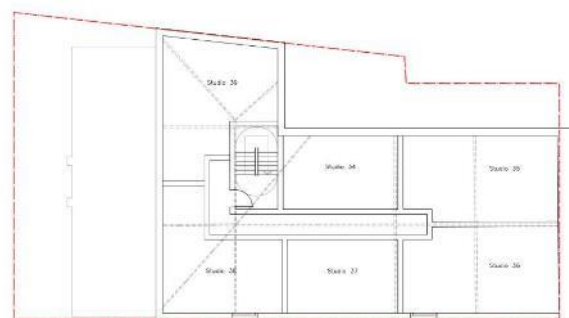
The September 2017 prior approval shows conversion to 39 studio flats, meaning 100% of the units are studios. 35 out of the 39 units (90%) appear to be smaller than national space standards. The studio flats vary between 15 and 40m² each. One of the studio flats is little more than a corridor, being a strange long, thin shape.

One of the units (3%) has doors leading out to a courtyard area which might perhaps be considered private amenity space. The other 38 units (97%) have no access to private amenity space nor is there any communal amenity space provided. 32 of the units (82%) appear to be single aspect only in terms of their windows, with 3 being dual aspect (8%) and 4 units (10%) appearing to only have rooflights.

An extract of the submitted plans is below.



3 Proposed Second Floor Plan
SCALE 1:50

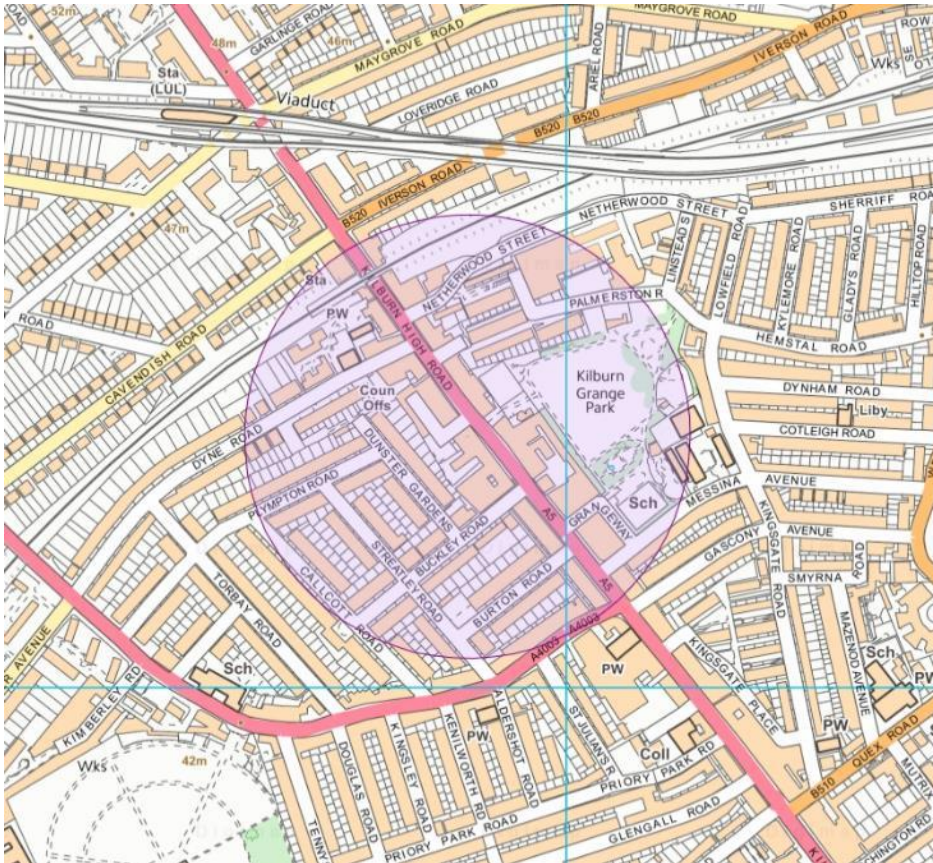


4 Proposed Third Floor Plan
SCALE 1:50

A planning application was submitted in June 2017 in relation to changing windows and doors and was granted.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is a park and area of green space within 250m (a short walk) of the development.

Further examples of office-to-residential permitted development conversions



Site visit



On our site visit, we noted that the conversion does not appear to have been implemented yet, although possibly works had started. There were still some neighbouring units in office / light industrial use. The building was located on a quiet lane just off Kilburn High Road, well located to access the shops, services and public transport available in the area.

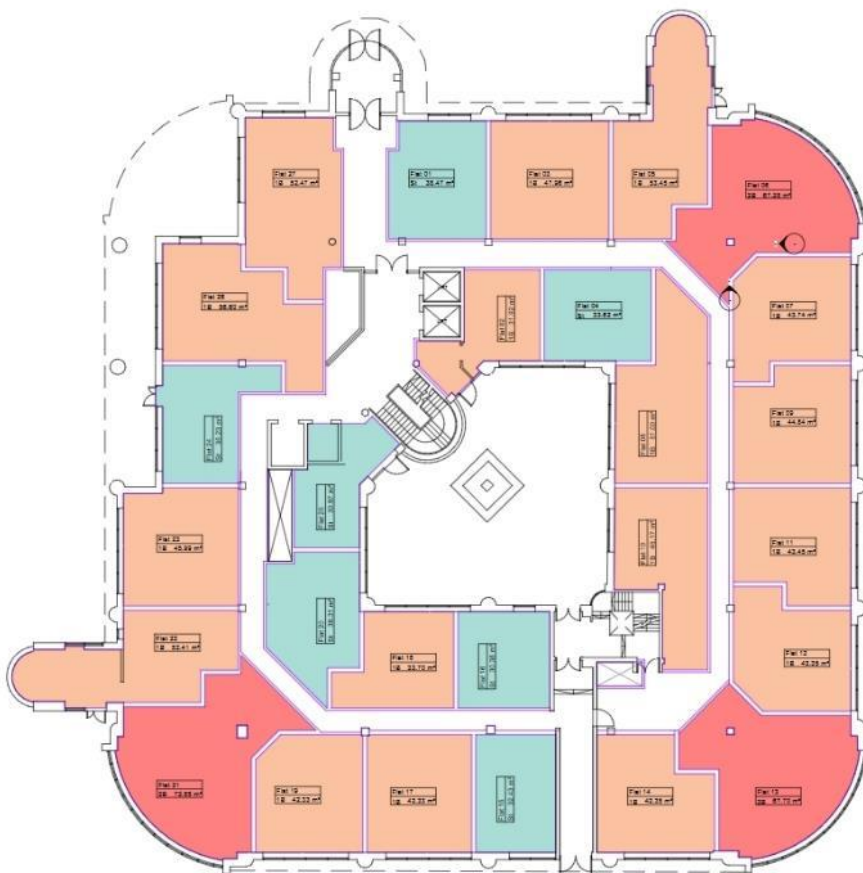
2. 1 and 4 New Horizons Court, Brentford, TW8 9ET

Overview

Conversion of building 1 to 99 flats: prior notification submitted October 2017. Plans show 86 of the 99 units (87%) are studios or one bedroom units (24 studios + 62 one beds), rest are two bedrooms. No units (0%) have access to private amenity space (like a balcony) although there does appear so be a small roof terrace which might be communal amenity space. The flats themselves are strangely shaped, according to the building floorplan, and a number of flats have windows just facing the central atrium space so would be directly overlooked by neighbours across the atrium (which is just about 10 metres by 10 metres). A number of studios and one bedroom flats are 30-34m² and overall 60 flats out of 99 (61%) are smaller than national space standards.

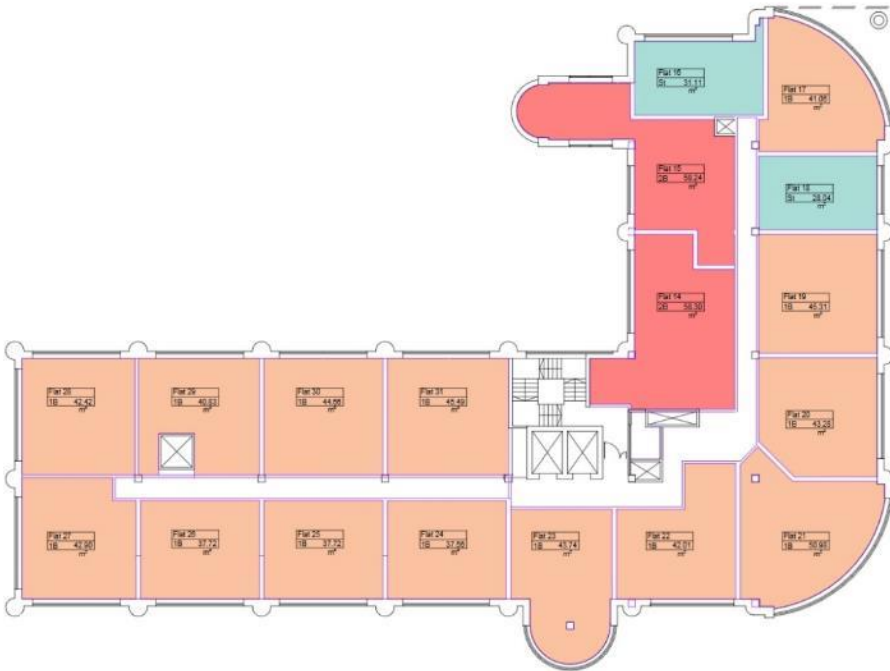
70 of the 99 flats (71%) appear to have a single aspect only. 25 of the flats (25%) only have windows looking out onto the central atrium space within the building, which would be likely to offer very poor amounts of daylight and a high degree of overlooking.

An extract of the proposed floor plans is below.

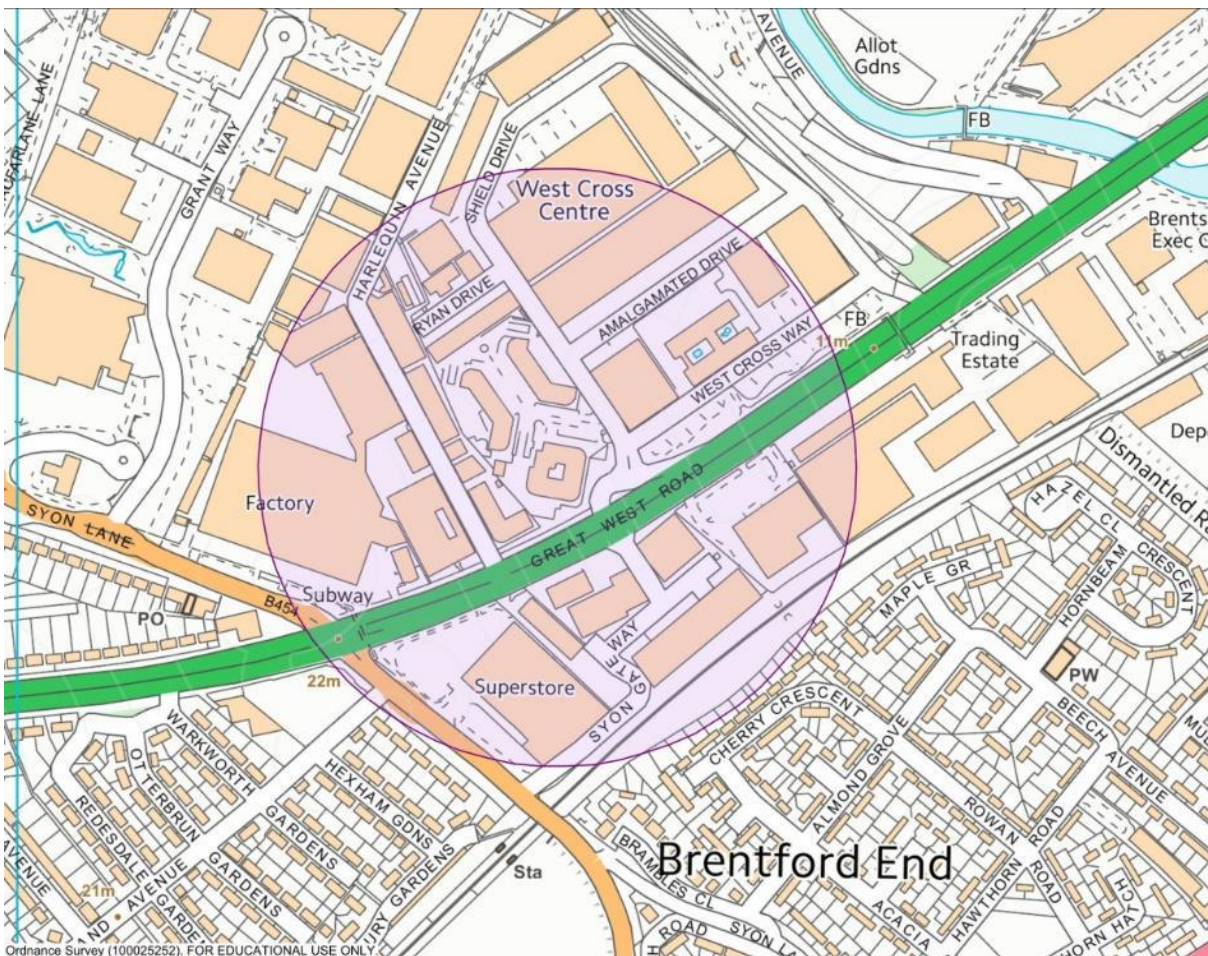


Conversion of building 4 to 45 flats: prior notification submitted October 2017. Plans show 40 of the 45 units (89%) are studios or one bedroom units (7 studios + 33 one beds), rest are two bedrooms. No units (0%) have access to any private amenity space, nor does there appear to be any access to communal amenity space. There are again some strangely shaped flats, following the shape of the office building. 39 out of 45 units (87%) are smaller than national space standards, with studio flats generally about 30m² and one bedroom units about 40m².

30 of the 45 flats (67%) appear to have a single aspect only. An extract of the proposed floor plans is below.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is no green or public open space within 250m of the development, although there is a park within 500m. The neighbourhood includes a business park, some factories and a waste transfer station and does not seem a good location for residential use.





Site visit



On our site visit, we noted that the buildings are currently under conversion to residential and being marketed to future residents. The buildings are located on a busy street with commercial and industrial uses surrounding the site. There are no residential areas within a 10 minute walk. The area seems quite poor in terms of residential amenity or access to green or open space. The buildings have had very little work done to the exterior as part of their conversions and still very much look like 1908s office buildings.

3. 1-5, Central Business Centre, Iron Bridge Close, London, NW10 0UR

Overview

A prior notification was submitted in December 2013 to convert the first floor of units 1-5 to residential use as 20 studio flats. This was refused because it was not confirmed all units were in B1 office use to begin with. This prior notification was resubmitted in March 2014 and again refused, this time because of highways impact concerns.

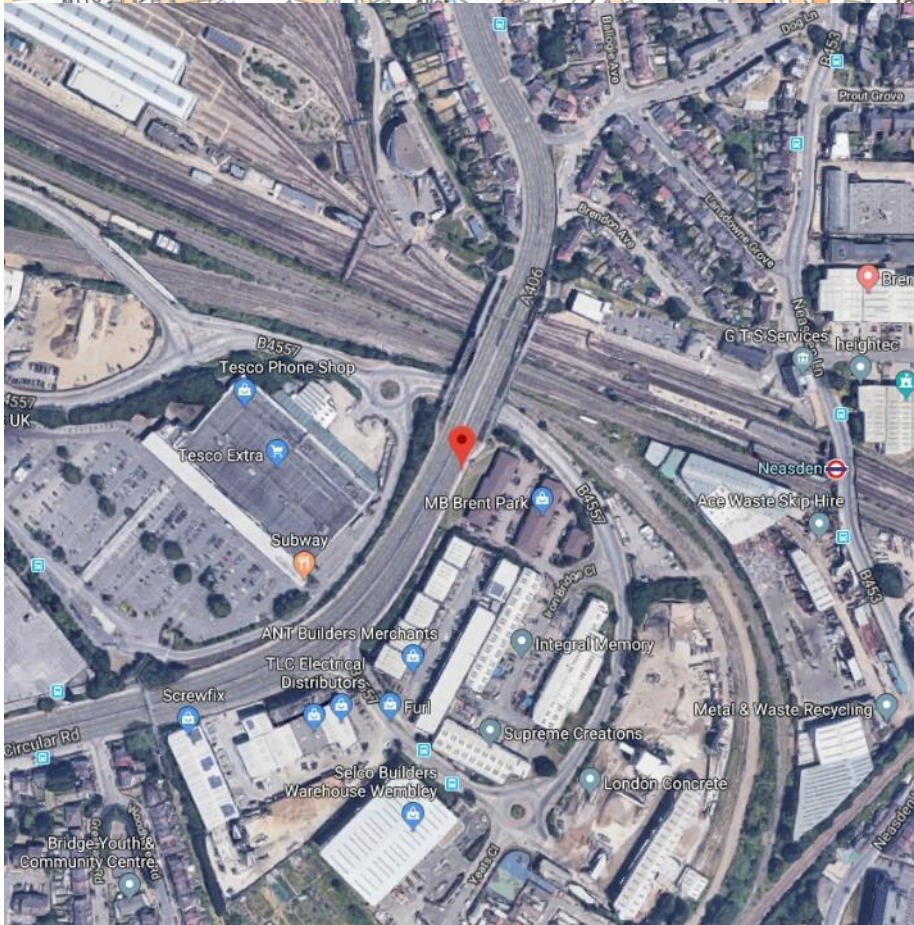
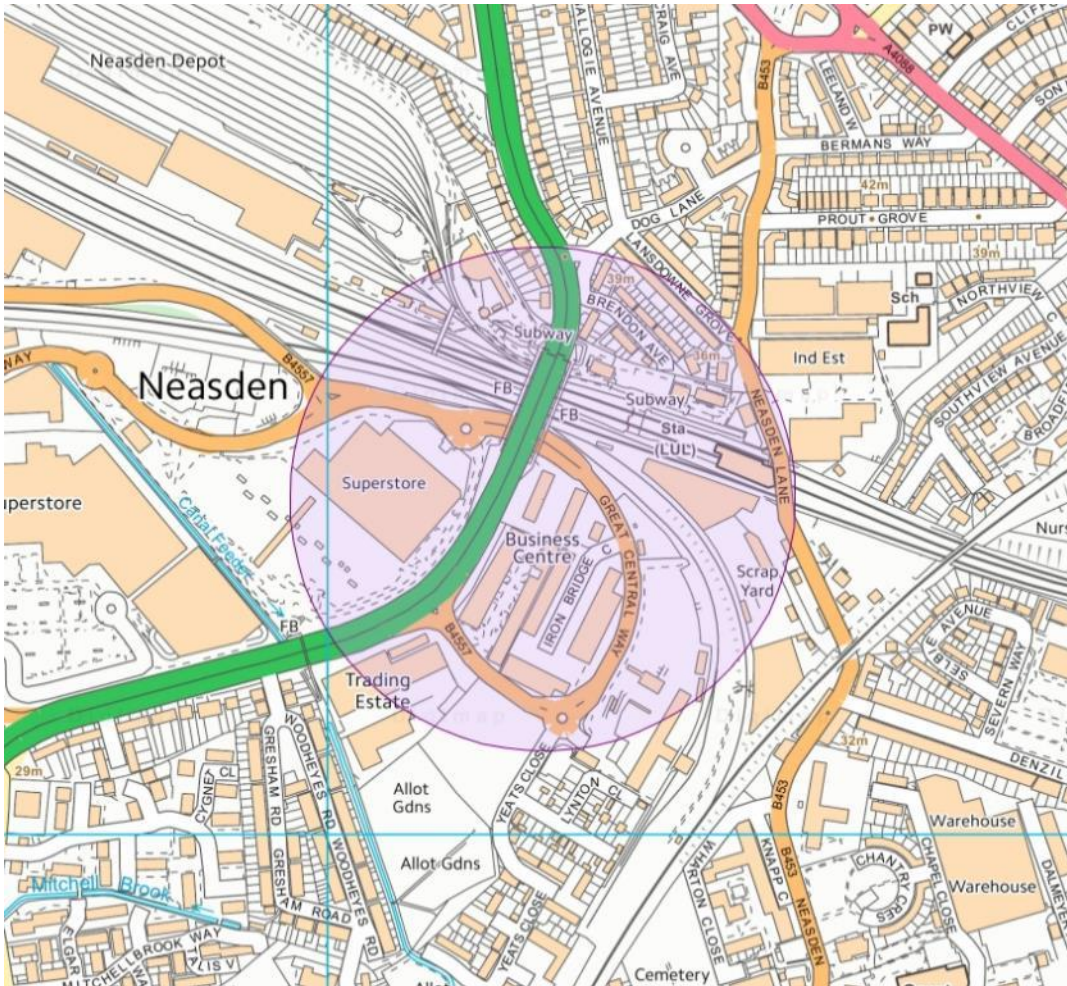
A third submission in June 2014 was then approved. This was to convert the first floor to 20 studio units. All 20 units (100%) appear to be smaller than national space standards, with the studios about 30-34m² each. All 20 units (100%) are studio flats. None (0%) have access to any private or communal amenity space. All 20 units (100%) are single aspect only, and 10 of those units are single aspect with windows facing a north-westerly direction and facing an embankment, so are likely to have poor daylight.

An extract from the submitted plans is below.



Prior notification were submitted in July 2018 to convert the first floors of the neighbouring two blocks, in the same business park, to residential use and at the time of writing are both subject to appeals, having been refused.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is no green or public open space within 250m of the development, although there is a park within 500m. The neighbourhood includes a business park, some factories, a cement facility and does not seem a good location for residential use.



Site visit



On our site visit we noted that the conversion has been implemented. The building was located near an extremely busy six lane highway, and with the ground floor of the block and neighbouring blocks still in business use. The unit entrance was directly into the parking area for these businesses. Neighbouring uses included a cement works, and the location did not appear to offer a good level of residential amenity.

4. 3-8 Devonhurst Place, Heathfield Terrace, Chiswick, London, W4 4JB

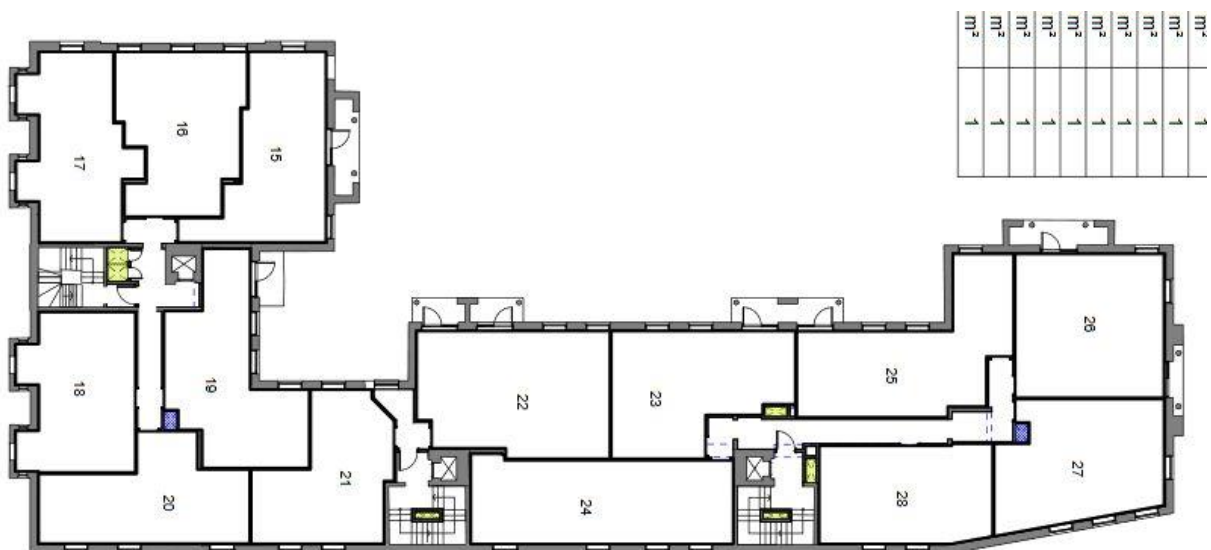
Overview

Prior approval applied for and granted in December 2017 to convert office to residential with 54 units. A planning application was submitted in July 2018 to replace the windows and a further planning application was submitted in October 2018 to add an additional storey with three flats. A further prior notification was submitted in March 2019 to convert to 53 units.

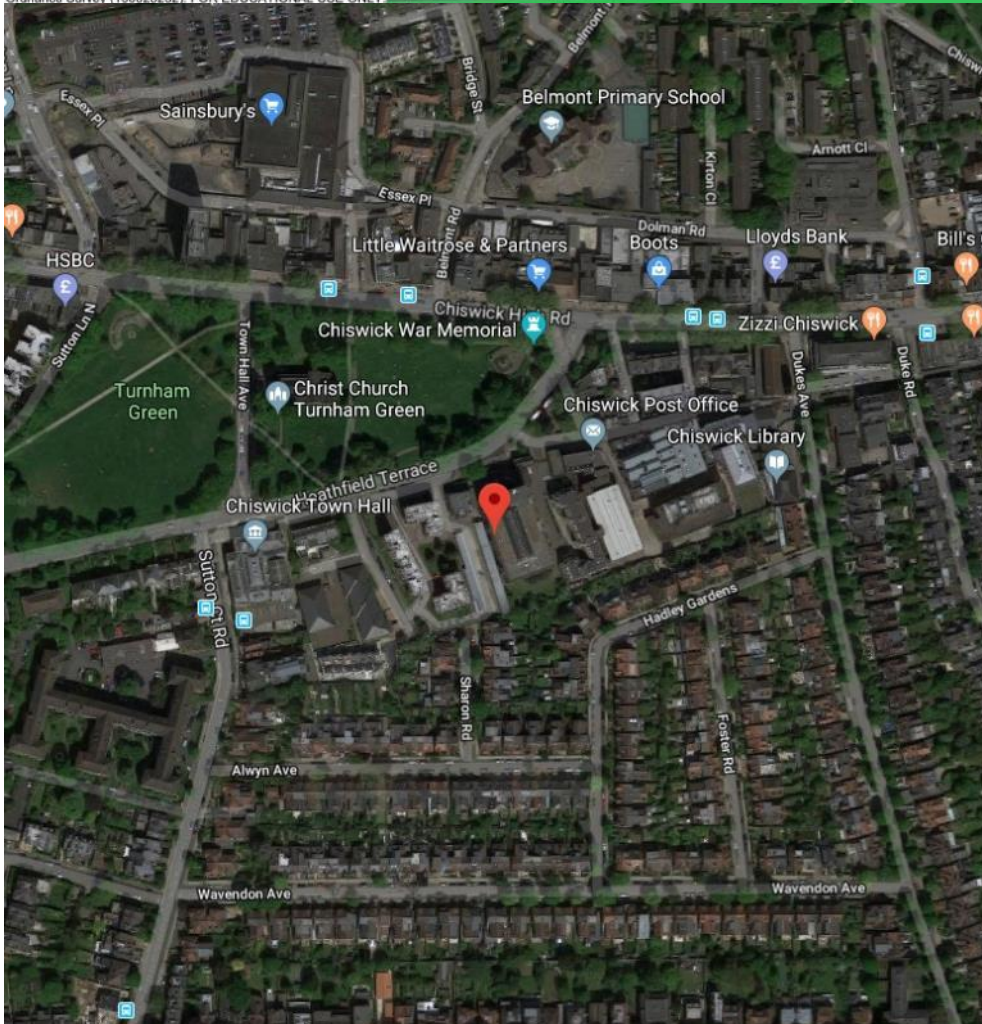
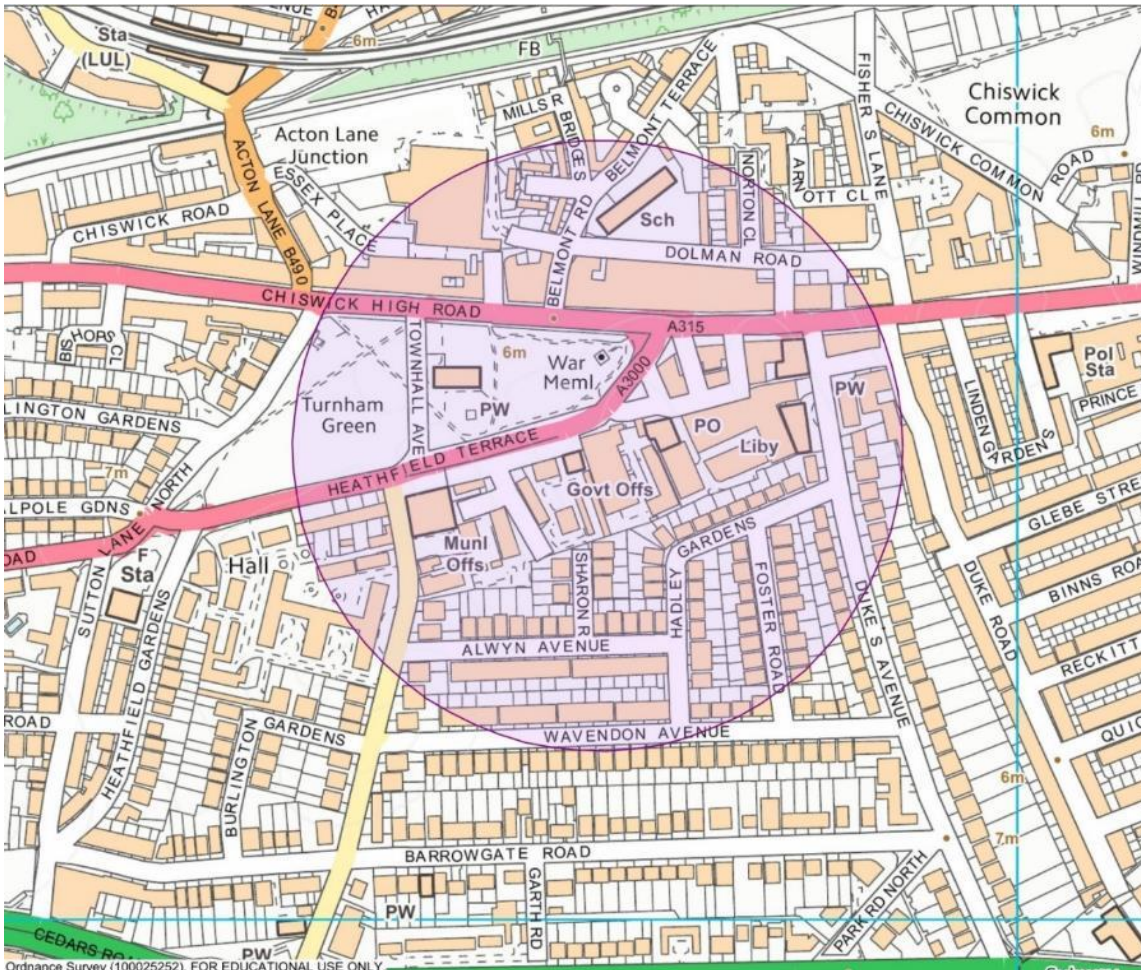
The March 2019 prior approval has 52 units of 53 (98%) being studio and one bedroom (2 x studio + 50 x 1 bed), with the 53rd unit being a two-bedroom flat. 4 of the ground floor units appear to have direct access outside. 13 units on the first and second floors appear to have access to a balcony area, so there is private amenity space for 13 of 53 units (25%). There does not appear to be any communal amenity space.

48 units (91%) are smaller than suggested national space standards: the studios are generally about 32m² and the one bedroom units about 41m². 23 of the 53 units (43%) are single aspect, with a majority of flats in the building being dual aspect. An extract of the proposed plans is below.

Interestingly, the additional fourth floor achieved through a full planning permission proposes three x three bedroom apartments, all about 150m² (so comfortably larger than national space standards) and all three with private amenity space in the form of roof terraces.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is open space within 250m of the development, although this does not seem to include dedicated play space (for which there appears to be no provision within 500m).



Site visit



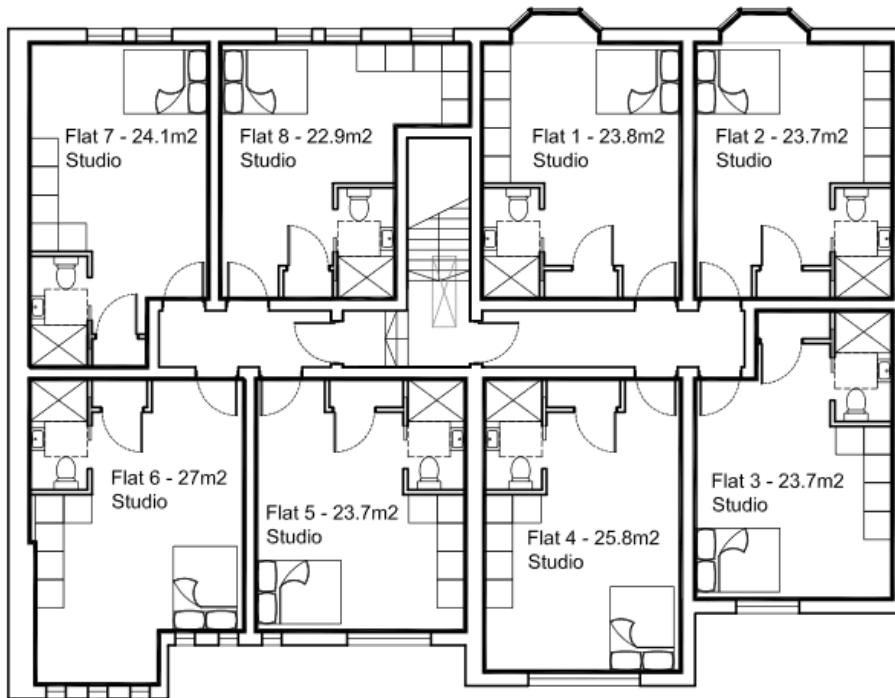
Construction work to implement the conversion and add the additional floor was ongoing at the time of our site visit. The site is just off a busy street, in a mixed residential and commercial area, near to shops and the London Underground. The immediate neighbourhood would offer a reasonable level of residential amenity.

5. 11-13 Crayford High Street, Dartford, DA1 4HH

Overview

A prior notification was submitted in May 2017 to convert to 8 studio flats. All 8 units (100%) are studio apartments. All 8 units (100%) are below national space standards, with units ranging from 22.9-27m² each and generally about 23m². None of the units (0%) appear to have access to private amenity space, nor is any communal amenity space or play space provided. It appears that 8 of the units (100%) would be single aspect only.

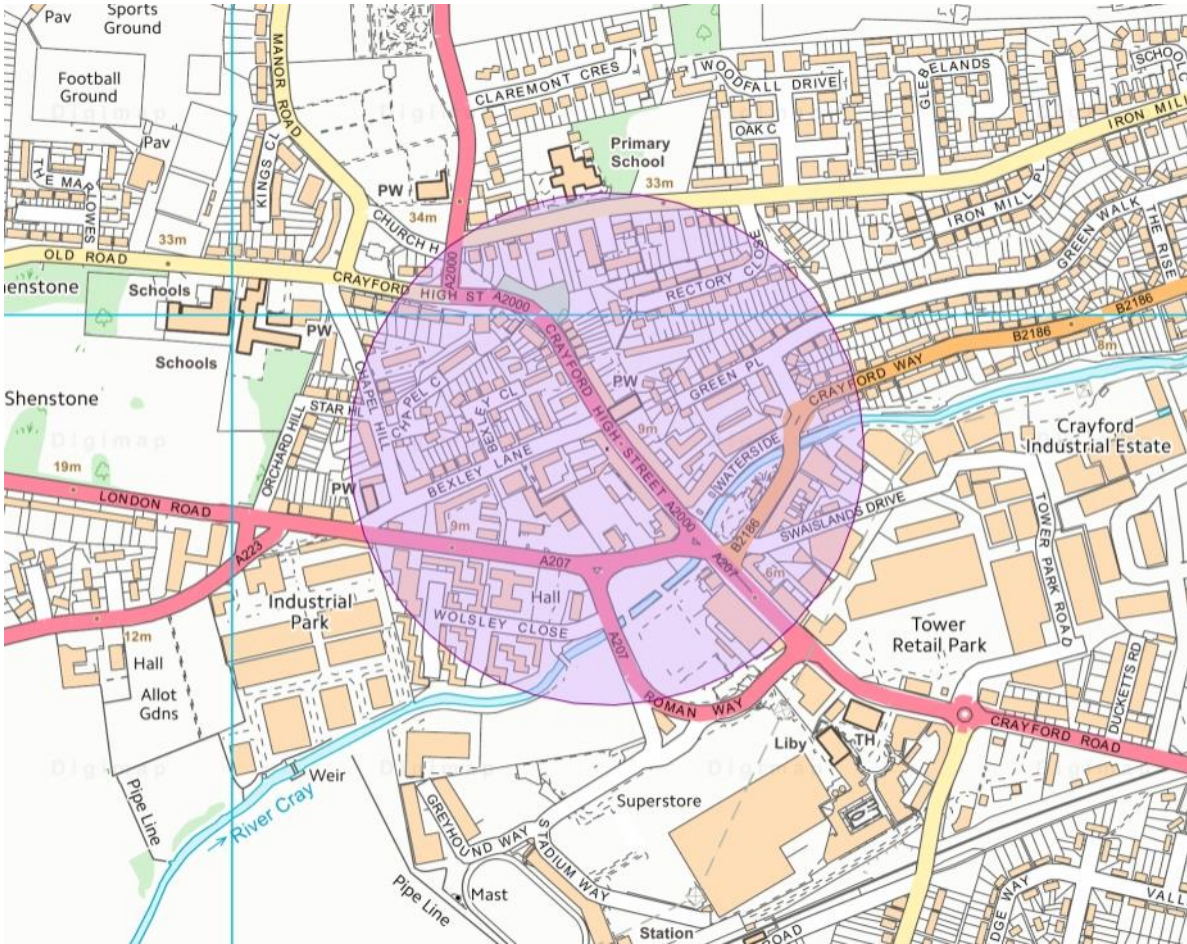
An extract from the submitted plans is below.



First Floor Plan - 1:100

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows that there is some public green space within 250m of the development, and a larger green space and play space within 500m. The neighbourhood is a mixture of commercial, residential and industrial uses.

Further examples of office-to-residential permitted development conversions



Site visit



On our site visit we noted that the conversion had been implemented, with a door entry buzzer with 8 buttons for the flats visible. The immediate neighbourhood is busy, with a mixture of local shops and residential dwellings. A mainline railway station is within walking distance.

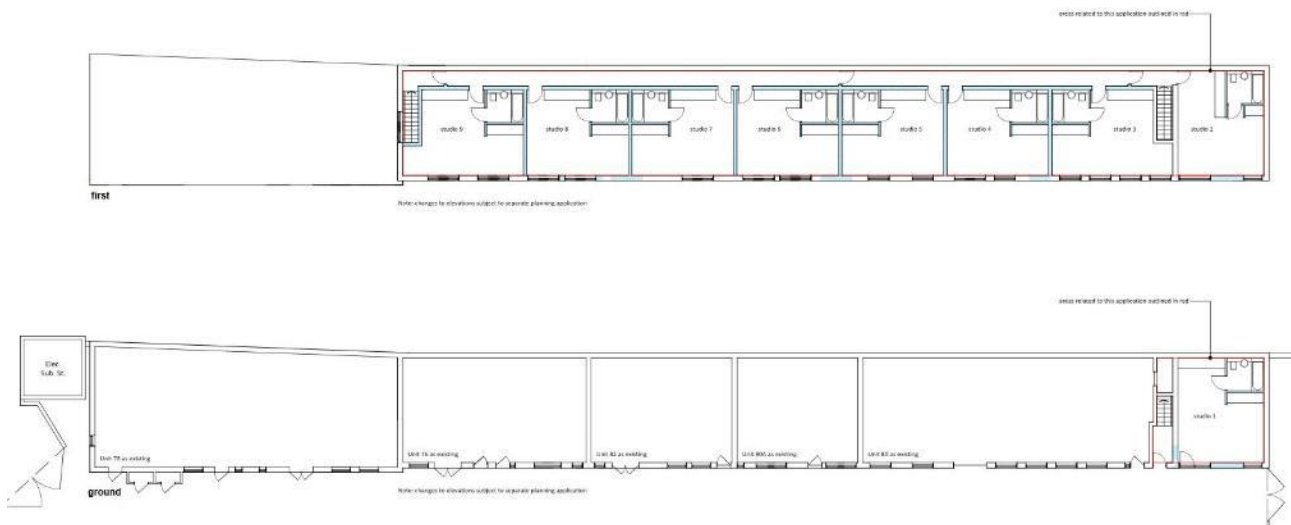
6. 76A, 82A and 84 Crayford High Street Dartford DA1 4EF

Overview

A prior notification was submitted to Bexley Council in March 2017 to covert these units from office use to 9 studio flats. This was approved.

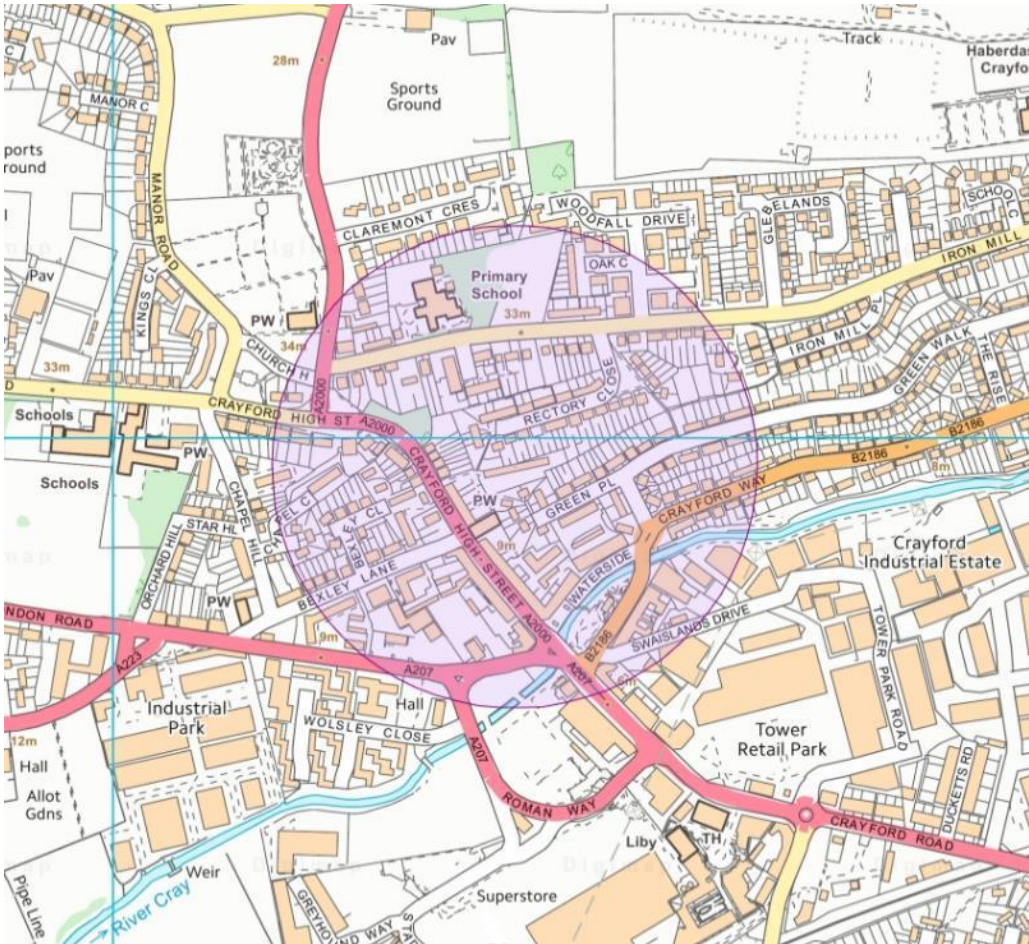
Looking at the March 2017 prior notification, all 9 units (100%) would be smaller than the nationally described space standards, with the studio flats about 12m² each. All the units (100%) are studio flats. All (100%) are single aspect only in terms of windows. None (0%) have access to any private amenity space, nor does any communal amenity space seem to be provided.

An extract from the submitted plans is below.



A number of other prior notifications have been submitted in relation to this block of business units, some of which relate to the ground floor and some to the first floor of the same units. A March 2017 prior notification was to turn units 76 and 78 from office use into 5 studio flats. A July 2017 prior notification was to turn unit 80 from office use into 3 studio flats. An October 2017 prior notification was to turn units 80A and 82 from light industrial use into 3 studio flats. A November 2017 prior notification was to turn units 76 and 78 from storage use to 7 studio flats. A February 2018 prior notification was to turn units 80A and 82 from light industrial use to 2 studio flats. Another February 2018 prior notification was to turn units 76A, 82A and 84D from office use to 3 studio flats. Finally, a third February 2018 prior notification was to turn units 80, 84, 84A, 84B and 84C from office use to 6 x one bedroom maisonettes. All these were granted, subject to conditions.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows that there is a small amount of public green space within 250m of the development, and a larger green space and play space within 500m. The neighbourhood is a mixture of commercial, residential and industrial uses.



Site visit



On our site visit, we noted that the entrance to the area of the buildings concerned was fenced off, with locked gates. Nearer the high street were signs saying there were commercial units to let, with to let signs seeming for each property in the row. Looking through the gates, there were no signs of construction but the buildings themselves did not look like they would make for high quality residential use if converted.

7. Atria House, 219 Bath Road, Slough, SL1 4BF (SL1 4AA)

Overview

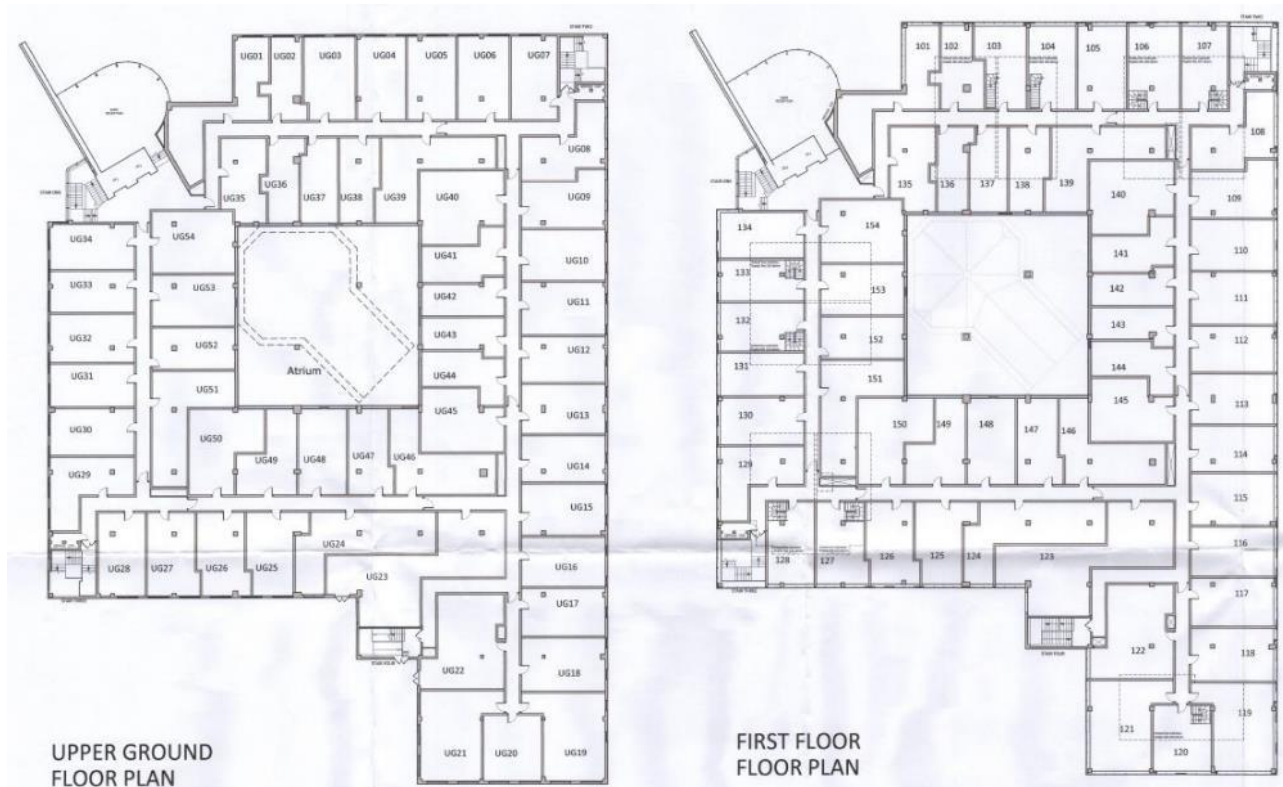
In August 2016, a prior notification was submitted to convert from office to residential use as 120 units on the ground floor and first floor. A second prior notification submitted in July 2017 was to convert to 124 residential units on the ground, first and second floors. These received approval.

The breakdown by unit type is not readily apparent from the submitted plans, but further details are provided through the marketing brochure on the developer website (<https://www.galliardhomes.com/atria#Overview>). This shows that there are 60 studios, 46 one beds and 18 two bed units. In other words, 106 units (85%) are studios and one beds. Looking at the units, 89 units (72%) are smaller than national space standards. Studio flats are generally about 25-35m² each and one beds 35-40m².

None of the units (0%) appear to have any access to private amenity space. There does not appear to be any usable communal amenity space either; the marketing brochure talks about 'landscaped grounds' but these appear to be primarily hard surfaced car parking with some minimal surrounding shrubbery.

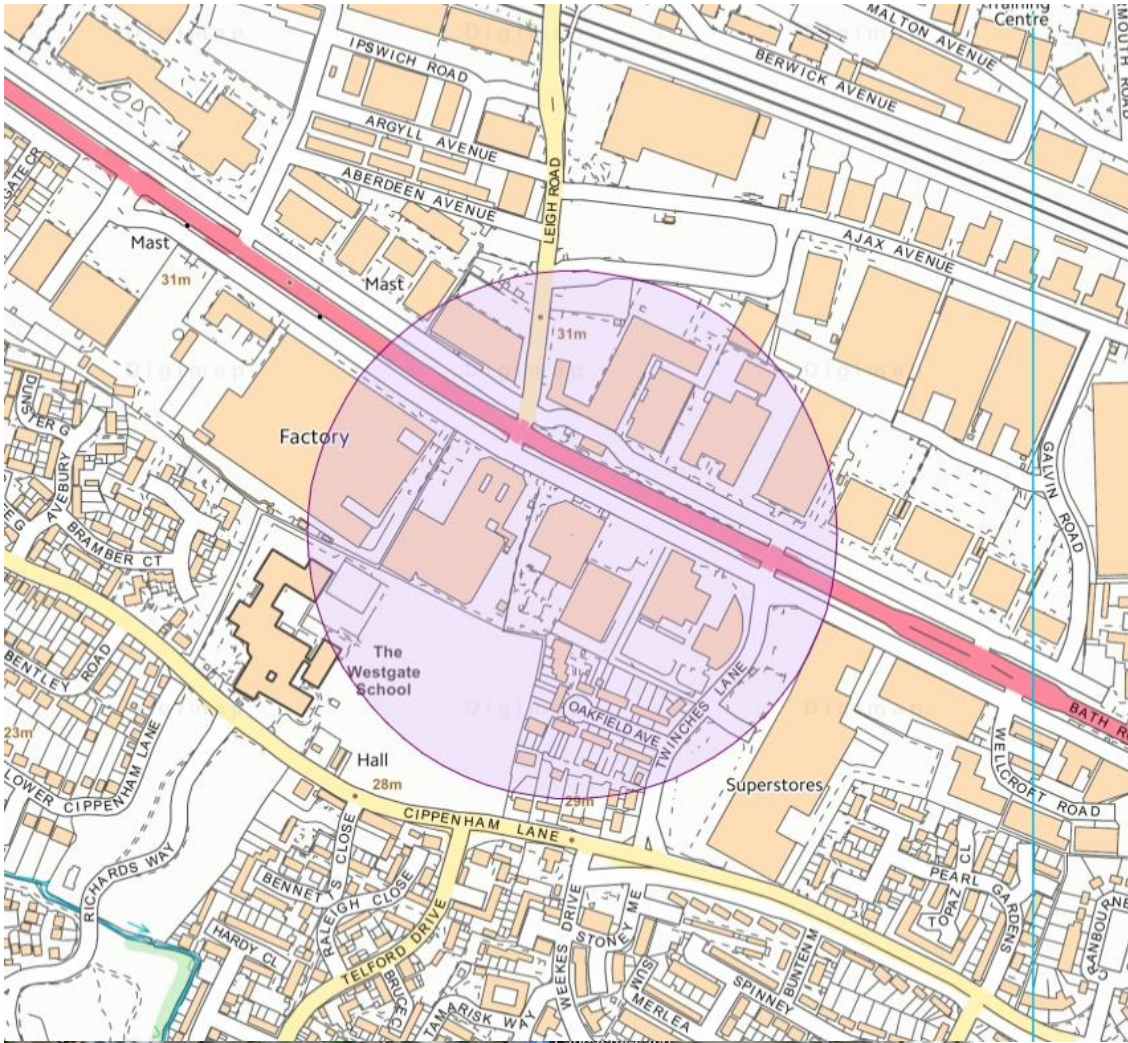
There are two studio flats which do not appear to have any windows at all. There are numerous flats where a bedroom does not have a window at all. Excluding rooflights, 112 units (90%) appear to be single aspect only in relation to windows, with 7 units (6%) dual aspect and then 2 units (2%) completely windowless and 3 units (2%) with rooflights only. 48 of the units (39%) appear to only have windows facing a glass central atrium, giving less natural daylight and the risk of overlooking. Further, 13 of the single aspect units (10% of all units) are facing north, leading again to less daylight.

An extract from the plans submitted with the prior approval is below, followed by an extract from the plans shown in the marketing brochure. These show some strangely shaped flats.





The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows that there is no public green space or open space within 250m of the development. There is some just within 500m as the crow flies, however this is further than this to walk.



Site visit



On our site visit, we noted the conversion had been implemented and 124 residential units were now implemented and being marketed. Although there was a direct bus link outside the development and some nearby shops, there were also light industrial uses still in place and a very busy main road directly outside the development. It did not therefore seem to offer a very good location for residential amenity.

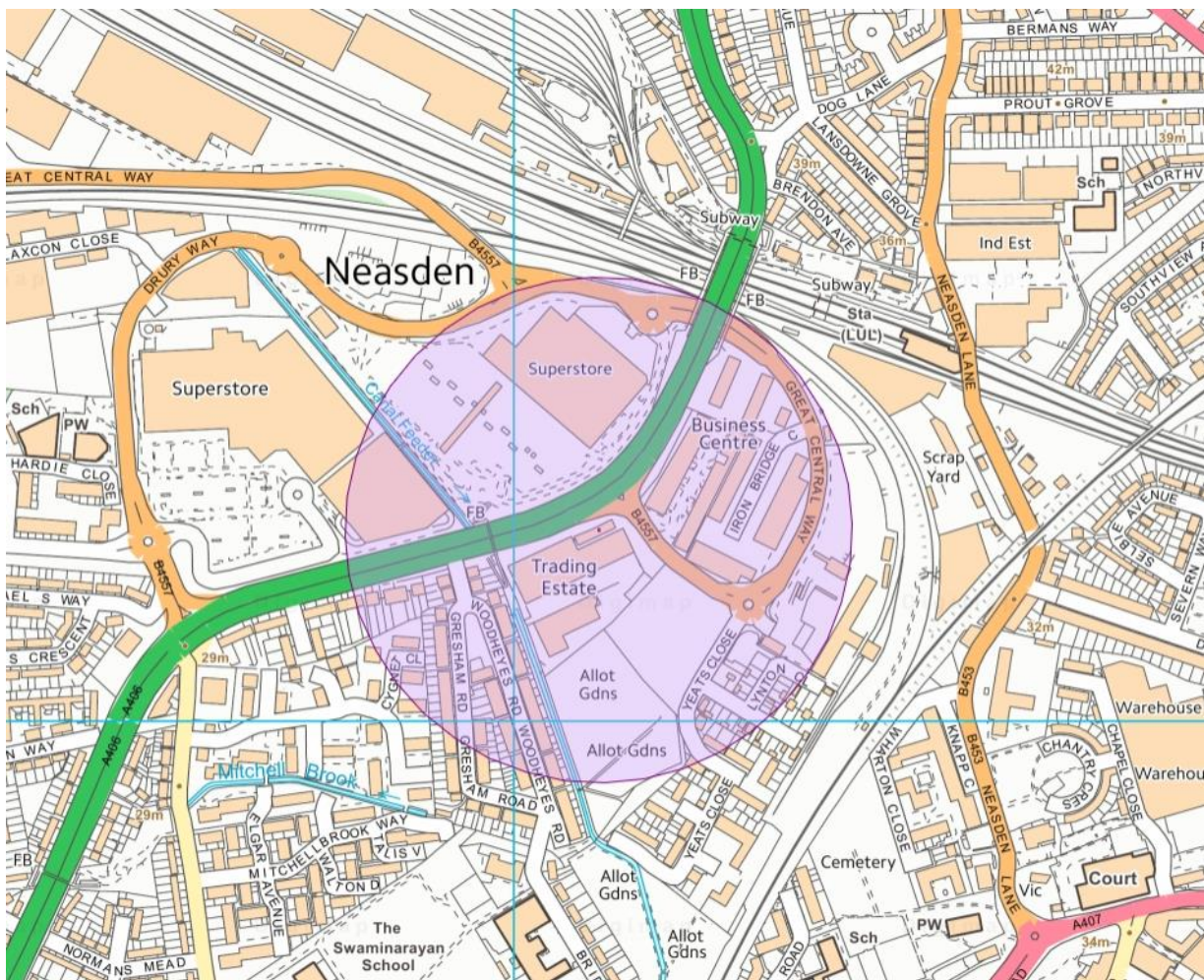
8. Beacon House, North Circular Road, Stonebridge, NW10 0JD

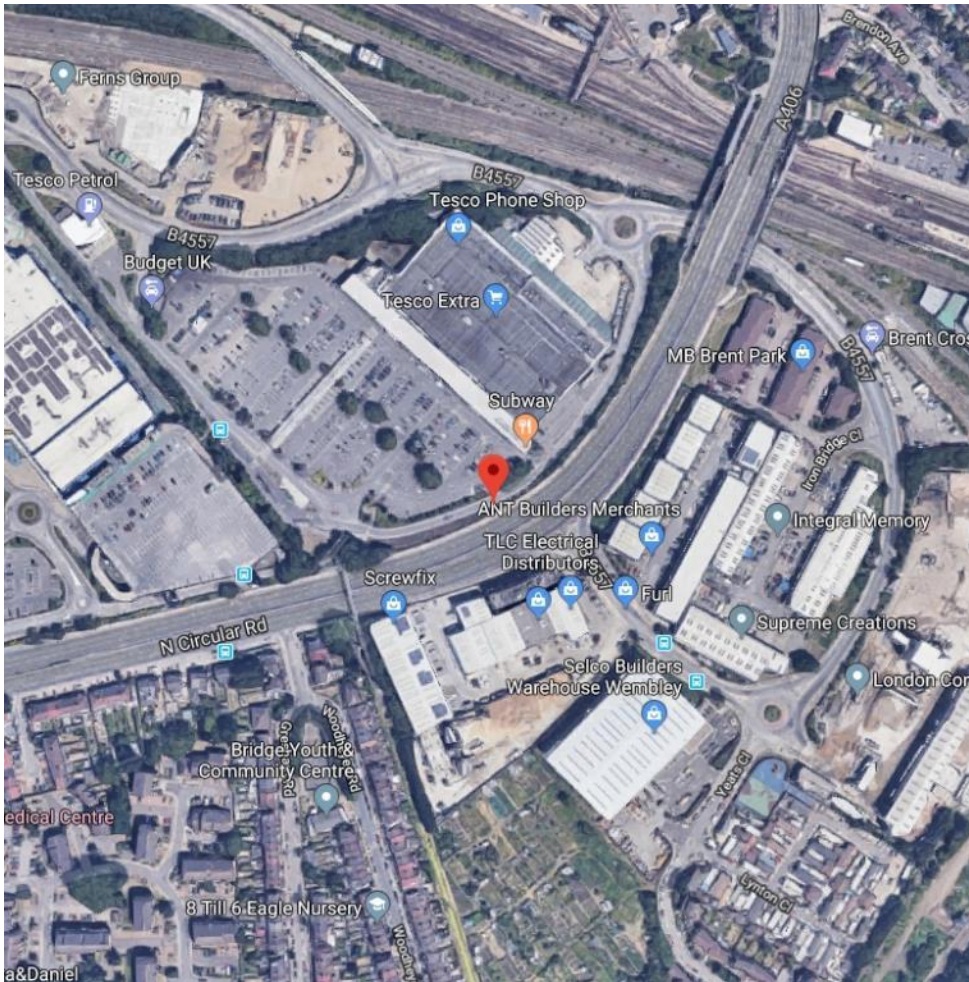
Overview

A number of prior notifications have been submitted in association with this property. In October 2015, two prior notifications were submitted: one to convert part of the 5 studio flats and another to 6 studio flats. These were both refused on the basis of the highways impacts (primarily related to parking). A third prior notification was submitted in January 2016 to convert to 11 studio flats and approved. A fourth prior notification submitted in January 2017 to convert into 8 units (7 x 1 bedroom and 1 x 2 bedroom) was withdrawn by the applicant. A fifth prior notification submitted in March 2017 for 8 units (7 x 1 bedroom and 1 x 2 bedroom) was approved.

No floorplans are available on the Brent Council planning database for this scheme, so it is not possible to determine the space standards, amenity space provision and window configuration of units. The prior notification suggests that 88% of the units are studios or one bed, comprising no studios, 7 one bed units and 1 two bed unit.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, also below. This shows there is no green or public open space within 250m of the building (allotments not being publicly accessible) or indeed within 500m. This also shows the building's location next to a busy dual carriageway main road and mainline railway and near to large commercial and industrial uses, including a cement factory.





Site visit





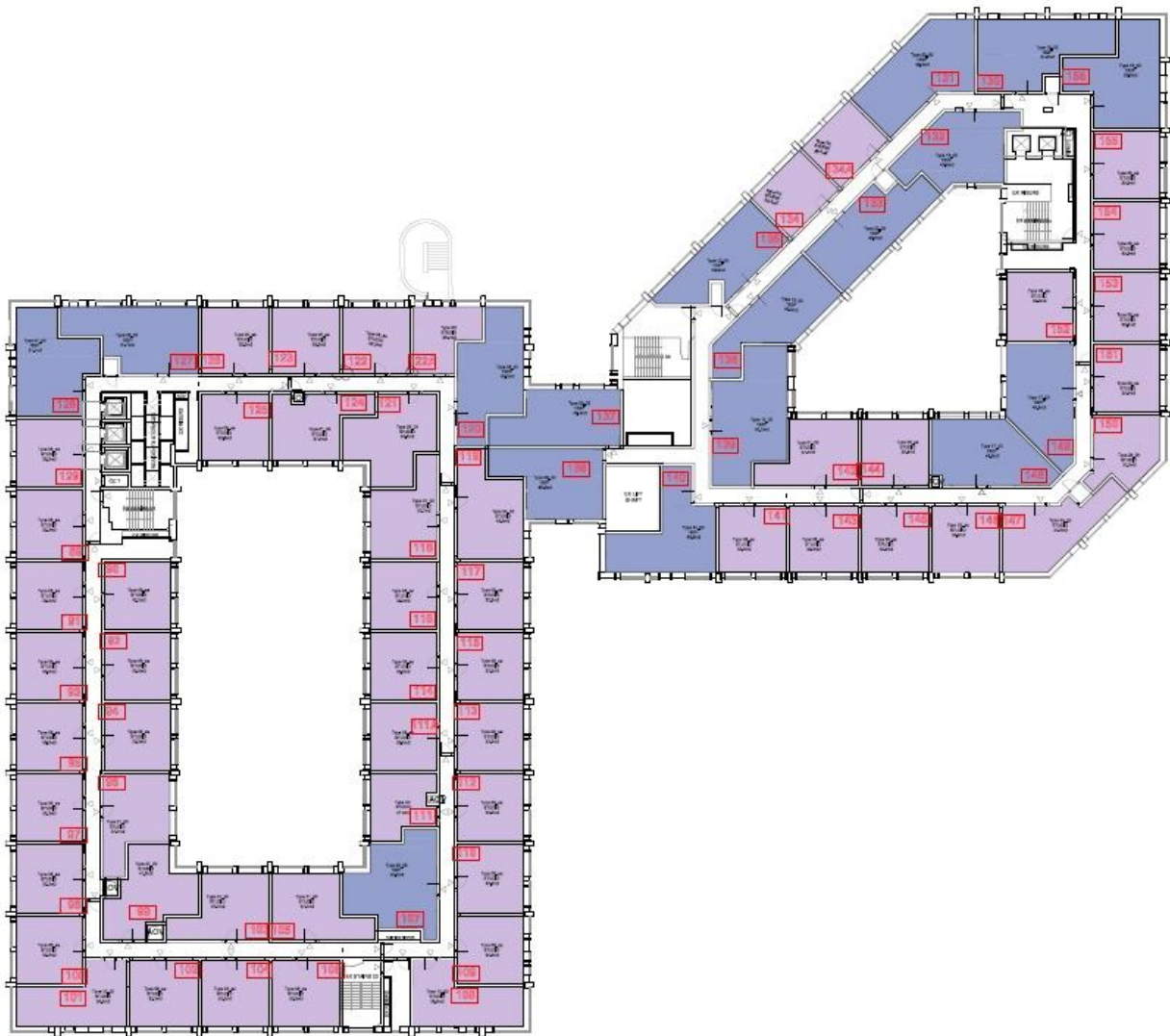
On our site visit we noted that the conversion seems to have been implemented, with eight letter boxes by the doors. The area seems undesirable and unsuitable as a location for residential use, immediately adjacent to a very busy road and not near to useful local amenities. There appeared to be some people trying to break into the property at the time of the visit.

9. Central House, 3 Lampton Road, Hounslow, TW3 1HY

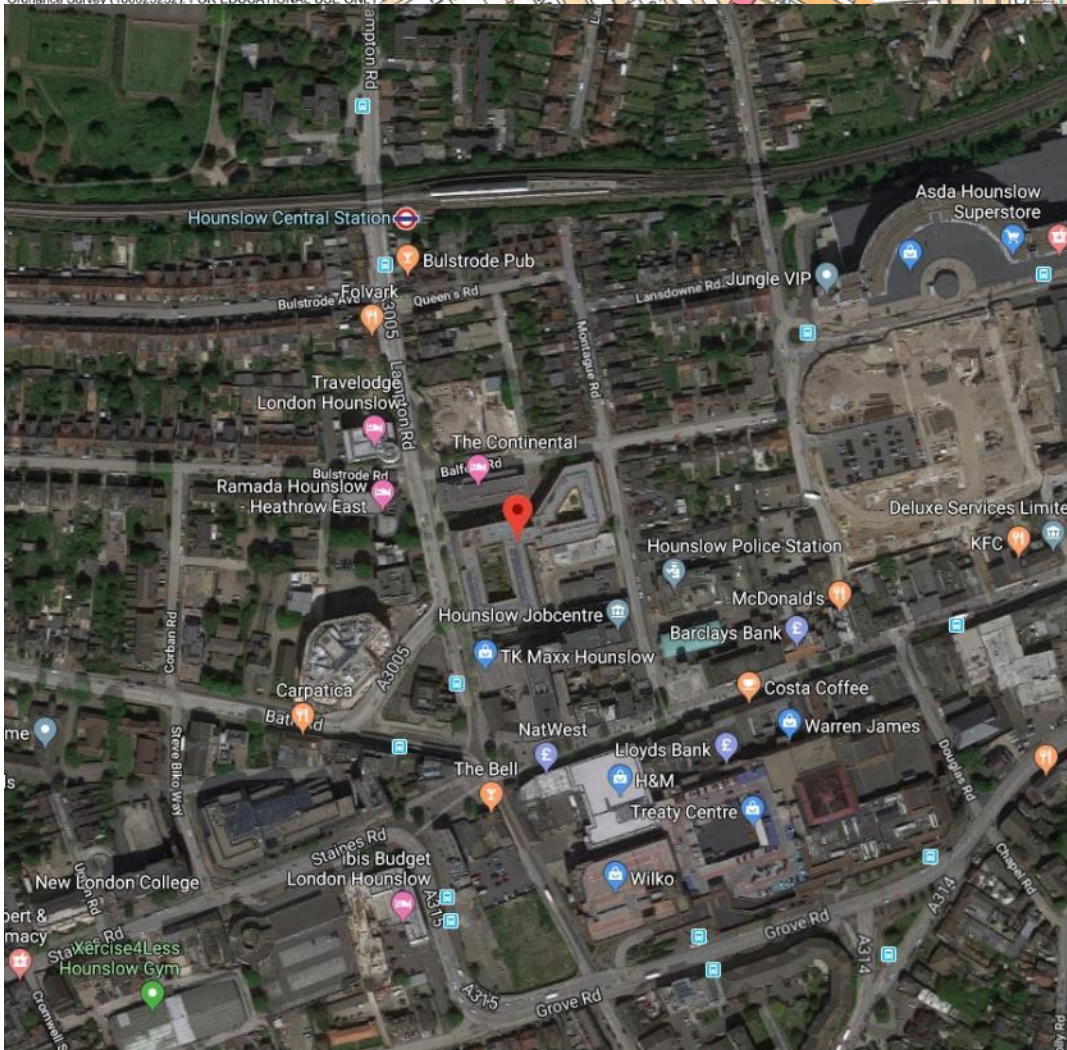
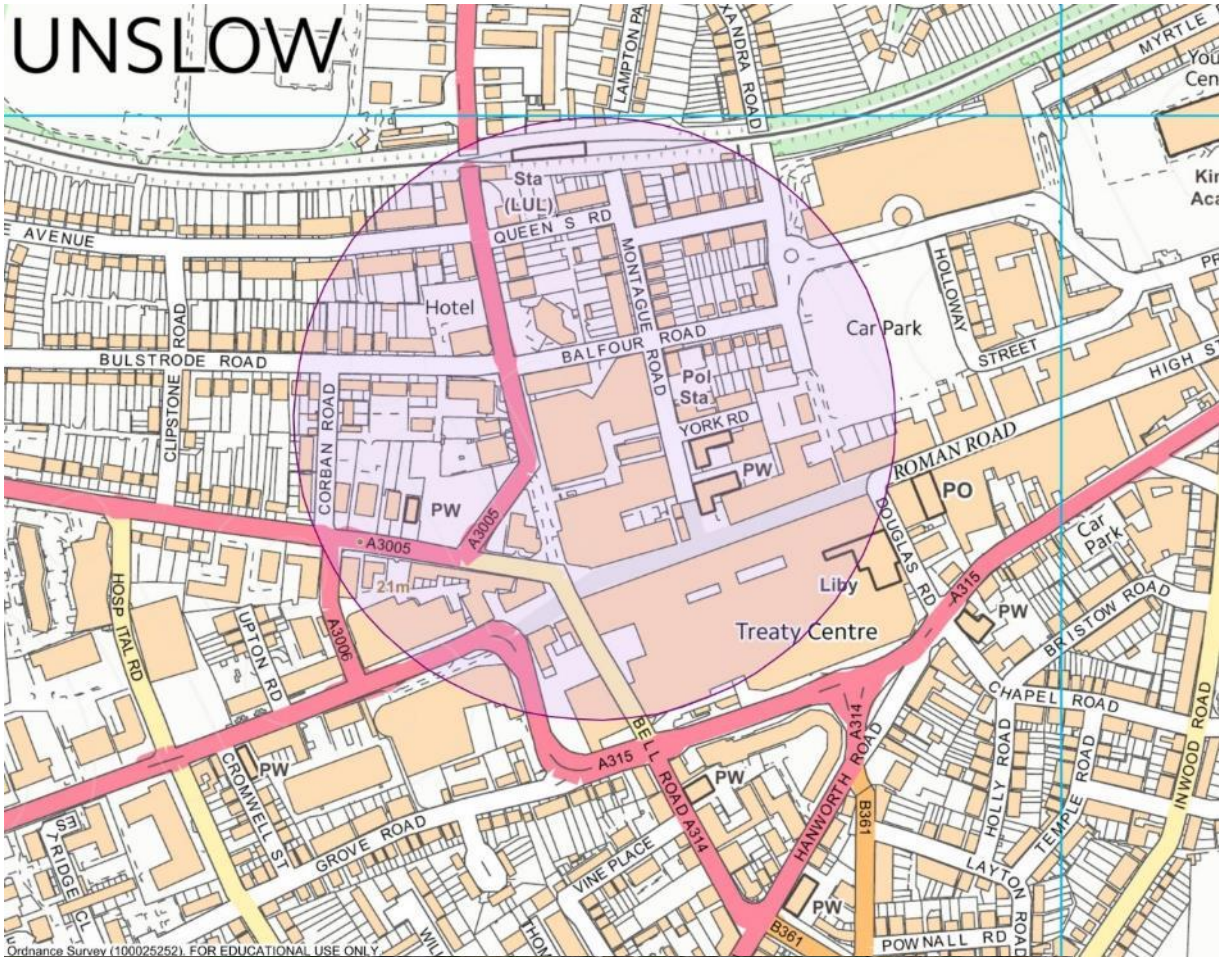
Prior notifications submitted in June 2014 for 160 units, in November 2014 for 166 units and in June 2015 for 171 units. Reconfigured plans for fourth floor submitted via a further prior approval in March 2016.

Plans show 168 of the 171 units (98%) are studios or one bedroom units (115 studios + 53 one beds), the other three are two bedrooms. No units (0%) have access to private amenity space nor does there appear to be any communal amenity space provided. Most studios are about 32m², some being just 26m². Overall 125 of the flats out of 171 (73%) are smaller than national space standards.

144 of the 171 flats (81%) appear to be single aspect only, and 50 of the flats (29%) seem to only have windows facing the central void areas of the building, so are likely to have less daylight and a high degree of overlooking from the flats directly opposite. An extract of the proposed floorplans is below.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is no green or public open space within 250m of the development, although there is a park within 500m.



Site visit



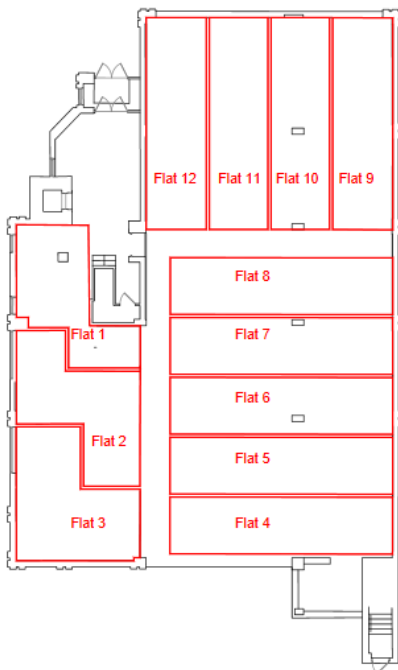
On our site visit, we noted that conversion to residential use has been completed. The building is located in a mixed area near Hounslow Central LU station with neighbouring uses include some shops, some other commercial properties but also other residential flats. The neighbourhood feels comfortable and offers reasonable residential amenity, albeit without immediate access to green or play space.

10. Coomb House, 7 St John's Road, Isleworth, TW7 6NH

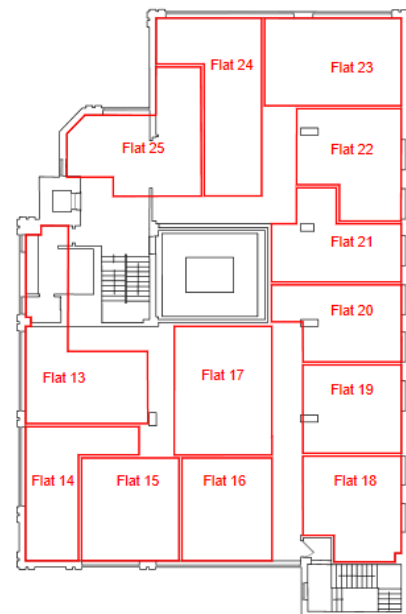
Overview

Granted planning permission in June 2016 to convert from office use to a hotel, with some changes to the elevations. Refused planning permission in September 2018 to add an additional two storeys for residential use. Prior notification submitted in October 2018 to convert from office to residential use, namely 39 flats. The prior approval documentation does not actually state what these flats would be (i.e. studios, one beds etc.) nor do the submitted plans show this. It appears from the plans, however, that there would no access for any flat (0%) to any private or communal amenity space. All 39 flats (100%) appear to be smaller than the national space standards even for a studio apartment, with flats about 25m² to 33m². Many units are strangely shaped to fit around the building's existing floorplan and interior columns (see below).

36 out of 39 flats (92%) appear to be single aspect only. 2 of the flats appear to only have windows facing the very small interior void or atrium area, and so likely to have very little daylight. An extract from the proposed plans, below, illustrate this.

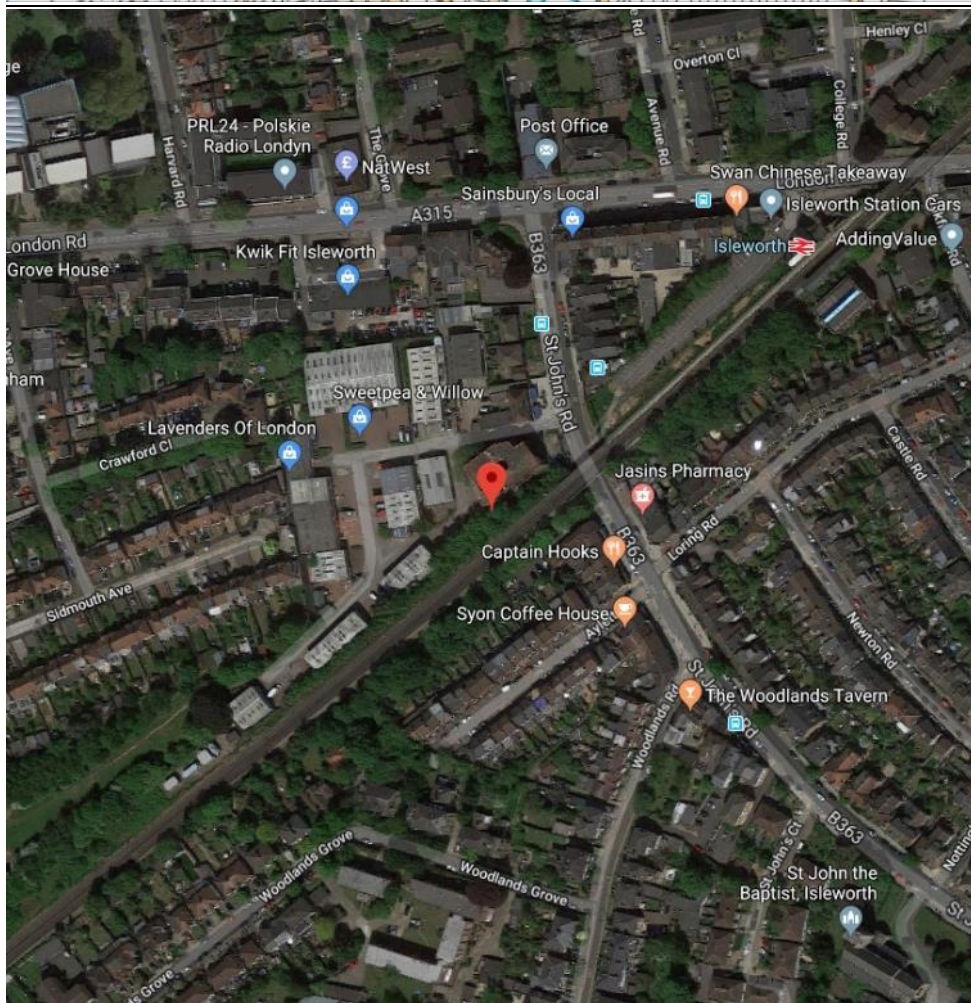


GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is a park within 250m of the development, and this includes some play space.



Site visit



The building was under conversion at the time of our site visit (March 2019). The block is located on a quiet suburban street. Although there are some neighbouring light industrial / storage uses, the area is primarily residential. It is near some local shops and the rail station, so the area itself would appear to provide reasonable levels of residential amenity.

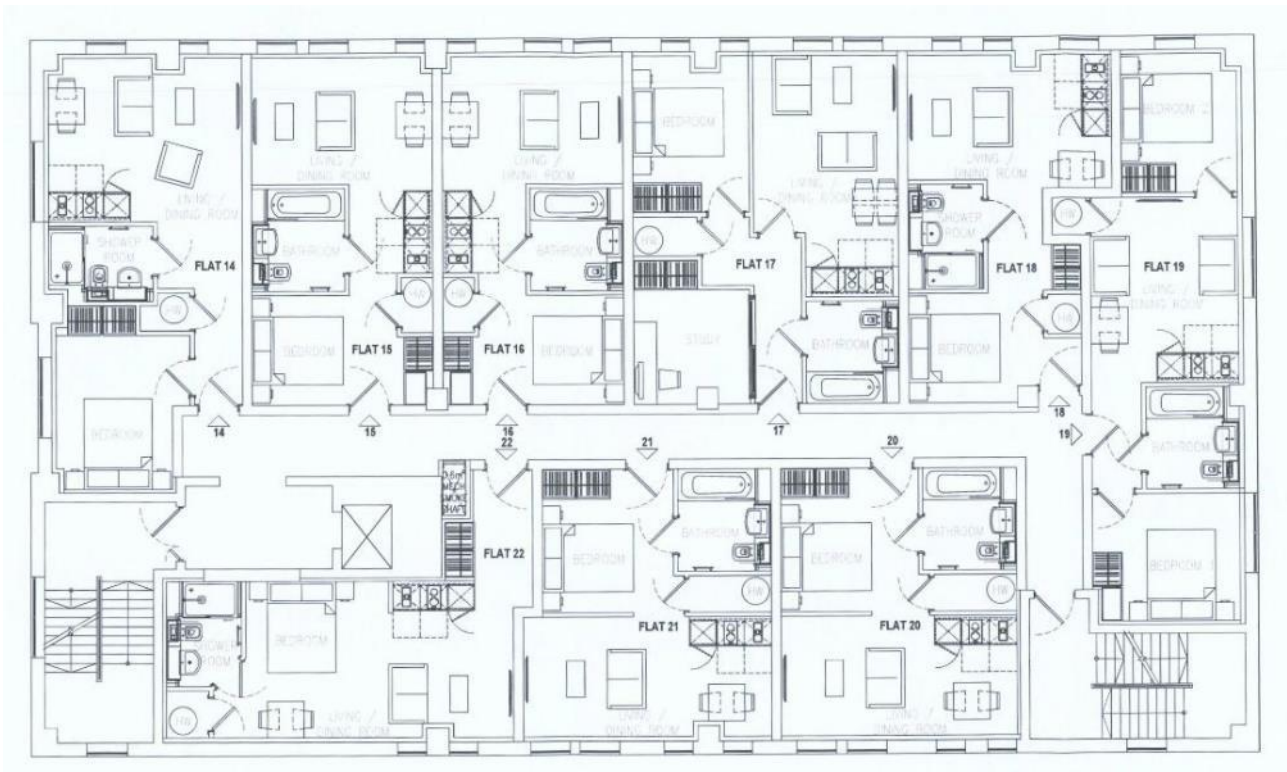
11. Craneshaw House, 8 Douglas Road, Hounslow, TW3 1DA

Overview

A Prior notification was submitted in February 2016 to change the office building to 32 residential units. A second prior notification was submitted in September 2016 to change to 31 units. The flats were marketed as for sale

(<https://www.galliardhomes.com/sites/default/files/documents/developments/A2yOs9icMHR/Craneshaw%20House%20Brochure.pdf>) and this shows the 32 unit scheme was implemented. This comprises 29 units being studios and one bedroom flats (91% - 14 studio and 15 one bed). No units (0%) have access to any private or communal amenity space. All 32 units (100%) are smaller than national space standards, with studio apartments typically about 31m² and one and two bedroom flats both about 45m². The sales brochure also notes 'Help to Buy' is available.

23 of the 31 flats (74%) are single aspect only. An extract from the proposed floor plans is included below.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is no park or open space within 250m of the development, but there is a park within 500m which includes some play space.

Site visit



On our site visit we noted that the conversion has been implemented and the flats are still being marketed. The building still looks very much like a 1990s office building, with very little change done during the conversion. The location is in a primary commercial area, near shops and the underground station, but there are also some residential uses nearby and the site does not provide a poor level of amenity.

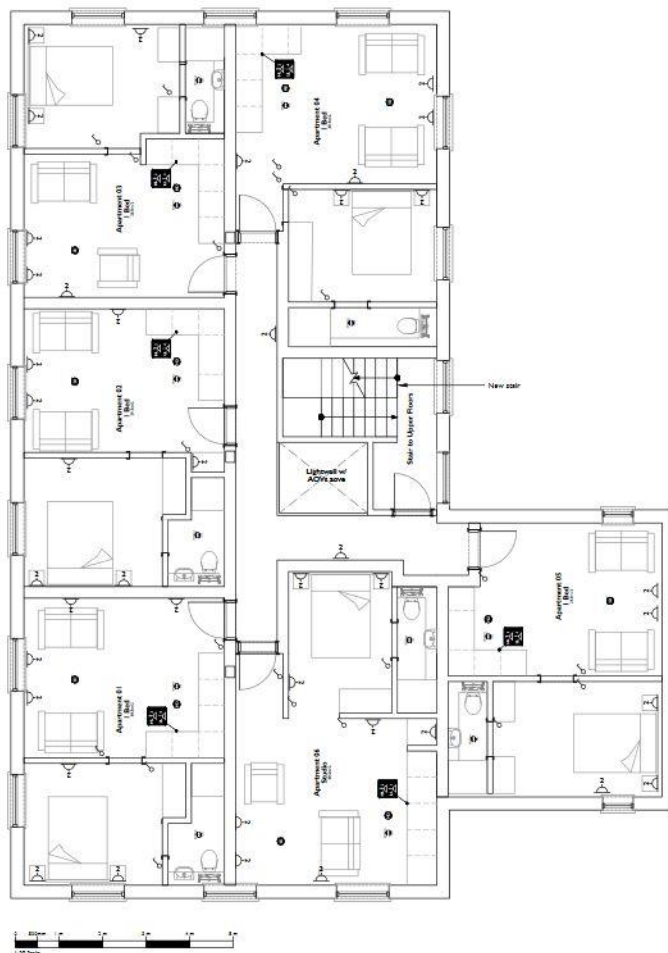
12. Elwick House, Elwick Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1NR

Overview

A prior notification was submitted in March 2015 to change part of the ground, first and second floors to nine units but this was rejected by the local authority as part of the building was in D1 rather than B1 use. A second prior notification was submitted in April 2015 to convert the first and second floors from office to residential use. This would be six flats (two x one bedroom, two x two bedroom and two x three bedroom). Unit sizes are not labelled on the plans but appear to be reasonably sized, albeit with no access to amenity space. Another prior approval was then submitted in July 2015 to turn the part of the ground floor not in D1 use from office to residential, to provide one x three bedroom flat.

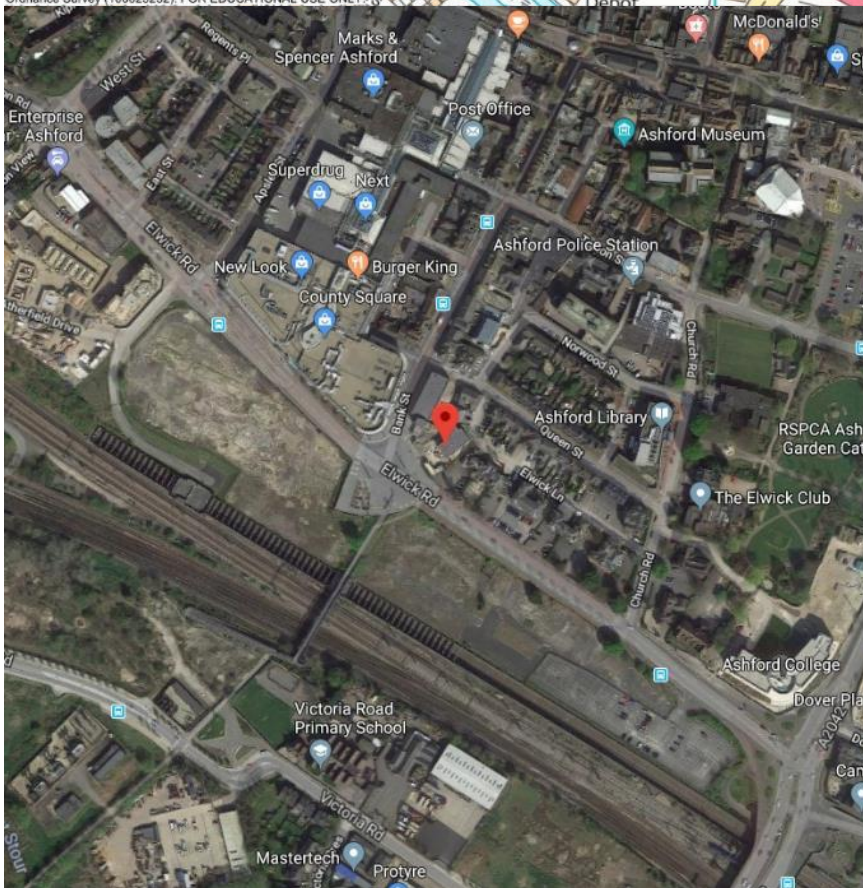
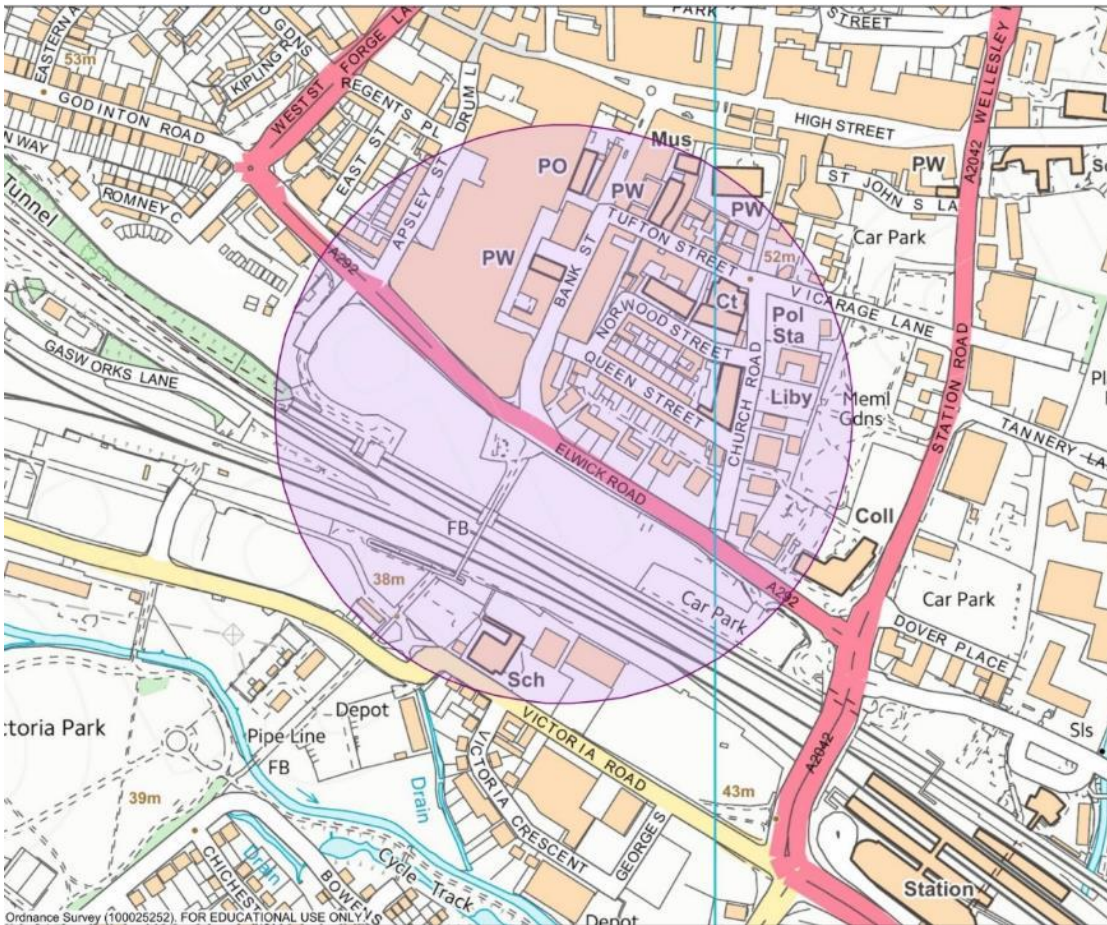
Another prior notification was then submitted in June 2016 to convert from office to residential as 15 units. This has all 15 units (100%) as studios and one bedrooms (3 x studios, 12 x one bedrooms). None of these units (0%) appear to have access to any private or communal amenity space. All 15 units (100%) are below national space standards, with both studios and one beds generally about 30m².

Only 5 of the 15 units (33%) are single aspect, with a majority of 10 units being dual aspect. An example of the proposed plans for the permitted development conversion is included below.



Planning applications were then submitted in June 2016 to add a storey with three new flats. These would be a two bed and two one bed units, all slightly below national space standards (59m² for the two bed and 45m² each for the one beds) but each with access to a private roof terrace area. and in July 2016 to convert the ground floor area in D1 use to residential use, with three one bedroom flats proposed, all below national space standards as well (about 30m² each).

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is open space within 250m of the development, although this does not seem to include dedicated play space (but there is a park within 500m of the development which does have play space).



Site visit



On our site visit, we noted construction works were underway to convert to residential use. The building is located in a mixed residential and commercial area, close to shops and the rail station and in an area offering reasonable residential amenity.

13. Empire House, Empire Way, Wembley, HA9 0EW

Overview

A prior notification was submitted in June 2018 to convert part of the ground floor, the first and second floors to residential use as 29 units. This was granted subject to a number of conditions. 93% of the units are studio or one bed, comprising no studios, 27 one bedroom units and 2 two bed units. All 29 units (100%) are smaller than national space standards, with the one bedroom units varying from 30.4-41.2m², generally being around 38m².

None of the units (0%) appear to have access to private amenity space, nor is any communal amenity space or play space provided. The quality of the floor plans submitted make it very difficult to determine whether units are single or double aspect.

An extract from the submitted plans is below.



A planning application was submitted in February 2019 to erect two additional storeys to the building to create 9 units (1 x one bed, 6 x two bed and 2 x three bed) and external refurbishment works to the whole building. This had planning permission refused due to concerns about overlooking, parking issues and because the layouts, small space standards, poor quality outlook and insufficient provision of amenity space would result in a poor standard of residential accommodation.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, below. This shows there is no green or public open space within 250m of the building, and only a very small amount within 500m of this is a dense mixed use location.

Site visit



On our site visit, we noticed that the building does not yet appear to have been converted to residential use. The location is in a busy area, near some local shops and services and near to Wembley Park station.

14. Gild House, 70-74 Norwich Avenue West, Bournemouth BH2 6AW

Overview

A prior notification was submitted in January 2019 to change from office use to residential as 18 flats, which was approved. This consists of 9 one bed and 9 two bed flats. 50% of the units are therefore one beds. All 18 units (100%) are smaller than national space standards, with the one bed units being generally about 31m² and the two beds generally about 52m². None of the units (0%) appear to have access to any private amenity space and there does not appear to be any communal amenity space either.

11 of the units (61%) appear to be single aspect only in terms of their window arrangement, with the rest being dual aspect. It is worth highlighting, however, that 3 of the single aspect only units are in the basement of the building, with the single windows being small and only giving light into one of the bedrooms of each of these units. They are therefore likely to suffer from extremely poor natural daylight in the rooms with windows, and no natural daylight at all in their second bedrooms or living rooms / kitchens.

An extract from the submitted plans is below.

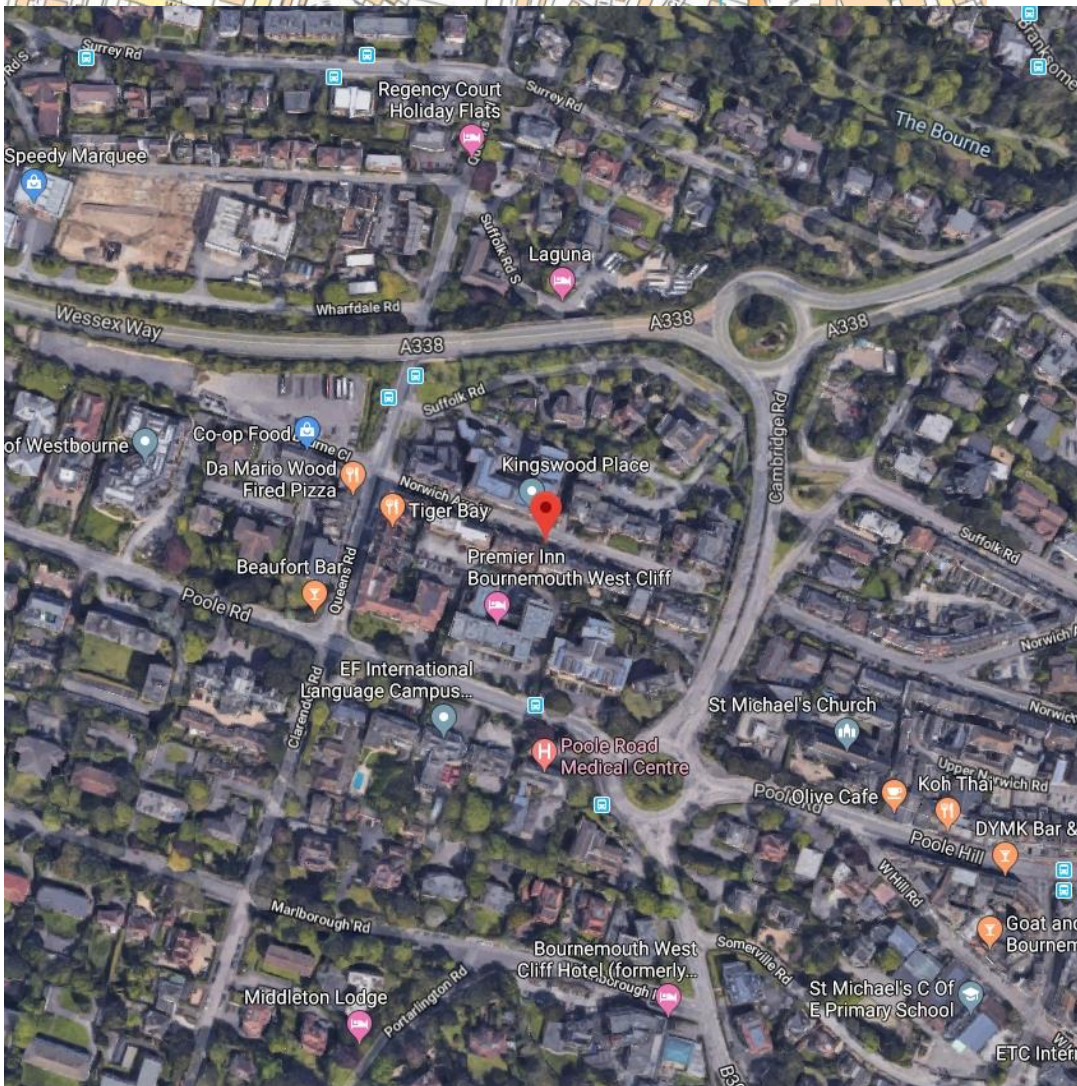


Proposed Ground Floor Plan
1:100



Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan
1:100

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, below. This shows there is now public green open space within 250m of the building, but there is some within 500m.



Site visit



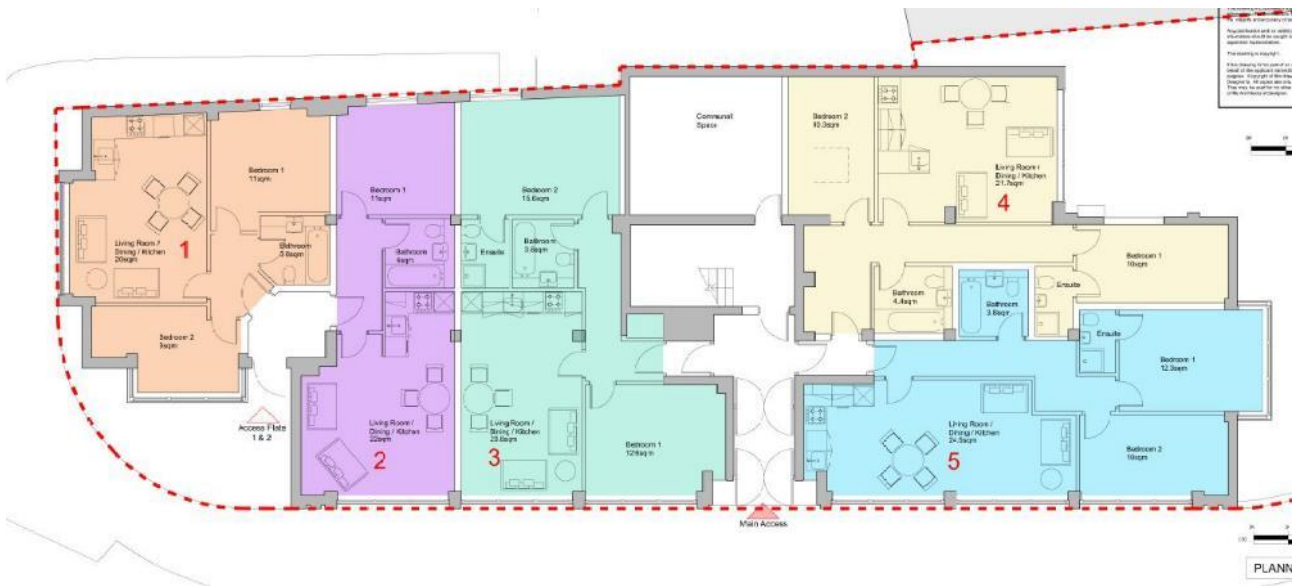
On our site visit, we noted that the building still had various businesses listed on the door buzzer and did not yet appear to have been converted to residential use. The building was located on a fairly quiet street but close to the city centre and so would offer a good location for residential use.

15. Herald House, Throwley Way, Sutton SM1 4AF (SM1 4AY)

Overview

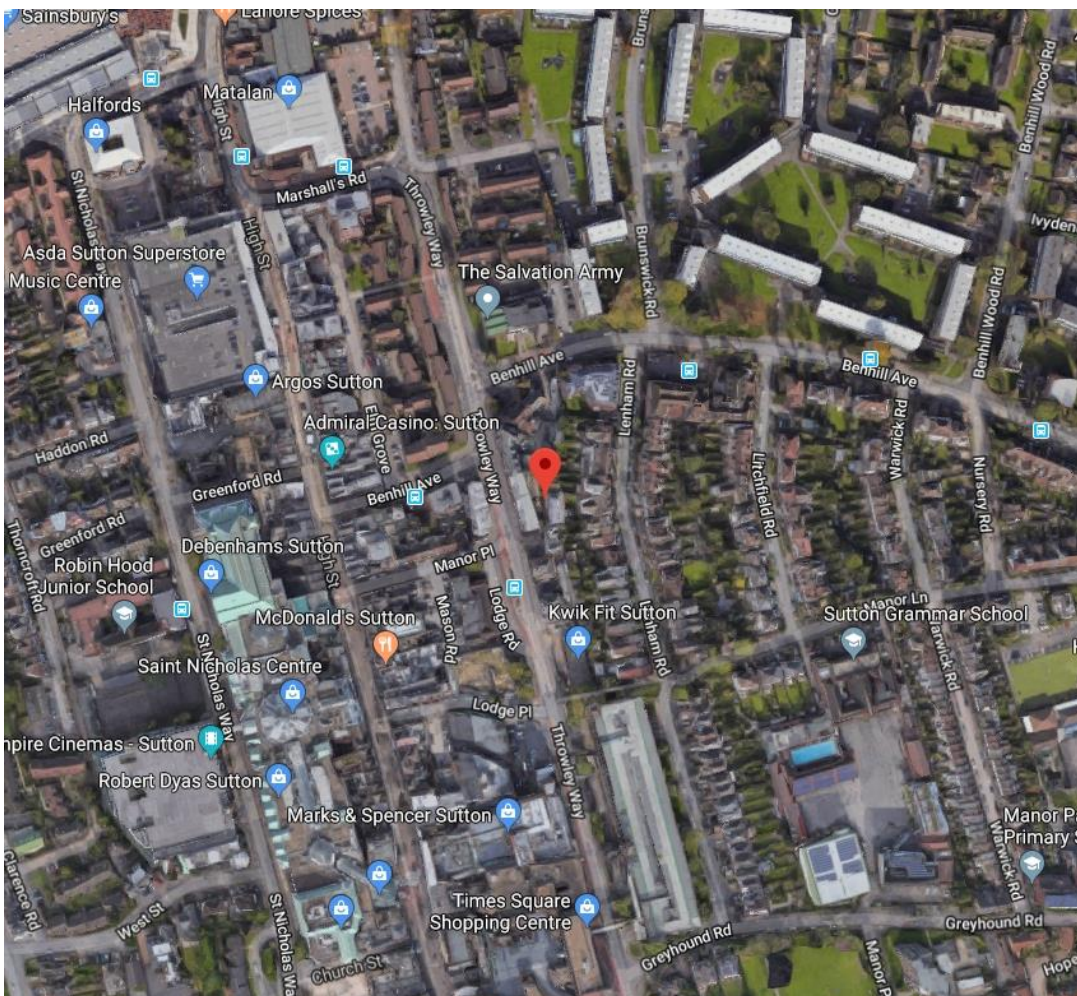
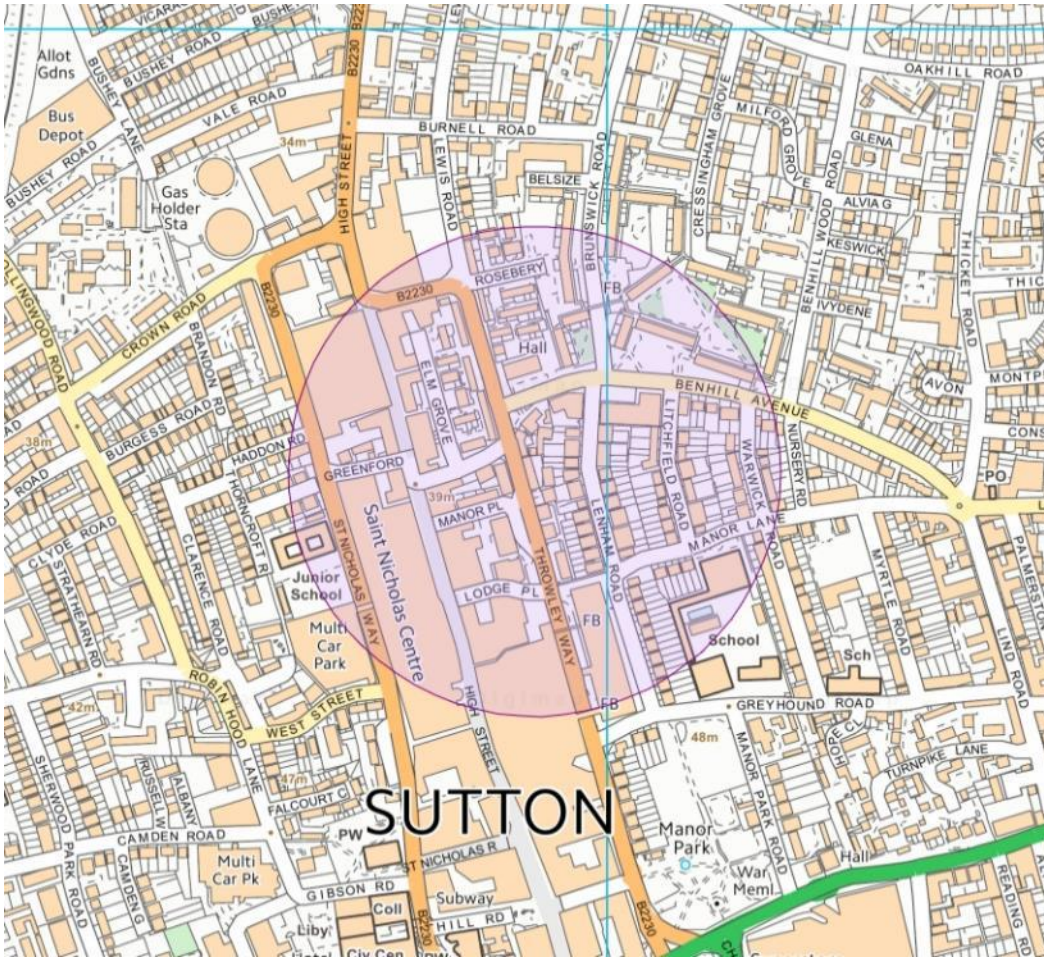
A prior notification was submitted in August 2014 to convert to 9 flats. These comprise 8 x two bedroom and 1 x one bedroom flats, meaning just 11% of the units are studios or one bedrooms overall. All nine units (100%) are below national space standards, with the one bed unit 42m² and the two beds 50-64m² each. None of the units (0%) appear to have access to private amenity space, nor is any play space provided. There is a small hallway area marked as communal amenity space on plans, but this appears to have little utility. From the plans, just one of the units (11%) would be single aspect only, with six being dual aspect and two being triple aspect in terms of windows.

An extract from the submitted plans is below.



An outline planning application was submitted in September 2015 to add two additional floors to the building with an additional eight one-bedroom flats. This was approved, as was a detailed matters application in February 2017, but does not appear to have been implemented and this permission has now expired.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, below. This shows there is a small amount of green or public open space within 250m of the building, and a large park including children's play space within 500m.



Site visit



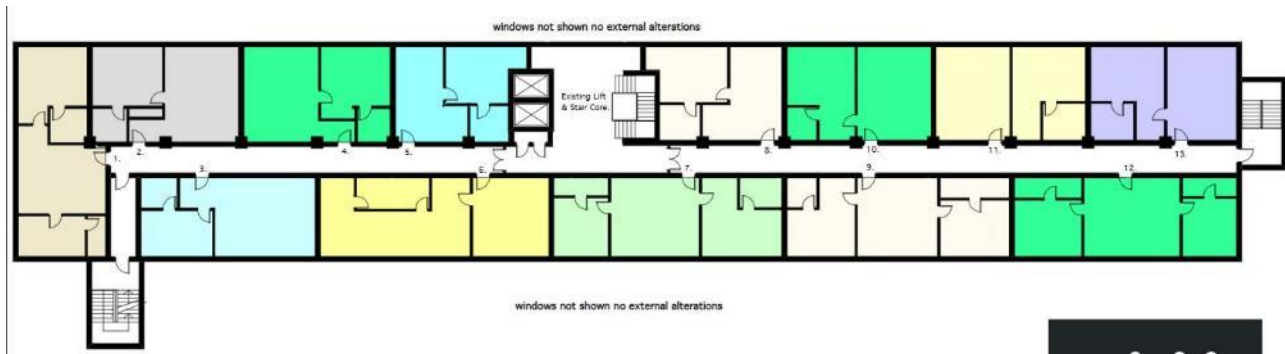
On our site visit we noted that there was a door buzzer with 17 buttons on, listed as flats 1 – 17. There also appeared to be some mail addressed to residents in the doors, so it appears the building has been converted to residential use but the number of units does not appear to agree with the prior approval plans. The immediate neighbourhood comprises a mix of commercial and residential uses, and the location is accessible to services in Sutton town centre.

16. John Busch House, 277 London Road, Isleworth, TW7 5AX

Overview

A prior notification was submitted in December 2013 to convert from office to residential, namely 40 units. 22 of the 40 units (55%) are studio or one bedroom apartments (6 studio + 16 one beds), with a good number of two bedroom (12 units) and three bedroom (6 units) apartments provided. None of the 40 units (0%) are below national space standards, with all units above these sizes. One bedroom flats are generally about 55m² and 2 bedrooms about 66m².

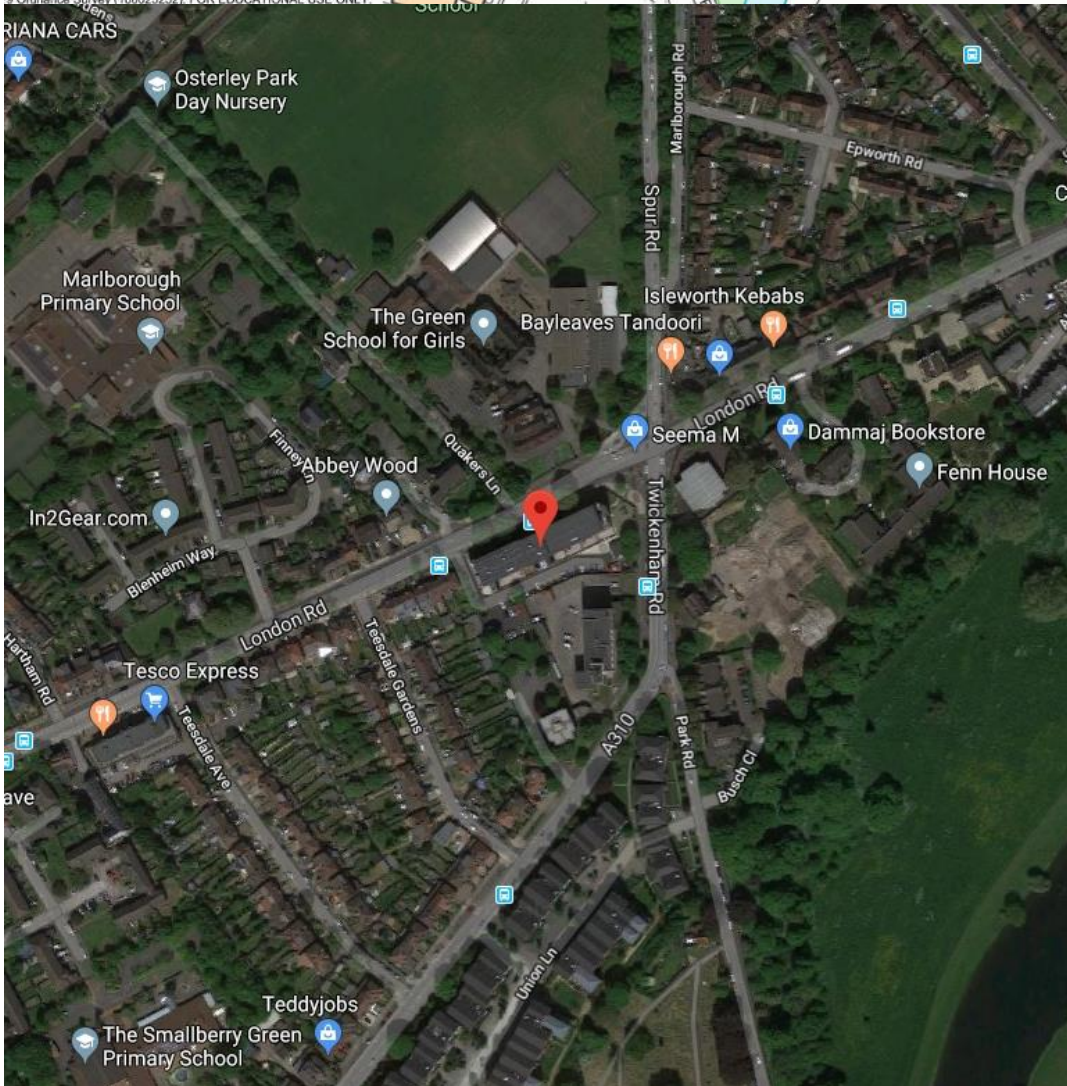
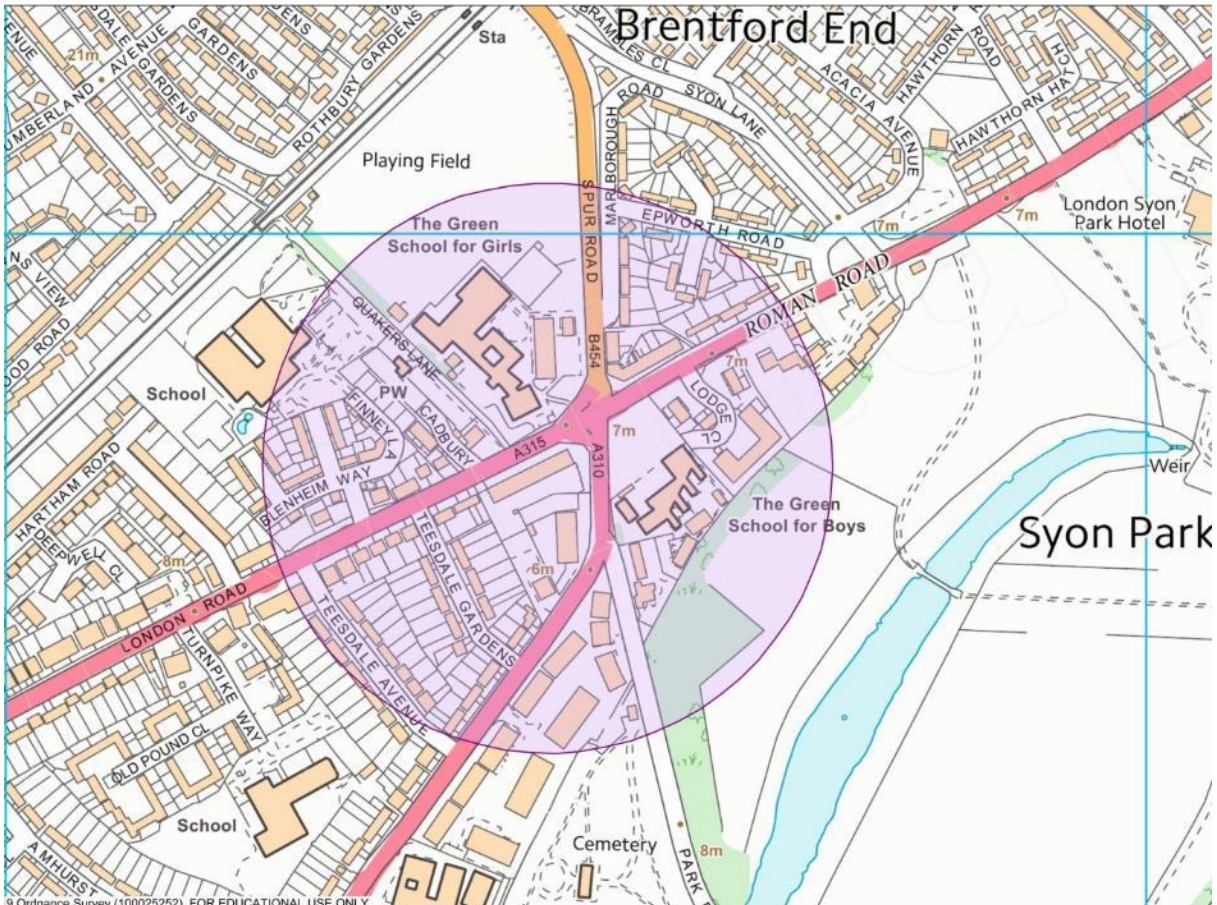
None of the units (0%) appear to have any access to private amenity space, but as part of the planning application (see below), communal amenity space is proposed in the form of a decking area and a children's play area to the side/rear of the building (about 350m²). 37 of the 40 units (93%) appear to be single aspect, with three units being dual aspect. An extract from the submitted proposed floor plans is included below.



A planning application was submitted in July 2014 to add an additional two storeys to the building, with nine additional flats, but this was refused planning permission on the basis the units were over-sized and so not optimising the site or opportunity to provide affordable housing and on the basis of inadequate amenity space.

A revised application was submitted in November 2014 to add an additional two storeys to the building, with 17 additional flats (three x one bedroom units and 14 x two bedroom units). Just one of these 17 units (6%) is below national space standards, and the planning officer report notes that this has access to a generous private amenity space area. All 17 units have access to a private balcony or roof terrace area. Only 4 of the 17 units (24%) are single aspect, with the majority of units being dual aspect. Three of the 17 units were agreed to be affordable housing (shared ownership) under a S.106 agreement.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is a large open space within 250m of the development.



Site visit



On our site visit, we noted the building has been converted, the additional storeys added and it is now in residential use. The additional storeys did not seem particularly obtrusive. The building itself is in a mainly residential area, near a large amount of green space, with some local shops nearby, and the area seems to offer a high level of residential amenity.

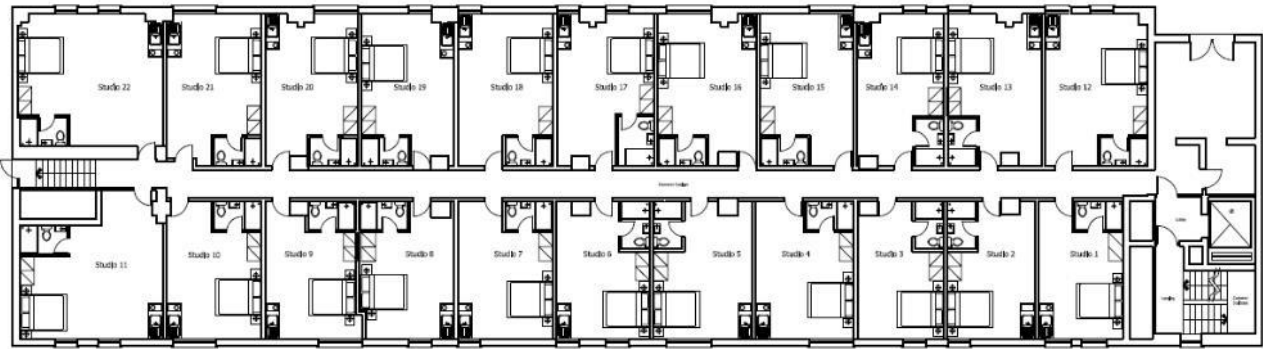
17. Madison Heights, 17-27 High St, Hounslow, TW3 1TA

Overview

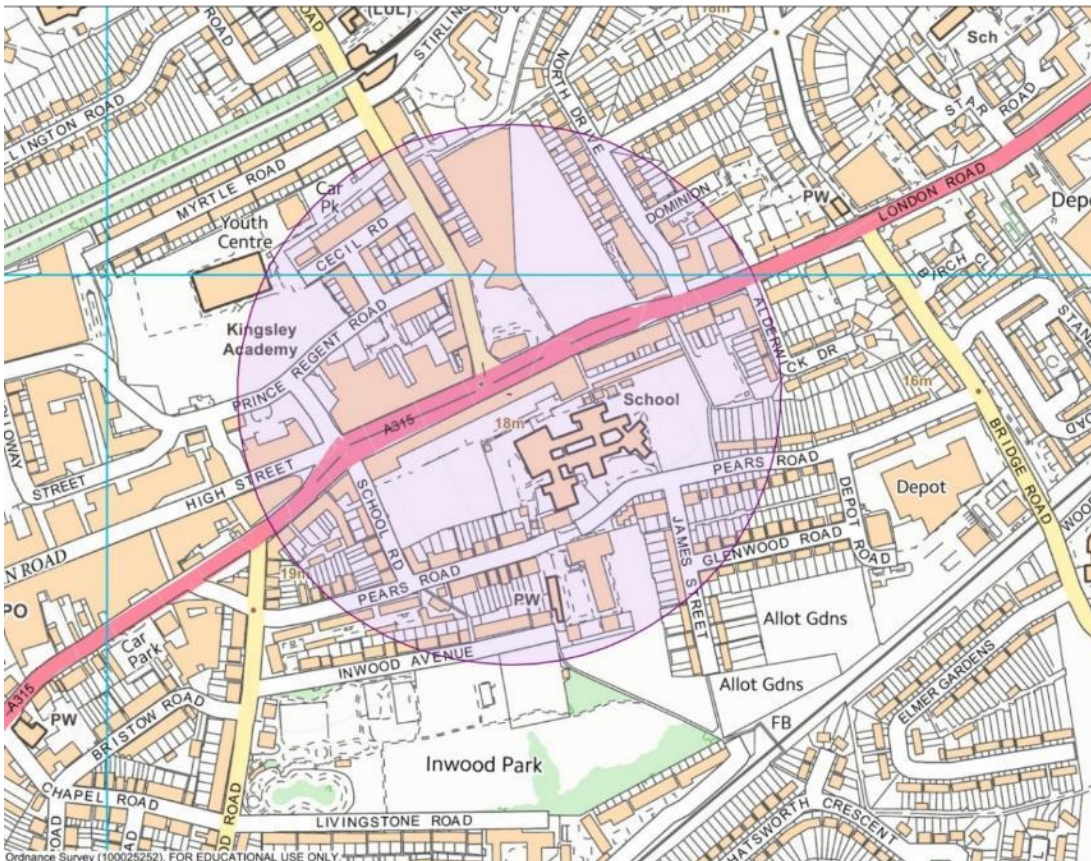
Floors 3 to 9 of this building were converted from office to 49 x two bedroom units and 21 x one bedroom residential units via a planning application submitted in March 1997. The plans are not available, but assuming an even distribution this would be 10 flats per floor.

Floor 2 was converted from office to 22 studio units via a permitted development prior notification submitted in October 2015. For the second floor conversion, all 22 units (100%) are studio apartments. None at all (0%) appear to have access to private or communal amenity space. All 22 units (100%) are smaller than national space standards, with the majority of studios about 25m².

All 22 units (100%) are single aspect only. An extract of the proposed floorplans is below.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is public open space within 250m of the development, namely a park which also includes a children's play area.





Site visit



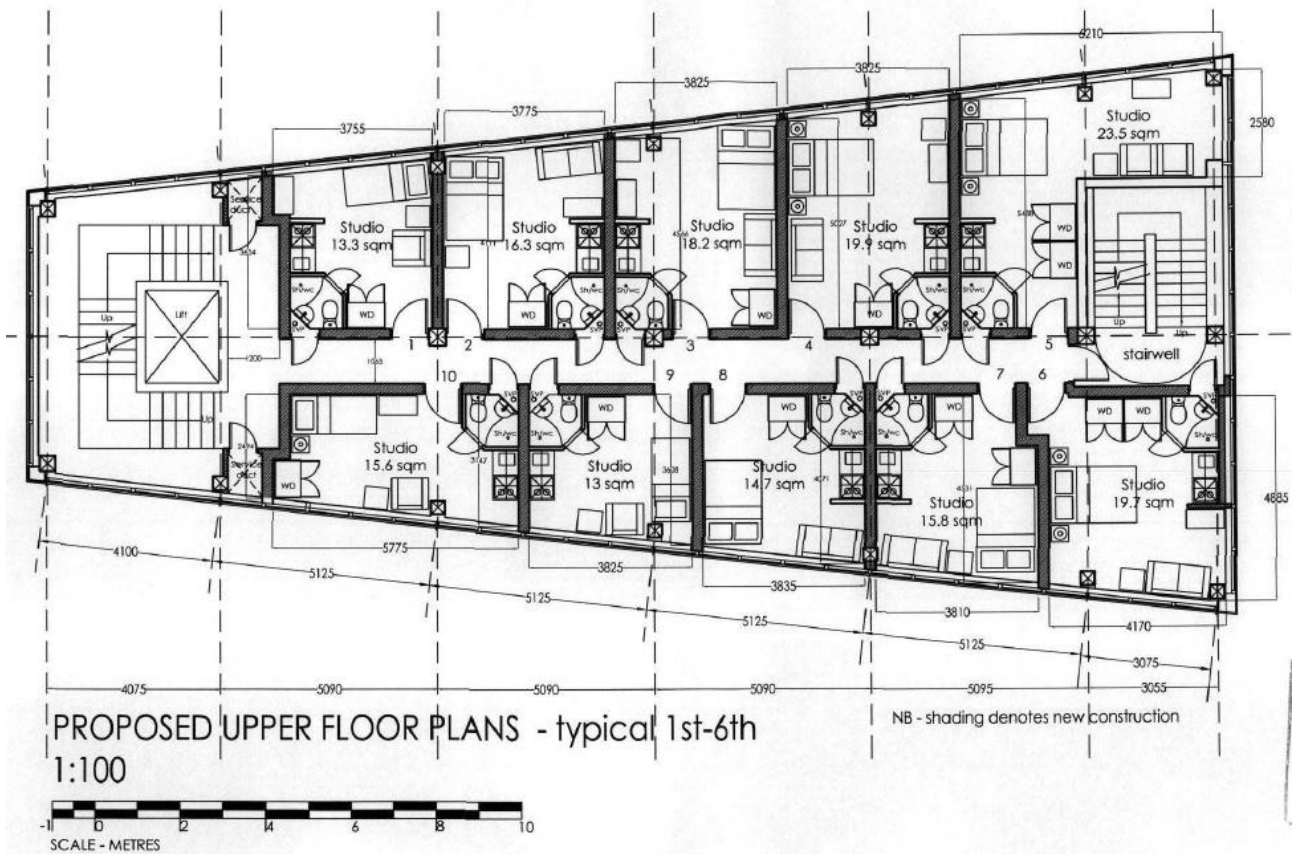
On our site visit, we noted that the flats are located on a busy main road in a mixed are which includes other residential as well as commercial uses. The general standards of maintenance of the building appeared to be low.

18. Newbury House, 890 Eastern Ave, Ilford, IG2 7HH

Overview

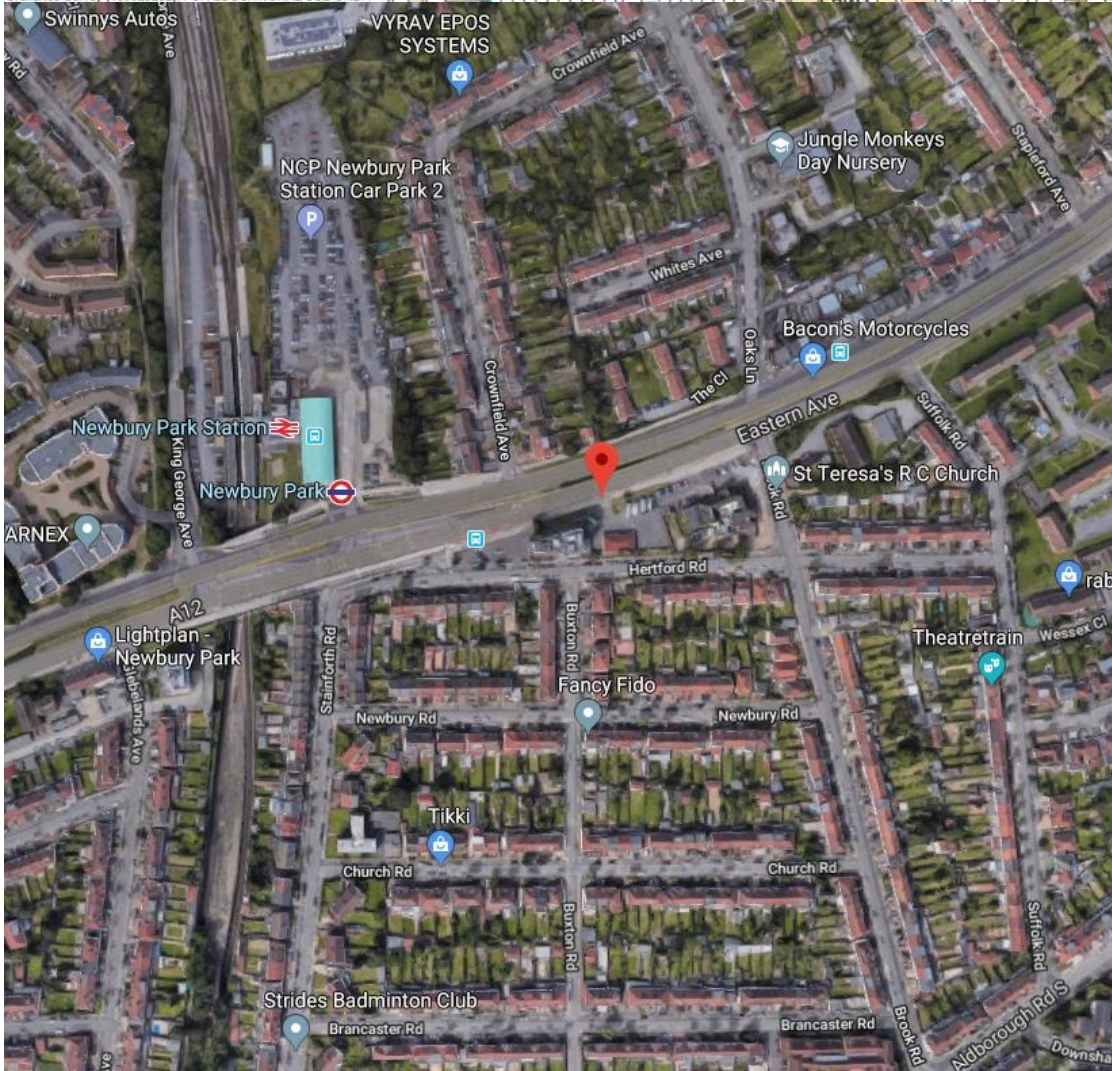
A prior notification was submitted in June 2014 to convert the building from office use to residential use, with the provision of 60 studio flats 'for the rental sector'. The building is entirely studio flats (100%) and none of these (0%) have any access to private or communal amenity space. All 60 studios (100%) are smaller than national space standards. There are 10 studio flats per floor and these range from just 13m² up to 25m², with the average being about 18m².

48 of the 60 flats (80%) are single aspect only. An example of the proposed floorplans is below.



There has previously been some national press attention in relation to this building (<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2018/aug/25/flats-block-converting-offices-living-space>) and local media coverage as well (<https://www.ilfordrecorder.co.uk/news/newbury-house-councillors-trade-blame-1-5670450>).

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is no public open space within 250m of the development, albeit there is a park within 500m.



Site visit



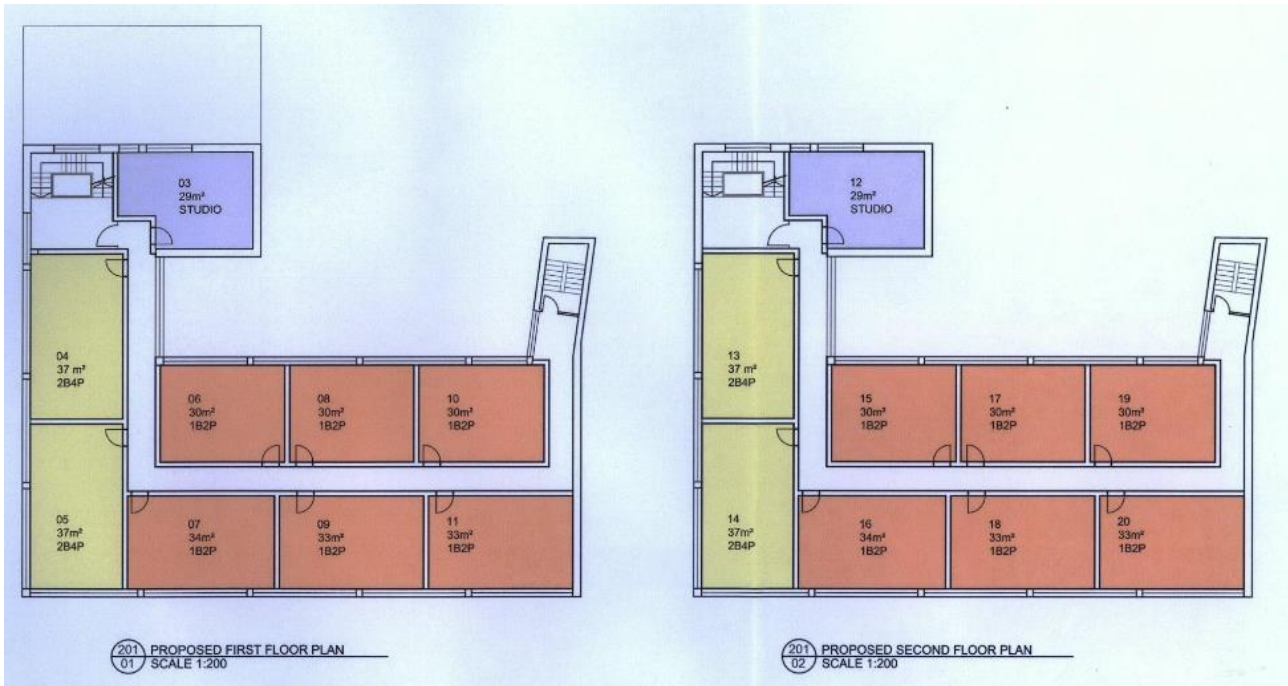
On our site visit, we noted that the conversion has been implemented and the building is now in residential use, albeit the absolute minimum has been done to convert the building from office to residential use. The building is in generally poor condition, particularly the windows. The area itself is mostly residential, and close to Newbury Park LU station. The block is immediately adjacent to a busy main road with no buffer between that road and the block.

19. Northdown House, 4 Station Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PT

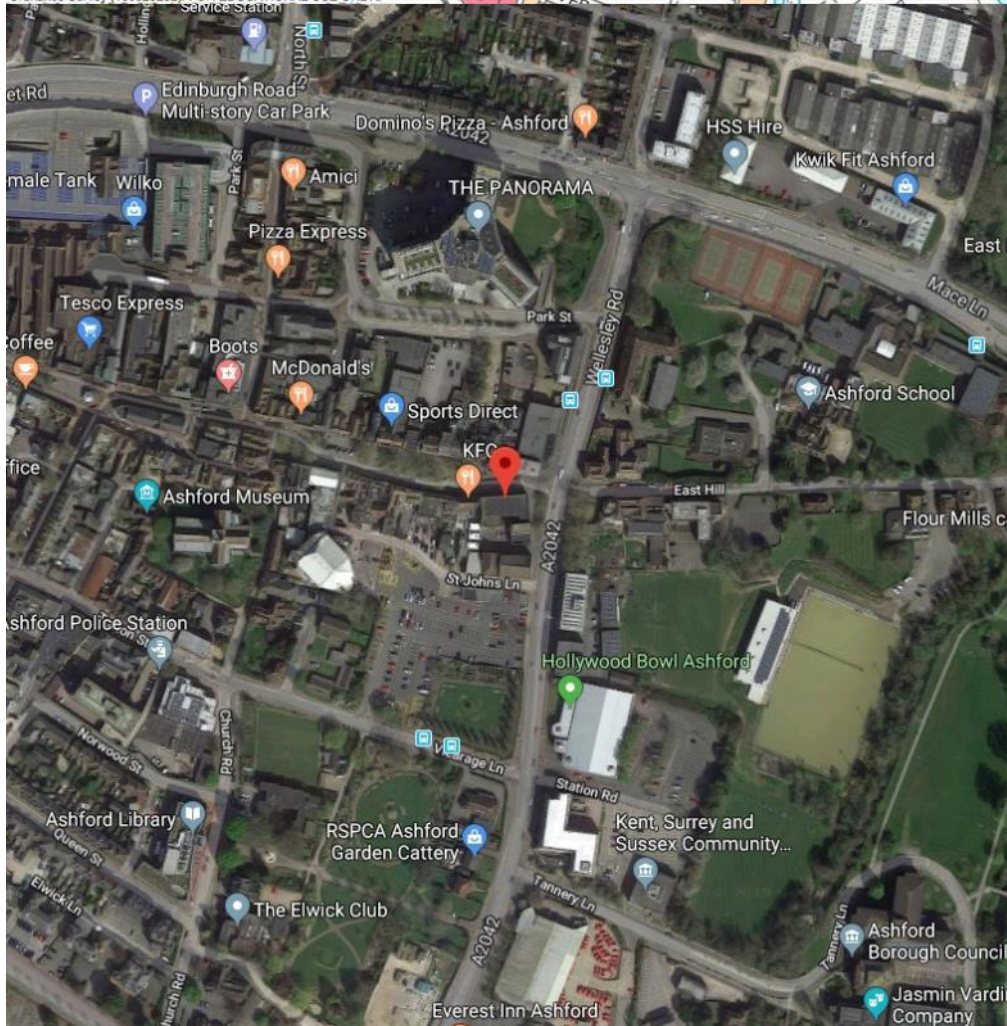
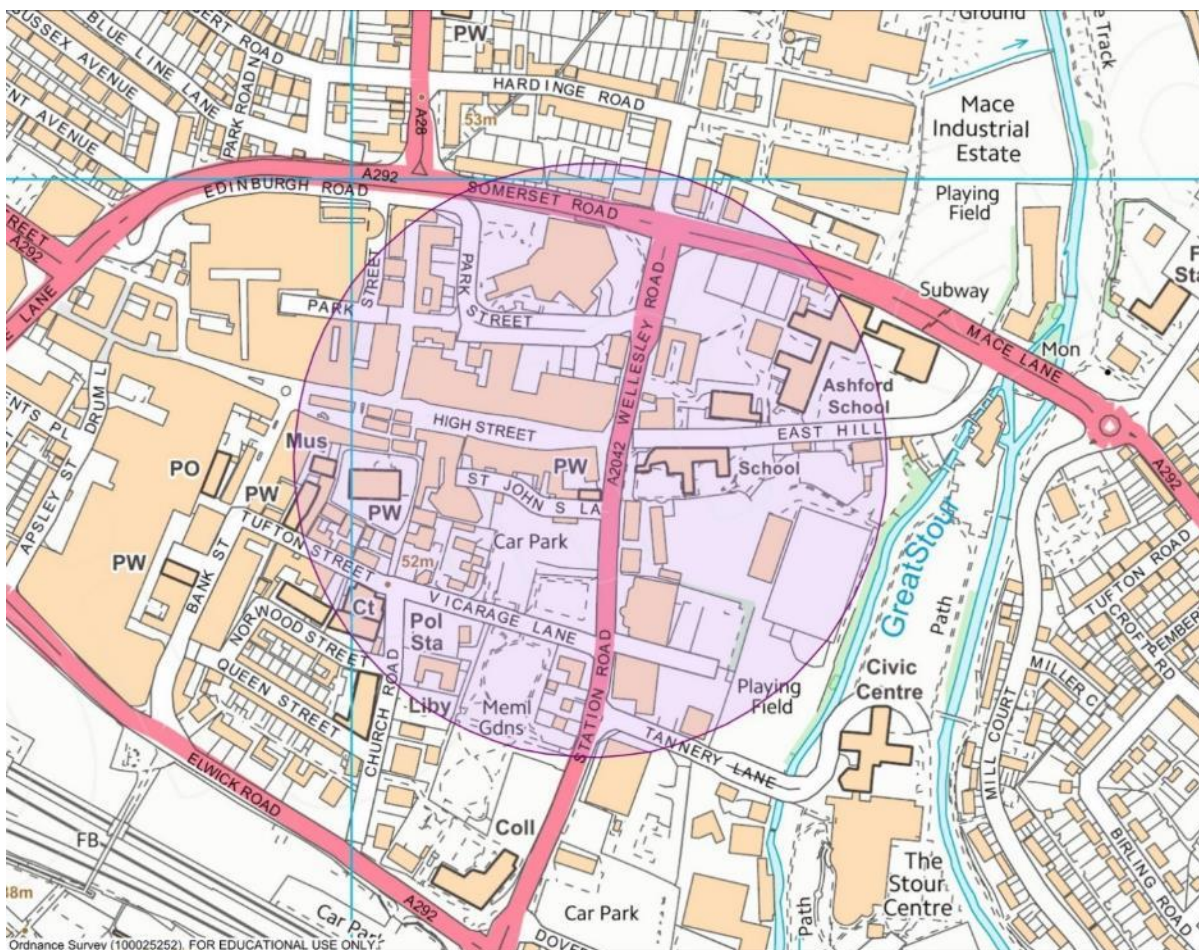
Overview

A prior notification was submitted September 2016 to convert to 20 flats. These comprise 15 studios and one beds out of 20 flats (75%: 2 studios and 13 one bedroom flats), with the other 5 being 2 bedroom flats. There is no private or communal amenity space proposed (so 0% of units would have access to amenity space). All 20 flats (100%) would be smaller than national space standards, with studio apartments being 29m², one bedroom apartments 30-34m² and two bedroom apartments 37m²-58m².

18 of the 20 flats (90%) would be single aspect only, according to the submitted proposed floorplans (below).



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is some public open space within 250m of the development, although this is a memorial garden and does not include children's play space per se.



Site visit



On our site visit we noted that the conversion dose not yet seem to have been implemented. The building is located in the centre of Ashford, in a primarily commercial area but with some residential use which could potentially provide a reasonable level of amenity.

20. Noma House, 71 St John's Road, Isleworth, TW7 6XQ

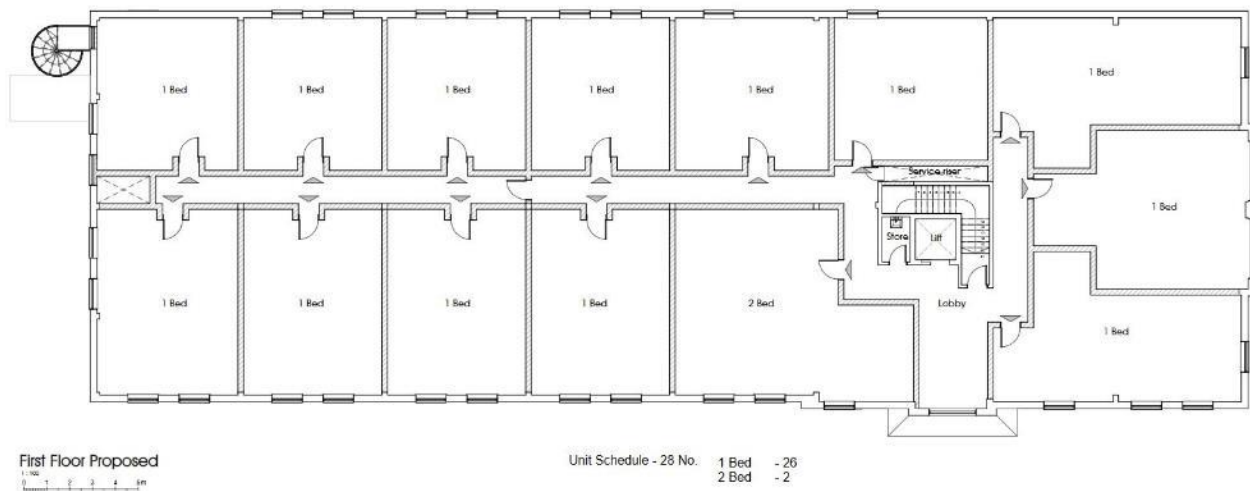
Overview

A prior notification was submitted in November 2016 to convert from office to residential use with the creation of 25 units. A revised prior notification was then submitted a few weeks later in November 2016 to convert to 28 units.

The 28 unit proposal comprises on the submitted plans, 26 x one bedroom units and two x two bedroom units. The marketing material for the development (http://www.frtdevelopments.co.uk/uploads/2019-03-07/162_frtnomabrov851705.pdf), however, have 22 x one bedroom units, four x two bedroom units and three x three bedroom units.

Judging by the marketing material, 22 of the 28 permitted development units (79%) are one bedroom units. None of the units (0%) have access to private amenity space, however as part of the planning application (below), communal amenity space has been provided in the form of 333m² of grass and planted space to the rear of the building.

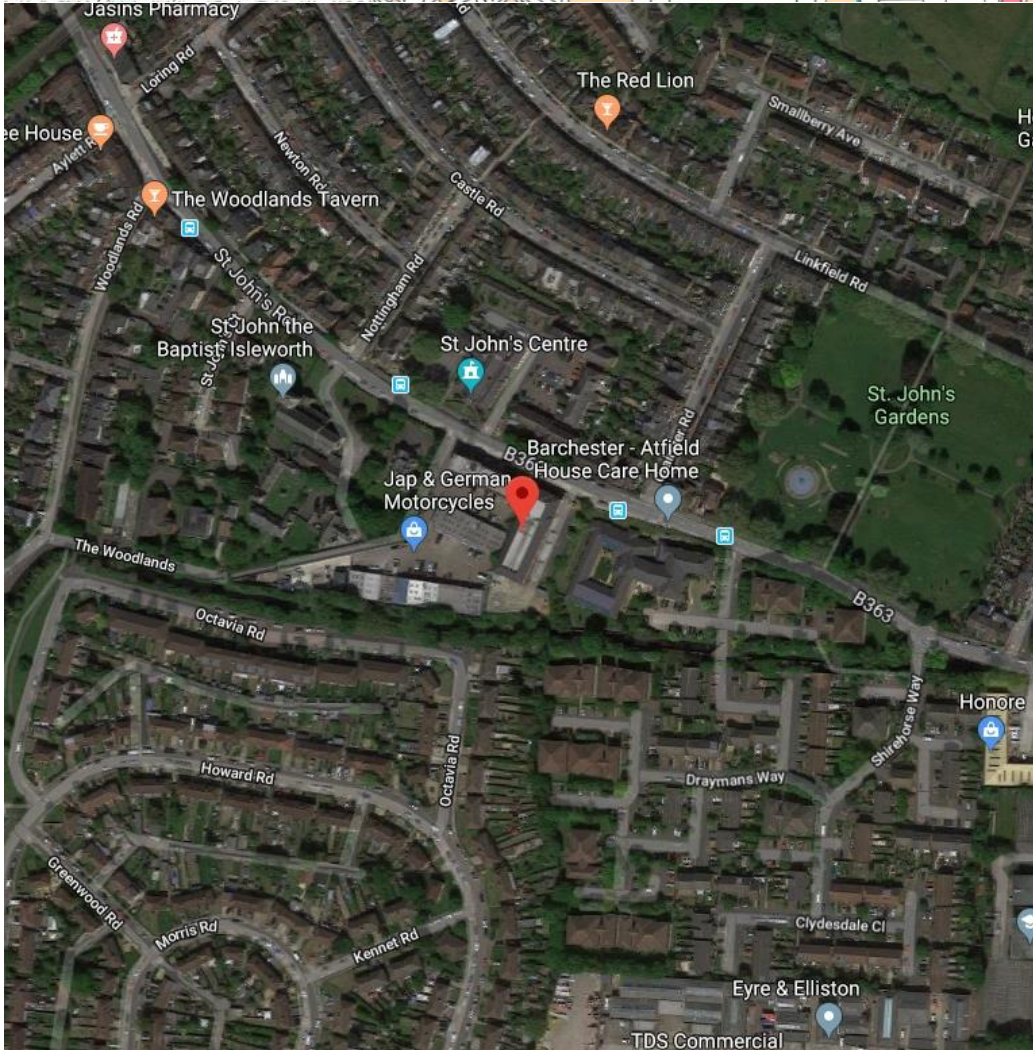
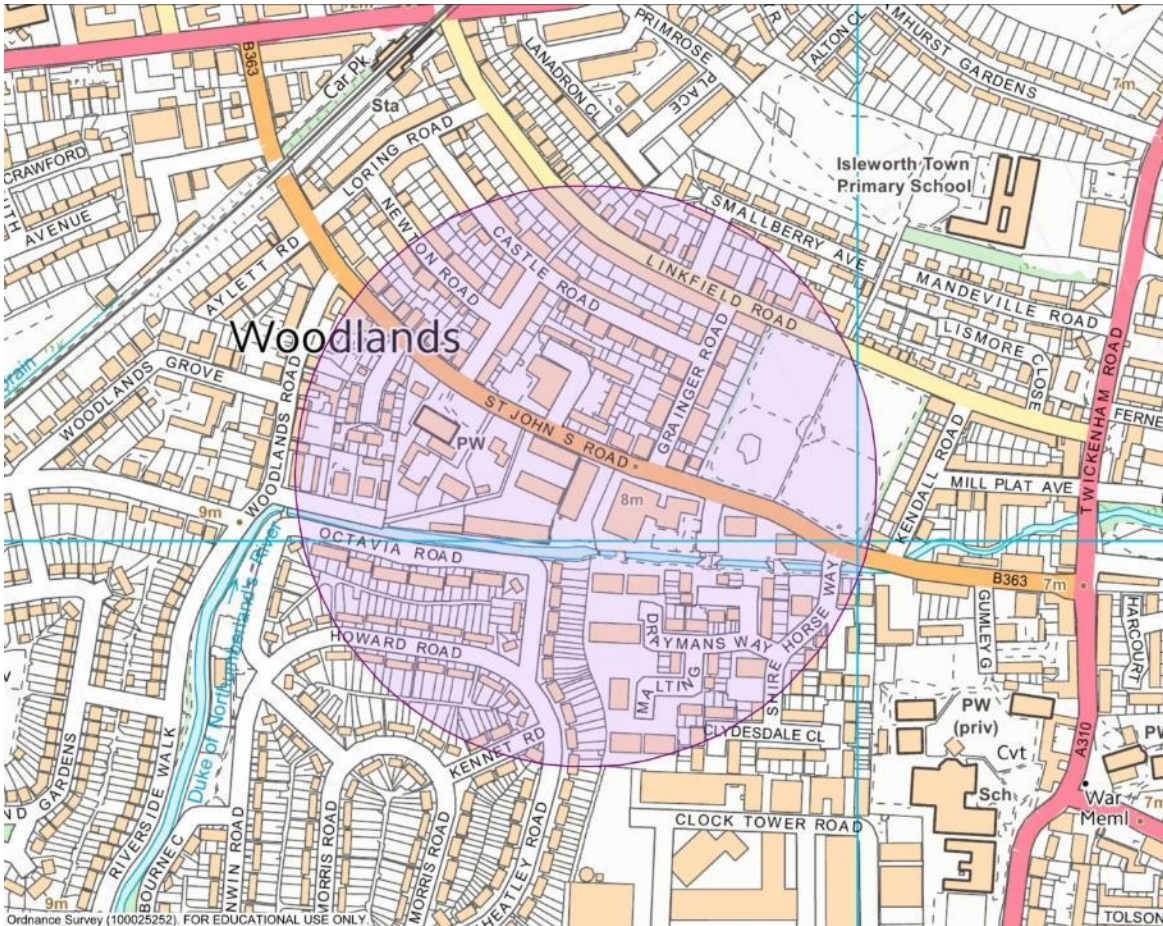
16 units (57%) are below national space standards, with one bedroom units generally around 47m². 23 units (82%) are single aspect only, with the other five being dual aspect. An extract of the proposed plans is below.



A planning application was submitted in February 2017 to reconfigure the roof area and create five additional units, but was refused permission on the basis of design and appearance as well as energy and sustainability issues. A second planning application was submitted in October 2017 and granted permission. This was for adding two storeys to the building to provide a further 23 flats with private and communal amenity space.

These 23 flats are apparently six x studios, nine x one bedroom, six x two bedroom and two x three bedroom (so 65% studio and one bedroom). None of the 23 (0%) are below national space standards and all of the units (100%) have access to private amenity space. Nine affordable units (five shared ownership and four affordable rent) have been provided on site through a S.106 agreement.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows there is open space within 250m of the development, and this includes a children's play area.



Site visit



On our site visit, we noted the building was under conversion to residential use and with the additional storeys being added. The building was on a suburban street in a mainly residential area but near some local shops and public transport. The area would appear to offer a high level of residential amenity.

21. Parkview, Great West Road, Brentford, TW8 9AZ

Overview

A prior notification was submitted in September 2016 to convert from office use to 213 residential units. This was refused on the basis of its high provision of car parking spaces and location with poor access to public transport, a poor pedestrian and cycling environment, and in an area of poor air quality would not promote or provide for travel by sustainable modes of transport. This was appealed and the Planning Inspectorate issued a decision allowing the appeal on 27 October 2017.

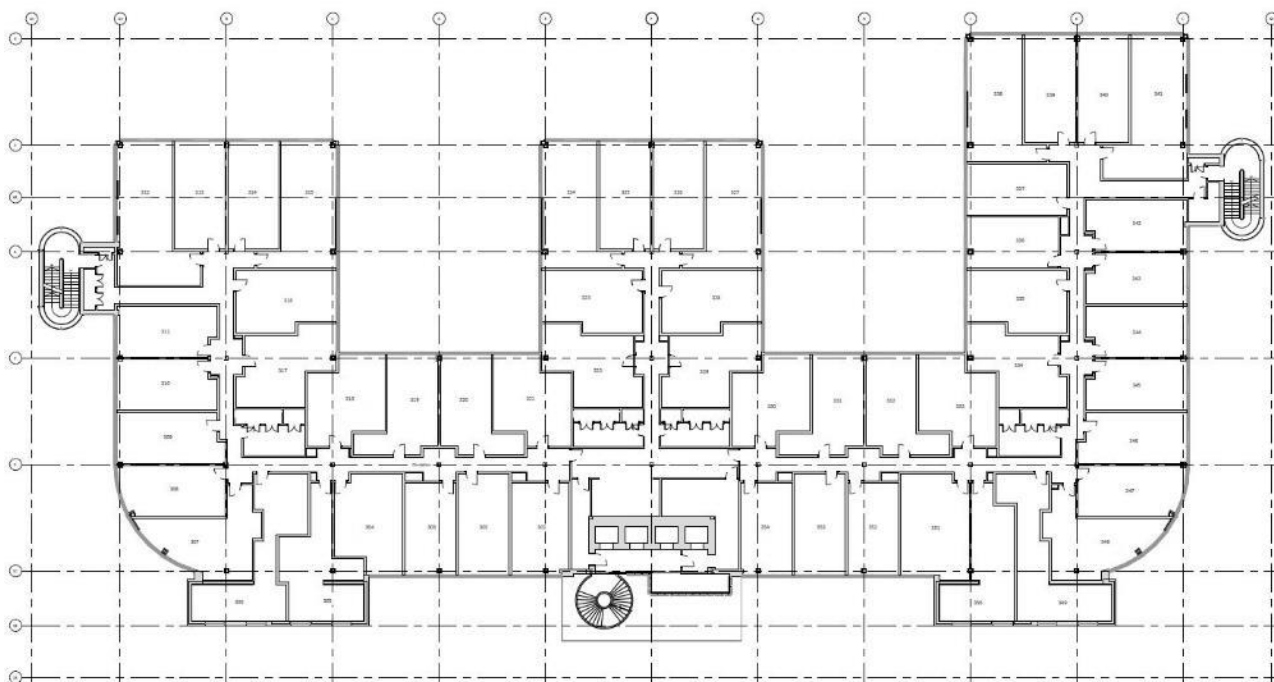
A second prior notification was submitted in February 2017 to convert to 171 residential units and was refused on the same basis as the September 2016 scheme, and was also appealed. This was allowed by the Planning Inspector on 27 October 2017.

A third prior notification was submitted in December 2017 to convert to 252 flats, as well as separate prior notifications to convert to 233 flats and 274 flats. All three were refused on the basis that there was now an Article 4 direction in place covering the site.

Three more prior notifications were then submitted in November 2018 for conversion to 233, 252 and 274 flats. These were allowed, subject to conditions, with the officer report noting that “The High Court has ruled (*Berkshire Assets (West London) Ltd, R (on the application of) v London Borough of Hounslow* 2018) that the Article 4 Direction does not apply to this site as it has an extant prior approval”.

Another prior notification submitted in February 2019 was for conversion to 288 flats, and allowed subject to conditions, and a further in March 2019 for conversion to 292 flats was also allowed subject to conditions.

It is not possible to tell from the prior approval documentation the mixture of units, although the marketing material (<https://apt-living.co.uk/locations/kew-bridge/>) suggests a mixture of studios, one bed and two bed units.



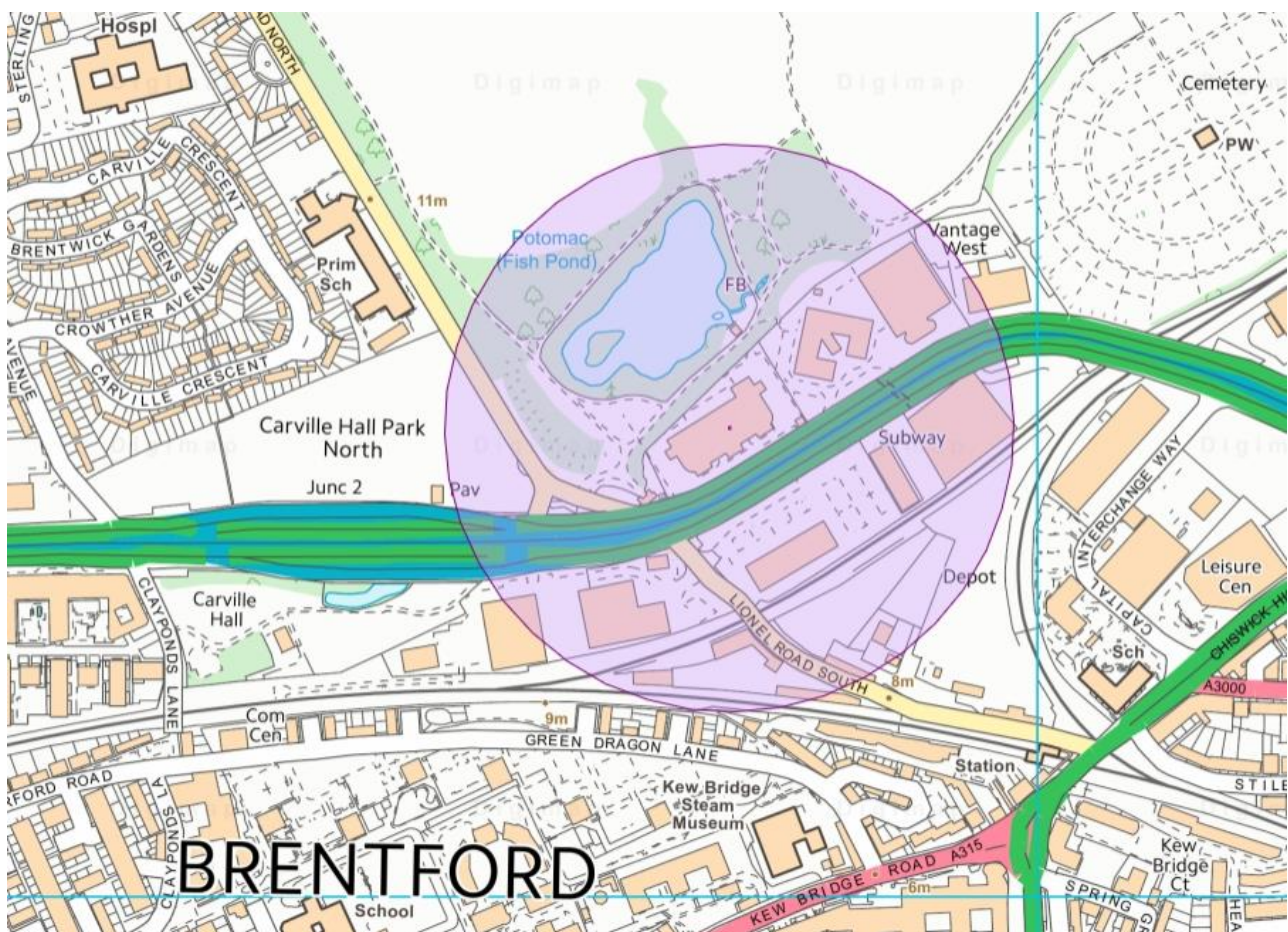
The floor plans suggest that none of the units (0%) have access to private amenity space, however the online marketing material suggests that communal amenity space has been provided including a roof terrace, lounge, gym and games too. Because the floorplans (an extract of which is above) do not indicate

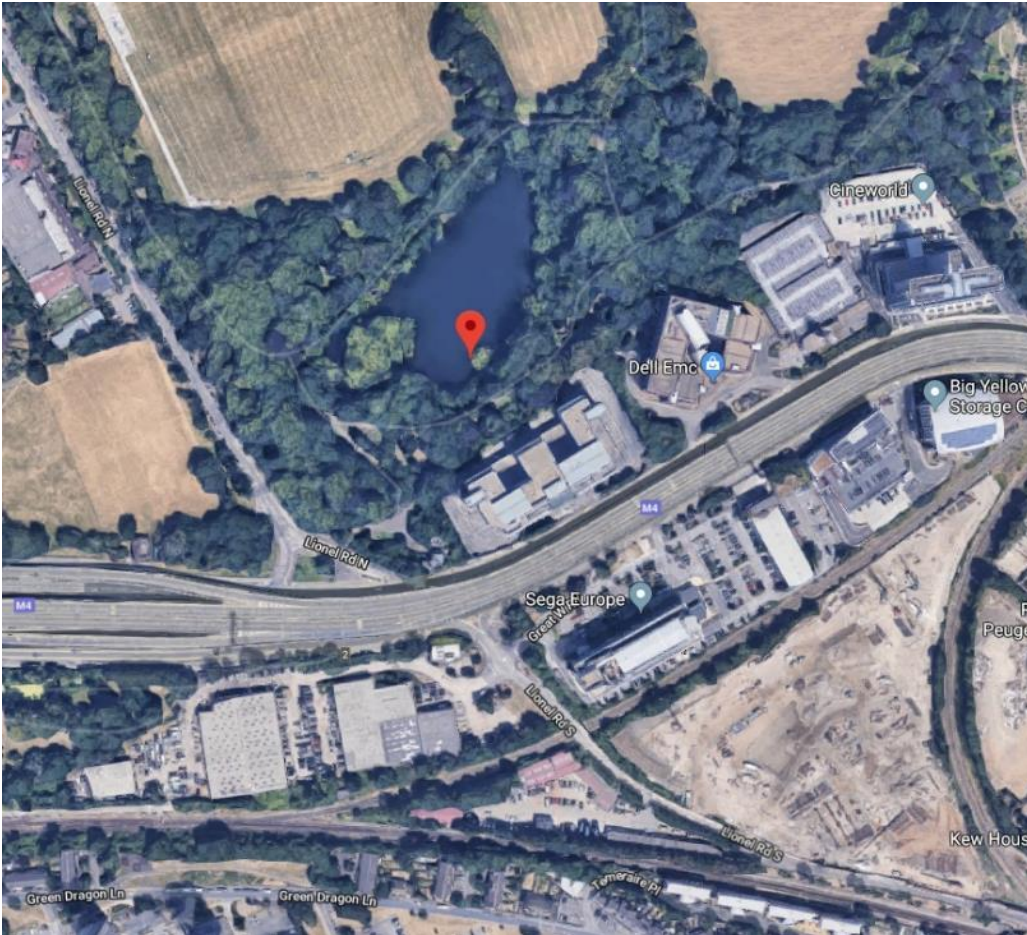
whether units are studio, one bed or two bed, an assessment of their compliance with national space standards cannot be made. It appears many flats are about 50m². A number of flats are strangely shaped.

The windows are not indicated on the plans, so a definite assessment as to how many are dual aspect cannot be made, however assuming those on the corner have dual aspect, then 262 units (90%) would be single aspect only. 68 of the flats (23%) appear to only have windows facing the two indented areas on the rear of the building, so are likely to have less daylight and a high degree of overlooking from other flats.

A planning application was submitted in August 2018 to make external alterations including changes to windows, cladding and doors.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery. This shows that there is a large green open space immediately adjacent to the building on one side, but on the other side is a motorway and light industrial / large commercial units, giving a somewhat mixed picture in terms of residential amenity.





Site visit



On our site visit, we noted the building was under conversion to residential use. At the rear of the building is a large park, but at the front it is immediately adjacent to the busy, elevated M4 motorway. The immediate area is primarily commercial and light industrial units, with a few local shops a 10 minute walk away by Kew Bridge rail station. The area does not seem to offer a high level of liveability or amenity.

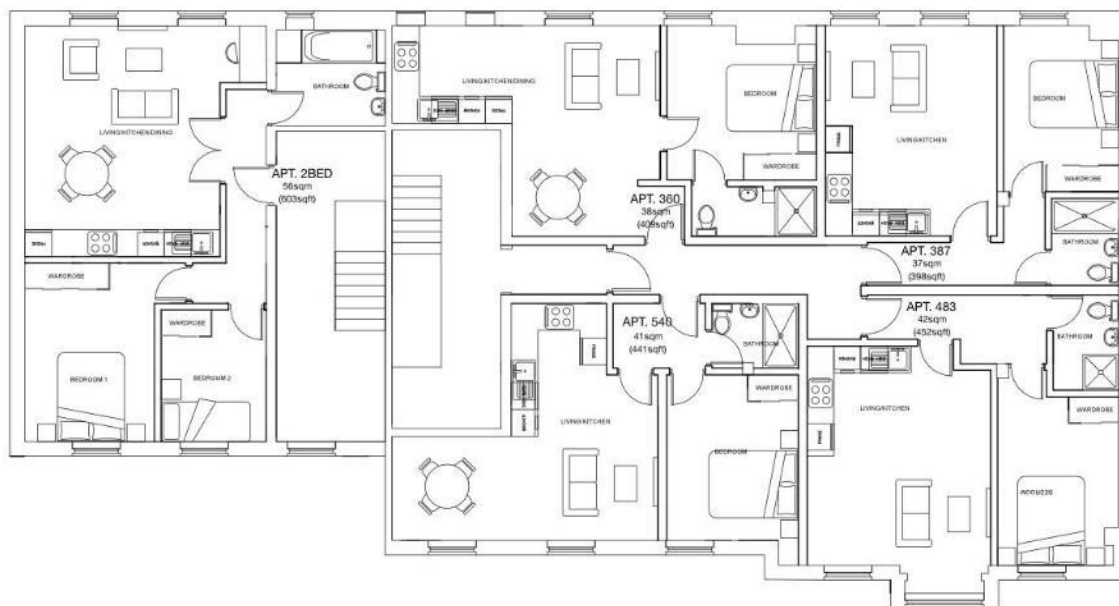
22. Rye House, 15-17 North Street, Ashford, TN24 8LF

Overview

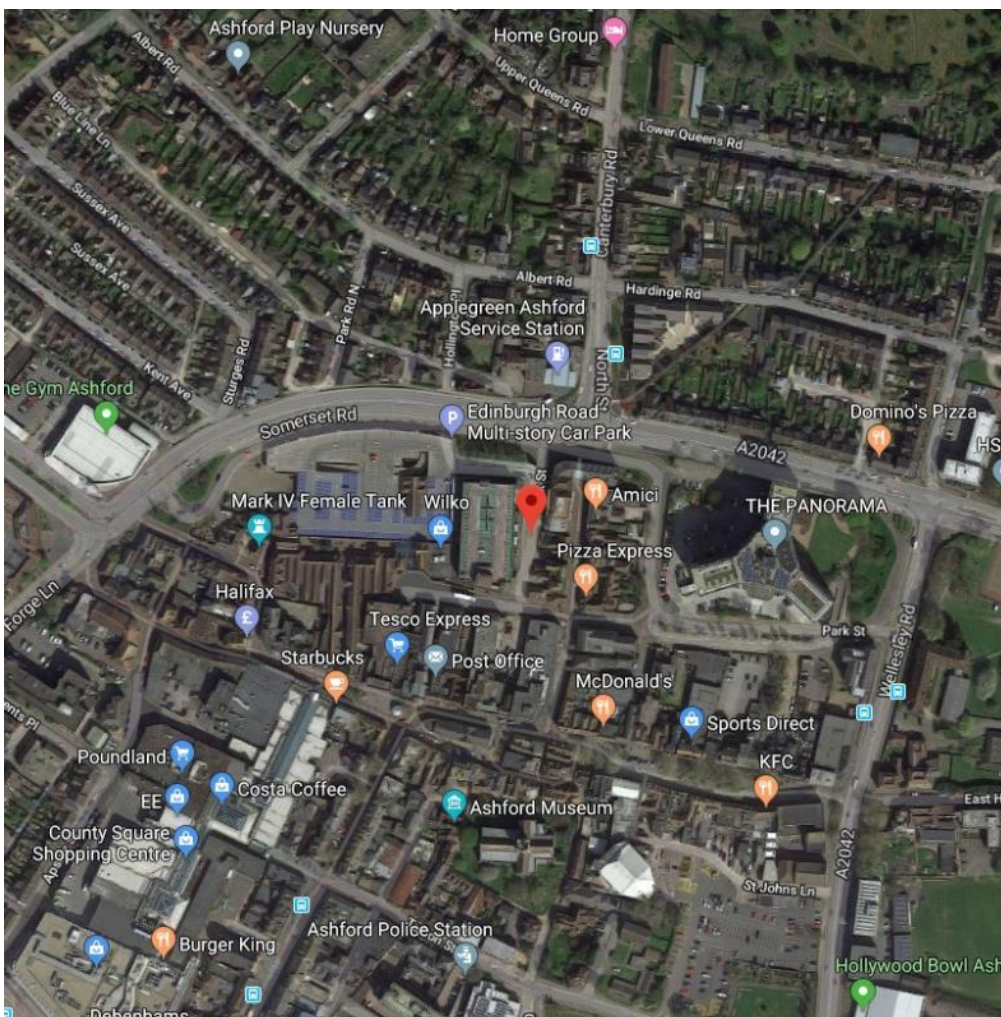
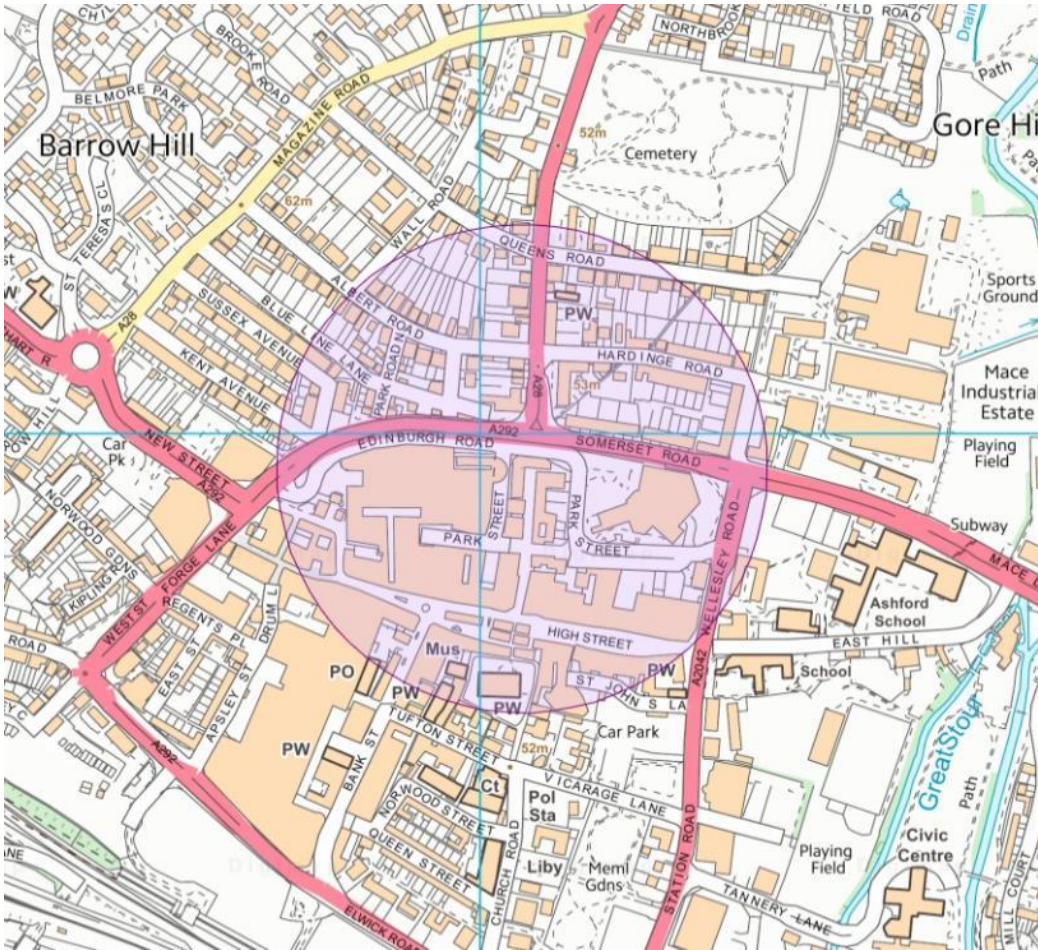
A prior notification was submitted in September 2016 to convert the office building into 14 flats, comprising 12 x one bedroom and 2 x two bedroom units. An additional prior notification was submitted in January 2017 to convert part of the ground floor of 15 North Street into an additional two bedroom flat.

Thirteen of the fifteen flats (87%) are smaller than national space standards, with the one bedroom flats generally 34-42m² each. Twelve of the flats (80%) are studios or one bedroom units, with 12 x one bedroom flats and 3 x two bedroom flats overall. None of the units (0%) appear to have access to private amenity space, nor is any communal amenity space or play space provided. Twelve of the flats (80%) are single aspect only, with the three two bedroom flats all being dual aspect.

An extract from the submitted plans is below.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, below. This shows there is no green or public open space within 250m of the building, but there is some (including two parks) within 500m.



Site visit



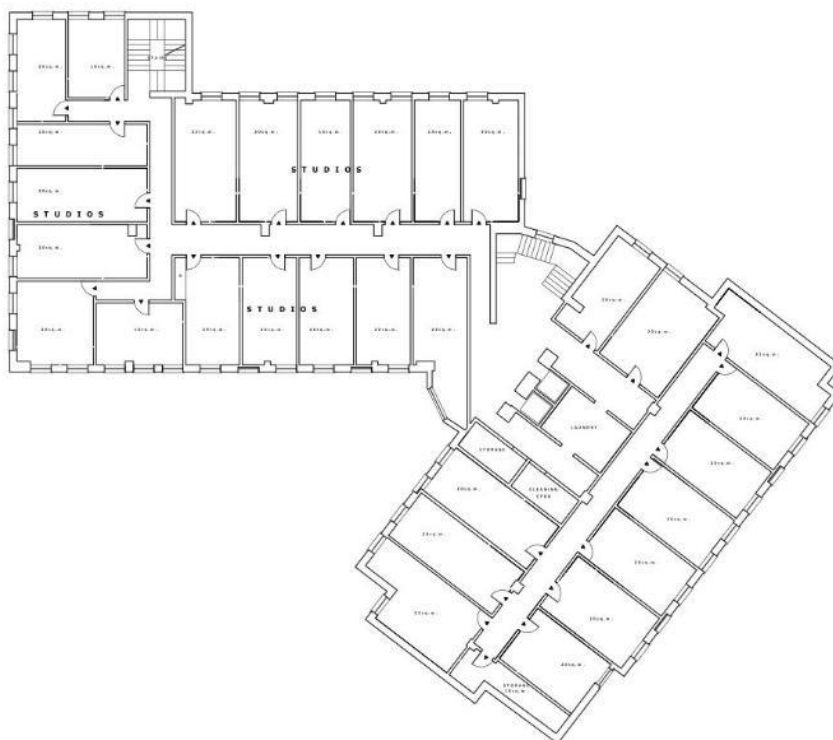
On our site visit, we noted that the conversion had been implemented, with 12 flats accessed in 15 North Street and three through a separate door for 15 North Street. The immediate neighbourhood comprised a mixture of residential and commercial uses, accessible to the services of Ashford town centre.

23. Sovereign Court, 15-21 Staines Road, Hounslow TW3 3HA (TW3 3HR)

Overview

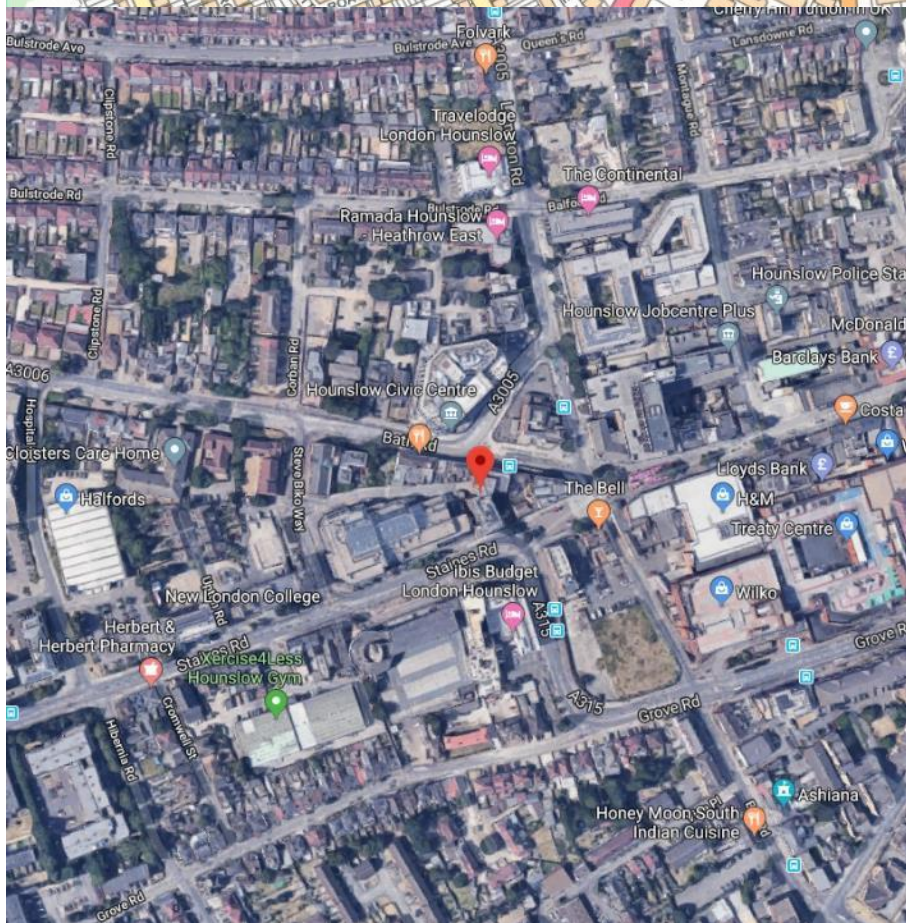
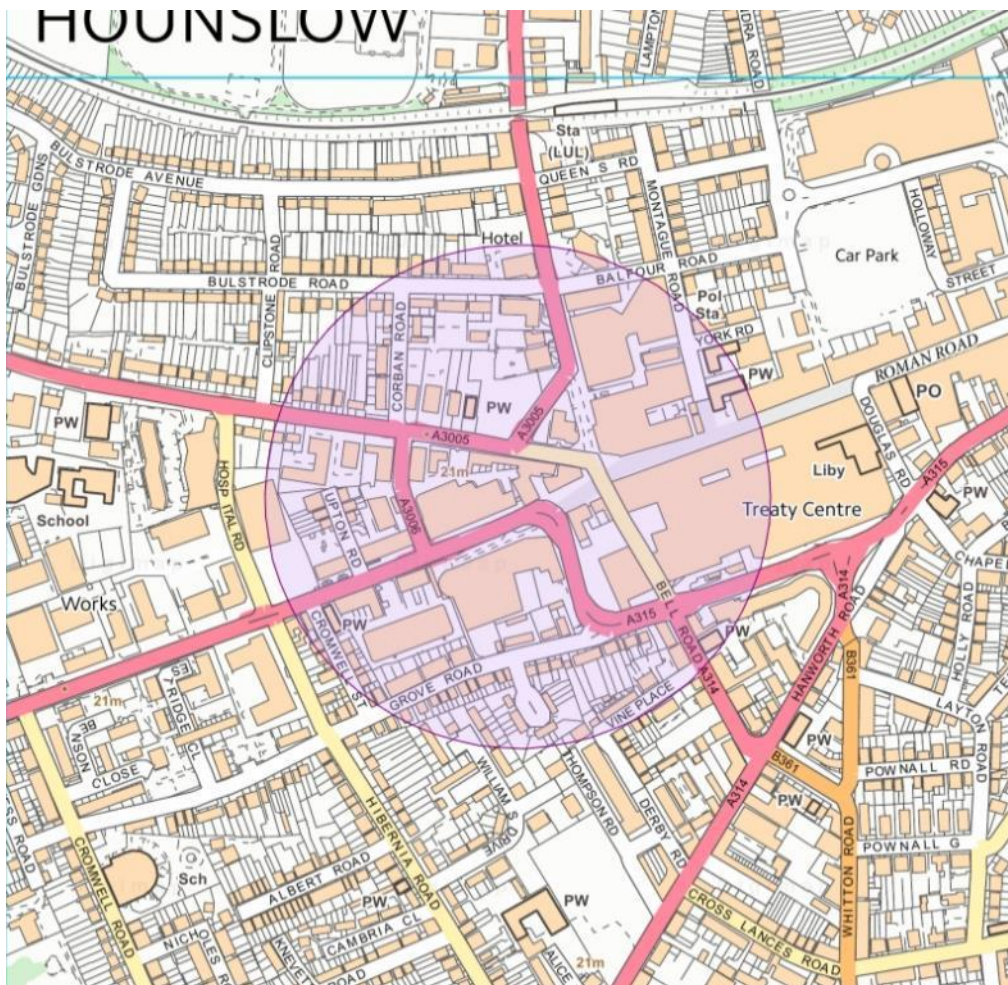
A prior notification was submitted in July 2014 to convert from office use to 41 residential units, which was granted. A second prior notification was submitted in September 2014 to convert the first, second and third floors to 63 residential units and in parallel, a third one to allow the same area to be converted to 80 residential units. These were both refused by the council. The 80 unit scheme was refused by the Council on the basis that the units were too small (at 18-22m²) to be considered 'dwellinghouses'. The appeal was allowed in April 2015, with the Inspector noting that *'Each of the residential units in the proposed development would be entirely self-contained... Each residential unit would also be fitted with a raising bed system, whereby the bed is mechanically raised to ceiling level on guide rails when not in use to provide the living space. At the time of my site inspection, one of the rooms in the building was fully fitted out with these space-saving features. Although I did not observe the raising bed in operation, it was evident to me that the operation of the bed was by a straightforward 'push-button' control and I do not accept the Council's contention that this arrangement would be impractical or contrived'*. The 63 unit scheme was similarly allowed in June 2015. A fourth prior notification was submitted in August 2015 to convert the ground and part of the second floor to provide an additional 34 residential units.

Combining the second and fourth prior approvals suggests conversion to 114 units in total. All 114 units (100%) are smaller than national space standards, with the studio flats 18-24m² each. All 114 units (100%) are studio flats. 102 units (89%) appear to be single aspect only, with the other 12 being dual aspect. An extract from the submitted plans is below.



No units (0%) appear to have access to any private amenity space, nor is any place space provided in the application. However, a planning application was submitted in September 2015 (and approved) to add a fourth floor extension to the building and provide a communal area for residents, including a lounge and indoor garden area.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, also below. This shows there is no green or public open space within 250m of the building or indeed within 500m.



Site visit



On our site visit, we noted that the conversion appeared to have been implemented, although it was impossible to tell the number of units from the gated entrance. The building was in a primarily commercial area, accessible to numerous services and public transport.

24. Trinity Square, 23-59 Staines Road, Hounslow TW3 3HL

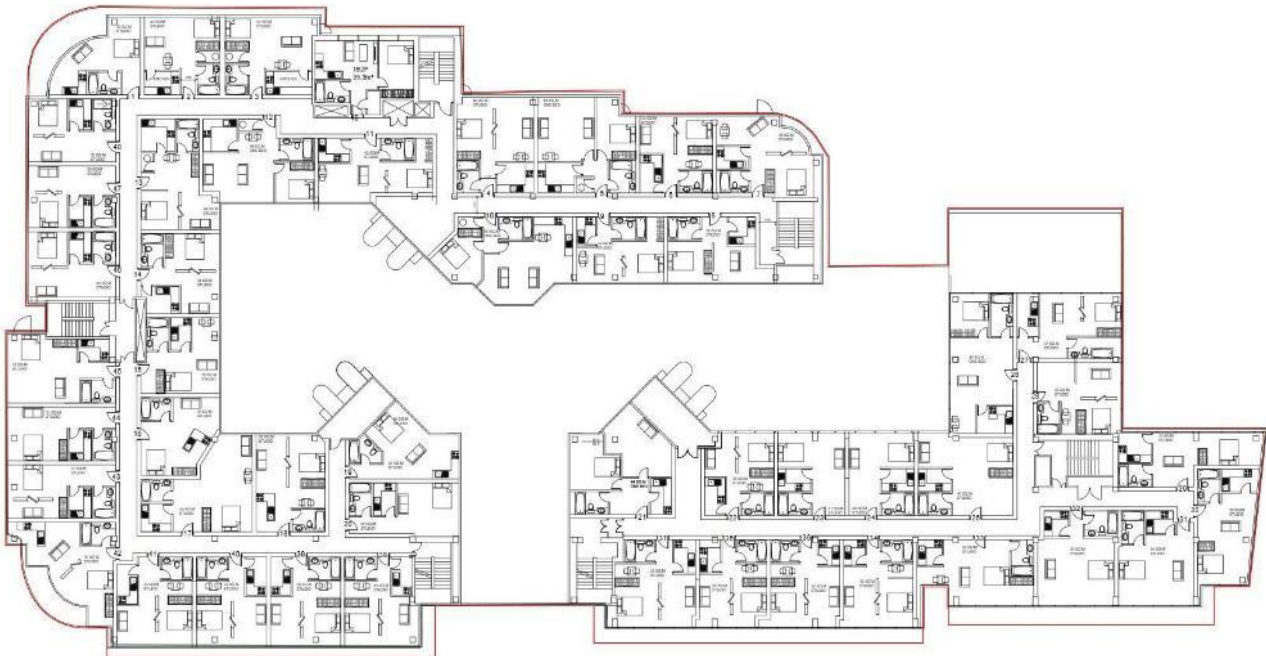
Overview

A prior notification was submitted in July 2016 to convert this office building into 232 residential units. This prior approval was granted.

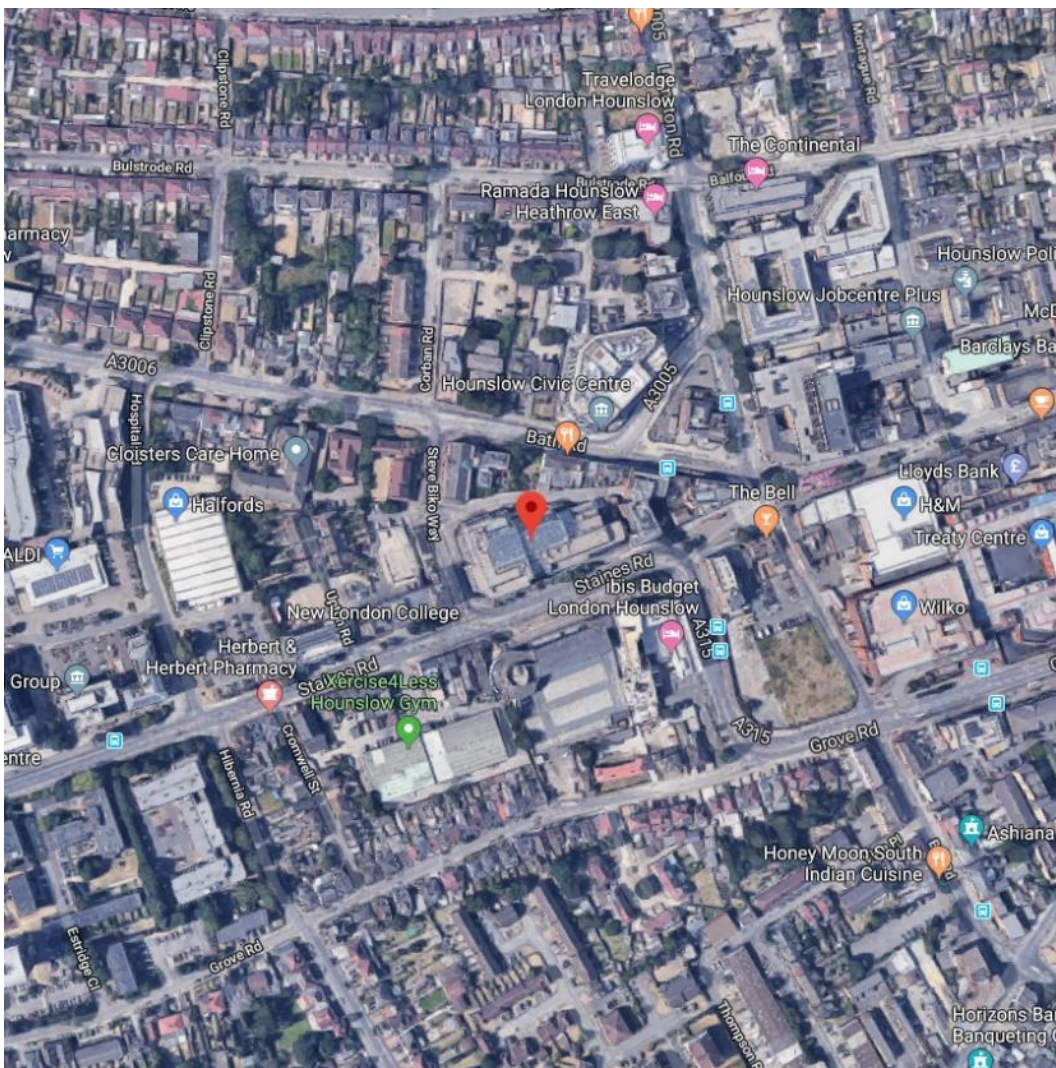
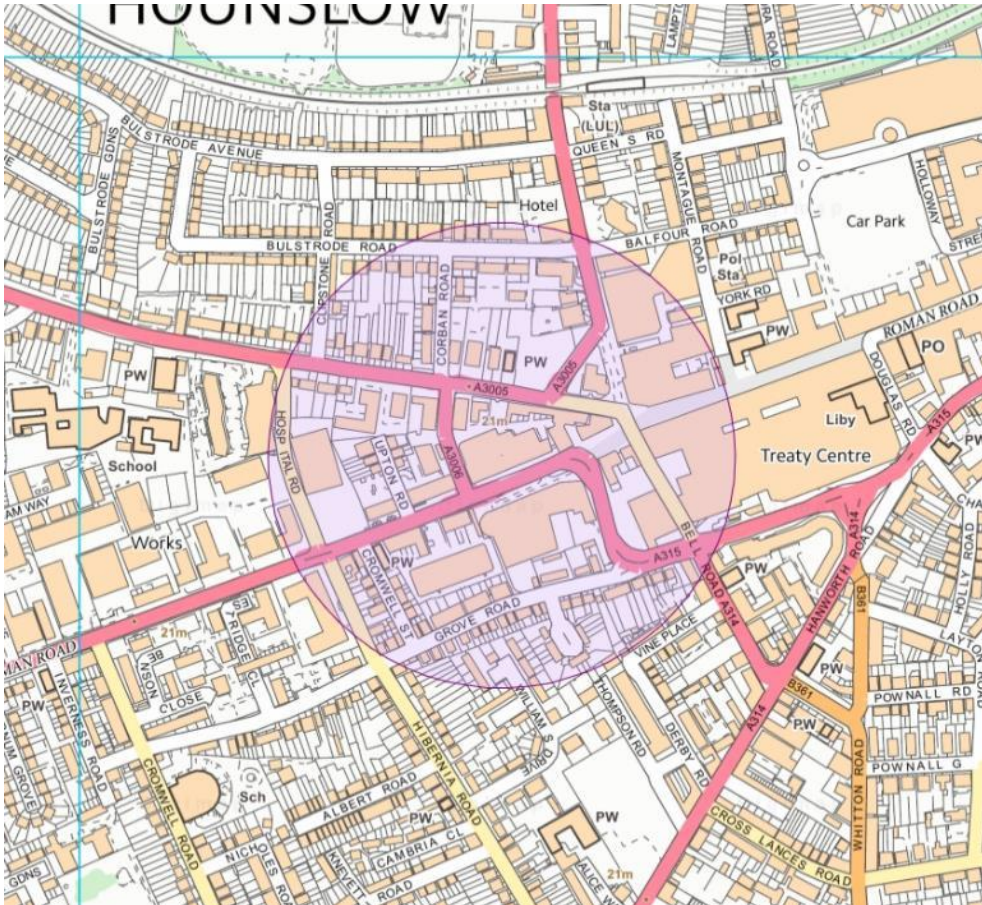
212 of the units (91%) appear to be smaller than national space standards, with studio flats generally about 30-34m². All 232 units (100%) are studios or one bedroom, comprising 206 studios and 26 one bedroom apartments. None of the units (0%) appear to have access to private amenity space. There is a glazed interior atrium area, and the use of this on the ground floor is not clear from plans, but it may be some communal amenity space.

From the plans, it appears that 215 of the units (93%) are single aspect only, with the other 17 being dual aspect. Additionally, it appears that 59 of the units (25%) only have windows facing into the internal atrium area. This is likely to involve some degree of overlooking in some cases, and minimal natural daylight in many of the flats.

An extract from the submitted plans for the prior approval is below.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, also below. This shows there is no green or public open space within 250m of the building or indeed within 500m.



Site visit



On our site visit we noted that the building had been converted into residential use and was occupied. It still very much had the look and feel of an office building. The location was primarily commercial, with easy access to shops, services and public transport, but little green space.

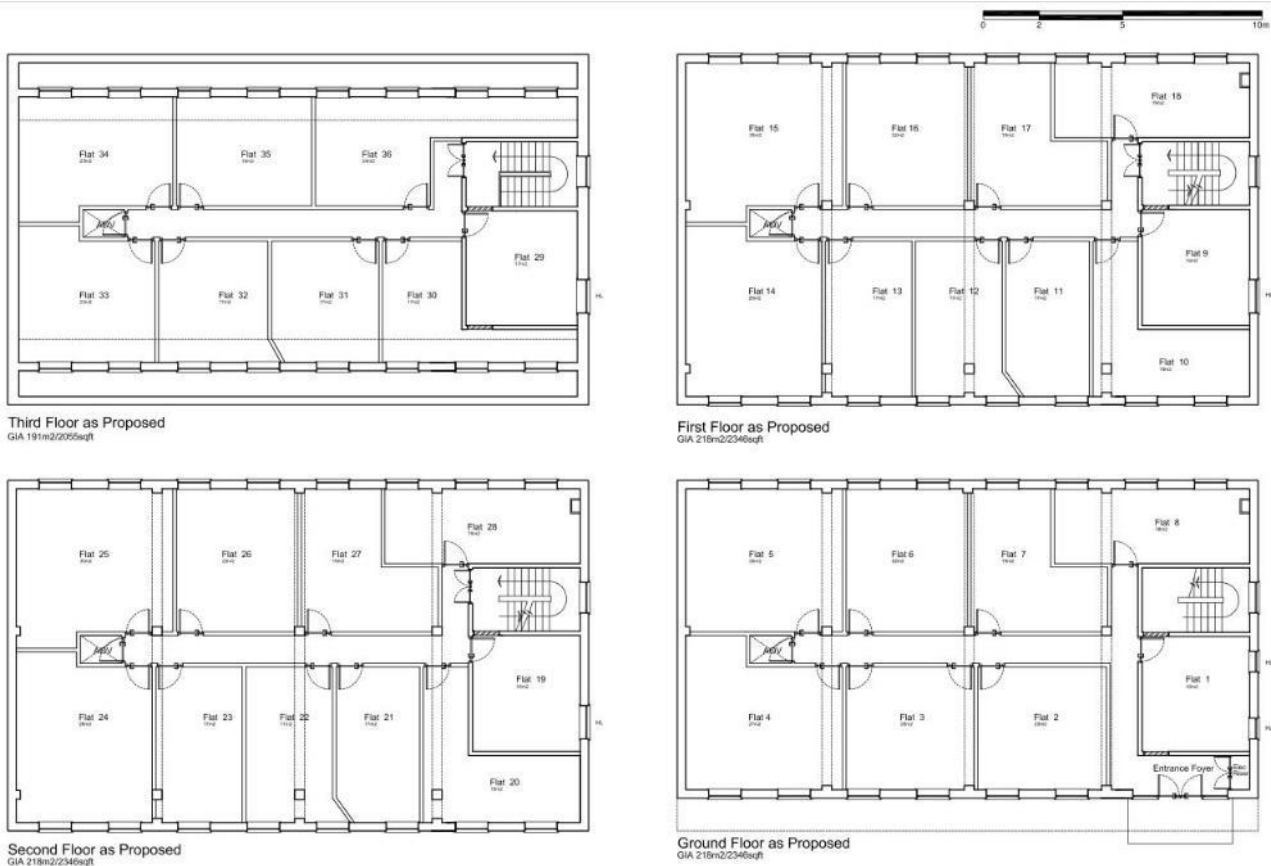
25. Tufton House, Tufton Street, Ashford, TN23 1QN

Overview

A prior notification was submitted in November 2016 to convert to 19 units. A second prior notification then followed in January 2017 to convert to 36 residential units. The plans submitted do not actually specify if the flats are one bedroom or not, but they appear to all be studio flats.

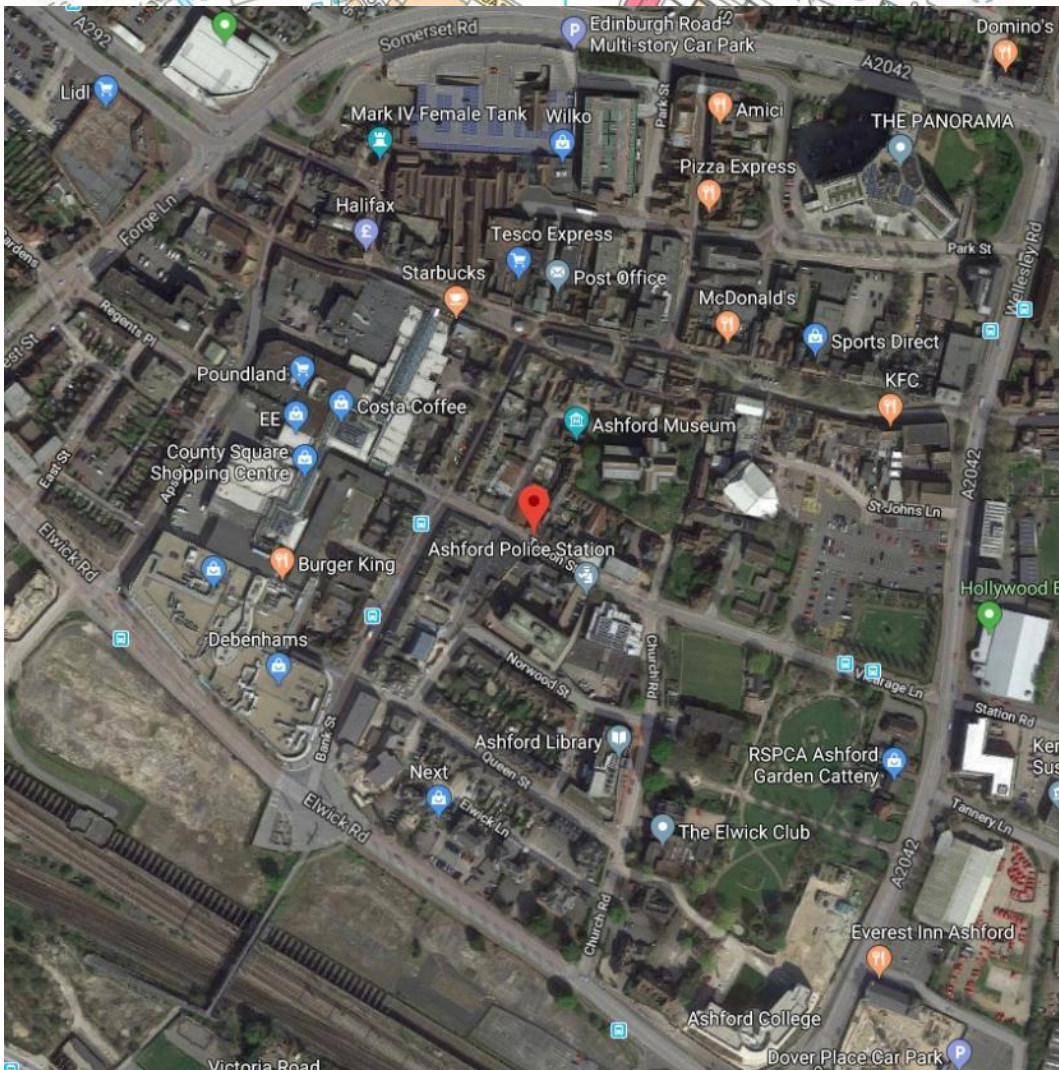
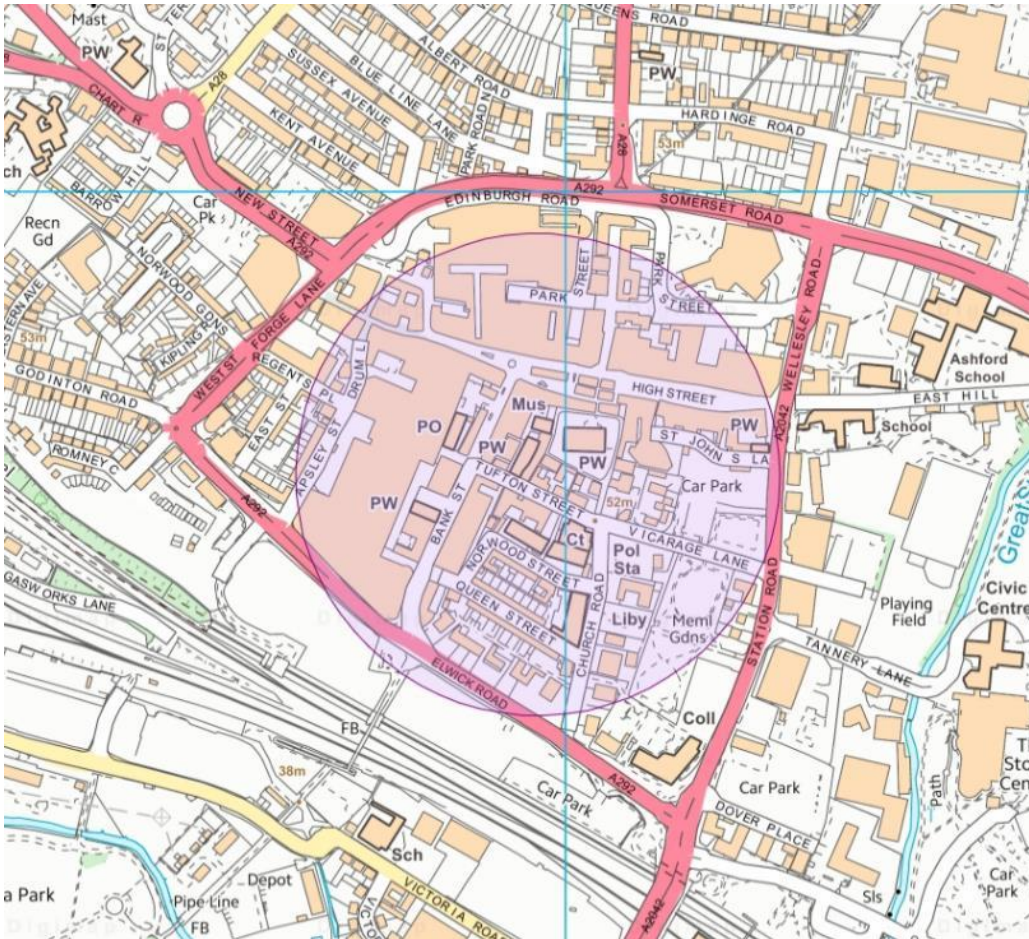
All 36 flats (100%) are smaller than national space standards, even if they are studio flats, with unit sizes ranging from 16-30m². All 36 units (100%) would appear to be studios. None of the units (0%) appear to have any access to any private amenity space, nor is any communal amenity space provided. All of the units (100%) appear to be single aspect only in terms of the arrangement of their windows.

An extract of the submitted plans is shown below.



A planning application was submitted in December 2016 to make external alterations to the building including removal of canopy, replacement windows and door and a further planning application was submitted in October 2017 to replace windows and provide a covered bin are and new railings.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, below. This shows there is some public green open space within 250m of the building.



Site visit



On our site visit we noted that the conversion had been implemented and there were indeed 36 residential units in the building. The windows did not appear to have been replaced. The building was located in town centre of Ashford, close to services and shops.

26. Utell House, 2 Kew Bridge Road, Brentford, TW8 0JF

Overview

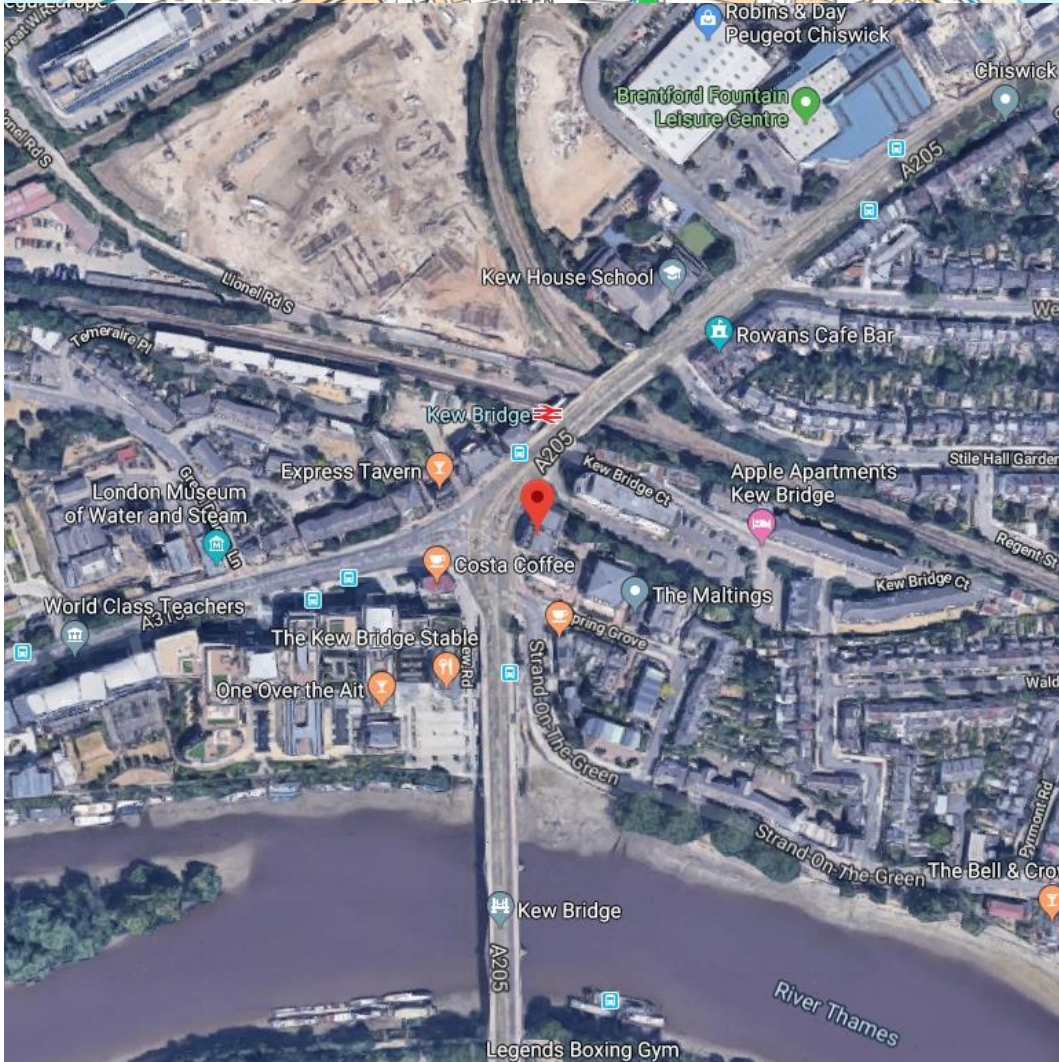
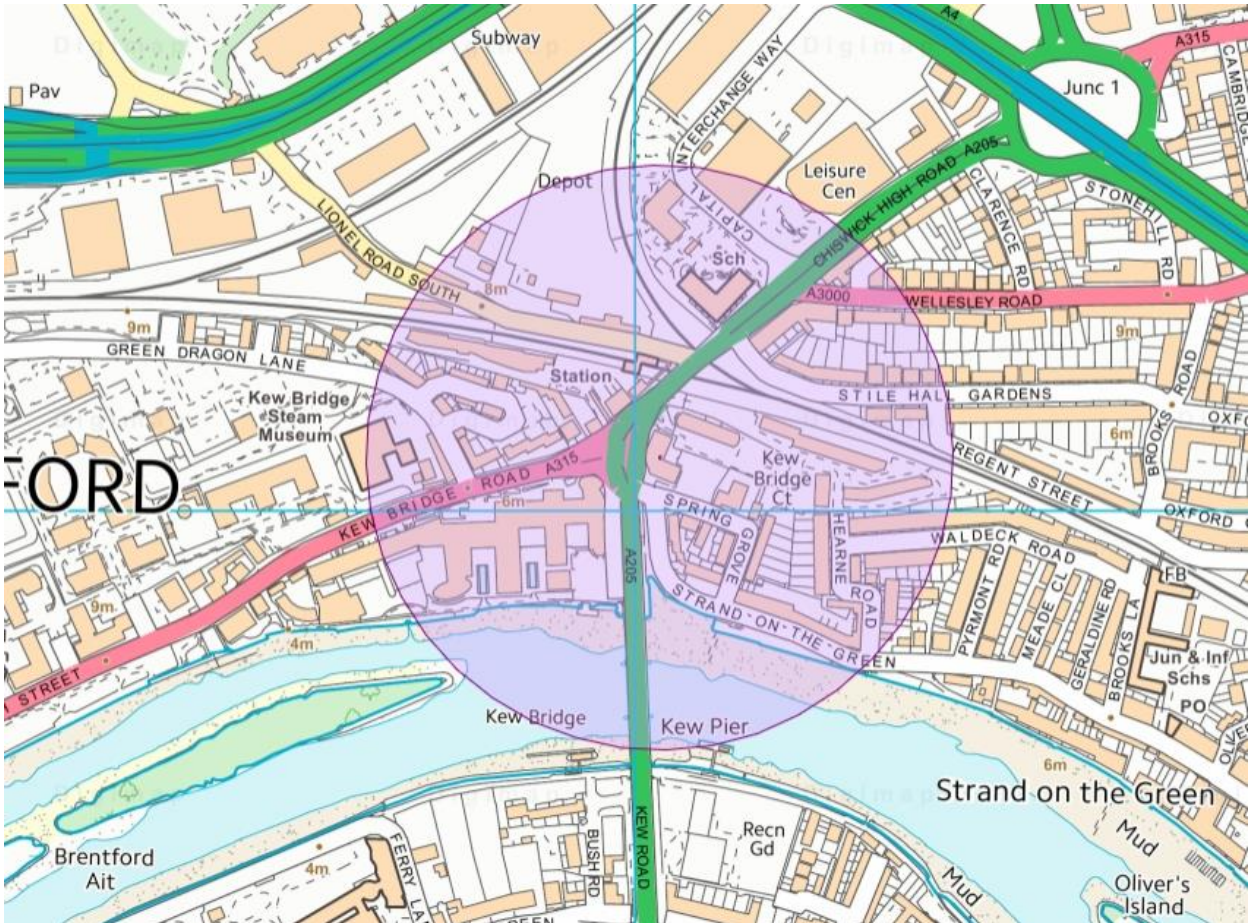
A prior notification was submitted in June 2013 to convert from office to residential use, with 31 units. Another prior notification was then submitted in July 2014 for an additional flat in the basement. The total scheme comprises, permitted through PD, 18 (56%) studio or one bedroom apartments with no studios, 18 one bedroom flats, 13 two bedroom flats and one three bedroom flats. 29 of the units (91%) meet national space standards, with most one bedroom flats about 50m² and two beds about 70m² (the three not meeting the standard are 48m² two bedroom flats). Two units appear to have access to private balcony space and three to private garden space (five units or 16%) but all 32 units (100%) appear to have access to communal amenity space with a shared garden space. 17 of the units (53%) appear to be dual aspect, with the rest single aspect.

An extract from the submitted plans is below.



A planning application was submitted in November 2013 for a roof extension for 3 additional one bedroom flats. Three February 2014 planning applications concerned a single storey rear extension to the building, and to replace windows and doors. A June 2014 application was to make minor alterations to the roof to accommodate a lift. An August 2014 application was to install a window to the basement. A November 2014 application for a roof terrace. A January 2015 application concerned lighting and landscaping. A March 2015 application concerned roof extensions.

The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, also below. This shows there is no green or public open space within 250m of the building, but there is some within 500m.



Site visit



On our site visit, we noted the conversion has been implemented. Although on a busy main road, it is in an area close to shops and in a mixed commercial and residential area, close to the river and rail station. This appears a fairly desirable residential location.

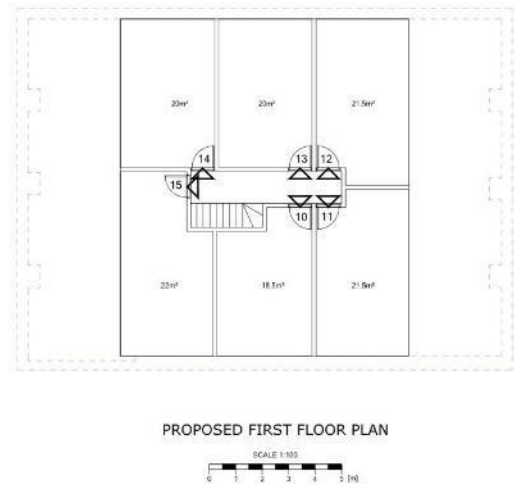
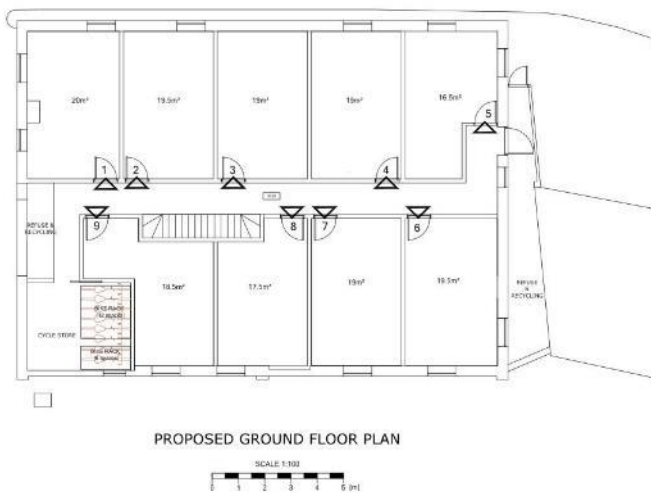
27. Wellstones, Watford, WD17 2AE

Overview

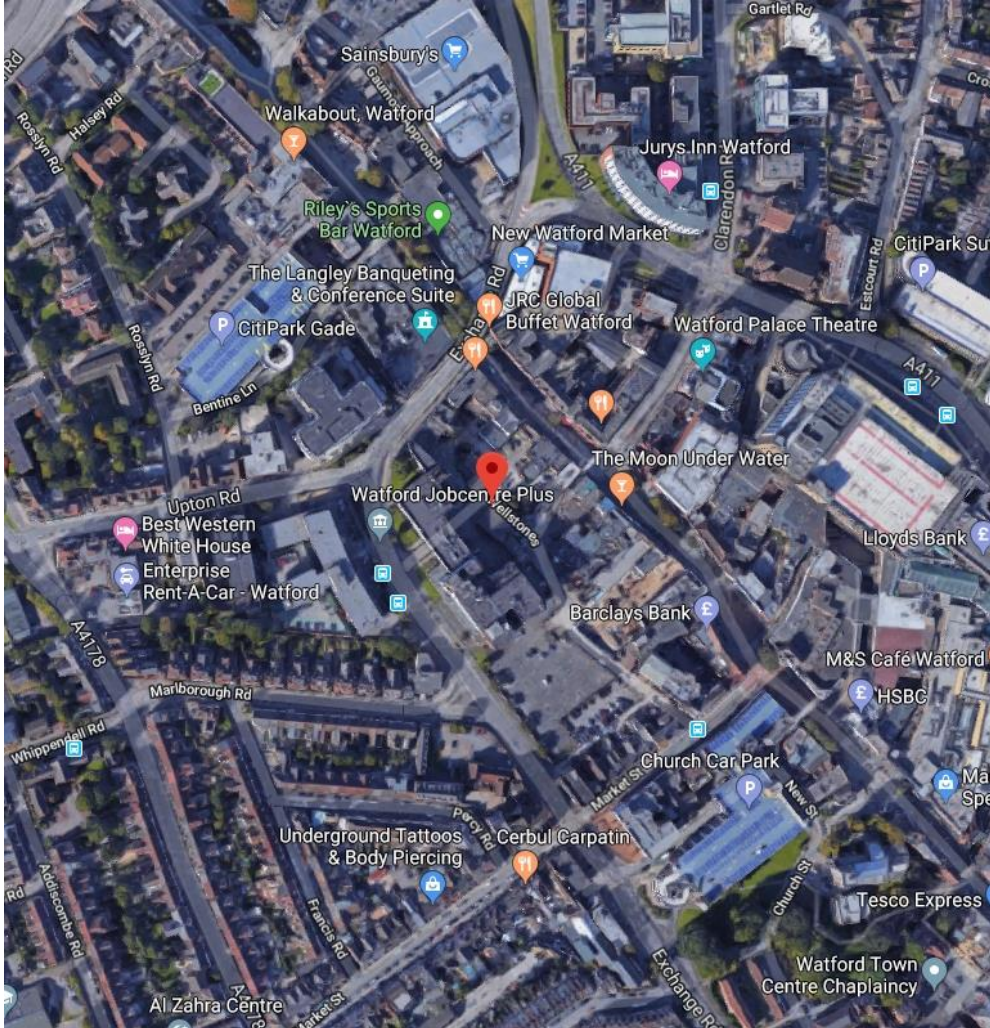
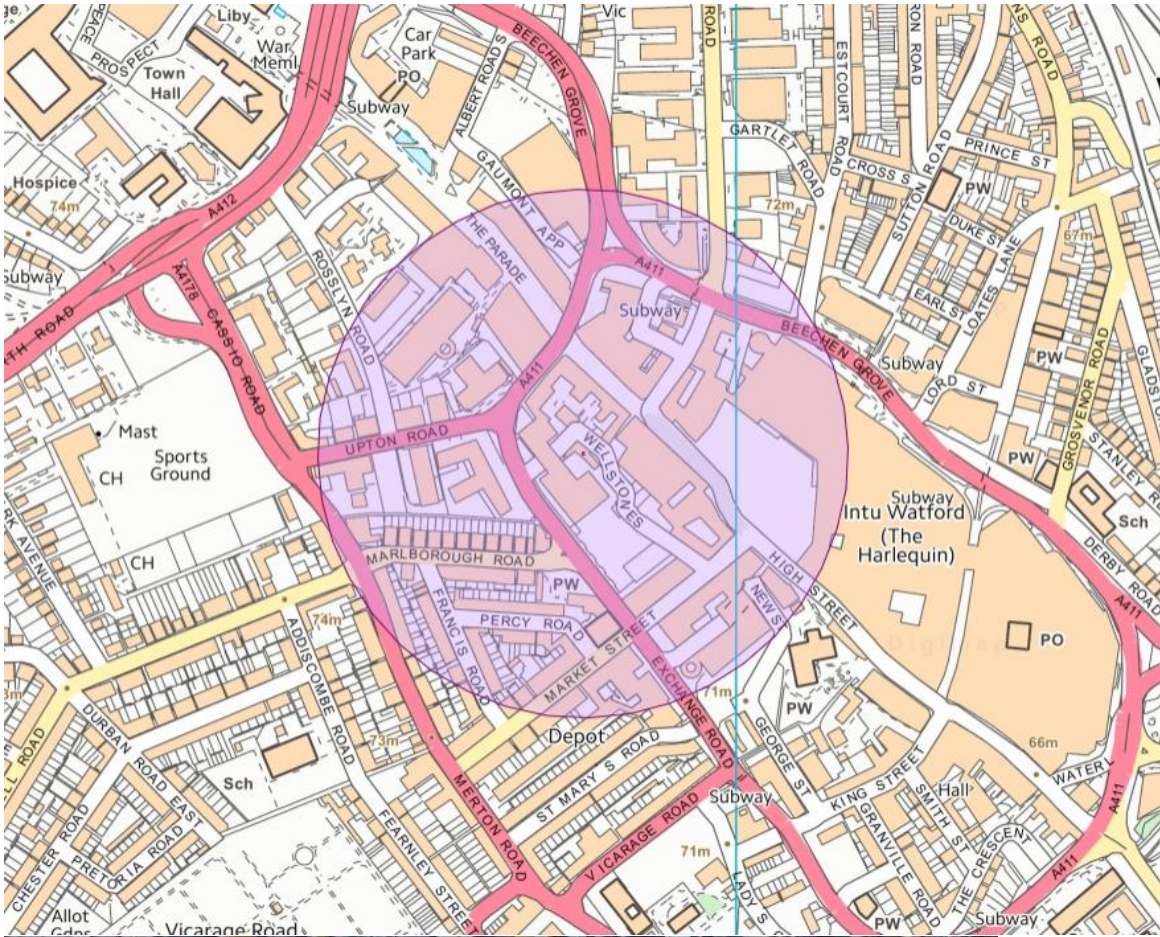
This is a light industrial to residential conversion. A prior notification was submitted in October 2018 to convert to 15 studio flats. This was refused in December 2018 on the grounds that it is not possible to tell if the proposed units are actually dwellings (with no details on internal layout, light or ventilation provided), and due to issues related to parking, cycle storage and refuse. The refusal has recently been allowed on appeal, which has received some media attention.

All 15 units (100%) are studio apartments. All 15 units (100%) are below national space standards, with units ranging from 16.5-22m² each and generally about 19m². None of the units (0%) appear to have access to private amenity space, nor is any communal amenity space or play space provided. It appears that 12 of the units (80%) would be single aspect only, with the other 3 being dual aspect, although this is impossible to confirm given the nature of the submitted plans. Without exterior alternations to the building, the existing windows would only provide an extremely small amount of daylight to the units.

An extract from the submitted plans is below.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, below. This shows there is no green or public open space within 250m of the building, and only a very small amount within 500m of this is a dense town centre location.



Site visit



On our site visit, we noted that the conversion had not been implemented and the unit was still in use in relation to furniture upholstery. The building was located centrally within Watford, just off the high street, but in an area surrounded by car parking and a large office building with no nearby green or open space. Although the town centre location does have advantages of access to services, the particular location of this building does not appear to offer a high level of residential amenity.

28. Wembley Point, 1 Harrow Road, Wembley, HA9 6DE

Overview

This building has a somewhat complex planning history. A planning application had been submitted to change the use of 15 floors of this 21 storey office building (6th to 20th floors) to a 306 bed hotel in October 2012 (with the other floors remaining in office use). This was given planning permission by Brent Council.

In February 2014, a prior notification was submitted to change floors 16-20 into 50 residential units. This was approved. A second prior notification submitted in October 2014 to convert the building into 321 residential dwellings comprising 240 studio flats, 27 x 1-bedroom flats and 54 x 2-bedroom flats but this was withdrawn by the applicant.

The next prior notification was submitted in January 2015 for change of use of floors 2-5, 7, 9-11,14-20 and part 21 from office to residential involving the creation of 243 residential units (176 x studios, 24 x 1bed and 43 x 2bed). The floors not included were in use as educational institutions rather than B1 offices. Brent Council refused prior approval because of concerns relating to flood risk and the lack of a travel plan to assess highways impacts. The same scheme appears to have been resubmitted in May 2015 with additional supporting documentation and was granted prior approval.

In February 2016, a new prior notification was submitted for change of use of the ground floor along with floors 2-5, 7, 9-12,14-20 and part 21 from office into residential use involving the creation of 322 residential units (241 x studios, 73 x 1bed and 8 x 2bed). This was withdrawn by the applicant. It was then resubmitted in July 2016 and granted prior approval.

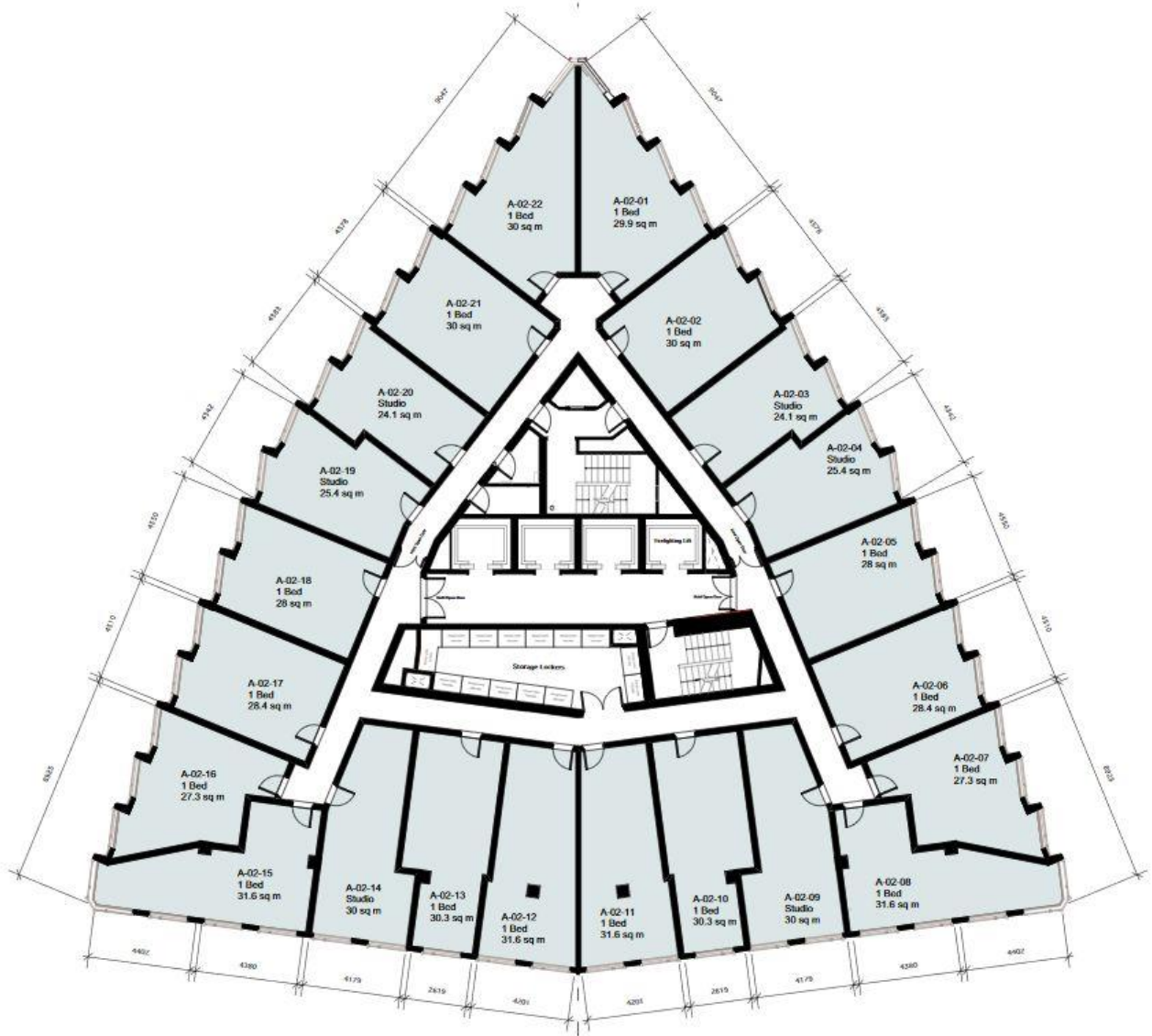
A further prior notification was submitted in November 2016 to convert the sixth and eighth floors into 22 residential units, all studios. This was granted approval. Alongside this, another prior notification was also submitted in November 2016 to convert floors 2nd to 20th (excluding part of 6th and 8th floors) and part of the 21st floor from office to residential involving the creation of 382 x studios. This was also approved.

Next, a prior notification was submitted in August 2018 to convert the building into 439 residential units. This was approved. A non-material amendment to make minor changes to the proposed plans was submitted and approved in February 2019.

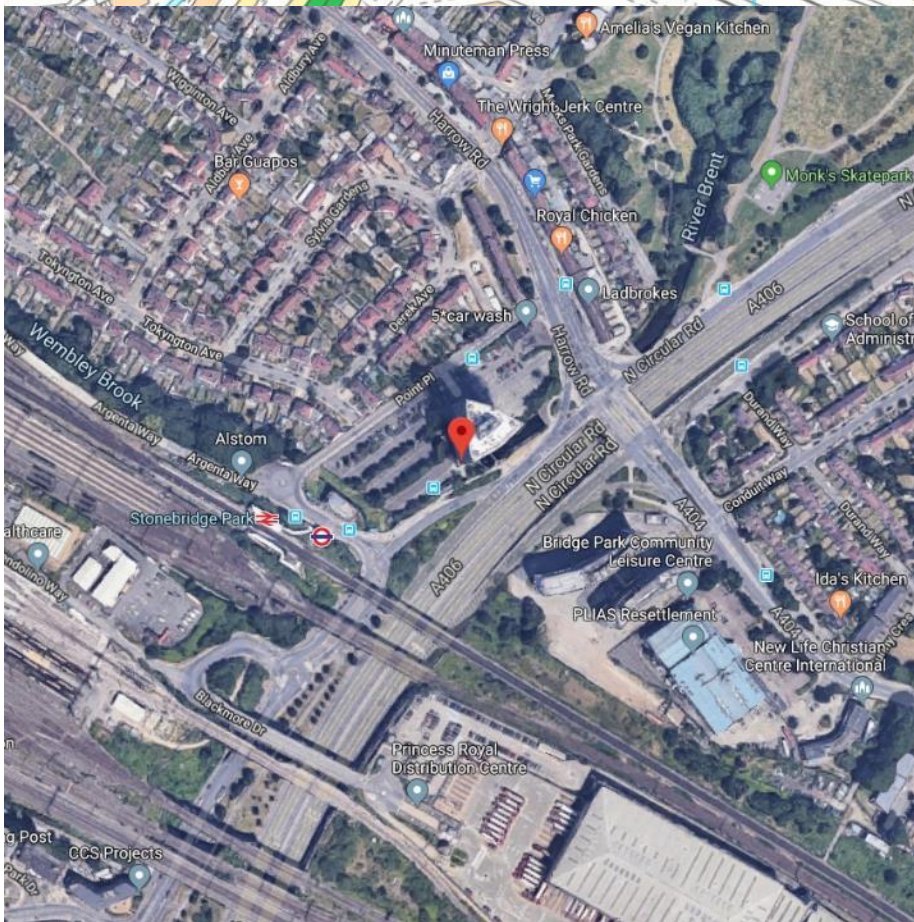
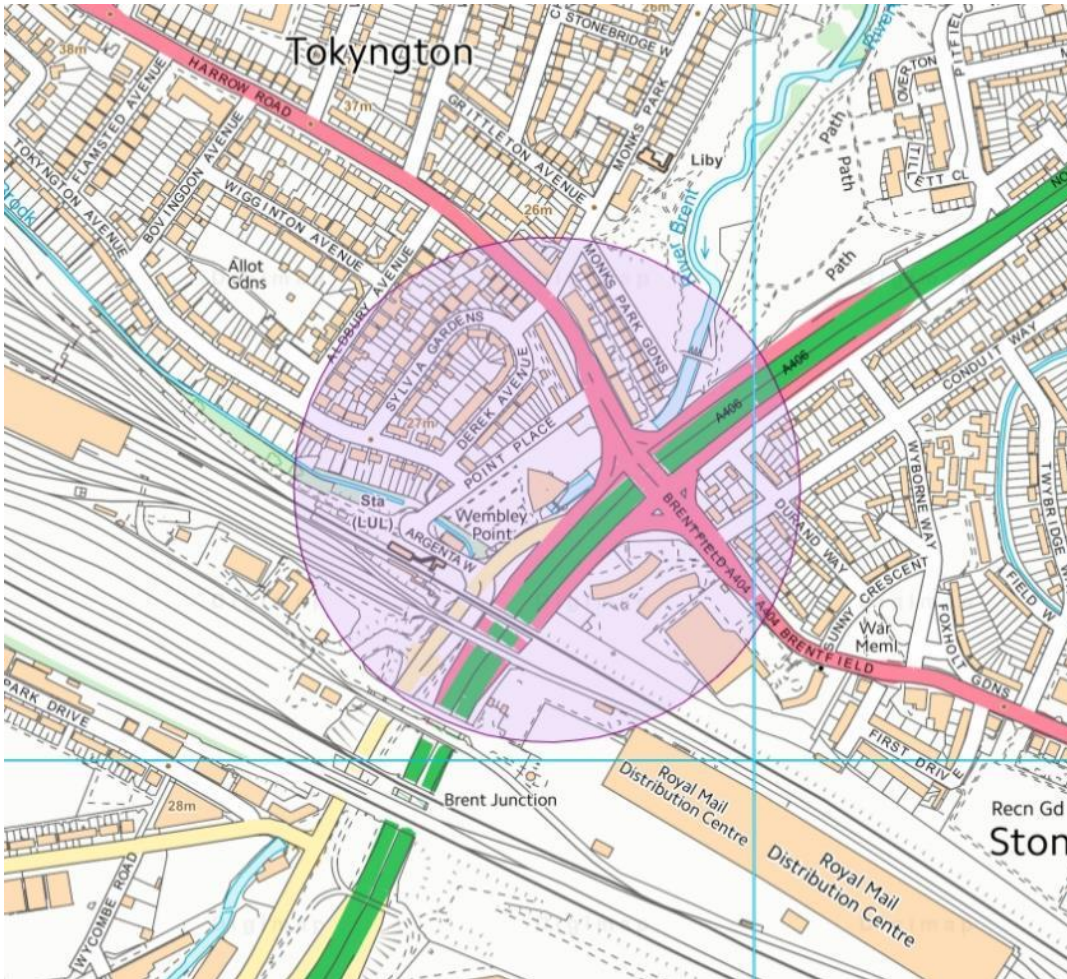
Looking the final prior approval scheme, this comprises 316 one bedroom and 123 studio flats. 100% of the units are thus studios and one beds. All 439 units (100%) are smaller than national space standards, with both studio and one bed units between 24-31m² each.

None of the units (0%) have access to any private amenity space. A large residents lounge of 457m² is provided on the ground floor, so there is communal amenity space. All 439 units (100%) are single aspect only in terms of their windows, and it is notable that 140 of the units only have a window facing to the north, giving less natural daylight.

An extract of the submitted plans is below.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, below. This shows there is some public green open space within 250m of the building.



Site visit

The building had not been converted at the time of our site visit. The building is located by the busy north circular road, but is also close to public transport and local shops and facilities, offering a moderate level of local amenity.



29. Wesley House, 19 Chapel Street, Luton, LU1 2SE

Overview

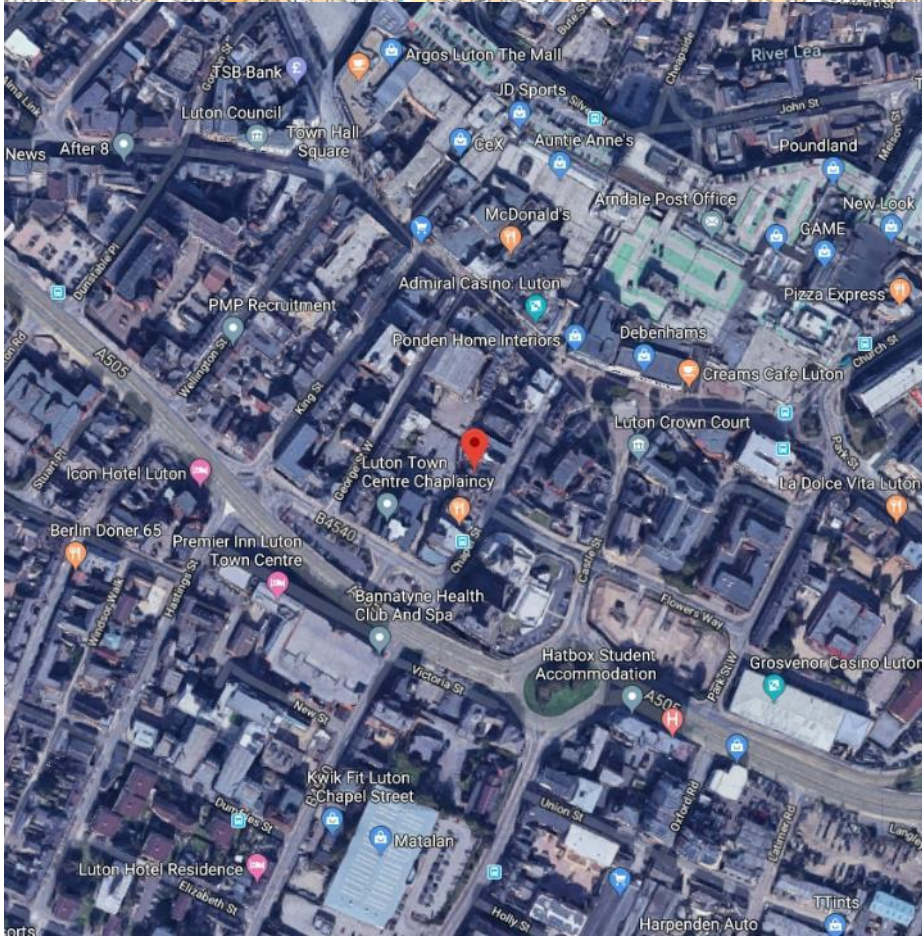
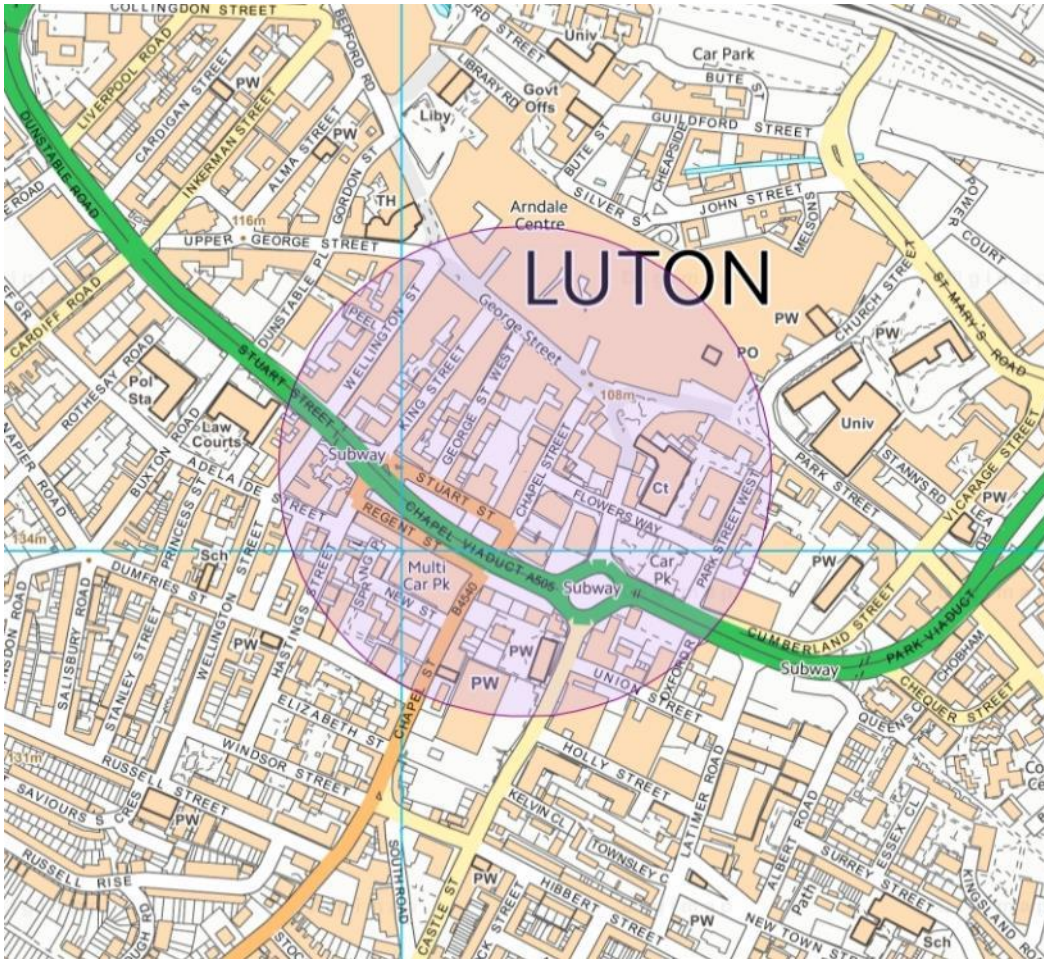
A prior notification was submitted in December 2013 to change the use of the 1st-10th floors from office to residential. This was approved.

The plans submitted suggest that there are 72 flats, all being two bedroom. 18 units (25%) seem to be smaller than national space standards, at about 56m² each, and the rest appear to exceed these, at about 62-70m² each. According to the plans, no units (0%) are studios or one beds. No units (0%) appear to have any access to private or communal amenity space. 18 units (25%) appear to be single aspect only in terms of window arrangement, with the rest being dual aspect.

An extract from the submitted plans is below.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, below. This shows there is no public green open space within 250m of the building nor any within 500m.



Site visit



On our site visit we noted that the conversion had been implemented and the block was now occupied. It is located centrally within Luton, so close to shops, services and the rail station, but not near any green or open space.

30. York House, Empire Way, Wembley, HA9 0PA

Overview

A prior notification was submitted in March 2017 to change the use of part of the ground floor, floors 1 to 8 and part of 9th to 15th floors from office into residential use, involving the creation of 360 studio flats with provision of communal facilities and gym on 15th floor and cycle storage on the 1st floor. This was approved.

A second prior notification was then submitted in November 2017 to convert part of the ground floor, floors 1 to 8, part of the 9th floor and floors 10 to 14 from office use to residential use, involving the creation of 353 residential units, cycle storage at ground and first floor levels and a lounge at the 15th floor. This was also approved.

A further prior notification was submitted to Brent Council in May 2018 to convert part of the ground floor, the 1st to 8th floors, part of the 9th floor and floors 10 to 14 from office use to residential use, creating 305 units in total (277 studio flats, 12 x 1 bedroom / 1 person flats and 16 x 1 bedroom / 2 person flats). This was approved. Another May 2018 prior notification was to convert the same floor areas into 346 residential units (315 studio flats, 14 x 1 bedroom / 1 person flats and 17 x 1 bedroom / 2 person flats). This was also approved.

Finally, a June 2018 prior notification was to convert part of the ground floor, floors 4-8, part of the 9th floor and floors 10-15 from office to residential use, involving the creation of 305 residential units in total (split as 277 studio flats, 12 x 1 bedroom / 1 person flats and 16 x 1 bedroom / 2 person flats). This was approved.

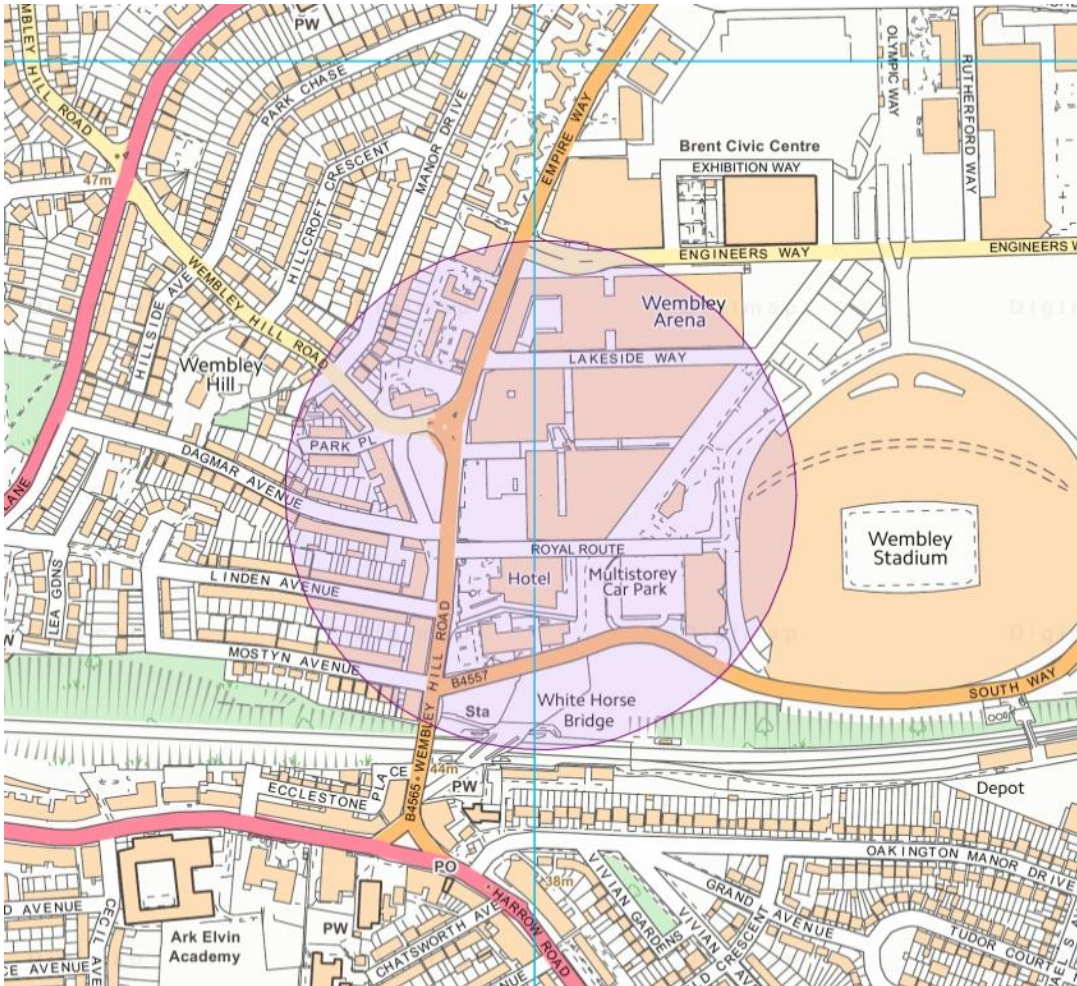
Looking at the final, June 2018, prior approval, 100% of the units appear to be smaller than national space standards, however they are closer to them than many other schemes reviewed, with studio flats about 32-34m² each, one bed / one person flats about 38m² each and one bed / two person flats about 40-48m² each. All 305 units (100%) are studios or one bed flats.

None of the units (0%) have access to private amenity space, however the 15th floor seems to be given over entirely to communal amenity space use with a lounge area. All 305 units (100%) appear to be single aspect only in terms of their windows.

An extract from the submitted plans is below.



The below Ordnance Survey map has a 250m radius drawn on it, whilst a similar area is shown from Google Maps satellite imagery, below. This shows there is a small amount of public green open space within 250m of the building and some more within 500m.



Site visit



On our site visit, we noted that the conversion appears to have been implemented and was just being finished, with some site fencing still present. The building is located near to retail outlets and Wembley Stadium and readily accessible by public transport.

Conclusions

We have considered thirty examples of buildings where a change of use to residential has been allowed through permitted development. Although they do not provide a comprehensive or systematic review of all permitted development schemes in any single place, they provide further examples of the variable quality that can be seen through this deregulation of planning control.

In respect to space standards, out of 2,140 residential units created through these schemes where we could assess space standards, just 292 units – 13.6% - would comply with the nationally described space standards. Ensuring adequate space standards has been closely linked to people's mental health and wellbeing. Whilst some units may be just slightly below the proposed minimum standards, often units are significantly smaller. Studio flats of just 15m² each are not uncommon.

These small space standards are compounded by a lack of provision of private amenity space, such as a balcony, which can contribute to a better quality of life in high density schemes. Just 16 units out of the 2,140 reviews (0.7%) had access to any private amenity space. There was communal amenity space, like a resident's lounge, for 1,298 units – 60.6% - but this figure is slightly skewed but the provision in a number of the larger schemes of communal amenity space. If we look at the scheme level, then actually communal amenity space was only provided in 9 out of the 30 schemes reviewed (30%).

The permitted development conversions are dominated by studio flats and one-bedroom flats: 1,962 of the units reviewed (91.7%) were studios or one beds. Whilst some might argue that in a housing crisis, surely the more units created the better, this assumes that the housing crisis is just about the overall number of units delivered. It is not, and also involves the right type of units in the right locations. The preponderance of studios and one beds can lead to overcrowding, particularly in the case of families with children in need of accommodation, and this is exacerbated by the small space standards often seen.

Looking at the arrangement of windows, we see that 1,826 units (85.3%) were single aspect only, which again can give a lower quality residential experience, particularly when in some schemes (such as Atria House, Central Business Centre and Wembley Point), we see a significant number of units that are single aspect and northerly facing, meaning less natural daylight entering the units.

This issue can be compounded by the somewhat unusual layouts seen in some schemes, as units are fitted awkwardly into the former office space, or when there are a significant number of flats whose only window faces an internal atrium area (likely to lead to reduced daylight and potential for overlooking) as seen, for example, at New Horizons Court, Atria House, Central House and Trinity Square. In some cases, office style tinted windows are still present. There are also units where the only daylight is from a small basement window, with some rooms without windows, such as at Gild House, and some units where there are no windows at all, or just rooflights only (as found for 13 units reviewed here).

Finally, in terms of location, half the schemes reviewed – 15 – were in 250m of some public green or open space, and 25 were within 500m. With small units and little amenity space common in permitted development conversions, additional pressure is likely to be put on such green infrastructure. Whilst many conversions were in potentially desirable locations, close to public transport and services, we do see some conversions in potentially problematic locations such as New Horizons Court (close to factories and a waste transfer station) and Beacon House (sandwiched between the very busy North Circular Road dual carriageway and industrial uses including a cement works).

Not all schemes reviewed are of bad quality and some, such as John Busch House appear to be generally good quality, however there are reasons to be concerned about a significant number of the permitted development conversions considered here. Some, such as Newbury House and Wellstones have already received considerable press coverage, but they are not alone amongst the examples here in potentially providing a very poor quality of life for their residents. A majority of the schemes considered here would perform poorly against the TCPA's *Healthy Homes* principles, calling into question the minimum standards which should be required for places which people call home.