

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

**18 MARCH 2021**

**APPLICATION NO.**

**DATE VALID**

20/P2899

26/01/2020

**Site Address:**

18 Clifton Road, Wimbledon Village, London SW19 4QT

**Ward:**

Village

**Proposal:**

REFURBISHMENT WORKS TO ORIGINAL HOUSE, INCLUDING CONVERSION OF 4 FLATS BACK TO SINGLE FAMILY HOME AND DEMOLITION OF EXISTING GARAGE BLOCK AND RECONFIGURATION OF DRIVEWAY.

**Drawing Nos:**

6256/03 (Rev G); 6258/111; 6258/112; 6258/113; 6258/114; 6258/115; 6258/118; 6258/116

**Contact Officer:**

Calum McCulloch (020 8274 5232)

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**RECOMMENDATION**

GRANT Planning permission subject to conditions

**CHECKLIST INFORMATION**

Is a screening opinion required	No
Is an Environmental Statement required	No
Press notice	Yes
Site notice	Yes
Design Review Panel consulted	No
Number of neighbours consulted	23
External consultations	0
Internal consultations	1
Controlled Parking Zone	Yes - VOs

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This planning application has been brought before the planning committee as the Applicant is an employee of Merton Council, and due to the number and nature of representations received.

## **2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 The application site comprises a four storey detached building dating from 1880. The site benefits from a large front garden with a number of single storey outbuildings and large rear garden.
- 2.2 The building was subdivided into four flats in the 1930s.
- 2.3 The site is located within the Wimbledon West Conservation Area.
- 2.4 The site has a significant amount of foliage with generous number of trees in the rear and front gardens.
- 2.5 The site is also located within the Wimbledon Common Archaeological Priority Area.
- 2.6 The dwelling is not Statutory or Locally Listed.

## **3. CURRENT PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The application seeks to convert the building back to a single family dwelling. This involves a number of alterations including a new main entrance on the front elevation and enlarging the existing lightwell at the front of the property.
- 3.2 The applicant also proposes to reconfigure the existing driveway with a new access installed on the front boundary.
- 3.3 It should be noted that no alterations to the rear elevation of the building are proposed.

### **Amendments**

- 3.4 The planning application originally proposed two additional dwellings in the rear garden (with car parking area) and subdivision of the plot. In response to feedback from Officers, the applicant has removed these elements of the proposal.
- 3.5 The site plan has also been amended to show the trees retained in accordance with that proposed in the tree report.

## **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 14/P0394 - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING GARAGES AND ERECTION OF A ONE AND A HALF STOREY BUILDING WITH A BASEMENT AND ACCOMMODATION WITHIN THE ROOFSpace WITH DORMERS, VENTS AND SKYLIGHTS TO PROVIDE STORAGE & LEISURE FACILITIES AND GUEST ACCOMMODATION ANCILLARY TO 18 CLIFTON ROAD - Withdrawn Decision - 28/03/2014

- 4.2 13/P2810 - APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS IN RESPECT OF THE CONTINUED RETENTION OF EXISTING PORTAKABINS IN CONNECTION WITH BUILDING WORKS - Issue Certificate of Lawfulness - 05/12/2013
- 4.3 11/P0968 - APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS IN RESPECT OF TEMPORARY INSTALLATION OF PORTAKABINS IN CONNECTION WITH PROPOSED BUILDING WORKS - Issue Certificate of Lawfulness - 30/06/2011
- 4.4 10/P2646 - APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS IN RESPECT OF TEMPORARY INSTALLATION OF PORTA CABINS IN CONNECTION WITH PROPOSED BUILDING WORK - Refuse Certificate of Lawfulness - 11/11/2010
- 4.5 Various Tree Works

## 5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation was carried out through Conservation Area Site Notice, Press Notice, and letters sent to adjoining neighbours.
- 5.2 The following representations were received between 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020 and 26<sup>th</sup> December 2020 during the standard 21-day consultation period.
- 5.3 In addition, a re-consultation was administered ending 26<sup>th</sup> September 2020 to consult on the amended plans which excluded the proposal to erect two dwellings at the rear of the site.

### External

#### **Neighbouring Properties:**

- 5.4 One representation was received highlighting the opportunity to integrate habitats for endangered Swifts.
- 5.5 A total of 14 objections were received. The main grounds of objection include:
- Concerns the proposed dwellings at the rear would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
  - Incomplete information – there does not appear to be a complete set of drawings for the proposed elevation of the main house
  - Confusing/ inaccurate information - On the "Block Plan" the Northside of the garden of 18 Clifton Road borders with number 20 Clifton Road and no 8 Southside Common. In the "Existing Site Plan" the garden is showing as bordering with 20 Clifton Road AND 24 Clifton Road and 8 Southside Common.
  - The additional proposed two story buildings in the middle of the garden area in not in keeping with this, necessitates removal of green space and trees; and obscures view of green spaces from all surrounding houses and gardens.
  - The windows of the new buildings will also overlook exiting gardens and houses, which will affect neighbours privacy.
  - This development reduces the number of dwellings. Currently the house is arranged in 4 flats as per the planning application description. If the

development goes ahead there will be an overall reduction in the number of dwellings on the site from 4 to 3. The original house and two new houses.

- New dwellings would harm the amenity of surrounding occupiers through overshadowing, overlooking and change to outlook.
- Objection to loss of oak tree at the rear
- Destruction of habitat of endangered and protected and other species.
- Loss of affordable housing
- Increased Vehicle Congestion
- The site has insufficient and restricted access for deliveries and emergency service vehicles, there being a very narrow access between No20 and No18 and the significant distance between the proposed houses and the public road.
- Concerns over the applicant having a conflict of interest
- Object to poor design of proposed cottages.
- Concerns over the loss of trees
- Concerns over traffic and congestion
- Concerns over refuse for new dwellings

5.6 One objection was received following the re-consultation on the amended plans between 4<sup>th</sup> February and 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020 raising issue

- Concern that the applicant has a conflict of interest due to their role at Merton Council.

**The Wimbledon Society:**

5.7 The property is in the Wimbledon West Conservation Area and in an Archaeological Priority zone. The Lynch, built in 1890, is the centre of a groups of 3 properties (12, 18 and 20 - there is no 14 or 16) that the Council's Character assessment considers makes a positive contribution to the area.

It is set in mature gardens: a heavily green front garden, important in the street views, and very large rear garden with trees. Drawings show 3 fair sized trees are to be removed, including in the front garden: the proposed front drive and two accesses etc will probably involve loss of most of the trees and front greenery. No details are provided of tree condition or protective zones or replacements.

Given the maturity of the gardens and street view in this area we would expect;

- An arboreal report covering the conditions of the trees in the garden and setting out how they will be protected.
- We note that three good-sized trees are to be lost. We would expect any lost trees should have plans for replacements.
- We also note that an additional vehicle access is proposed. Given the need to preserve the streetscene in this area, we feel that the single vehicle access should be maintained to preserve the space for green frontage.

- We would expect a landscape plan for a development like this. It should be a condition of the planning permission.

We also note that air heat exchangers are to be used for the new buildings. These can be noisy and it is important for plans to indicate where they will be located.

### **Historic England:**

- 5.8 No archaeological requirements needed. The proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on heritage assets of archaeological interest. No further assessment or conditions are therefore necessary.

### **Internal**

#### **Council's Tree Officer:**

- 5.9 The Tree Officer has raised no objection to the loss of trees at the front of the property given that there are four trees to be retained. However, the Tree Officer notes the supporting Tree Report is out of step with the proposals due to the removal of the proposed cottages at the rear. Therefore, they recommend an updated Tree Report is conditioned as well as Site Supervision (F5 and F8).

## **6. POLICY CONTEXT**

### **National Planning Policy Framework 2019**

- Chapter 4 Decision-making
- Chapter 11 Making effective use of land
- Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### **London Plan 2021**

- D1 London's form, character and capacity for growth
- D4 Delivering good design
- H1 Increasing housing supply
- H10 Housing size mix
- HC1 Heritage conservation and growth
- G7 Trees and woodlands
- T3 Transport capacity, connectivity and safeguarding
- T4 Assessing and mitigating transport impacts
- T6 Car parking
- T6.1 Residential parking

### **Merton Core Strategy 2011**

- Policy CS 8 Housing Choice

- Policy CS 9 Housing provision
- Policy CS 13 Open space, nature conservation, leisure and culture
- Policy CS 14 Design
- Policy CS 15 Climate Change
- Policy CS 16 Flood Risk Management
- Policy CS 20 Parking, Servicing and Delivery

#### **Merton Sites and Policies Plan 2014**

- DM O2 Nature Conservation, Trees, hedges and landscape features
- DM D1 Urban design and the public realm
- DM D2 Design considerations in all developments
- DM D4 Managing heritage assets
- DM F1 Support for flood risk management
- DM F2 Sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) and; Wastewater and Water Infrastructure
- DM T2 Transport impacts of development
- DM T3 Car parking and servicing standards

#### **West Wimbledon Conservation Area Character Assessment 2004**

## **7. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Principle of development**

- 7.1 Policy CS.9 of the Core Planning Strategy states that the Council will not support proposals that result in a net loss of residential units.
- 7.2 The current building comprises 4 flats (1 x 1 bedroom lower ground floor, 1 x 2 bedroom on the upper ground floor and 2 x 3-bedroom on first and second floor respectively). It is considered that although the proposal would not comply with this policy in this respect, it would not warrant a refusal of the application in this instance.
- 7.3 This is due to a number of factors including:
- History of the building - the building was originally used as single dwelling house before it was converted into flats. As such, the proposal would simply be returning the building to its original use. The removal of internal walls and move new entrance to the front elevation of the building would improve the buildings architectural character.
  - Need for larger family housing - there is an identified need for family sized housing within the Borough as noted in the supporting text for Policy DM H2 of the Merton Sites and Policies Plan which sets an indicative target for all new major developments to have 33% of units as three+ bedroom units. In a similar light, supporting paragraph 22.27 to Core Strategy Policy CS14 notes the need to retain existing stock of family sized units. Although the proposal would result in the loss of some 3-bedroom units, the first and second floor units do not have access to the rear garden.
  - Another factor is the Council receive a larger proportion of conversion of houses into flats applications, in comparison to conversion of flatted buildings

into single houses. Analysis of the Council's database shows that since the start of 2019 there have been 37 applications approved for conversion from single dwellings to self-contained flats. On the contrary there have been only 8 applications approved for the conversion from flats back to a single dwelling during the same period.

- 7.4 The proposal would result in the creation of a large family sized unit which would benefit the overall housing mix within the Borough, with access to a large outdoor garden. It would also return the existing building back to its original use as a single dwelling house making a positive contribution to the heritage and character of the dwelling. Overall, the principle of development is therefore considered acceptable in this case.

### **Design, Character and appearance of the Wimbledon West Conservation Area**

- 7.5 London Plan policies D1, D4 and HC1, Core Strategy policy CS14 and SPP Policies DMD2, DMD3 and DMD4 require proposals to conserve and enhance heritage assets, as well as respect the appearance, scale, bulk, form, proportions, materials and character of the original building and their surroundings.
- 7.6 The proposal involves limited internal alterations which comprising removal of non-structural walls returning subdivided rooms to their former composition. The application site is located in sub-area 12: Clifton Road of the Wimbledon West Conservation Area Character Assessment. The assessment notes that Clifton Road has had its character eroded as a result of modern blocks of flats being constructed. However, it identifies a number of buildings which are of particular architectural interest, which includes the application site. No specific detail is provided on the application dwelling, but the character assessment identifies its heavily overgrown front garden and recommends its setting be enhanced.
- 7.7 Externally, the applicant proposes to remove two windows on the front elevation which would be replaced with a new front entrance. The entrance would have an appropriate traditional appearance and would appear in proportion with the original fenestration on the front elevation. This is considered to provide an enhancement to the front elevation over the existing.
- 7.8 The applicant proposes to replace the existing entrance on the side elevation with a sash window which would match the style and appearance of other original windows on the western side elevation.
- 7.9 The applicant proposed to enlarge the lightwell serving the lower ground floor to a depth of 2.58m. This will improve the levels daylight for the lower ground floor. The lightwell would increase the visibility of the aesthetically pleasing lower ground floor sash windows at the front and the lightwell would be set back roughly 5m from the front boundary in any case. Therefore, the lightwell would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling or Conservation Area.
- 7.10 It is proposed to re-surface the front driveway and create a new vehicle access. The principle for a new access is considered acceptable as crossovers are a common feature in the street scene and one in this location is not considered to harm the character and appearance of the street scene. However, no elevation

showing details of the boundary has been provided by the applicant. These details would therefore be secured by condition to ensure the boundary would have a suitable appearance.

7.11 Officers consider bringing the dwelling back into single occupancy would re-establish the originally intended use of the site as a large family dwelling. This will improve the character of the dwelling internally by reinstating the original historic fabric of the building. However, in addition, the conversion would facilitate enhancing the appearance and setting of the building through elevational enhancements, demolition of unsightly rear outbuildings and re-landscaped forecourt. Consequently, this would enhance the wider visual amenity of the Conservation Area which has been historically eroded as identified in the Character Assessment.

7.12 Overall, the proposed development is considered acceptable in respect of design and would enhance the character and appearance of the Wimbledon West Conservation Area subject to conditions met.

### **Neighbour Amenity**

7.13 Sites and Policies Plan Policy DM D2 seeks to ensure that the potential impact of new development has regard for neighbour amenity.

7.14 There are no structural enlargements to the proposal, with the exception of the enlarged lightwell which would not have any material impact on neighbouring properties. The removal of trees at the front of the property would increase the degree of inter-visibility between the site and apartments on the opposite side of Clifton Road. However, this is a common relationship in the street scene and not considered harmful. Replacing the side front door with windows and opening up new front door on the front elevation would not cause any harm to surrounding neighbouring amenity. Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of neighbouring amenity.

### **Trees**

7.15 London Plan Policy G7, Merton Core Strategy Policy CS1 and Sites and Policies Plan Policy DMO2 require development proposals to conserve important trees.

7.16 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment was submitted in support of the plans originally submitted. The development originally proposed would have impacted a number of trees at the rear. However, since the proposed dwellings at the rear were removed from the scheme, these trees are now unaffected.

7.17 At the front of the property, the resurfaced driveway would involve the loss of 7 individual Category C Trees.

7.18 However, 4 category C trees would be retained. This includes T18 (Yew Tree), T19 (Common Holly), T28 (Holm Oak) and T27 (Holm Oak). The tree report notes the proposed driveway will encroach upon the remaining trees RPA by up to a maximum of 14% within any unmade area previously uncovered.

7.19 The Council's Tree Officer has reviewed the proposals and has raised no objection to proposed tree works. However, they have recommended an updated Tree Report be conditioned to reflect the changes to the proposed development.



7.20 Taking into consideration above, the proposed development is considered acceptable in respect of trees subject to conditions being met.

### **Transport and parking**

7.21 London Plan Policy T4, Adopted Merton Core Planning Strategy (2011) CS20 (Parking, Servicing and Delivery), Sites and Policies Plan (2014) DM T2 (Transport Impacts of Developments), DM T3 (Car Parking and Servicing Standards) require developers to demonstrate that their development would not adversely affect pedestrian and cycle movements, safety, the convenience of local residents or the quality of bus movements and/or facilities; on street parking and traffic management and provision of parking to the council's current standards.

7.22 The applicant proposes to create a new vehicle access at the front of the site. As the proposal is located in a Conservation Area, the change to the front boundary requires assessment on the visual impact on the street scene. As mentioned further up in this report, the principle of a vehicle crossover is considered acceptable in respect of character and appearance subject to details of the boundary secured by condition.

7.23 From a traffic and highways perspective, a new access would allow for cars to enter and leave in forward gear thereby improving the visibility for vehicles when compared with the existing situation. However, a dropped kerb to make the access useable would require the removal of a lampposts and a single on-street parking space. The acceptability of a crossover in this location would be determined through a separate vehicle crossover application, a process managed by Merton's Highways Department. As the site is located within a controlled parking zone and would involve the removal of existing on-street parking space, an amendment to the Traffic Order would be required and the crossover application would involve consulting and advertising neighbours to assess whether alterations to the public highway would not have a harmful impact in respect of parking capacity or highway safety. This would be subject of a separate process outside of the planning application. Notwithstanding this, the loss of the parking space in the road is not considered to cause a significant impact on parking capacity in the road, given the amount of on-street parking spaces that would remain available.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

8.1 The principle of development involving the conversion of the property from four flats back to a single dwelling is considered acceptable. Although, the loss of units is generally resisted, the conversion would enhance the character of the building by returning the site to its original use as a single dwelling house and would contribute to Merton's supply of larger family housing. The proposed elevation alterations and enlargement to the lightwell would assimilate well with appearance of the dwelling not appear incongruous with the wider setting of the Conservation Area. There would be no undue harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties and is consider acceptable in respect of Trees, Transport and Parking subject to conditions met.

## 9. RECOMMENDATION

### 9.1 Grant planning permission subject to conditions

#### Conditions

1. **A1 Commencement** of development (full application)
2. **A7 Approved Plans:** The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 6256/03 (Rev G); 6258/111; 6258/112; 6258/113; 6258/114; 6258/115; 6258/118; 6258/116

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. **B1 External Materials to be approved:** No development shall take place until details of particulars and samples of the materials to be used on all external faces of the development hereby permitted, including window frames and doors (notwithstanding any materials specified in the application form and/or the approved drawings), have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. No works which are the subject of this condition shall be carried out until the details are approved, and the development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance of the development and to comply with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy D4 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021, policy CS14 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011 and policies DM D2 and D3 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014

4. **D11 Construction Times:** No demolition or construction work or ancillary activities such as deliveries shall take place before 8am or after 6pm Mondays - Fridays inclusive, before 8am or after 1pm on Saturdays or at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area and the occupiers of neighbouring properties and ensure compliance with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy D14 of the London Plan 2021 and policy DM EP2 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

5. **Tree Protection:** No development [including demolition] pursuant to this consent shall commence until an updated Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, drafted in accordance with the recommendations and guidance set out in BS 5837:2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved details have been installed. The details and measures as approved shall be retained and maintained, until the completion of all site operations.

Reason: To protect and safeguard the existing retained trees in accordance with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy G7 of the London Plan 2021, policy CS13 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011 and policies DM D2 and 02 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

**F8 Site supervision:** The details of the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan shall include the retention of an arboricultural expert to supervise, monitor and report to the LPA not less than monthly the status of all tree works and tree protection measures throughout the course of the construction period. At the conclusion of the construction period the arboricultural expert shall submit to the LPA a satisfactory completion statement to demonstrate compliance with the approved protection measures.

**Reason:** To protect and safeguard the existing retained trees in accordance with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policy G7 of the London Plan 2021, policy CS13 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011 and policy DMO2 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

6. **B4 Details of Surface Treatment:** No development shall take place until details of the surfacing of all those parts of the site not covered by buildings or soft landscaping, including any parking, service areas or roads, footpaths, hard and soft have been submitted in writing for approval by the Local Planning Authority. No works that are the subject of this condition shall be carried out until the details are approved, and the development shall not be occupied / the use of the development hereby approved shall not commence until the details have been approved and works to which this condition relates have been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

**Reason:** To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policies D4 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021, policy CS14 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011 and policies DM D1 and D2 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

7. **B5 Details of Walls/Faces:** No development shall take place until details of the front boundary are submitted in writing for approval to the Local Planning Authority. No works which are the subject of this condition shall be carried out until the details are approved, and the development shall not be occupied / the use of the development hereby approved shall not commence until the details are approved and works to which this condition relates have been carried out in accordance with the approved details. The walls and fencing shall be permanently retained thereafter.

**Reason:** To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the following Development Plan policies for Merton: policies D4 and HC1 of the London Plan 2021, policy CS14 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011 and policies DM D1 and D2 of Merton's Sites and Policies Plan 2014.

8. **Informative:** The implementation of a vehicle crossover will be subject to a separate Vehicle Crossover Application with the Council. Applications for crossovers sited within controlled parking zones will be required to meet the criteria outlined the [Vehicle Crossover Information Pack](#) . If it is necessary to remove an existing on street parking space an amendment to the Traffic Order will be required. All fees must be paid by the applicant to cover the council's costs in advertising and consulting on the proposal and will also significantly delay the process of approving a crossover application. The council may refuse an application where it

is considered that the removal of too many onstreet spaces or provision of too many crossovers would lead to insufficient on street space being available. The approval of a crossover would be subject to the outcome of a statutory consultation and therefore cannot be guaranteed. Should street furniture need to be re-located, this shall be at the expense of the applicant.

9. **Informative:** No surface water runoff should discharge onto the public highway including the public footway or highway. When it is proposed to connect to a public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required (contact no. 0845 850 2777).
10. **Informative:** No waste material, including concrete, mortar, grout, plaster, fats, oils and chemicals shall be washed down on the highway or disposed of into the highway drainage system.