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DEMOLITION REPORT



26 WASHINGTON ROAD SW13 9BH

(July 2024)

INTRODUCTION

This report is produced as a planning requirement to demonstrate the need for house demolition and rebuild to satisfy a Local Plan Policy LP38 and to demonstrate that the existing house is incapable of improvement nor conversion to a satisfactory standard. As the applicant seeks to rebuild the house on a like-for-like basis with further extensions within the planning law, it will not have an adverse impact on the local character or amenity as a whole.



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RELEVANT POLICIES

Policy LP 38 states that existing housing should be retained. Redevelopment of existing housing should normally only take place where:

- a. it has first been demonstrated that the existing housing is incapable of improvement or conversion to a satisfactory standard to provide an equivalent scheme; and, if this is the case*
- b. the proposal does not have an adverse impact on local character; and*
- c. the proposal provides a reasonable standard of accommodation, including accessible design, as set out in LP 35 Housing Mix and Standards.*

The accompanying paragraph 8.5.3 states that there is a presumption for the applicant to first assess the potential for retaining and refurbishing existing buildings. There should be full consideration as to whether existing housing can be improved or converted to a satisfactory standard.

Relevant description, comments, and evidence is given in the section below.

DESCRIPTION AND EVIDENCE

The property at 26 Washington Road is a 3-bedroom house built in the 1920s by the Henry Boot Company. As most other houses in the old North Barnes estate, the house was built using a prefabricated reinforced concrete (PRC) block build method (the Boot pier and panel system) which allowed the house to be built at speed and with limited need for skilled workers, particularly bricklayers, which were in short supply after the end of World War I.

Over time, material issues have emerged with this build method including corroding steel frames and degrading structural integrity. Following various studies and reports in the 1980s, several PRC-based build methods, including the Boot pier and panel system used at 26 Washington Road and neighbouring properties, were found to result in the buildings being structurally unsound and requiring substantial repair or replacement work. The Secretary of State for the Environment subsequently designated the Boot PRC build as defective under s.1(1) of the Housing Defects Act 1984 (by way of the Housing Defects (Boot Prefabricated Reinforced Concrete Dwellings) (England and Wales) Designation 1984).

Under the Housing Defects Act 1984 and, subsequently, the Housing Act 1985, HM Government provided funding for owners of defective dwellings such as 26 Washington Road to undertake the repair works needed to make the building structurally sound. Those works essentially consist of demolishing all external walls of the building and replacing them with brick walls. While some owners in the North Barnes area took advantage of this funding and carried out the works needed, the then-owners of 26 Washington Road did not do so. Other essential works were also not carried out over several decades.

The building structure therefore deteriorated further over the years. A survey conducted in 2023 prior to completion of the purchase by the current owners found that the roof, windows and various other elements of the building were at the end of their useful life and urgently required replacement.



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Additionally, various water leaks and sources of mould were discovered by the current owners which would require not only the external structure of the building but also large parts of the internal structure to be removed and replaced.

Primarily as a result of the legal designation of the PRC build method as defective, banks are not able to provide a mortgage over the property as a charge over a defective property is insufficient security for lending purposes. Even if the minimum of essential works to replace the PRC structure was carried out, various lenders would still not be able to lend against the property unless a more fundamental repair is carried out.

Furthermore, the building being built more than 100 years ago, has passed the lifespan of the materials being available at the time. As such the house does not comply with most of the current Building and Fire regulations and therefore does not satisfy current living standards criteria. Being constructed of breeze concrete blocks with a cavity, this itself represents a danger of carrying potential smoke through the cavity throughout the building. It is not possible to retroactively add the cavity closers.



cavity construction



visible cracks and water marks

Given that the concrete has already cracked in places, and is of such deteriorating material, further cracks are expected in time. The only remedy would be a full wall replacement. As it stands now, the building poses a potential danger to its occupants.

In terms of sustainability, air tightness and CO₂ carbon emissions, this building would not be able to be repaired to comply with current Building Regulation standards without building completely new walls internally as a separate independent layer. This is not sustainable, as it would be costly and financially not viable. Also, this would result in a substantial loss of internal area in already small rooms. Furthermore, such substantial works would cause additional cracks in the extremal walls and the structure as a whole.

The owners are applying for planning permission to add a rear and side extension together with a small first-floor bathroom extension, and such works will further disturb already vulnerable walls and



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structures. By keeping the existing walls and structure, the owners would not be able to achieve their goal, of making their home sustainable and energy efficient close to the passive house standards.

The government introduced legislation under the Housing Defects Act 1984, allowing local authorities to designate particular types of property as 'defective by reason of their design or construction', and fund remedial work. By definition, a dwelling is unfit for human habitation due to construction or repair defects. Being built as a "Boot House" type construction, it has been nationally known as potentially unstable and designated defective in England and Wales.

Furthermore, the existing concrete sandwich walls are showing severe signs of water ingress and damp. This is most likely due to any DPM membrane deteriorating over time, or being broken. As the breeze concrete is porous, the ingress of moisture is evident. Under the weather and freezing conditions, it is reasonable to expect further concrete deterioration and cracks. This outlook is not a good foundation for any remedial works. The house and its materials have come past the end of their useful life.



Ingress of water and damp on ceilings and walls

To make the property fully safe and habitable for the short to medium term, at a minimum the following needs to be done:

- (i) all external walls would have to be removed and replaced with new walls following a traditional/approved build method,
- (ii) the roof would have to be replaced in its entirety, and
- (iii) the majority of internal walls and floors would have to be replaced.

The cumulative result of these works, and the environmental and carbon impact resulting from them, is de facto equal to a full demolition and rebuild of the existing structure.



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The owners firmly believe in building sustainably for the long-term future in line with the council's planning policies. This means in particular:

- (i) achieving high levels of insulation and airtightness to reduce heat loss and energy consumption (including the use of an MVHR system), and
- (ii) sourcing a large part of heating and electricity sustainably by use of an air source heat pump and solar panels/battery.

Achieving these goals requires substantial changes to the external wall thickness and internal floor and ceiling thickness and composition, as well as complex changes to the current services set up in the house (replacement of gas boiler, changes to wiring and water pipes and in particular air ventilation (extract and supply) ducts, would not be possible without a complete demolition and rebuild.

CONCLUSION

As a result, to make the property safe and habitable and achieve a good long-term environmental outcome (including in terms of sustainability and net carbon emissions), a full demolition and rebuild is necessary.

The rebuild proposal is in full compliance with Policy LP 38 of the Local Plan.

Yours sincerely
LIM ENGINEERING LTD

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July 2024