

CITY OF WESTMINSTER			
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE	Date 28 June 2016	Classification For General Release	
Report of Director of Planning		Ward(s) involved Queen's Park	
Subject of Report	85 Oliphant Street, London, W10 4EE		
Proposal	Installation of a burglar alarm box to front elevation at first floor level.		
Agent	Miss Karen Round		
On behalf of	Miss Karen Round		
Registered Number	16/04064/FULL	Date amended/ completed	6 May 2016
Date Application Received	3 May 2016		
Historic Building Grade	Unlisted		
Conservation Area	Queens Park Estate		

1. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse permission – design grounds.

2. SUMMARY

The application site is an attractive two storey Victorian terrace house located on the north side of the street near the junction with Peach Road. The building is not listed, but is located within the Queen's Park Estate Conservation Area.

The application seeks permission for the installation of an alarm box on the front elevation of the building between the two first floor windows.

The Queens Park Estate Conservation Area has an extremely uniform character and is in large part covered by an Article 4 Direction, within which alterations to the front elevations of dwellinghouses (or any other part of the dwellinghouses that are visible from the public highway), such as alarm boxes, which would normally be permitted development, require the benefit of planning permission. The purpose of the Article 4 Direction is to maintain the uniformity of the buildings within the conservation area, which is a feature that is key to the character and appearance of the Queens Park Estate Conservation Area.

Following a recent survey of the Queens Park Estate Conservation Area a number of unauthorised alarm boxes have been identified. This application represents the first planning application to retain/

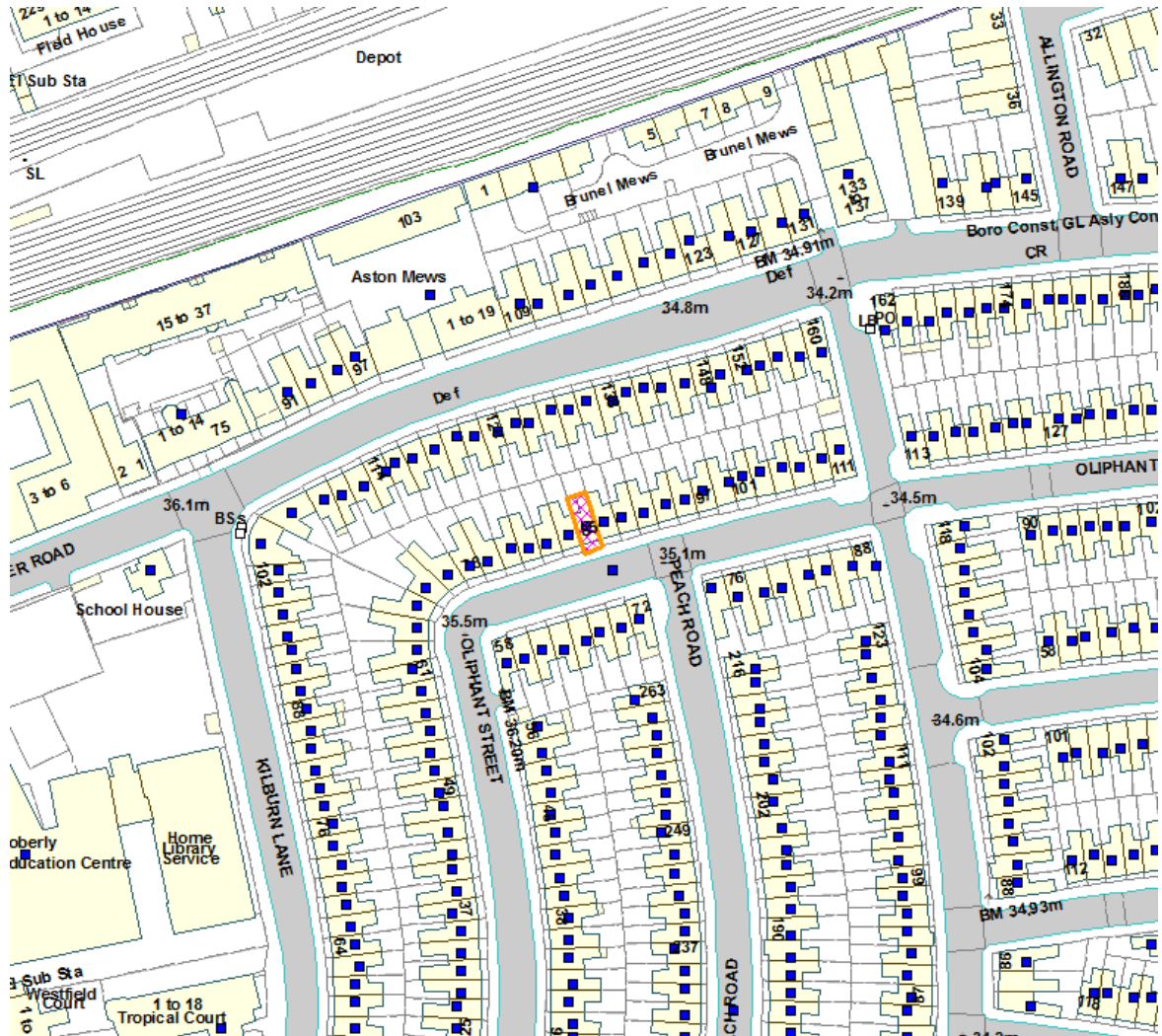
reinstate an alarm box to the front elevation. There are a further two planning applications that are at an early stage of consideration and a further four properties where enforcement notices have been issued requiring the removal of alarm boxes.

The key issue in this case is:

- The impact of the proposed alarm box on the appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the Queens Park Conservation Area.

The proposed alarm box harms the appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the Queens Park Estate Conservation Area and would be contrary to policies DES1, DES5 and DES9 in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and Policies S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies (the City Plan).

3. LOCATION PLAN



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4. PHOTOGRAPHS



Front elevation (application site on left of photograph).
(Photograph taken after removal of security box from between the first floor windows.)

5. CONSULTATIONS

COUNCILLOR DIMOLDENBERG

Supports application and asks that the application is reported to a Planning Applications Committee. Considers burglar alarm improves security of homes and notes that the Police encourage their installation in visible locations.

COUNCILLOR MCALLISTER

Supports application. Advises that the Police encourage the installation of visible burglar alarms.

QUEEN'S PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Any response to be reported verbally.

DESIGNING OUT CRIME OFFICER

No comment on this scale of application.

ADJOINING OWNERS/OCCUPIERS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

No. Consulted: 7

Total No. of replies: 2

No. of objections: 0

No. in support: 2

PRESS ADVERTISEMENT / SITE NOTICE: Yes.

6. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6.1 The Application Site

The application site is a single family dwelling house located on the north side of Oliphant Street near the junction with Peach Road. The building is an unlisted building of merit located in the Queen's Park Estate Conservation Area.

The building is subject of an Article 4 Direction area, within which permitted development rights for dwellinghouses are removed for almost all alterations and extensions that would affect any part of the dwellinghouses that can be seen from the public highway. The Article 4 Direction was originally approved in 1981 and revised on 12th November 1992, to include only parts of the property which are visible from the street.

6.2 Recent Relevant History

6.2.1 No.109 Oliphant Street

On 06 May 2016 permission was refused on design grounds for the installation of an alarm box to the front elevation at 109 Oliphant Street (16/01634/FULL).

6.2.2 Other Alarm Box Applications

There are two other planning applications for alarm boxes and are currently under consideration. These applications are at No.80 Kilravock Street (16/02342/FULL) and

No.206 Peach Road (16/04630/FULL) and both seek permission for the installation/retention of alarm boxes on the front elevation. These applications were only recently validated on 1 June 2016 and 10 June respectively and both are currently subject to public consultation.

Except for the recent 4 applications there are no planning records relating to alarm boxes in the Queen's Park Estate.

6.2.3 Planning Enforcement Background

A survey of the Queen's Park Estate was conducted in the Autumn 2015 to identify unauthorised development visible from the street that erodes the character and appearance of the Queens Park Estate Conservation Area. In addition to alarm boxes, examples of unauthorised development that was identified as part of this exercise included replacement windows, replacement of front doors, alterations to front boundaries, installation of satellite dishes etc. As a result of this survey 64 planning enforcement investigations were opened relating to the installation of alarm boxes, of which 19 are currently still open. Enforcement notices have been issued at 4 addresses, two in Kilburn Lane, one in Huxley Street and one in Kilravock Street requiring the removal of alarm boxes.

7. THE PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of an alarm box located on the front elevation between the two first floor windows.

The application includes a photograph of a white rectangular alarm box with blue base light that was recently removed by the applicant in response to the planning enforcement investigation set out in section 6.2.3. The application seeks to reinstate this alarm box.

8. DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Land Use

There are no land use issues which arise from these applications.

8.2 Townscape and Design

The application site is a two storey brick faced, pitched roof, Victorian terraced building built circa 1874, as part of a planned estate to provide working class housing of improved standards and quality by The Artizans, Labourers and General Dwellings Company founded by William Austin. The cottage estate contrasted with the tenement blocks of other charitable bodies. The Queen's Park Estate (amongst other cottage estates) were the forerunners of the Garden City movement which influenced the design and layout of residential areas and the development of Town Planning.

The estate has a regular road layout with numbered avenues (1st-6th) running approximately north-south and alphabetically named streets running east-west. The wide streets of the estate are lined with pollarded London plane trees, which were first planted in 1885 and create its distinctive arcadian avenues. The Queen's Park Estate is consistent

in architectural style, scale and materials, creating a homogenous area which still retains its separate character. While there is a uniformity of design within each terrace, the design and detailing varies from one terrace to the next.

The Queen's Park Estate is a composition of buildings, streets, trees and open spaces which as a group is an asset to the community. The Estate has a special character which distinguishes it from its surroundings. It displays the historical associations with the Artizans, Labourers and General Dwellings Company and with the Garden City Movement. The composition of the terraces, the architectural design, construction, detailing of the buildings and layout of the streets, define collectively the Estate's cohesive townscape. Therefore, the consistent appearance of a terrace is a fundamental characteristic of the Queen's Park Estate Conservation Area.

The pertinent policies contained in the adopted City Plan are S25 and S28. The relevant policies in the adopted UDP are set out in Chapter 10, Urban Design and Conservation. The most applicable policies are DES 1 that sets out principles of urban design and conservation, DES 5(A)(4)(5) and (6) relating to alterations and DES 9 that concerns the impact of development on conservation areas.

The alarm box would be seen prominently from the street and longer townscape views given its high level location, design, colour (including blue illuminating light element) and projection. Despite the alarm box being small in scale, the building and the wider terrace are two storeys, with low front boundary walls and small front gardens, offering an inherent intimacy and almost tangible relationship with the passing public. Furthermore, the alarm box is a modern utilitarian feature seen against the pleasing composition with distinctive gothic details of this small Victorian building and the homogenous appearance of the terrace. Therefore, the alarm box appears as an intrusive and detracting feature against this attractive two storey brickwork façade. The impact would be exacerbated should similar alarm boxes be added over time to every dwellinghouse within the same terrace.

There is a private benefit to the occupant of the building whereby the installation of an operational alarm box will raise attention in the event of burglary, but more so act as a deterrent. It is acknowledged that the display of security measures help to deter potential crime, however in this case the alarm box is insensitively located and would have a harmful impact on the building and character and appearance of the conservation area.

There is potentially scope for alternative siting of the alarm box, such as at the rear (this would not require permission) or within the recessed flank wall of the doorway. There is also scope for alternative security measures, such as display of warning notifications applied to windows that would serve as a deterrent and which would have no impact on the character and appearance of the building or the conservation area. However, these alternatives do not appear to have been explored in this case.

In conclusion in design terms, the proposal to install an alarm box at high level would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the building and disrupt the consistent and homogenous appearance of the terrace and the conservation area. The proposal would be contrary to S25 and S28 in the City Plan and DES 1, DES 5 and DES 9 in the UDP 2007. In addition, it is the City Council's duty under S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation

areas. It is considered that the addition of highly prominent alarm boxes to the small buildings of the Queens Park Estate Conservation Area would erode the prevailing clean and uncluttered nature of the facades and thus the recommendation to refuse would be in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

8.3 Residential Amenity

There are no residential amenity issues that arise from the proposal.

8.4 Transportation/Parking

There are no transportation or parking issues that arise from the proposal.

8.5 Equalities and Diversities

There are no equalities or diversities issues that arise from the proposal.

8.6 Economic Considerations

No economic considerations are applicable for a development of this size.

8.7 Access

There are no access issues arising from this proposal.

8.8 Other UDP/Westminster Policy Considerations

The aim of Policy DES1 in the UDP is *'To ensure the highest quality in the form and quality of new development in order to preserve or enhance the townscape of Westminster; to provide adequate access; to reduce crime and improve security'*.

Ward Councillors have commented that the installation of alarms accords with advice set out by the Metropolitan Police. An information leaflet produced by the Metropolitan Police entitled "Advice on Burglary Prevention" states *that 'Alarms are undoubtedly the most effective? deterrent against burglary.* However, the guidance document also sets out a number of other prevention methods to make homes difficult to access and help to deter criminals and does not only rely on the installation of alarm systems.

As referenced in the design section of this report, it is recognised that the installation of an alarm box provides some private benefit in terms of providing a burglar deterrent and also provides residents with reassurance that their home is more secure. However, these security benefits, which can also be achieved by alternative security measures, must be balanced against the harm that they cause, both individually and cumulatively, to the appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

8.9 London Plan

This application raises no strategic issues.

8.10 National Policy/Guidance Considerations

The City Plan and UDP policies referred to in the consideration of this application are considered to be consistent with the NPPF unless stated otherwise.

8.11 Planning Obligations

Planning obligations are not relevant in the determination of this application.

8.12 Other Issues

None relevant.

8.13 Conclusions

Whilst the proposed alarm box would provide some limited private benefit in terms of contributing to improved security of the application property, this would not outweigh the material harm that the alarm box would cause in such a prominent location on the front elevation to the appearance of the building and the character and appearance of the Queens Park Conservation Area. This harm would be contrary to Policies DES1, DES5 and DES9 in the UDP and Policies S25 and S28 in the City Plan.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application form.
2. Email from Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg dated 14 May 2016.
3. Email from Councillor Patricia McAllister dated 22 May 2016.
4. Email from the Designing Out Crime Officer dated 12 May 2016.

Selected relevant drawings

Existing and Proposed Photographs.

(Please note: All the application drawings and other relevant documents and Background Papers are available to view on the Council's website)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT PLEASE CONTACT OLIVER GIBSON ON 020 7641 2680 OR BY EMAIL AT ogibson@westminster.gov.uk

10. KEY DRAWINGS



Front elevation – without alarm box (above) and with alarm box (below).



DRAFT DECISION LETTER

Address: 85 Oliphant Street, London, W10 4EE,

Proposal: Installation of a burglar alarm box to front elevation at first floor level.

Plan Nos: Photograph (white alarm box centrally located between first floor level windows).

Case Officer: Shui-Fung Siu

Direct Tel. No. 020 7641 2522

Recommended Condition(s) and Reason(s) or Reason(s) for Refusal:

Reason:

- 1 Because of its prominent high level location, projection, materials and design, the installation of the rectangular alarm box at first floor level would harm the appearance of this building and fail to maintain or improve (preserve or enhance) the character and appearance of the Queen's Park Estate Conservation Area. This would not meet S25 and S28 of Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies adopted in November 2013 and DES 1, DES 5, DES 9 and paras 10.108 to 10.128 of our Unitary Development Plan that we adopted in January 2007.

Informative(s):

- 1 In dealing with this application the City Council has implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way so far as practicable. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies in Westminster's City Plan: Strategic Policies adopted November 2013, Unitary Development Plan, Supplementary Planning documents, planning briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre application advice service, in order to ensure that the applicant has been given every opportunity to submit an application which is likely to be considered favourably. However, the necessary amendments to make the application acceptable are substantial and would materially change the development proposal. They would require further consultations to be undertaken prior to determination, which could not take place within the statutory determination period specified by the Department of Communities and Local Government. You are therefore encouraged to consider submission of a fresh application incorporating the material amendments set out below which are necessary to make the scheme acceptable.

Required amendments:

- Exploration of alternative more discreet locations for installation of the alarm box or consideration of alternative, less prominent security measures.