



## DESIGN & ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

### Site

36-37 Great Russell St, London WC1B 3PP

### Proposal

*Third floor rear extension over recently approved extension for new residential units. New 3<sup>rd</sup> floor extension to form new one bedroom Studio unit. Associated internal alterations at ground floor to enlarge Bins and cycle storage.*

### 1. Application Site and Location

The site is located on the southern side of Great Russell Street, close to the junction with Bloomsbury Street and to the south of the British Museum.

It comprises a four storey building plus basement. The existing building is undergoing construction to facilitate for the recent approval to form the new flats on site.

There are a variety of uses within the vicinity of the site including retail units at ground floor level, and residential on the upper floors of buildings and cultural uses in close proximity.

The site lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and an Archaeological Priority Area as well as being within the London Plan Central Activities Zone (CAZ).

The site has a very high public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 6b, in close proximity to three London Underground Stations including Goodge Street, Tottenham Court Road and Holborn. The site is also within Flood Zone 1 (low risk).

### 2. Relevant planning history

Planning permission (Ref: 2022/3001/P) was granted on 02.03.2023 for "Erection of rear extensions at basement to 2nd floor levels to provide enlarged retail space at basement and ground floor (as approved on 23/08/2016 ref 2016/2795/P) and two new self contained 1 bedroom flats at first and second floors with associated new internal lift; provision of communal cycle and refuse stores at ground floor; conversion of two 1 bed flats to one 2 bedroom flat on third floor; retention of existing office use at part 1st and part 2nd floors;

*creation of new roof terrace at rear 1st floor; replacement of staircase hatch by larger one to existing main roof terrace; and associated external fenestration alterations."*

Works on site progress to implement the approved scheme.

### **3. Relevant Planning Policies**

Paragraph 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework Document (NPPF) (2019) states; *"So sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11)."*

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states; *"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development."*

Paragraph 111 states: *"Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."*

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2019) states: *"Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents. Conversely, where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development..."*

Sections 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("the Listed Buildings Act") requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area when considering applications relating to land or buildings within that Area. The effect of this sections of the Conservation Area Act is that there is a statutory presumption in favour of the preservation of the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. A proposal which would cause harm should only be permitted where there are strong countervailing planning considerations which sufficiently outweigh the harm caused.

**The London Plan was adopted March 2021. The relevant policies for this application include:**

**GG2 - Making the best use of land.** Part c of the policy states: *"Proactively explore the potential to intensify the use of land to support additional homes and workspaces, promoting higher density development, particularly in locations that are well-connected to jobs, services, infrastructure and amenities by public transport, walking and cycling."*

**GG4 - Delivering the homes Londoners need.** This policy reinforces the need to delivery more homes because the delivery of more homes is a strategic priority.

**Policy SD6 - Town centres and high streets.** This policy seeks to strengthen the viability and function of town centres. The policy promotes housing growth in such areas to help strengthen the viability and function of town centres.

**Policy D3 - Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach.** This policy seeks design led higher density development in sustainable locations.

**Policy D4 - Delivering good design.**

**Policy D6 - Housing quality and standards**

**Policy H1 - Increasing housing supply.** This policy sets new housing delivery targets for all London Boroughs. The annualised target for housing completions in Camden has been increased to 1,380.

**Policy - H2 Small sites.** This policy states that small site housing developments will be the strategic priority to deliver housing. Part A of the policy states that “*small sites should play a much greater role in housing delivery...*” Part B, 1, recognises that planning decisions should accept that local character evolves over time and will need to change in appropriate locations to accommodate additional housing provision and increases in residential density through small housing developments. The policy also includes a new housing delivery target solely for the number of dwellings approved for applications of small sites. The annualised target for housing completions set for Camden is 328 dwellings per annum.

The London Plan Housing SPG (2016) is also a material consideration.

Camden's Local Plan was adopted 2017. **The relevant policies within Camden Councils adopted Local Plan include:**

A1 – Managing the impact of development

D1 – Design

D2 – Heritage

G1 – Delivery and location of growth

H1 – Maximising housing supply

H4 – Maximising the supply of affordable housing

H6 – Housing choice and mix

H7 – Large and small homes

T1 – Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport

T2 – Car-free development and limiting the availability of parking.

Camden Council have also adopted the following planning guidance:

- Design (2019)

- Amenity (2019)
- Housing (2019)
- Transport (2019)
- Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

#### **4. Planning Assessment**

##### **Scale**

As per Pre-app discussions, the new floor with a mansard roof, aims to respect and be sub-ordinated to the host building. The roof form would also be subordinate to the host building.

The proposed unit at third floor designed with a mansard roof (70 degree), comprised with two Lead clad dormers and rooflights over the toilet and kitchen.

##### **Materials**

Proposed Studio unit to be of high quality and durable materials to match the palette in the vicinity of the site and ensure that the scheme enhances the appearance of the building overall.

The mansard roof will be tiled with black/Gray slates, dormers with Lead Cladding, and timber, double glazed windows. All to meet the historic character of the host building and Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

##### **Appearance**

The proposed unit will be located at the rear of the site, with very limited views from Willoughby Street. As such the roof extension will have minimal impact on the character and appearance of the wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The mansard roof design to meet Camden guidelines.

There are no proposed changes to the front elevation.

## **Use**

The proposed one bedroom Studio flat will assist in providing the necessary housing needs in London.

Given the position of this flat, at the back of the streets, the flat will be very quiet and well Lit.

## **Standard of accommodation**

The proposal is for a one bedroom, one person studio dwelling.

The proposed unit exceeds the minimum national space standards being a total of 41.6sqm. bedroom is 9.6sqm. with 2.9m wide. Headroom is 2.5m.

The flat will be single aspect, facing East through two dormer windows, one from the bedroom and one from the living kitchen, and provide an open aspect and a good daylight from Willoughby St.

Further rooflight is provided in the shower room and another rooflight provided to the Kitchen area for added natural light.

A roof terrace to be reinstated at the main host building, to provide good amenity area (160sqm) for the communal use of the residential occupiers in the building

## Refuse, Recycling and Cycle storage

The previously approved refuse and recycling store has been enlarged to accommodate the new Studio. All to ensure that appropriate storage for waste and recyclables is provided.

The proposed refuse storage will be in accordance with the CPG1 DESIGN Storage and collection of recycling and waste, Section A: Kerbside collection, as indicated in the table below.

COMMUNAL REFUSE / RECYCLING STORAGE		
	Contained Flats	Proposed storage
General Waste	6 Dwellings	3 x 240L Wheeled Containers
Mixed Recycling	6 Dwellings	4 x 240L Wheeled Containers
Food Waste	6 Dwellings	6 x 23L Caddy

Secure cycle parking facilities are also proposed at ground floor for a total of 12no. cycles, in line with the London Plan and Camden Planning Guidance: Transport.

## External amenity

The previously approved communal terrace (160m<sup>2</sup>) at roofspace will be reinstated to provide for the residential units, in line with the requirements of the London Plan:

*"Provide a minimum of 5m<sup>2</sup> of rectangular private outside space for homes with 1-2 bedspaces which must have a minimum depth and width of 1.5m. An extra 1m<sup>2</sup> should be provided for every additional bedspace".*

OUTSIDE AMENITY		
	No. Bedspaces	Minimum required area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Unit A	2 Bedspaces	5m <sup>2</sup>
Unit B	2 Bedspaces	5m <sup>2</sup>
Unit C	4 Bedspaces	7m <sup>2</sup>
Unit D	4 Bedspaces	7m <sup>2</sup>
Unit E	4 Bedspaces	7m <sup>2</sup>
Unit F	1 Bedspace	5 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>36m<sup>2</sup></b>

The approved outside amenity space will be four and half times the minimum amount required for a total of 6 units.

## **Access**

all the flats including the proposed studio flat, will be accessible from no.36 and the previously approved lift. Access to the Ground floor Class E use will be only through No.37.

The site is located in a mixed used area with shops, workplaces, entertainment and leisure facilities and other local amenities nearby which will reduce the need for travel.

The site has a PTAL rating of 6b, with excellent access to public transport facilities (PTAL 6a), including three London Underground Stations in close proximity (Goodge Street, Tottenham Court Road and Holborn) as well as numerous bus routes.

The development is therefore proposed to be "car free" with a restriction of future residents applying for parking permits, which can be secured via S106 legal agreement.

## **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, based on the high housing demand in this location, we believe that the proposed new unit is a viable and necessary alternative to maximize the potential of the site.

The option to use the flat roof at the rear in order to form a mansard, subordinate structure that respect the host building to accommodate the proposed 1 bedroom Studio flat will contribute to meet the growing need for residential accommodation in the area. By repurposing small sites spaces, we can provide housing that aligns with the demand and improves the overall utilization of the building, rather than expending into open, green nature space.

We understand the importance of preserving the character and integrity of the conservation area. Our proposed alterations have been carefully designed to respect the architectural context and historic value of the surroundings. The conversion will be carried out with the utmost consideration for the existing building's design, ensuring a harmonious integration within the conservation area.

We kindly request the Camden Council's favourable consideration and approval of this planning application.