

# Design and Access Statement

## Proposed Basement Extension plus Internal Alterations and Refurbishment of

**51 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 6PH**

### *Introduction:*

51 Fitzjohn's Avenue is a rather complicated detached residential building within the conservation area of Fitzjohn's/Netherhall. It has a basement, ground and three upper stories at the front of the building and a basement, ground and four upper stories to the rear. This is borne out by the fact that at the front of the building the floor to ceiling heights are around three metres whereas in the rear section the floor to ceiling heights are approximately 2.4 metres. The rear portion of the building would appear to be an extension to the original front elevation. This has led to some rather odd designs of the internal apartments, which have either a change in levels, or are in fact on two separate floors.



Front Elevation of the Building.

For example apartment number 1 on the ground floor has a long straight staircase leading to a basement bedroom area at the front of the building; apartment number 4 at first floor level is very similar having a bedroom area at ground floor level; apartment number 6 at second floor

level is also very similar having a bedroom area at first floor; apartment number 5, which is accessed off of its own internal staircase from the first floor, has a change in level between the front section and the rear reception area; apartment number eight has two changes in level within the apartment and apartments numbered 3, 10, 12 and 14 are duplex apartments.



Rear Elevation of the Building

To the rear of the property there is a disused swimming pool within a basement area, along with a sun room, a sauna, a laundry room and various store rooms. The pool itself has been floored over and the whole space is presently used as a storage area.

The present mix of accommodation is as follows:-

- Four number 4 bedroom apartments
- Two number 3 bedroom apartments
- Seven number 2 bedroom apartments

### ***The Design Proposals:***

It is clear that there is a considerable amount of wasted space within the shell of the existing building especially at basement level (the swimming pool area) and with the space taken up by the large number of staircases/changes in levels. We, therefore, approached the design of the reconfiguration of the spaces within the building by having a lateral split between the apartments, instead of the current front to back split, thus keeping each apartment on one level. The removal of staircases, also, allowed us to obtain more floor space.

The basement sun room is to be removed to allow more daylight into the present area of the swimming pool. This area is to be completely refurbished to form a new basement apartment.

The basement area of the existing apartment number 1 is to have its own access from the ground floor thus providing us with space for a single bedroom basement apartment.

By this careful reconfiguration of the existing spaces and extending the basement area to cover the whole of the footprint of the existing building we are able to improve on the design of the apartments, get a better mix in the size (number of bedrooms) of each unit and thereby increase the number of units from 13 to 21. This increase in the number of units is achieved without the need to make any extensions outside of the footprint of the existing building.

With regards to the proposed extension of the basement area we are aware of your Policy DP27 and have produced separately a 'Basement Impact Assessment' which is included within this Planning Application.

The minor addition at fifth floor level, to extend the existing staircase up to that level, will not have any effect with respect to diminishing the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours with respect to issues such as outlook, daylight and sunlight etc. This small addition will also hardly be noticeable when viewing the building from ground level. The visual appearance of both the front and rear elevations of the building have hardly changed with the exception of the creation of slightly larger lightwells to provide adequate daylight and sunlight to the basement apartments.

### ***The Standard of the Proposed Accommodation:***

Although we are increasing the number of units within the building, the standard of the fitting out of the accommodation will be set very high to meet the high standards demanded of properties within the area. Although there are to be four apartments at basement level, the rear apartments will look out over large terrace areas and the front apartments will have the benefit of having extended lightwells. Escape from the front basement apartments will be provided within the lightwells by the construction of integrated ladders built within the walls of the lightwells.

Consideration has also been given to the amount of daylight and sunlight that will enter the various apartments and where ever possible windows have been enlarged to ensure that all units receive a sufficient level of daylight and sunlight. To this end we have submitted separately a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment document.

There is within the existing building a small amount of overlooking. We intend to deal with this problem by the introduction of having etched glass within the reception windows of apartments 8, 11, 14, 17 and 21 where there is the possibility of overlooking the bedroom windows of apartments 7, 10, 12, 17 and 20 respectively.

On the subject of having a mixed development we have removed all of the 4 bedroom units releasing floor space, which together with the space made available from the removal of staircases etc, plus the basement extension has allowed us to provide within our proposals seven one bedroom units; twelve two bedroom units and two number three bedroom units which meets Camden's requirements of having at least 40% of the accommodation as two bedroom units.

There is already on the site an allotted area for waste. The space that is available is sufficient for the refuse bins currently used by the authority. The council is presently easily emptying the existing refuse bins and we do not anticipate any changes to this situation.

## ***Accessibility: (Lifetime Homes Assessment)***

As this is an existing building we are restricted in what we are able to achieve with respect to meeting the standards as outlined within the “Lifetime Homes” document. However, we have set out below, under the various headings, what we are able to achieve.

### **Criterion 1 - Parking**

The two drawings on the following pages show that without any disabled parking we can provide four car parking spaces. With the disabled parking bay we end up with three car parking spaces. Please note that because the building is situated on a sloping site (a hill) the existing drive has a 1:28 gradient running along the length of the drive and a cross fall of between 1:14 and 1:12. This means that we are unable to comply with the requirements to have a disabled parking bay on a level surface (i.e. No gradient exceeding 1:60 and or a cross fall exceeding 1:40).

### **Criterion 3 - Approach to the Dwelling from the Parking Area**

Although the distance from the disabled car parking bay to the entrance door to the building is only around 6 metres, the access is up a staircase with 7 number risers, a total rise of just over one metre. Under the regulations for providing a ramped access in accordance with the “Lifetime Homes” requirements we would need a ramp in excess of 20 metres long ( the width of the site) and in considering that the present drive slopes at a gradient of 1:28 it is likely that the ramp may have to be in excess of 30 meters long. Obviously this is totally impracticable, as we would lose the space required for the disabled parking. The option of providing some form of external lift would mean extending the area shown as the porch and moving the entrance stairs and constructing a lift that would block the daylight and sunlight to the basement window and ground floor window of two apartments.

### **Criterion 4 – Entrances**

Here we are able to confirm that we can fully comply with “Lifetime Homes” requirements. The area will be clearly illuminated; have a level access; have a clear opening width for wheelchair access; have adequate weather protection and have a level external landing.

### **Criterion 5 – Communal Stairs and Lift**

As this application is related to an existing building, there is little that we can do with respect to the design of the existing staircase and the size of the lift car. It is totally impracticable to consider changing the design of these elements of the building to conform to the “Lifetime Homes” requirements. It would mean the demolition of a considerable area of the building and the redesign of the layout of the majority of the apartments, which would ultimately lead to the loss of accommodation.

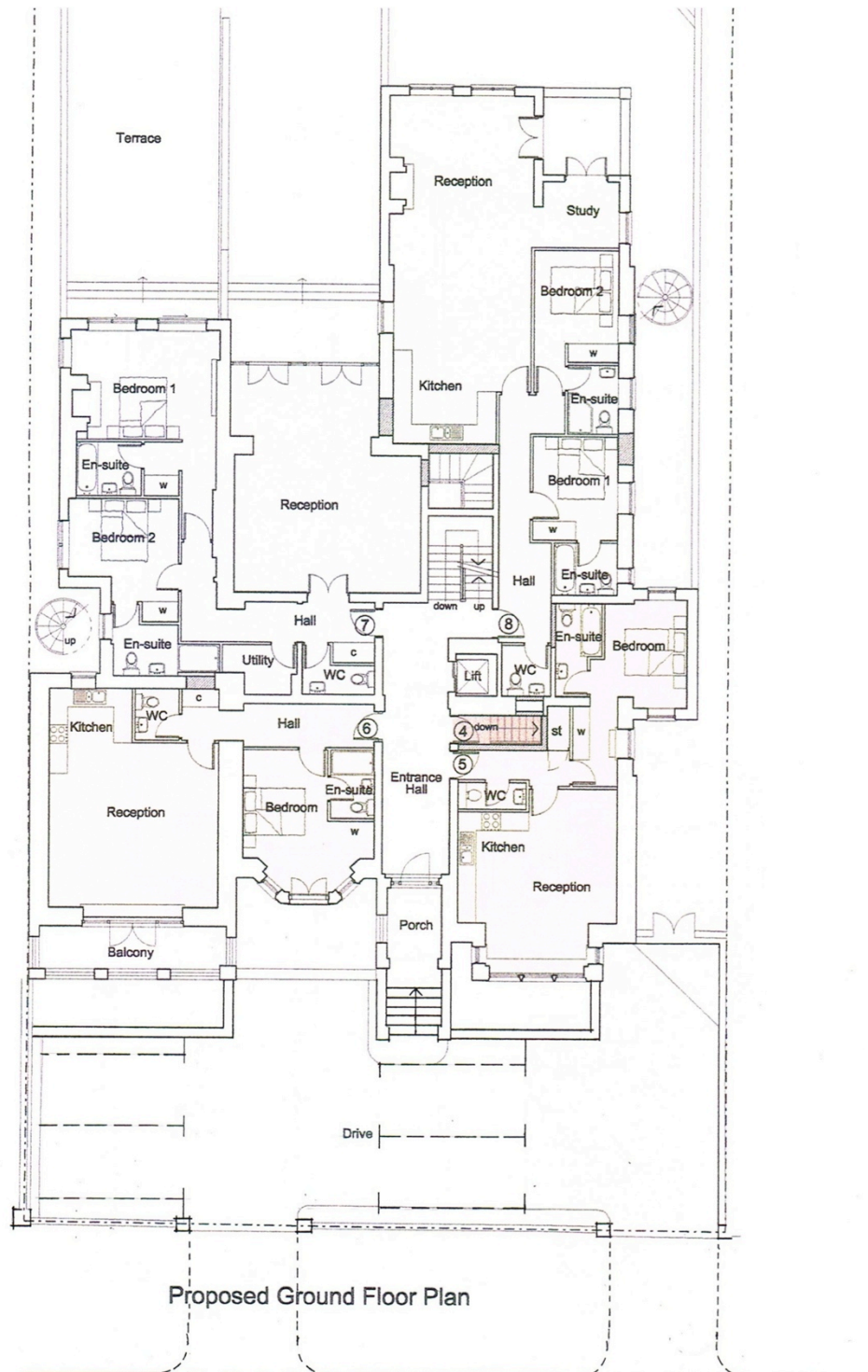
### **Criterion 6 - Internal Doorways and Hallways**

In general the width of the hallways within the apartments is in excess of 900mm and within the communal areas in excess of 1200mm. However, being an existing building the clear opening width of the doorways, although generally in excess of 750mm, do not increase in width when located at right angles to hallways.

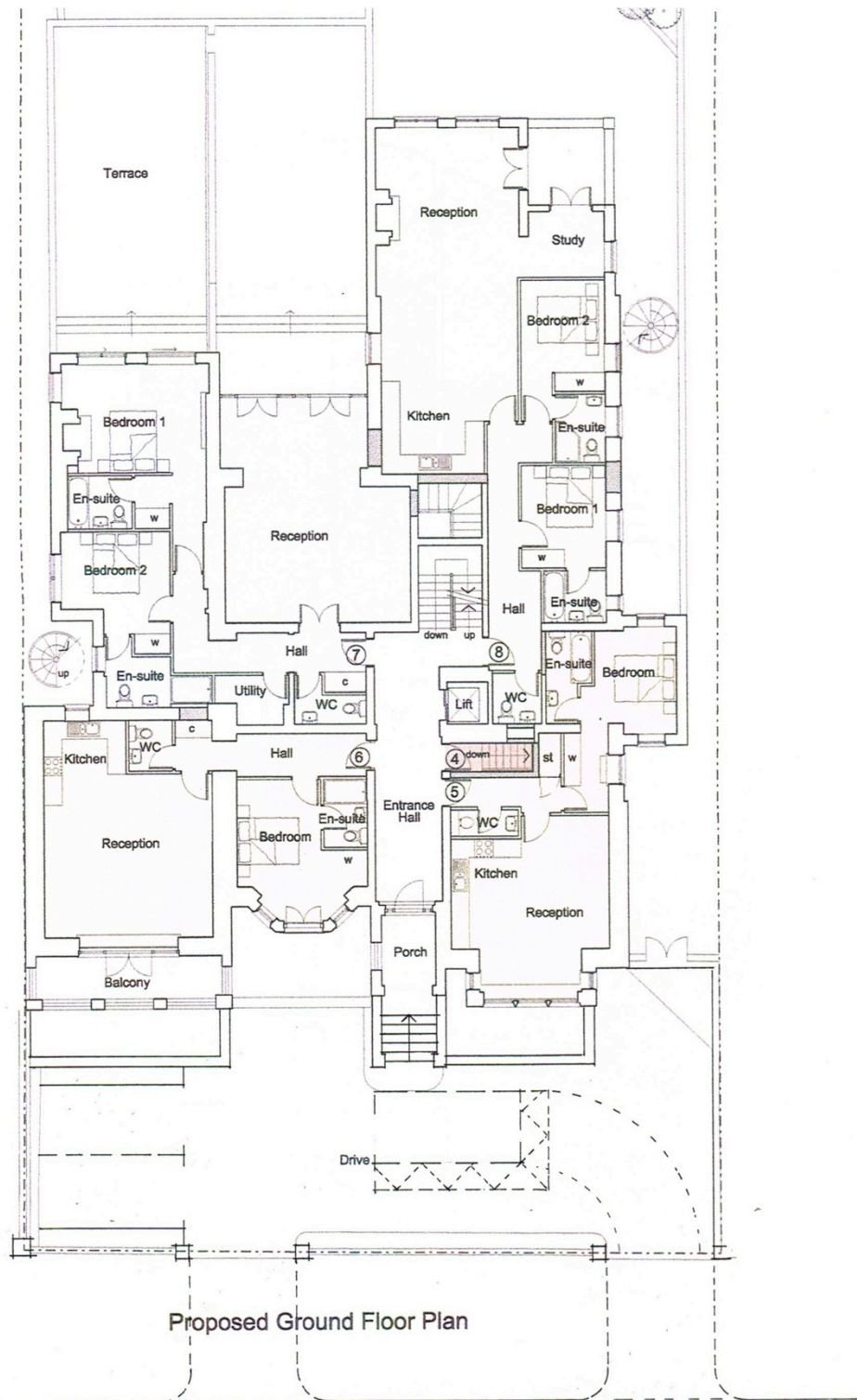
### **Criterion 7 – Circulation Space**

Being an existing building there will obviously be some problems associated with meeting the criteria as set down by the “Lifetime Homes” within all of the apartments. However, a number of the apartments are quite generous in size and do provide adequate space for wheelchairs within the main reception rooms, dining room, kitchen and bedrooms.





0 5 10m  
Scale 1:100 @ A1



0 5 10m  
Scale 1:100 @ A1

### **Criterion 8 – Entrance Level Living Space**

With the exception of apartments 4, 9 and 15, all other apartments have their reception rooms at the entrance level to that apartment.

### **Criterion 9 – Entrance Level Bed Space**

With the exception of apartments 4, 9 and 15, all other apartments have their bedrooms at the entrance level to that apartment.

### **Criterion 10/11 – Entrance Level WC and Shower.**

With the exception of apartments 4, 9 and 15, all other apartments have their WC's bathrooms and shower rooms at the entrance level to that apartment. In general the design of the WC's, bathroom and shower rooms will meet the criteria as set down by the "Lifetime Homes".

The construction of all of the WC's, bathrooms and shower rooms, will allow for the secure fixing of grab rails, if so required at some future date.

### **Criterion 13 – Potential for Fitting Hoists**

Although thought to be possible, there is at present no way of confirming whether or not the existing structure of the ceilings in every apartment could take the load from a ceiling hoist.

### **Criterion 15 – Glazing and Window Handle Heights**

It is our intention to replace the majority of the windows and wherever possible, subject to the constraints of designing a window to suit the window openings of the existing building, we will endeavor to ensure that within principal living areas the windows are designed to allow people to see out when seated. We shall also try to ensure that at least one opening light in each habitable room is approachable and usable by a wide range of people – including those with restricted movement and reach.

### **Criterion 16 – Location of Service Controls**

As it is our intention to refurbish every apartment, we shall ensure that all service controls fully comply with the "Lifetime Homes" requirements.