DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

64 ROCHESTER PLACE
LONDON, NW1 9JX

ROOFTOP, BASEMENT, AND PARTIAL REAR EXTENSION TO EXISTING MEWS BUILDING

Location of the site within the context of the local community

CONTENTS:

1. PURPOSE OF DESIGN

The proposal is to provide a discreet new Class C3 residence on top of an existing mews building, a new basement, and a ground floor rear extension to provide additional floor area for the existing Class B1a commercial office space.

Work to be carried out as part of the process will include the refurbishment of existing period features such as the timber gate doors at first floor level, essential roof renewal, and removal of unsympathetic aluminium security shutters.

2. SITE AND HISTORIC CONTEXT

The site is situated on the North side of Rochester Place, and is on the South border of the Rochester Conservation Area. Rochester Place, originally laid out in the 1840's, formed the mews to Rochester Terrace, which was developed with housing in the 1850's. Rochester Place is in contrast to other streets within the Conservation Area as it is a narrow street with generally smaller scale buildings of mixed use, residential, light industrial and commercial. The first development began in Rochester Place in the 1870's however did not continue again until the 1930's, and has been sporadic until the 1990's. This has led to a wide range of architectural styles, and typically buildings have no front boundary as the building frontage is directly onto the street.

3. SITE APPRAISAL

The existing 2 story flat roof mews building faces directly on to Rochester Place. Opposite, behind tall fencing, is a private green for the mansion buildings facing onto St Pancras Way. To the rear of the property there is a paved garden that faces the rear of a block of flats on Rochester Terrace, and diagonally housing and gardens from the adjacent properties. The existing paved garden is approximately 45m sq, is bounded by low brick walls and timber-slat fencing, and there is substantial planting in the surrounding gardens.

64 Rochester Place is currently vacant, and was most recently let to a building maintenance company as their office headquarters. The company left the premises in January of this year.

The existing period features are in reasonable condition, however the flat roof of the building is in need of renewal. This would be carried out as part of the proposed overall works.

The building is Southwest facing onto Rochester Place, and Northeast facing to the rear.

The neighbouring building, 62 Rochester Place, is owned by the occupants of 18 Rochester Terrace, and forms the rear boundary to their property. This building has been extended to the rear (with planning permission) with a double height pitched glazed roof, and an extended mirrored roof canopy.

On the other side, the neighbouring 66 Rochester Place is occupied by a web-design company, and does not have any access to the rear of the property as it fronts directly on to the rear garden of the house on Rochester Terrace.

4. PREVIOUS AND CURRENT PLANNING HISTORY

A planning application (reference: 2010/4318/P) was submitted in August 2010, and withdrawn in September 2010. The original application design process was heavily restricted at the time due to physical restraints imposed by the property owner's wish to keep the existing tenants in occupation whilst carrying out the proposed works.

The original proposal involved retaining the existing roof structure and building independently on top, which resulted in a proposed new roof height higher than the adjacent properties. The original proposal also included a 3-story rear extension to accommodate additional commercial floor area at Ground and First floors, and a third bedroom space in the proposed roof top flat.

This new proposal seeks to resolve previous matters of concern. The originally proposed new roof height was 915mm above the adjacent neighbouring roof ridge, and the new proposal now brings the roof height in-line with ridge heights of the adjacent properties. This has been achieved through agreement with the property owner that the existing roof could be removed and re-built as part of the works, rather than a new structure being built wholly on top as previously proposed.

The roof-top flat has been set back 2500mm from the front parapet wall, and is now proposed to be a 2-bed, rather than the 3 proposed originally.

The bulky multiple-story rear extension in the original application has been redesigned as a Ground floor partial width extension, and the desired additional commercial floor area has been proposed as a new Basement extension.

All new windows proposed on the rear elevation are either in replacement of existing windows on the lower levels, or are above 1700mm on the upper levels to avoid concerns regarding over-looking.

5. BUILDING USE

The existing building was most recently leased long-term to a maintenance company, who vacated in January 2012. The existing arrangement of office space is over ground and first floors, with a single stair access between Ground and First floors that does not comply with current regulations, WC's on Ground floor only, and a staff Kitchenette at First floor level. The proposal is to provide greater flexibility for the commercial letting of the premises, by bringing it up to regulation standards, and refurbishing generally throughout, whilst creating a new dwelling discreetly on the roof, with private access from Ground level, either to be let with the commercial premises, or to be used as a residence by the building owner.

The rear extension is proposed to provide some additional floor area for the commercial space to compensate for the area lost by the creation of a new access to the proposed dwelling at roof level, and also to bring natural light into the rear of the building.

6. BUILDING FORM AND SCALE

As the property is located within a Conservation Area, it is important to consider the existing relationship of the building to the street, to its neighbouring properties, and any existing features that have a positive impact on the local area. The aim is to enhance the existing character and period features of the building whilst incorporating a new extension to enrich the future life of the building.

In order to maintain the relationship of the mews scale building to the street, the new roof top flat has been set back 2.5m from the front elevation so it will not be visible from street-level under normal circumstances, and will remain subordinate to the existing building.

The rear extension is kept to a minimum width and depth, in order to retain the maximum garden space and to be kept well in from the boundaries with neighbouring properties. It is set well back from both side boundaries, and nearly 80% of the existing outdoor space is retained for the use of the office tenants in the existing mews building.

The existing building frontages along Rochester Place are not uniform, and although all are of a similar scale, there are very few examples of roof ridges aligning. The existing rear elevations of 64 and its neighbours are also not aligned. For these reasons, we believe a new rear extension or alteration of roof-line would not be detrimental to any pre-existing uniformity, as this does not currently exist due to the sporadic development of Rochester Place historically.

The new rooftop flat and rear extension will be constructed using a combination of timber and steel frame structures with cedar panel cladding, and obscured glazing to the rear of the property, and large glazed windows across the front elevation. Roof-lights will provide additional natural lighting and ventilation to the bathroom, and bedroom areas.

In accordance with the Camden Planning Guidance Section 29 on overlooking and privacy, all new glazing at the First and Second floors of the building will be a 1700mm above finished floor level, so as to let in light, whilst preventing overlooking into adjacent gardens. The high level clear glazing in the bedrooms will provide a landscape view of the existing tree tops in surrounding properties, and allow a connection with the outdoors for the comfort of the occupant.
In accordance with Camden Planning Guidance Section 19 on extensions.

7. DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

The proposed rear extension and rooftop flat are set back from all boundaries, and are height restricted in order to have the least impact possible on the daylight and sunlight potential for surrounding properties.

The orientation of 64 Rochester Place, and neighbours, is Northeast – Southwest, and therefore the rooftop and rear extension will have little or no impact on 62 Rochester Place, and 18-19-20 Rochester Terrace.

66 Rochester Place has a rooflight on their pitched roof adjacent to 64 Rochester Place. This has been inspected from inside no. 66 during consultation with the tenants. Both parties concluded that there would be little or no impact on the quality of lighting provided by the rooflight.

The new Basement lightwells at the rear, and the internal lightwell at the front are designed to bring natural light into the Basement work spaces for a comfortable working environment.

8. ACCESSIBILITY, INCLUSION AND LIFETIME HOMES CRITERION

The new dwelling has been designed to conform to Building Regulations Part M, and wherever possible in accordance with Lifetime Homes Criterion. To provide the new residential access, the existing Office single door access with a step at the entrance will be relocated to the double door entrance on the West side of the building frontage, and will become step-free.

The new private access for the roof-top flat is located where the old entrance for the office was. The entrance door, corridor/lobby and stairs to the flat have been kept to a maximum width to facilitate practical access, and a 1600mm wide lobby area has been provided at Ground floor level for potential bicycle or buggy storage.

LIFETIME HOMES CRITERION STATEMENT:

Criterion 1 - Parking (width or widening capability)

Resident’s Parking Permit bays are provided directly adjacent to 64 Rochester Place, and due to the narrow road width, the opposite side of the street has single yellow line restrictions in place. There is no new provision for parking to be created as part of this application.

Criterion 2 - Approach to dwelling from parking

As detailed above, there will be no provision for new parking as part of this application, however the existing Resident's Permit bay's are directly adjacent to the ground level entrance, the street and footpath are reasonably level, although narrow, and the entrance off the street will be a no-step entrance.

Criterion 3 - Approach to all entrances

The approach to the new dwelling's ground floor entry door will be from the existing footpath, directly into the ground floor hallway, as the building fronts directly on to the street. There will be a no-step entrance through the entry door.

The footpath immediate approach is asphalt, and is non-slip and reasonably level.

Criterion 4 - Entrances

Note regarding Appendix I Definition of 'entrance level' for the purposes of Lifetime Homes Criteria: The entrance level door is at Ground floor level, directly off the street, with a generous width stair leading directly to all habitable rooms at Second floor level. The stair conforms to Building Regulations, but does not constitute an "easy going" stair. This is due to space restrictions imposed by the existing building structure, and the desirability to keep the new rear extension to a minimum size.

Illumination: The existing street front of the building is well lit with public street-lighting, and the entrance to the dwelling will be illuminated by a new fully diffused light located adjacent to the glazed over-panel above the door. Refer to Front elevation drawing for location.

Level threshold access: The entrance is a no-step entrance, and the door threshold will be no more than 15mm in total height.

Effective clear opening widths and nibs: The existing structural opening for the entrance door is and proposed effective clear width for the entrance is 865mm. There is a clear nib in excess of of 450mm on the internal side of the entrance door, and flat wall adjacent on the external side. Refer to Proposed Ground floor plan.

Weather protection: The building is in a Conservation Area and we are therefore no proposing to make alterations to the front elevation to provide weather protection.

External landing: The public footpath provides the external landing for the entrance door.

Criterion 5 - Communal Stairs and lifts:

There are no communal stairs or lifts in this proposal. The entrance door off the street provides private access for the resident only to a ground level hall leading to stairs to the new flat at Second floor level.

Criterion 6 - Internal doorways and hallways

Hallway widths: Refer to Proposed Second floor plan for layout. There are no hallways proposed.

Internal dwelling doors: Internal doors are kept to a minimum of 760mm, allowing clear effective opening of 740mm..

Communal doors: There are no communal doors within this proposal.

Criterion 7 - Circulation Space

The dwelling has been designed to meet the circulation requirements for a wheelchair user in regard to the WC, Bathroom, Hallways and landings, and Kitchen/living areas. Please refer to Criteria 6, 10 & 14, for specific information, and Proposed Second floor layout for figured dimensions.

The design is for a dwelling on the Second floor level of an existing building in a Conservation Area, and incorporates a generous width stair access from Ground level, which could in future be fitted with a chair-lift if required.

Kitchen/living: Within the Kitchen/living area there are clear turning circles of 1500mm diameter and at least 750mm between furniture items on access routes.

There are no fixed obstructions within 1200mm of the kitchen units frontage, and the layout is a continuous L-shape.

Bedrooms: There are two double bedrooms, both with step-free access and clear access routes.

Criterion 8 - Entrance level living space

There are no habitable rooms at ground floor level, the stair leads directly to the Second floor where all accommodation is contained.

Criterion 9 - Potential for entrance level bed-space
Refer to Criterion 7 and 8 above. All accommodation is on one level.

Criterion 10 - Entrance level WC and shower drainage

An accessible WC is provided in the Bathroom on the same level as all habitable rooms in the new accommodation. The centre-line of the WC is 400mm from the adjacent wall, and 1000mm from the nearest obstruction. The flush control will be located on the side furthest from the adjacent wall. The approach zone dimensions are exceeded, and the wash basin does not project more than 200mm

into this zone. The footprint and drainage installation will provide flexibility to convert the area to contain an accessible shower in future if required.

Criterion 11 - WC and bathroom walls

Plywood reinforcing will be installed within all partition walls at a height between 300mm and 1800mm above floor level to enable future installation of grab rails if required.

Criterion 12 - Stairs and potential through-floor lift in dwellings

The entrance stair to the flat has been design to a generous width, however there is no proposal for a through-floor lift.

Criterion 13 - Potential for fitting of hoists and bedroom/bathroom relationship

The ceiling structure is capable of supporting ceiling hoists in future, if required.

Criterion 14 - Bathrooms

As described in Criterion 10 above, there is an accessible Bathroom containing WC and shower-over bath on the same level as all habitable rooms in the new accommodation. The centre-line of the WC is 400mm from the adjacent wall, and 1000mm from the nearest obstruction, the side of the bath. The flush control will be located on the side furthest from the adjacent wall. The approach zone dimensions are exceeded, and the wash basin does not project more than 200mm into this zone. The footprint and drainage installation will provide flexibility to convert the proposed area to contain an accessible shower in future if required.

Criterion 15 - Glazing and window handle heights

The principle living space has floor to ceiling glazing on one full wall, and each bedroom has openable windows on the North-facing wall. The bedroom windows are at 1700mm above FFL to prevent over-looking, however these have the potential for wireless operation from accessible controls if required.

Criterion 16 - Location of service controls

Emergency and regularly used service controls will be located between 450mm - 1200mm above finished floor level, and at least 300mm away from any internal room corner.

9. SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable materials such as timber structure and cedar panel cladding are used in order to keep the embodied energy of the new extension as low as possible.

Extending the building to the rear and on top of the existing flat roof will intrinsically assist with insulating the existing external envelope of the mews building, and will provide an opportunity to upgrade insulation to those areas not being affected by the development.

The new flat roof has potential for the future installation of a solar photovoltaic system to provide electricity for the building, and potentially feed back into the grid.

10. CONCLUSION

In summary, the new extensions will be sympathetic, contemporary additions to the existing mews building that will provide a coherent upgrade and enlargement of the office space, whilst adding a discreet new residence to the wonderfully diverse built fabric of Rochester Place. It is anticipated this will increase the future flexibility and appeal of the building as let-able commercial space, which has been under-occupied for some time.