

Raag (St. Pancras) Ltd.

**Proposed Hotel & Residential Development
Britannia Street, Kings Cross**

**Design & Access Statement
including
'Lifetime Homes Standards' & Crime Statement**

Prepared by Morrison Design Limited
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DESIGN STATEMENT

Site Description

The site covers an area of 1022m² which lies between Britannia Street and Wicklow Street within walking distance of Kings Cross/St Pancras Stations. The South West boundary is parallel to an active railway cutting comprising two tracks for London Underground Circle Line. The North East boundaries adjoin existing established properties occupied for residential and office uses. The site is currently used as a public car park accessed from Britannia Street and includes a circular brick vent stack linked to the railway tunnel below. The existing railway tunnel which is sited under part of the site runs parallel to the Circle Line cutting and incorporates two tracks for Network Rail.

Site Constraints

The proximity of the adjacent railway cutting and the shallow depth of the Network Rail tunnel below the site requires any development located above to be of lightweight construction extending no greater than 2/3 storeys. Design guidance from London Underground also requires the frontage of any new buildings to be set back from the track/cutting boundary with appropriate security fencing to protect the line from falling objects associated with the new development.

Development of the site to the North East of the line of the tunnel can extend to a greater height providing adequate foundation provisions are utilised by the introduction of deep piling which does not impact upon the existing tunnel structure. The super structure to any new building above does however need to be relatively lightweight and in a form which reflects the limitations of the piling design below. Exploratory calculations have been prepared by the project engineers in conjunction with a preliminary pile design sufficient to enable the height and scale of the proposed development to be established. To the North East of the site is located Derby Lodge, a private residential development of six storeys in height fronting Wicklow Street. This incorporates existing windows serving habitable rooms which have been considered in relation to the proximity of the proposed development and the effects upon natural daylight. Please refer to the separate 'Daylight' report prepared by Right of Light. A 6m high brick boundary wall exists between the site and Derby Lodge and is in a poor state of repair. The site and its immediate surroundings are described by contextual photographs referred to on drawing 3859/P122 supporting this application.

Development Proposals

Heads of terms have been agreed between Origin Housing, the current site owners, and the applicant for a mixed use development of the site incorporating a super budget hotel providing 121 guest rooms designed to meet 'The Tune Hotel' brand. In addition, the proposals include the provision of eight self-contained affordable housing units to be managed by Origin Housing and five two bedroomed residential units for open market sale. Origin housing originally achieved Planning Consent in 2006 for 23 Social housing units. However this development has proved unviable and consequently a mixed use residential/hotel development is now considered the only solution.

The hotel which will extend up to a maximum height of 6 storeys is to be positioned on the site area not undercut by the Network Rail tunnel. The building will be of Metframe construction, clad in masonry with specific acoustic separation of the new super structure from the foundations. The hotel's main entrance will be served from Britannia Street whilst servicing of laundry, consumable items and refuse recycling access will occur from Wicklow Street. The ground floor of the hotel will extend up to the existing North East boundaries with construction containing all public areas, staff and back of house facilities etc. The main reception area, lift access and luggage stores will be served from the Britannia Street entrance. The new build construction of the hotel will replace the existing free standing boundary wall adjacent Derby Lodge. New facing brickwork of the hotel will be visible to the Derby Lodge courtyard.

The mixed use development described within this application has been arrived at following two pre-application meetings with the Camden Planning Team. An initial meeting on 30th June 2011 considered a scheme comprising 173 en suite hotel guest rooms, alone. The conclusion of this meeting required further consideration of the massing and aesthetic as Camden reported "the proposal is not considered to be specific enough in design to the character and appearance of the conservation area" etc.

The 173 bedroom hotel proposals were subsequently reworked introducing 8 self-contained social housing units in a 2/3 storey ribbon block facing South West. The hotel content was reduced to 143 guestrooms, the external aesthetic of the hotel being redeveloped to 'industrialise' the massing, particularly of upper floors to appear distinctly separate from the attached social housing 'block'. These mixed use proposals which divided the new development area into 82% hotel, 18% residential were considered at a Pre-Application meeting on 24th November 2011.

Officers' response to this latest proposal criticised the 18% residential content being significantly lower than that sought within policy DPI and officers recommended this "be increased as far as possible to the Council's 50% figure stipulated in DPI". Officers recommended the scheme be reconfigured to introduce further residential content facing Wicklow Street whilst retaining service access for the hotel at this point. Concerns were also expressed regarding the aspect of windows to the residential units and the perceived quality of the hotel development. However, with regard to Design/Conservation consideration officers commented that "all primary matters have been addressed and they were satisfied in large with the alterations made to date.....".

The proposals now to be formally considered with this full application have been further modified to generate a greater balance of mixed use. The residential content has been increased specifically adjacent Wicklow Street as officers previously recommended. This has been achieved by introducing 5 no. 'open market' sale properties, each providing two bedrooms with access to a self-contained lift and stairs, the latter having a dual use with the hotel for fire escape purposes only. Access from the hotel would only occur when the fire alarm is activated.

The introduction of further 'open market housing' has increased the residential content to 34% of the total resulting in the hotel guestroom count being reduced to 121. This number of rooms is now considered to be the lowest which can be considered viable for this hotel.

Design

Use:

The applicant has established the need for a hotel on the site for the type proposed. The location is within walking distance of Kings Cross/St Pancras and the considerable choice of restaurant/cafes nearby. The Tune Hotel brand is operating successfully for the applicant at four other London sites. This proposal, however, is the second entirely new build project in the 'City'. A further new build hotel is currently receiving planning consideration for a site in Canary Wharf.

The Tune brand requires all rooms to be en-suite with fully integrated 'pod' shower rooms, of the 121 rooms planned 6 no. will be installed for full accessibility and will be Part M compliant. A further 6 will be fitted with additional systems to aid guests who are ambulant but may have sight of hearing impairments. Of the total bedroom count 36 will not have natural lighting but will be fitted with full mechanical ventilation and air conditioning. This arrangement is acceptable to the brand and works successfully at the current London sites. The on line booking arrangement for 'Tune' provides an option for rooms with or without daylight, the latter operating at a slightly cheaper rate. All guest rooms are fitted with VRV ceiling mounted cassette units providing heating and cooling by use of air source heat pumps. The 'Tune' brand does not provide dining facilities as the sites are located in areas where restaurants/bars already exist. Hence the public space comprises a reception/lounge area, a luggage store, public/accessible wc, an internet station and vending facilities. All laundry is collected for off-site cleaning. Access to the hotel for all servicing will be achieved via an enclosed service yard from Wicklow Street.

The proposed affordable housing element will comprise of a 2/3 storey linear block of lightweight construction mounted on a raft foundation acoustically separated from the existing tunnel construction. The affordable housing will comprise 8 no. self contained units divided into 4 single bed two person units and 4 two bedroom 4 person units.

A further 5 no. two bedroom open market housing units are proposed facing Wicklow Street served by a private entrance hall accessing a lift and ambulant staircase which will provide emergency escape from the hotel in the event of fire.

Scale and Appearance:

The aesthetic of this mixed use development has been developed following two pre-application meetings and in response the scale and massing has been developed to reflect the character of the Kings Cross Conservation Area. The development comprises a mix of 2/3 and 5 storey buildings for residential and small commercial use.

Following an initial pre application meeting Officers commented that the development needed to create a 'warehouse' feel and composition with elements specific to the frontages of Britannia Street and Wicklow Street. Following the pre application meeting in November 2011 officers commented that "the design had been significantly advanced with the architects responding positively to the concerns initially expressed".

However, criticism was expressed regarding the assertion that all housing units proposed were single aspect, facing only the railway line. This is not entirely correct as four social housing units are dual aspect facing both the railway cutting and the existing street frontages and the two upper floor units incorporating two bedrooms have a secondary aspect into a lightwell. Consequently only two ground floor units are single aspect. It has been noted that of the 23 flats originally approved in 2006, 9 were of single aspect.

With regard to the 5 two bedroom 'open market' flats, all are dual aspect. The introduction of these units to the scheme is a direct response to officers comments at the November 2011 meeting.

The impact of the development is being considered in relation to daylight/shading effects upon existing residents at Derby Lodge. The procedures being adopted are referred to in the separate 'Daylight' report by Right of Light.

The buildings will be constructed in a Metframe structure clad in a combination of 'stock' brick and render with punched hole windows of multi-pane combinations in PPC coated aluminium frames. All glazing is designed utilising 'coincidence twin pane' treatment to improve acoustic performance. Roofing will be either flat behind raised parapets or pitched with slate finish. A significant area of the first floor roof will incorporate a light-weight green roofing system. Detailing of windows, eaves parapets and entrances will be modern/contemporary.

In designing this development, the height, bulk and massing has been carefully considered and will sit comfortably with the adjacent listed buildings.

Landscaping / External Works:

The existing site is entirely hard paved suitable only for surface level parking. The new development will create a high proportion of site coverage with the exception of an open strip of site between the social housing units and the existing South West boundary parallel to the railway cutting. It is proposed that this area is to be self contained for private use of the residents and will be 'gated' off from both Wicklow Street and Britannia Street. The area will be predominantly hard paved with pockets of landscaping yet to be detailed. The existing rail boundary will receive a 'green' wall treatment visible to the affordable housing. Waste/recycling storage will be contained within a secure enclosure for the affordable housing units along with the provision of cycle hoops. All will be accessed via gated entrance from Wicklow Street and Britannia Street.

It is proposed to incorporate a 'green roof' treatment to the social housing roofscapes which will be largely viewed from hotel bedrooms. However due to the relatively 'lightweight' construction of this block an Extensive Sedum Green Roof System is proposed.

Servicing of the hotel will occur from Wicklow Street all hotel waste and recycling provisions will be contained within the enclosed service yard which will also make separate provision for similar facilities required by the 5 residential units. Cycle hoops for both facilities will be contained securely and accessed from Wicklow Street.

ACCESS STATEMENT **& 'LIFETIME HOME STANDARDS'**

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope

This Access Statement refers to the proposals for development of a 121 bedroom Tune Hotel, 8 separate affordable housing units and 5 self-contained flats for open market sale. This report covers entrances, horizontal and vertical circulation within all elements of the development and the design approach which is being implemented in recognition of Approved Document M of the Building Regulations and Lifetime Homes Standards.

1.2 Design Proposals

The new 5 storey hotel provides for pedestrian access directly from Britannia Street incorporating existing pavements which are generally level. There is no car park provision for the hotel. The affordable housing units are accessed from an external hard landscaped area providing pedestrian access from both Britannia Street and Wicklow Street, existing pavements for which are generally level. Again, there is no car park provision.

The 5 no. self-contained flats adjoining the hotel are accessed directly from the existing Wicklow Street pavement via a ground floor entrance lobby.

1.3 Design Approach

The design of this mixed development takes into account requirements of the brief, the implications and requirements of current legislation and Good Practice Guidance relating to:

- London Borough of Camden LDF policy DP6 which notes that all housing developments should meet Lifetime Homes Standards and Camden Planning Guidance 2 chapter 5.
- Lifetime Homes Standards (as revised July 2010).
- Approved Document M of the Building Regulations.

2. Provisions within the Hotel

The hotel is designed to a 'Tune' brand standard and provides for 121 en-suite guestrooms, six of which are provided with full accessibility provisions, entirely in accordance with Approved Document M of the Building Regulations. In addition, five further guestrooms are provided with supporting systems relevant to guests who are ambulant but have either sight or hearing impairments. These provisions will include vibrating pillows, fire alarm sounders and strobe beacons in both the guestrooms and bathrooms. Details are referred to in the separate services report prepared by Building Services Solutions.

The hotel corridors are designed to be minimum of 1200mm wide and all floors are served by 2 no. wheelchair accessible lifts which are to be installed in full compliance with EN81-70.

The hotel provides only limited public use facilities and does not incorporate restaurant or breakfast/dining facilities. The main entrance to the hotel is achieved through an automatic electronic sliding door, radar operated, from the existing Britannia Street pavement. The entrance area will have direct access to a disabled toilet facility and the reception desk is to be provided with an element at low level for guests who arrive by wheelchair. The reception area will be fitted with an induction loop system.

3. Lifetime Home Standards

There are 16 criteria scheduled for consideration as follows:

Criterion 1 : Parking (width or widening capable)

Parking is not provided

Criterion 2 : Approach to Dwelling from Parking (distance gradients and widths)

Parking is not provided

Criterion 3 : Approach to all Entrances

The entrance to the ground floor social housing units is approached via a gently ramped entrance through a flush threshold. The upper level affordable housing units are accessed via covered ambulant staircases. The 5 no. flats for sale are served by both an ambulant staircase and a lift for wheelchair use solely contained within the entrance lobby to the flats. The ambulant staircase is also to provide a means of escape from the hotel in fire emergency conditions.

Criterion 4 : Entrances

Entrances will be illuminated and will generally have access via a level threshold as Criterion 3 above. They will have 800mm minimum clear width to doorways and a 300mm nib to the leading edge on the pull side.

Criterion 5 : Communal Stairs and Lift

There are 2 no. communal stairs to the upper level social housing units. These will be designed in accordance with the Building Regulations for ambulant access. These staircases will be permanently illuminated and have secure entrance doors at ground floor level leading to a level landing externally. No lifts are provided to the upper level social housing units.

A fully accessible wheelchair lift is provided solely for the 5 no. flats for sale, the adjacent communal staircase being fully illuminated and designed in accordance with the Building Regulations for ambulant access.

Criterion 6 : Internal Doorways and Hallways

All hallways and doorways will be illuminated. Emergency lighting will be provided in all cases. All main entrance doors to residential units will be provided with a minimum clear opening of 800mm.

The corridor width in all residential units will be minimum of 1200mm clear.

Criterion 7 : Circulation Space

Living room and dining area provisions within all housing units meet the requirement for a 1500mm turning circle. There is also an excess of 1200mm in front of all kitchen worktops. The main bedrooms within the social housing units are all provided with a clear width of 750mm to each side and the end of the bed, secondary bedrooms have 750mm to one side and to the foot of the bed. The flats for sale incorporate 750mm to one side and to the end of the bed within the main bedrooms and also to the secondary bedroom.

Criterion 8 : Entrance Level Living Space

The entrance of a dwelling for the purposes of the Lifetime Home criteria is generally deemed to be the storey containing the main entrance as defined by Criterion 4. Within this scheme, both for affordable housing and open market housing, all living spaces and in general at least one bedroom are contained at the same level as the main entrance door. However, the four upper level units within the affordable housing block incorporate a first floor entrance at which access is provided directly to the living space and one bedroom. A further double bedroom is sited at a level above the main entrance accessed from a private stairwell. The staircase will be designed as an 'easy going' stair with maximum risers at 170mm and minimum goings of 250mm.

Criterion 9 : Potential for Entrance Level Bed Space

All residential units have bedrooms at entrance level as defined above.

Criterion 10 : Entrance Level W.C. and Shower Drainage

It should be noted that all dwellings are provided with fully fitted bathrooms at the same level as the entrance level.

Criterion 11 : W.C. and Bathroom Walls

Walls in all bathrooms will be enclosed with partitions and pattresses capable of receiving firm fixings and support for adaptations such as grab rails.

Criterion 12 : Stairs and Potential Through Floor Lifts in Dwellings

All dwellings are generally at one level apart from the upper floors of the affordable housing units which incorporate private stairs to the second bedroom. The partitions to these stairs will be designed sufficient to support a stair lift installation if necessary. In a similar vein, the stairways from ground to entrance level of these units will incorporate partition enclosures capable of supporting stair lifts if necessary.

Criterion 13 : Potential for Fitting of Hoists in Bedrooms/Bathrooms

It is intended that the ceiling/floor structures above all bedrooms will incorporate a construction with appropriate pattresses to support a ceiling mounted hoist if required.

Criterion 14 : Bathrooms

All bathrooms are sited at the entry level of each dwelling for ease of access.

Criterion 15 : Glazing and Window Handle Heights

All windows to principal living spaces will have sills no higher than 800mm above floor level and opening lights will be top hung with operating handles at low level.

Criterion 16 : Location of Service Controls

This states that services controls should be in a height band of 450mm to 1200mm from floor level and at least 300mm from internal doors and corners. Although services layouts and details have yet to be prepared, it is intended that all light switches, socket outlets and the like will be located within this band width.

CRIME STATEMENT

The building and limited areas of hard landscaping are designed to create a secure environment and to provide good overseeing for natural surveillance to minimise crime. It is the applicant's intention to achieve Secured by Design Accreditation. It is therefore proposed that before final details of the scheme design are concluded the London Borough of Camden Crime Prevention Advisor will be approached to oversee both the final building design and the systems to be incorporated for security both of the hotel and the residential units.

The development will be built up to both the Wicklow Street and Britannia Street boundaries thus largely securing the site. The open ribbon space between the affordable housing and the railway cutting will be enclosed by a wall and gates at both ends. Access will be via pedestrian gates fitted with self closing devices and appropriate locks. The boundary wall to the railway cutting will remain as existing. The steel paling fence above will be replaced with new open mesh fencing to the same height.

Access to flats served by a communal lobby/staircase will be fitted with audio visual link and digital locks operated by resident only.

The hotel entrance will be directly from Britannia Street through automatic sliding doors and a Reception Area manned 24hrs. There will be no other access for residents, fire escapes will be secured unless activated by fire alarm. The hotel entrance and rear service yard will be covered by CCTV managed from the Reception Desk.