

PLANNING STATEMENT

on behalf of

Zen Developments Ltd

in support of the erection of a 5 storey building to create 9 residential units
(Class C3) and associated landscaping, at;

**4 St. Augustine's Road
Camden
NW1 9RN**

CTP ref: PR/JCC/CJ/5450/Planning Statement
Date: February 2013

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Cunnane Town Planning LLP have been instructed by Zen Developments Ltd to prepare a Planning Statement in support of a planning application to the London Borough of Camden proposing the erection of a 5 storey (Lower Ground Floor to 3rd Floor) building at 4 St. Augustine's Road, Camden, NW1 9RN, comprising 9 residential units (Class C3) and associated landscaping.
- 1.2 This planning statement is submitted in support of the planning application, and should be read in conjunction with other material that accompanies this application. The statement outlines the application site, surroundings and planning history before undertaking an assessment of the proposal in relation to the relevant development plan policies and associated guidance.

2.0 The Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site comprises a triangular shaped parcel of land measuring 0.06 ha. Located at the junction of Agar Grove and Murray Street, the primary frontage is considered to be located on St. Augustine's Road. This junction forms a key entrance point into the Camden Square Conservation Area, and the site is recognised as a negative contributor to the character of the Conservation Area and a key development site. The topography of the site is such that both Agar Grove and St. Augustine's Road slope uphill from their junction. In the context of the site, this represents a 0.5 m difference between the east and west ends of the site.
- 2.2 The surrounding area is characterised by large 3 and 4 storey, semi-detached Victorian villas. The materials used in the construction of these buildings vary, resulting in an interesting mix of brick and stucco rendered buildings. The absence of a building at No.4 St. Augustine's Road leaves a significant void in the visual coherence of the area, and exposes the side wall of No. 6 with its poor haphazard fenestration. We note that there is evidence of recent attempts by the local residents to improve the situation through the siting of trees and shrubbery in concrete planters.
- 2.3 The application site has been vacant for many years, and has no designated use. It is believed the most recent use of the site was as a builder's yard which operated on a temporary permission that has since expired. We believe that given the character of the area, a residential use is most suited to the site. The detailed planning history of the site is outlined in section 3.
- 2.4 The site as existing comprises a yard with concrete hard standing, bounded by a substantial 1.8 m high, brick wall articulated into panels of London Stock brick.. It is important in providing a visual link across the void discussed in 2.2. On inspection, the yard is vacant, clear and in a poor condition. Due to the neglect of the site, the wall will require some superficial repointing

- 2.5 The only plant life on site are weeds, which are growing on the wall, and on the concrete hardstanding . Nothing of ecological value was observed on site.
- 2.6 The application site is well suited for residential use, with the 274 bus stops immediately adjacent to the property, 60 m walk around the perimeter of the site onto Agar Grove. Near by stops (in both directions) provide easy links between the following destinations:

29	Trafalgar Square	400 m
	Wood Green	
253	Euston	400 m
	Hackney Central	
274	Islington	60 m
	Lancaster Gate	
390	Archway	450 m
	Notting Hill Gate	
393	Chalk Farm	450 m
	Clapton	
N29	Enfield	400 m
	Trafalgar Square	
N253	Aldgate	400 m
	Tottenham Court Road	
N279	Trafalgar Square	400 m
	Waltham Cross	

- 2.7 The application site is located within Travel Card Zone 2, with the nearest train station, Camden Road, located 550 m west and providing access to the London Overground service. The closest tube station is Camden Town, 950 m south-west, and served by the 253, 29 and 274 bus services. Camden Town Tube Station also provides an easy link to regional and national rail services, including Euston Station (2 stops) and Waterloo Station (11 Stops). Overall the site achieves a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of 3 (medium).

- 2.8 The application site is located within the CA-N controlled parking zone of Camden, with parking restricted to permit holders only between 08:30 – 20:30 Monday to Friday. A pay and display parking area is available nearby on Murray Street.
- 2.9 There are two car clubs serving the area:
- “City Car Club” has two locations, 950 m and 1,100 m from the site.
 - “Zipcar” has one location, 560 m away.
- 2.10 There is London Bicycle Hire scheme point by Camden Road station, 550m from the site.
- 2.11 The application site is located opposite the Murray Street Neighbourhood Centre, which provides a small supermarket, a restaurant, launderette and separate newsagents within easy walking distance. It is anticipated that the proposed scheme will also help improve the viability of this centre.

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1 A planning history search using the London Borough of Camden Council website reveals the following planning history;

2011/6045/P Application Refused

Use of the site for a car valet business (Class B2).

2010/6748/P Application Refused

Erection of a basement and part three and four storey building to create nine residential units (Class C3).

2008/2989/P Application Withdrawn

Erection of basement and part three, four and five storey building to create nine residential units (Class C3) and associated parking and landscaping.

2008/4783/P Application Refused and Appeal Dismissed

Erection of basement and part three, four and five storey building to create nine residential units (Class C3) plus associated disabled parking, cycle and refuse stores and landscaping.

2005/5127/P Application Refused

Use of existing vacant site for car/van hire with ancillary single storey office building.

2005/0872/P Application Refused

Use of existing vacant site for car/van hire with ancillary portacabin.

9300258 Application Granted Temporary Permission until 23/09/96

Change of use of the site from builder's merchants to builder's yard.

8802284 Application Granted Temporary Permission until 01/07/91

Continued use of the site for the storage and sale of new and used building materials.

8500495 Application Granted Temporary Permission until 01/07/88

Use of the site for the storage and sale of new and used buildings materials.

87/01325 Application Granted

Retention of single storey studio for storage purposes

ENV/11/0727

Enforcement enquiry regarding use of the site.

3.2 This planning history demonstrates that there has been no established use of the site, with a number of temporary permissions granted for use as a builder's yard. The most recent temporary permission expired 23 August 1996 and it is believed that the site has been vacant since.

3.3 The most recent application for the erection of a basement and part three and four storey building to create nine residential units (Class C3). (2010/6748/P) was recommended for approval, but was refused for 6 reasons, which can be summarised as:

1. Failing to preserve the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area.
2. Placing unacceptable pressure on the Borough's open space facilities.
3. Generating an unacceptable impact on the local transport system.
4. Placing undue pressure on the local education system.
5. Failing to mitigate the impact on the local highway.
6. Failing to meet Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

3.4 The application prior to this, for the erection of basement and part three, four and five storey building to create nine residential units (Class C3) plus associated disabled parking, cycle and refuse stores and landscaping. (2008/4783/P), was refused permission by the council for the following 8 reasons (summarised):

1. Failing to preserve the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area.
2. Failing to contribute to the affordable housing needs of the area.
3. Placing unacceptable pressure on the Borough's open space facilities.
4. Placing undue pressure on the local education system.
5. Failing to mitigate the impact on the local highway.

6. Failing to provide a Construction Management Plan.
7. Failing to provide secure, adequate and safe access to the site.
8. Failing to meet Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

3.5 The refusal of 2008/4783/P was supported by the subsequent appeal, and the appeal was dismissed.

3.6 In light of the history of refusal for C3 use, and having studied both officer's and inspector's reports, the applicant has sought the advice of Camden Council from the outset, and has held two pre-application advice meetings and one public consultation event. For more information, please refer to the Design and Access Statement.

4.0 The Proposal

- 4.1 The proposal involves the erection of a 5 storey (Lower Ground Floor to 3rd Floor) building to create 9 residential units (Class C3) and associated landscaping. The proposed scheme comprises 2 no. 2 bedroom flats and 7 no. 3 bedroom flats. All dwellings are self-contained, Lifetime Homes compliant and targeting Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 4.2 The design of the building has been influenced and continued to develop in light of comments made by the Council, local residents and other key stakeholders. Two pre-application meetings have been held (16/11/12 and 18/01/13) with Conservation Officer Charlie Rose and Planning Officer Robert Tulloch of Camden Borough Council. In addition to this, a public consultation was held with the Camden Square Residents Association on 12/12/12. The consultation consisted of a presentation, discussion and questionnaire, the results of which can be found in Appendix 1 and 2. The scheme was generally welcomed by the residents, and that the principle of 9 residential units was appropriate for the site. The size, form and treatment of the building were acceptable and seen as a significant improvement when compared to the previously refused applications. Following the consultation, some minor amendments were made to the design to assimilate the resident's suggestions for improvement. The residents agree that this is an appropriate design which will improve a vacant and derelict site which has historically detracted from the character of the Camden Square Conservation Area.
- 4.3 The proposal uses the neighbouring buildings to influence the materials and proportions used in the construction of the building. The building will use the same London stock brick that is traditional within the area, and a self coloured white render will be used to accentuate the entrance area, windows and Lower Ground Floor of the building. In addition to this, the western elevation of the building will be rendered in white stucco, to reflect the pedimented semi-detached villas on the north side of St. Augustine's Road (Nos.5-23) and acknowledge the importance of the highly visible corner of the two streets in the urban environment.
- 4.4 The proposed building has been designed to respond to the character and rhythm of St. Augustine's Road and Agar Grove, and will be set back to respect the existing building

lines. It is not the intention of the design to imitate these historic buildings, but to provide a sensitive interpretation that remains in character with the surrounding area, and enhances the Camden Square Conservation Area.

- 4.5 As part of the proposal, the two existing vehicle access points (off Agar Grove and St. Augustine's Road) will be removed, the wall reconstructed and the attendant crossing reinstated as pavement. Access to the building would be pedestrian only, from the north-eastern corner of the site, adjacent to the entrance of the neighbouring building. To maintain the character of the street, the entrance is housed within a porch, which is rendered white and follows similar proportions to that of its neighbours. To ensure disabled access and to avoid any unnecessary access ramps, the front door will be at street level. An internal elevator will provide level access to all floors in the building.
- 4.6 The building will follow the same design principle of its neighbours by creating a Lower and Upper Ground Floor. The Lower Ground Floor would be built at circa 1 m below street level, so that the upper Ground Floor is at the same height as the existing perimeter wall.
- 4.7 A good level of amenity space will be provided, with the Lower Ground residents benefiting from a hard surfaced area extending around the building, and all other residents being provided with a semi-circular balcony on the western elevation. The balcony and patio areas will be separated by planting to provide a good level of privacy. The apartment at the top of the building, in addition to this, has two terraces running parallel to the main facades. A communal patio area is also provided in the western corner of the site. Trees will be planted in the western corner of the site, and at regular intervals along the Agar Grove perimeter, to extend the tree-lined character of the surrounding streets. This will have a permanent and positive impact on the Agar Grove junction, and will add to previous attempts to improve the greenery of the area.
- 4.8 Sustainable methods of transport are encouraged by this development. In addition to a range of easily accessible public transport services, a bicycle storage area for 18 bikes is provided in the south-eastern corner of the site, and 1 electric vehicle charging point will replace the existing northern vehicular entrance.

- 4.9 In summary, the proposal has given due consideration to the character and appearance of the Camden Square Conservation Area, and seeks to enhance it by developing a site that has remained underused for many years, and has a negative impact on the area. The junctions between Agar Grove, St. Augustine's Road and Murray Street mark a key entrance to the Conservation Area, and should be recognised by an appropriate building. The proposal will bring this derelict site back into use and provide a sensitively designed, contemporary addition to the area.