

# DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

66 Rochester Place, Camden, London NW1 9JX

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This Design and Access Statement is prepared on behalf of Ms Justine McLucas in connection with an application for full planning permission for change of use from Class B1 office space to a Class D2 dance and fitness studio at 66 Rochester Place, Camden, London.

The purpose of the Statement is to explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to particular aspects of the proposal. It recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is based on a contextual appraisal of the site, including its physical, social and economic context, any relevant planning history and the relevant policy context.

This Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Planning Statement.

## 2.0 ASSESSMENT

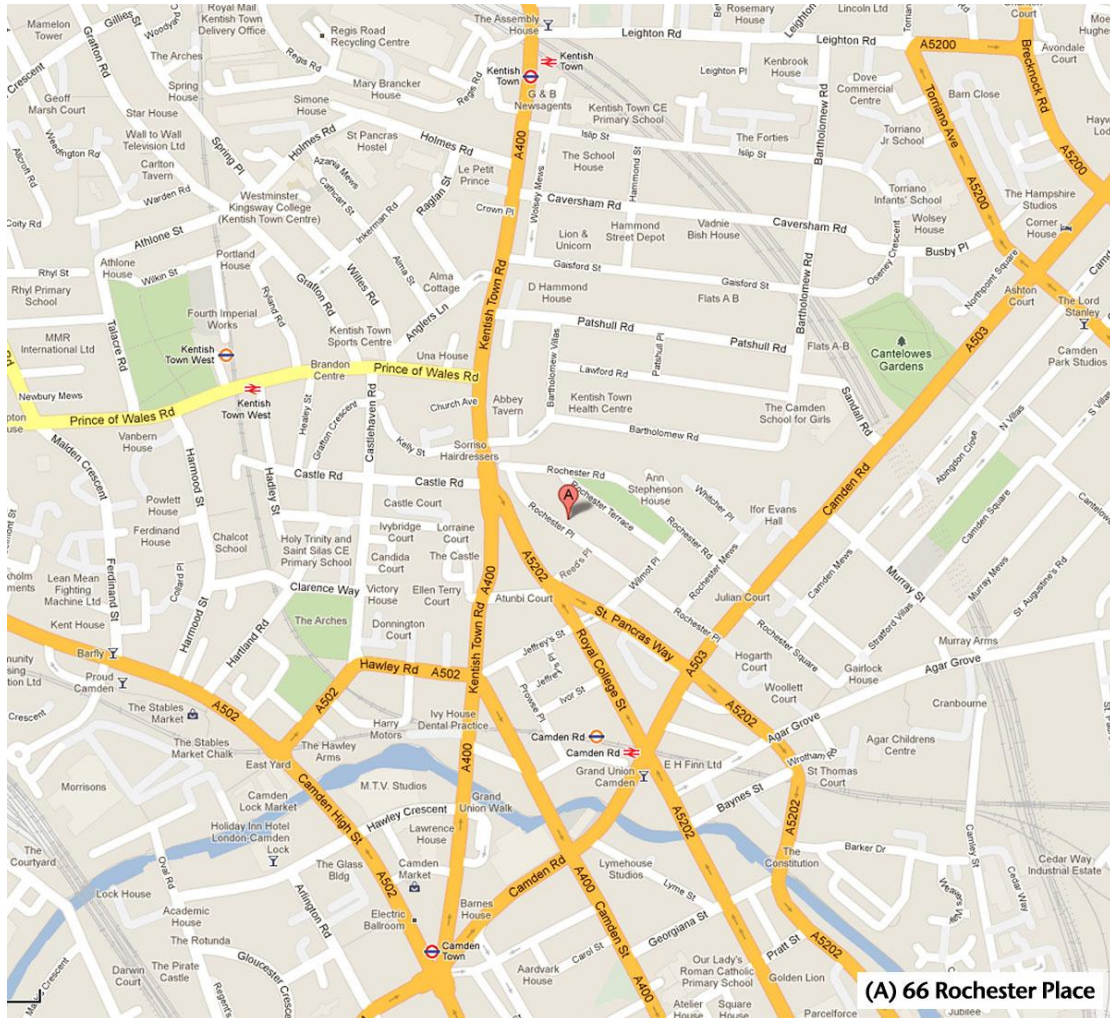


### 2.1 Physical Context

The proposal relates to an existing mid-terraced property (shown above with the red door) currently used as Class B1 offices. The property is located in Rochester Place, a traditional cobbled street containing mainly commercial buildings, offices and warehousing.

Building forms vary considerably in terms of height, bulk, width and depth. Pitched roof forms predominate but there is little consistency in terms of the individual arrangements. This results in a rich and diverse streetscape. The wider locality is similarly diverse, including commercial and residential development built at various scales and reflecting different periods of redevelopment and renewal. This has resulted in traditional terraces being in close proximity with new build apartment blocks.

The site is well connected to the local road network, with easy access to the A400, A502 and A503 distributor roads. Rail and underground connections are available from Camden Road (approximately 350m to the south), Kentish Town West (approximately 450m to the northwest) and Kentish Town (approximately 600m to the north). Camden High Street and Camden Town tube station are also within an easy 600m (one third of a mile) walking distance. Buses run regularly from Camden Town.



## 2.2 Social Context

Rochester Place is characterised by small-scale commercial uses. There are no immediately adjoining residential occupiers within Rochester Place. This should limit the potential for conflict between different uses. However, the local area includes a broad mix of commercial and residential uses with significant concentrations of residential development, including on adjacent roads. The site is therefore well located to serve the resident local community.

Existing local facilities on Kentish Town Road provide various shopping and leisure uses, but currently lack any provision for fitness facilities, such as gymnasiums or dance studios. The proposed dance studio would therefore complement and expand upon existing local facilities.

## 2.3 Economic Context

The area includes a wide range of small-scale commercial uses providing offices, shopping and leisure activities. As noted above, however, the area is currently lacking in provision for fitness facilities and has no dance studio.

The proposed use would assist in the diversification of the local economy, providing a complementary use, which would strengthen and broaden the area's appeal. The proposal would also enhance the vibrancy of the evening economy, as classes would be offered in the evening and over the weekend.

## **2.4 Planning Policy Context**

The Core Strategy (CS) and Development Policies (DP) development plan documents were adopted in Camden in 2010. These documents, along with the Mayor's adopted London Plan, form the statutory development plan.

Policy CS5 seeks broadly to manage the impact of growth and development in the interests of meeting the need for local infrastructure and facilities whilst protecting local areas and amenity. Policy CS7 is concerned to promote local centres and provide for a range of shops, services and other uses to provide variety, vibrancy and choice. Policy CS8 is committed to promoting a successful and inclusive local economy. It recognises the importance of securing a mix of employment types and other employment generating uses, including leisure and health uses.

Policy DP13 seeks to retain land and buildings that are suitable for continued business use and will resist a change to non-business uses unless (a) it can be demonstrated that a site or building is no longer suitable for its existing business use and (b) there is evidence that the possibility of retaining, re-using or redeveloping the site or building for similar or alternative business use has been fully explored over an appropriate period of time. Where possible an element of business use should be retained.

Under Policy DP15 new community and leisure uses should be close or accessible to the community they serve and accessible by a range of transport modes. Policies DP16 and DP17 require that regard is paid to the transport implications of development whilst seeking proper integration with the transport network, including travel by walking, cycling and public transport. Under Policy DP18 car parking should be restricted to the minimum necessary. Policies DP26 and DP28 are concerned to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours by preventing development that harms amenity in relation to such matters as noise and vibration.

National policy is contained primarily in the recently published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which replaces the former system of planning policy guidance notes and statements. The NPPF introduces a new presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as having economic, social and environmental components. The NPPF is particularly concerned to proactively encourage sustainable economic growth, enhance quality of life, promote vibrant and healthy communities and deliver the social and recreational facilities needed by local communities.

### **3.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

#### **3.1 Use**

There is broad policy support for the provision of community facilities and services, including health and leisure facilities, in the interests of promoting healthy communities and diversifying local economies. The proposal would assist in the delivery of these objectives, whilst retaining an element of office administration and business use.

In particular, the proposal would introduce a new and exciting facility, which would widen the range of activities available in the area and complement existing uses in the vicinity of Kentish Town Road. This is consistent with important national planning policy objectives for delivering sustainable development, as providing a good mix of uses is recognised as a vital part of creating sustainable places.

It is acknowledged that there is specific local planning policy protection for the existing Class B1 office use. A detailed justification, setting out the case for the proposal in planning terms, is set out in full in the accompanying Planning Statement, which should be read in conjunction with this Design and Access Statement.

#### **3.2 Amount**

Rochester Place is characterised by small-scale commercial uses. The proposed dance and fitness studio would be consistent with this character and appropriate to the location, which is dominated by small businesses, shops and other facilities.

No external works or alterations are required. Therefore the amount of development on the site would not change. The intensity of use would be comparable with the existing Class B1 office use, which is not subject to any particular restrictions in terms of occupiers or hours of use.

#### **3.3 Layout**

The main dance and fitness area would be provided on the ground floor, thereby maximising ease of use and providing a safe, secure and accessible means of access to the proposed facility. Ancillary administrative activities would be located in the office area upstairs.

The proposed use complements the existing mix of small scale commercial businesses located in the area whilst also serving the wider resident population. There are no adjoining residential occupiers. As a consequence of this, the proposal does not raise any significant issues in relation to noise and disturbance.



### **3.4 Scale**

The proposal would introduce a small-scale fitness and leisure facility into an area of small-scale commercial activity. This would complement the form and scale of the existing uses and would be consistent with the size and scale of the existing building. The existing building requires no external modification and already relates well to the local townscape.

### **3.5 Landscaping**

The site contains no significant open or landscaped spaces. The building directly abuts the street, which is urban in character with a strong sense of enclosure. In view of these characteristics, there is no need to incorporate landscaping works into the proposal.

### **3.6 Appearance**

The external appearance of the building would not be affected. The existing building would be retained and re-used. The proposal would secure a beneficial use of the property, which would improve its appearance when compared with the negative effect of leaving the premises vacant. In addition, the proposal would contribute a sense of activity and vibrancy to the street scene.

### **3.7 Access**

As noted above, the site has excellent connections to local road network and is within easy walking distance of the local residents. The road network is well lit and provides safe and secure access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Car parking, if required, is available within Rochester Place in the form of marked pay and display bays (6am – 6.30pm Mon-Fri). Outside these hours parking is free, which would be convenient for those attending evening and weekend classes. This would also be likely to coincide with those times when other nearby commercial uses, such as offices and warehouses, are not in use, thereby relieving potential parking congestion and making the most efficient use of the on-street parking spaces.

Rail and underground connections are available from Camden Road, Kentish Town West and Kentish Town, all within an easy 600m (one third or a mile) walk. These provide connections to the Northern Line and London Overground and C2C lines and direct links to King's Cross St Pancras.

Bus services run regularly from Camden Town, including the routes 24, 27, 29, 31, 46, 88, 134, 168, 214, 253, 274 and C2. Night buses run on routes N5, N20, N28, N29, N31, N253 and N279, providing connections to Edgware, Trafalgar Square, Barnet, Wandsworth, Enfield, Clapham Junction, Aldgate, Tottenham Court Road and Waltham Cross.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Our analysis demonstrates that the proposed development would function well and add to the overall quality of the area. It would secure a beneficial use of the existing vacant premises, optimising the potential of the site and helping to create a vibrant and sustainable mix of uses.

The proposal would enhance local services by increasing the range and quality of facilities available to the local community. It would create a safe and accessible environment and provide an attractive and comfortable place to work and visit. By introducing new uses into the area, it will help to bring different sections of the community together, promoting social inclusion.

The site is well located to serve the local resident population and is easily accessible by a variety of transport modes, including walking, cycling and public transport. The local road network provides safe, secure and convenient access for all users.

As such, the proposal is fully in accordance with the design principles set out in the Council's development plan policies. The scheme further complies with the government's objectives for delivering sustainable development, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Humphreys & Co.**