NEW PREMIER HOUSE - 150 SOUTHAMPTON ROW
LONDON WC1B 5AL

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Revision B: November 2012

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CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design & Access statement is submitted in support of a planning application which proposes refurbishment, and alterations to provide student accommodation at New Premier House, 150 Southampton Row, London.

1.2 150 is a mixed use commercial building in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
The existing accommodation comprises retail shops/restaurants on the ground floor (with linked space on the lower ground floor), and offices on the remaining first to seventh floors. The building is not listed, and none of the existing retail uses are affected by these proposals.

Southampton Row Elevation

1.3 The key elements of the application are:

- It is intended to change the use of the upper floors of the property from office use to student accommodation which will be a sustainable use that meets a recognised need within the Borough of Camden, and specifically the Holborn area. The applicant wishes to use the Property as fully supervised accommodation – comparable to a managed hall of residence – for students attending CATS College London, which is part of the Cambridge Education Group (CEG).

- The ground floor and part of the lower ground floor will remain substantially in restaurant/retail use; the proposed changes are to the remaining two thirds of the building. There are no intended changes to the front or rear facade.

- At the existing roof level, several existing stores are to be converted and connected to create a functional space. This will enhance the visual appearance for occupiers at high levels in the adjoining buildings. The total additional area at this level is 142.8 sq. m. as shown on Casson Conder Partnership's plan 1130/ G107.

- Externally at the rear of the lower ground floor, an open area will be brought into use as amenity garden space. Within the area there is an existing single story extension used as an office for one of the restaurants. This function is being relocated to a better facility in the main building, and the extension will be removed to create the garden. The total area of the extension being removed at this level is 15 sq. m. and is shown on plan 1130/ G103.

- Based on the above, there is a minor net addition to the building area of 127.8 sq. m.

- To provide proper means of fire escape – currently lacking in the building – a second fire escape route has been designed in consultation with Approved Inspectors, Thames Building Control, who have affirmed compliance. Please refer to the letter dated 1st October 2012 confirming same from Thames Building Control, and to Casson Conder Partnership drawings No.1130/ 202, 203, 204 dated 09.10.2012 for full details. The final meeting points are shown on drawing 204; the proposed egress from

the site via the established right-of-way at the back to the meeting point on Queen Square is shown on the photomontage below.

Proposed egress at back of site (painted yellow road markings delineate right-of-way)

Existing sign identifying fire exit route to the rear of the property

- The existing two unattractive internal light wells which currently house substantial redundant services, HVAC plant and debris will be cleared of all services, cleaned of debris, and painted. It is also proposed to introduce paving and planting at the base of the light wells, and effective netting to

eliminate the long-standing nuisance caused by pigeons over many years (according to residents in Russell Mansions).

- These improvements will greatly improve the amenity of the residents of the adjoining Russell Mansions who look on to the light well on the south side of the building and will benefit the occupants of New Premier House.

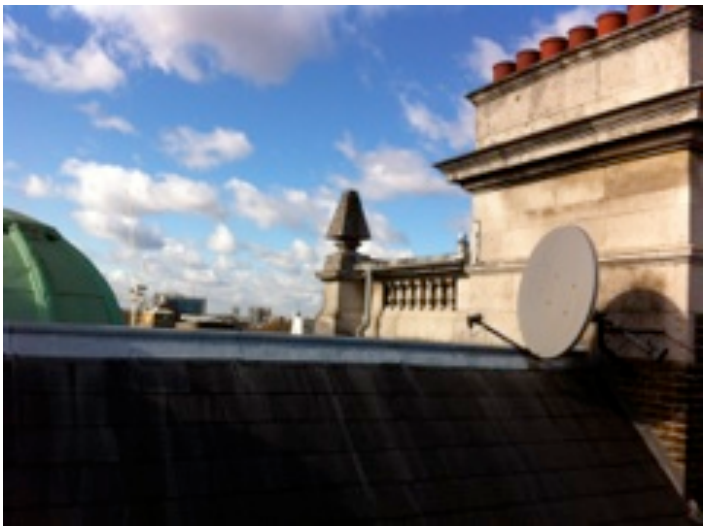
- No other works are planned within the existing light wells.

Existing Internal Light Well

- The existing building consists of ground, lower ground and seven storeys on Southampton Row with additional eighth floor plant rooms incorporated within a pitched slated roof space behind parapet walls and copper domed turrets. The existing plant space at roof level is redundant and will be incorporated into the usable building area. It is proposed that the new student accommodation will be comfort cooled by a new heat pump system. The external condensing units for the system will be located externally behind parapet walls at roof level at the rear of the building, together with solar panels which will be used to pre-heat the hot water.

- The accompanying acoustic report, by Dean Austin Associates, demonstrates that the noise generated by these units would be minimal and within the compliance criteria for both day and night time operational requirements set by Camden. It should also be noted that the removal of the redundant equipment within the existing light wells will improve the amenity of adjoining properties.

View of roof plant area to be converted to student accommodation



Existing roof plant areas behind copper domed turret on front facade

- The development will be 'car-free' and no one associated with it will request local parking permits. The public transport to and from the building is very good and all transport issues have been addressed in detail in the accompanying Transport Assessment and Travel Plan (1207-22/TA/01A) dated October 2012.

- An internal bicycle store is being provided for 80 bicycles, with safe level access and no steps. Within the store, a Josta two-tier rack system will be installed (Casson Conder Partnership drawing No.1130/ 103). The provision exceeds the standard of one space for every two students.

- The refuse store on the lower ground floor follows Camden Planning Guidance 1, Chapter 10. Account has also been taken of CS18, and DP22

& DP26. Based on experience of previous projects, assuming weekly collections the storage requirement will be about 4.5 cubic metres: twelve 360 litre bins.

- The operations of the facility are run by a 17-person team of care-givers, facility managers, housekeepers and general supervisors working on a shift system. The staff provide 24 hours a day, 7 days a week coverage of all comings and goings to and from the facility. The main entrance hallway in to the building is overseen by the staff office, which looks on to it.

- A detailed Student Management Plan has been submitted.

- With regard to the proposed construction work, a construction management plan has been produced and submitted, which permits no work to be carried out from Southampton Row. The construction period will be comparatively short, at less than six months. (The project team has achieved similar results elsewhere, including at Byron Court in Camden, with no undue disruption or concerns caused to the Local Authority.)

- There is no basement excavation work proposed.

2.0 SITE ANALYSIS

The Application Site:

2.1 150 Southampton Row was constructed in the early 20th century with a grand and impressive Victorian ornate facade of Portland Stone. Whilst the facade, the copper capped roof turrets and chimney pots remain from the original construction, the rear of the building was substantially rebuilt after the war.

2.2 The building has a single central core and stair arranged around a lift flanked on either side by a light well, which splits each floor in the building in half. In the 1980s the mesh-caged lift was enclosed for fire protection by a metal panel system. For approximately eighty years the upper floors were occupied as 26 residential apartments before being converted to open-plan offices. The stripping out of the apartments has compromised the integrity of the original mansion building

2.3 The rear of the building has tiered residential external terraces facing the quiet Queen Square gardens.

Site Context:

2.4 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area was designated in September 1968. Number 150 is in Sub Area 8 of the C. A. which is characterised by areas of large-scale, late 19th and early 20th century buildings fronting busy thoroughfares.

3.0 DESIGN & ACCESS PRINCIPLES

Use:

3.1 The accommodation will be for students attending CATS College London which is part of the Cambridge Education Group (CEG). The proposed accommodation will provide 39 high quality self-contained flats each with kitchens, en-suite bathrooms and common space. The building will have additional dispersed common rooms for student group study. Best practice guidance will be followed with regard to accessibility.

3.2 The mix of flat types includes flats with single rooms, and “sibling rooms” for those who send two members of the same family. The “sibling rooms” reflect a preference by families to have siblings sharing a room rather than in single rooms, and is a continuing trend which is fully supported by the College.

3.3 The accommodation and room layouts have been agreed with the user group and are fully acceptable to them. They are consistent with similar accommodation previously provided in Kensington, Camden, and Lambeth which have been very well received by the users. The bedrooms are appropriately sized to provide adequate accommodation space, at a significantly reduced density to the previously submitted proposals. The bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens and associated facilities comply with the minimum HMO standards published by the LB of Camden.

3.4 It is no longer intended to extend the built space in to the light wells. Therefore the outlook and daylight levels within the building, and for the neighbouring Russell Mansions where some windows front on to a light well, will not be adversely affected. Instead the visual outlook will be improved by virtue of the intended refurbishment of the light well areas previously referred to.

Although the lower rooms facing in to the light wells receive correspondingly lower daylight levels, as recorded in the Daylight Report produced by MES Energy Services, it should be noted that bedrooms facing in to light wells is typical of mansion blocks in Central London, and New Premier House is no different to very many others in this

respect. The situation is found in the immediately adjacent Mercure and Bloomsbury Hotels. Developments approved in Camden where student rooms look in to equivalent light wells include Goodenough College, and Byron Court.

3.5 The new facilities have been planned to current standards, with lift access to all floors. The building will meet BREEAM “very good” standards and exceed the minimum requirements for reduction in on-site carbon production. A detailed Energy and Sustainability Statement by MES Energy Services has been submitted.

The proposed introduction of solar panels and green roof will be a new enhancement to this building and will be a significant improvement. Bird boxes are being introduced at roof level as shown on the plans and sections. Details of the green roof have been provided (drawing 1130/ 201).

3.6 Noise from outside will be mitigated by secondary glazing internally wherever required, as referred to in the acoustic report by Dean Austin Associates.

3.7 The property will be a completely car free development and is well served by local transport with several bus routes and six underground stations within 900 metres; the nearest being Russell Square which is approximately 600 metres away.

At present, students are accommodated in locations comparatively remote from the academic site. Because New Premier House is very near the academic facility at CATS College in Bloomsbury Square students will, by preference, walk between the accommodation and the academic building – rather than being transported. This will result in a reduction in peak hour volumes on the Underground. Please refer to the documents prepared by TPA Transport Planning Associates: Transport Assessment; and Travel Plan.

3.8 To help create a safe and sustainable environment there will be compliance with the documents: “Safer Places, The Planning System & Crime Prevention - The Seven Attributes of a Safer Place” published by the Home Office; and “Secured by Design Accreditation Scheme - SBD” by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Security measures on site will include movement sensor lights in the garden, and video security front and back. The cycle store is inside the building and doubly secure because the boundary wall to the garden forms a supplementary barrier.

All students receive awareness training and orientation covering their use of personal items, travelling within a safe environment, and other guidance.

Amount:

3.9 The design which has been developed for this application has sought to utilise the space available within the existing building envelope and its structural divisions.

3.10 The accommodation that will be created comprises 154 bed spaces, together with ancillary facilities. (The reduction from the previous proposals results from the inclusion of common rooms, the division in to smaller flats containing fewer study bedrooms, and no building extension in to the light wells.) The floor space of the student accommodation is 2452 sq. m.

Layout:

3.11 The existing floor plan of the upper floors of the building is very inefficient for its current use, with the floor plate effectively being bisected by the combination of the central core and the two light wells. Currently there is only a single internal staircase, with substandard external fire escape staircases in the light wells. The light wells themselves are unsatisfactory spaces at present, mainly taken over by mechanical and other plant and services. These light wells are to be significantly enhanced, as previously described.

3.12 The proposed layout comprises 39 apartments consisting of a mix of three, four, or – where there are “sibling rooms” – five bed spaces each, giving a total of 154 beds. The varieties of configurations within the apartments are purpose-designed in conjunction with CATS College, the user group.

3.13 Proposed partition walls, of lightweight construction, have been coordinated with existing windows and external doors. For the few places where it has not been possible to avoid partitions corresponding with window mullions a detail has been developed which maintains the necessary separation between rooms without being obtrusive from outside the building (drawing 1130/205). This detail has been used successfully in similar projects in Kensington and Lambeth.

Scale:

3.14 The scale of the building will not be altered.

Landscaping:

3.15 There are no existing trees or other planting anywhere on the site at present.

The rear yard at lower ground floor level has been redundant since the 1930s, apart from an extension used as an office for one of the restaurants. The office will be relocated within the lower ground floor, as shown on drawing 1130/ G103 and the extension will be removed. The rear yard will then be landscaped to form a private external garden for student use, replicating the existing amenity at the back of Russell Mansions.

Planting in containers will be introduced into the existing balcony terraces at the rear, maintained by an automatic watering system. (For safety reasons, these terraces will not be accessible by the students – but will be for maintenance purposes only.) It is also proposed to introduce paving and planting in containers at the base of the light wells.

Appearance:

3.16 The front elevation of the building will not be altered. The small scale development of new accommodation at eighth floor level utilises existing plant roof space hidden behind the existing parapet, central building and flanking copper domed turrets. This storey will not be seen from street level or indeed extend higher than existing massing.

3.17 The rear of the building will not be altered except with the addition of amenity planting.

Existing Rear Elevation

Access:

3.18 There are two shallow steps on to the pavement at the entrance to the building in front of the main doors. Set back, inside a lobby in front of a pair of inner glass doors, are a further three steps. To improve the access it is proposed to remove the inner doors and form a shallow ramp in place of the three steps.

With regard to the two steps on to the pavement, studies have been carried out which demonstrate that it is not possible to introduce a permanent ramp without obstructing the pavement and access to the adjoining shop entrances – and this situation will persist regardless of the use of the building. A portable ramp (as exists at present) will be deployed as may be required by on-site staff who are in attendance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A call button with intercom function will be installed at the entrance. Drawing 1130/ G206 illustrates the proposed ramp, and the implications of forming a permanent ramp on the pavement.

Main entrance, showing two steps on to pavement, and steps beyond to be ramped

3.19 The access to the bicycle store in the lower ground floor at the back of the building is level, from the public right of way via the adjoining garden, without steps.

3.20 Access within the building will be by way of the lift linking all floors to the entrance hall on the ground floor. Floor levels will remain constant in all storeys. Best practice guidance is to be followed, including BS8300:2001 and Approved Document M. There are 12 designated accessible bedrooms, comprising almost 8% of the total. It will also be possible to adapt one or more of the larger sibling rooms should circumstances require.

4.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 New Premier House, 150 Southampton Row, was substantially rebuilt behind its original Portland stone facade after the war. For most of the life of the building the upper floors were occupied as residential apartments before being converted to open-plan offices. The stripping out of the apartments has compromised the integrity of the original mansion building.

4.2 The proposals are to convert the existing sub-standard office space which is bisected by a poorly planned core and unattractive light wells, into modern, high quality fully supervised student accommodation for a specific user, to accommodate students who attend academic facilities nearby in Camden.

4.3 The changes involve re-ordering and re-planning of the interior within the external envelope and converting redundant roof plant areas into additional accommodation within existing heights and overall massing. The existing light wells will be retained and improved – which will also be of benefit to the neighbours who look on to one of the light wells.

4.4 The retail units and restaurants on the ground floor will not be changed, and there will be no alterations to the front or rear facade. The character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area will be unaffected and will thus be preserved.

4.5 The development will be 'car-free'. Students will walk the comparatively short distance between the accommodation and the academic building rather than being transported, which will result in a reduction in peak hour volumes on the Underground. An internal bicycle store is provided for 80 bicycles.

4.6 Planting will be introduced on the rear terraces, in the rear yard, within the light wells, and the green roof. The building will meet BREEAM "very good" standards.

4.7 It is submitted that the proposals comply with Camden's Planning policies and will be beneficial and appropriate. We therefore request that these proposals be approved.

Interior images of the Grade II listed Royal Waterloo Hospital in Lambeth, recently converted by the applicants (included for information).

Schedule of Documents and Drawings:

Documents:

- Planning Statement, dated 21 November 2012
- Design & Access Statement, Rev. B, dated November 2012
- Commercial Viability Report (with appendices) prepared by Mark Tillson, MRICS of Matthews & Goodman Property Advisers, dated November 2012
    - App 1: Letter from Pearl & Coutts
    - App 2: Investment sale brochure
    - App 3: Schedule of photographs showing broad range of retail and hotel users
    - App 4: Schedule of photographs showing constraints in the building for office use
    - App 5: Schedule of competing buildings
    - App 6: Enquiry schedule
    - App 7: Letter from Richard Susskind & Co.
    - App 8: Letter from Gale Priggen & Co.
    - App 9: To Let board
    - App 10: Photograph of To Let board
    - App 11: Letting details
    - App 12: Letting details
    - App 13: Website marketing details
    - App 14: Letter from Searchgrade
- Transport Assessment (Report No. 1207-22/TA/01A) from Transport Planning Associates, dated October 2012
    - Text and Figures
    - Appendices
- Travel Plan (Report No. 1207-22/TP-01A) from Transport Planning Associates, dated October 2012
- Energy and Sustainability Statement from C.S. Jones of MES Energy Services, dated October 2012
- Daylight Report (Revision 2) from Alex W. Hole, MRICS of MES Energy Services, dated 7th November 2012
- Acoustic Report (Technical Report DAA12031943-05) from Deane Austin Associates LLP, dated 5th October 2012
- Student Management Plan, dated October 2012
- Construction Management Plan, dated November 2012
- Letter from Thames Building Control to Halstead Associates, dated 15th March 2012

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Drawings:

1130 / 001 Existing - Site Location Plan
1130 / 002 Existing - Block Plan
1130 / 003 D Existing Lower Ground & Ground Floor Plans
1130 / 004 C Existing - First & Second Floor Plans
1130 / 005 C Existing - Third & Fourth Floor Plans
1130 / 006 C Existing - Fifth & Sixth Floor Plans
1130 / 007 C Existing - Seventh Floor & Roof Plans
1130 / 008 C Existing - Section AA
1130 / 009 D Existing - Section BB
1130 / 010 D Existing - Elevations
1130 / 011 D Existing - Section CC - FF
1130 / 012 D Existing - Side Elevations AA and BB

1130 Existing - Photographs - Sheet 1
1130 Existing - Photographs - Sheet 2
1130 Existing - Photographs - Sheet 3

1130 / 102 C Proposed - Block Plan
1130 / 103 F Proposed - Lower Ground & Ground Floor Plans
1130 / 104 E Proposed - First & Second Floor Plans
1130 / 105 D Proposed - Third & Fourth Floor Plans
1130 / 106 E Proposed - Fifth & Sixth Floor Plans
1130 / 107 F Proposed - Seventh & Eighth Floor Plans
1130 / 108 E Proposed - Roof Plan
1130 / 109 E Proposed - Section AA
1130 / 110 F Proposed - Section BB
1130 / 111 E Proposed - Elevations
1130 / 112 E Proposed - Section CC - FF
1130 / 113 E Proposed - Side Elevations AA and BB

1130 / 201 Green Roof - Proposed Detail
1130 / 202 Fire Escape Routes
1130 / 203 Fire Escape Routes
1130 / 204 Fire Escape Routes
1130 / 205 Stud Partition to Window Mullion Detail
1130 / 206 Entrance Ramp Study
1130 / 207 Proposed Areas