

45 NEW COMPTON STREET, LONDON WC2
DESIGN STRATEGY AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1. BACKGROUND

45 New Compton Street (herein "the Building") is an existing five storey block of 24 residential flats comprising 16 two bedroom duplex flats, 4 one bedroom and 4 studio flats. The Building is situated close to the confluence of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road, just to the south-east of St Giles Circus. It is adjacent to the Grade 1 listed Church of St Giles in the Fields and has the benefit of overlooking the public open space around the Church, which itself adjoins the Phoenix "open to the public" charity-run garden.

The Building was constructed 1970/1 and its design was then regarded as good and acceptable housing. The building is a classic example of 1970's architecture. It has an extensive flat roof as is usual for this type and style of Building. The construction and design lend themselves to the extension of a further floor on top providing some additional accommodation.

The proposals are intended to make best use of the space available from the flat roof to create three new flats whilst taking advantage of the available height and visual aspects. The Freehold of the Building's estate area, and which has the adjoining air and all ancillary development rights, is owned by 45 New Compton Street Improvement Company Limited whose registered office is situated at 25/45 New Compton Street London WC2H 8DF. The Freeholder is a pro-active owner and oversees the management and good running of the Building.

Thirteen, being a majority of the existing 24 flats, are privately owned under long leases with around 100 years of their unexpired terms outstanding. The remaining 11 flats are used for social housing and let by the Building's Head lessee, Camden Council, under council tenancy arrangements to residents most of whom have lived in the Building for prolonged periods.

New Compton Street is a mixture of both residential and commercial/office buildings. Most of the other buildings have already had additional storeys added in recent times. In fact, the Building is now the lowest in the street beside some original Victorian properties immediately to the north on the corner with St Giles High Street. Even with an additional storey added, the Building will still be lower than the others around therefore remain well within the scale and context of the street.

2. AMOUNT

The proposals are for three new flats comprising a new sixth storey (being the fifth floor of accommodation within the Building). The proposed number of units and accommodation sizes corresponds to the space available and meets London Borough of Camden's preferred requirement for mixed residential developments.

The area of the site is 0.066 hectares and the number of habitable rooms including all existing plus the new proposals gives a density of ???hab rooms per hectare.

The site is very close to many existing public transport systems. It is within easy walking distance to three London Underground stations. There are also many bus routes nearby with good connections to all parts of London. In due course, the Building will be within a few yards of the Tottenham Court Road station entrance to Crossrail which, as the name suggests, will, when completed in 2016, provide transport from and to the east and west of London.

3. LAYOUT

The flats have been designed taking into account current and L.B.Camdens standards and the layouts are for maximum utilisation of the space available, with good access and include for the possibility of disabled persons. Each flat is designed for ease of use internally, rooms of good size, minimum circulation, and 2 flats are provided with their own private amenity terrace to give comfortable external accommodation when required. Living rooms and balconies are positioned to make use of sunlight during the day and best visual aspect to the open space immediately to the west and also across the roofs over to the Charring Cross Road area.

4. SCALE

The new storey has been designed to relate to the height of the existing floors of the building and the scale has been replicated. Construction will be of lightweight arrangement to link-in visually with and use the existing structure to its best advantage. It is likely to be of steel, possibly lattice frame, with glazed cladding of specialist manufacture. The intention is to maintain the building in scale with the existing buildings in the street and also keep it sympathetically in context with St Giles in the Fields Church, which is very close to the west.

5. LANDSCAPING

Landscaping has been considered but there are no areas on the site itself where this can be provided. However, as already noted above, the Building is situated directly adjacent to the open area adjoining St Giles in the Fields which area itself leads to the Phoenix Garden via a dedicated pathway and set of steps. The Freeholder has in the past supported and has offered further financial assistance to both the Church and the Phoenix Garden. These are two very attractive small parkland spaces with access from both St Giles High Street and New Compton Street. They are both well used by people living and working locally. Although very different in character and original objective, they are both well looked after and are much appreciated. Together they therefore form the local amenity space for the Building. The present Rector of St Giles Church has ambitious plans to encourage greater use of the churchyard open space utilising substantial dedicated S106 agreement funds available from the developer of the large nearby St Giles Court residential and office development.

6. APPEARANCE

The new fifth floor construction will be to current architectural design and relate to the general horizontal visual alignment of the building. It is intended that the design will be an attractive asset to the street and also when viewed from above, as most of the buildings on St Giles High Street are higher than this one including Centre Point and the buildings forming the St Giles Court development itself. The roof scape is therefore an essential part of the design context of the proposals and solar panels and eco-systems are to be incorporated. The roof of St Giles Church is of copper sheeting with oxidation to the light green colour. Copper is therefore proposed for the new roof to fit in with the Church although whether oxidation should take place or the copper metal colour retained to be discussed.

The new floors are set back slightly from the footprint of the other floors and materials and glazed panelling have been selected to give a light and airy design, also generally reflective to the sky. The use of the existing materials was discounted structurally and also it was felt that the new storey in brickwork would make the increased height too heavy and noticeable in relation to St Giles in the Fields Church. Elevations and the roof are straightforward and uncomplicated with colours and appearance generally similar to the surroundings and in particular the design of the additional storeys that have been added to the buildings at the other side of New Compton Street.

7. ACCESS

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There are several possible access routes. This issue will require consultation with the Building's existing residents and stake-holders and agreement with Head lessee Camden. Access into the existing Building is provided today through doors onto New Compton Street at both ends of the Building although generally residents enter using the northern main entrance. The other southern exit was intended as a fire exit route but is in practice also much used as an exit route from the Building by the residents of the one-bedroom and studio flats'.

Subject to agreement with relevant parties, access into the Building to the new roof-top level could be via the Building's main entrance at the northern end of New Compton Street then by the existing main staircase or existing lift and then along the higher 3rd residential floor corridor to the existing roof access.

Entrance from the street may also be up-graded to provide an easy alternative exit route from the new rooftop level. The open to air ground floor area of the site is mostly allocated for parking by residents and is nowadays little used. Access into the ground floor garage area is direct from New Compton Street via existing security gates which could also be upgraded and even supplemented by a new secure doorway.

The alternative access routes would utilise (i) the Building's two existing entrance doors and related staircases-the Building's southern stairs already reach the roof level, and (ii) the Building's recently replaced lift. These alternative access options will require consultation with the Building's existing lessees etc. They must inevitably result in improved overall security to the benefit of the whole building.

8. SUMMARY

The proposals are to provide generous and attractive accommodation to high standards and pleasing situations. The new floor to co-ordinate with the existing architectural scale of the Building and be in character and an asset to the existing blocks in the street and in particular St Giles in the Field Church.

R.M. Partnership