

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT: **87 Albany Street, London, NW1 4BT**

The purpose of this Design & Access Statement is to explain in further detail the principles as set out in the attached drawings.

1.0 Context:

The application site is situated at the junction of Albany St and Chester Gate and consists of a three storey plus basement property - the ground and basement floors of which contain 2 duplex flats and there are two floors of existing residential accommodation above.

The property is located within the Regents Park Conservation Area but outside any centres of designation.

The immediate neighbour to the west of the application site is a listed building, no. 3 Chester Gate. The applicant site is not listed.

2.0 The Proposal:

The proposal is to remove the metal horizontal bars covering the existing lightwells (as per granted application ref: 2010/6561/P) and to create larger lightwells with black painted metal vertical railings to match the railings to the side of the property.

There are a number of reasons for this proposal:

1. Health and Safety: The applicant is concerned that by guarding the lightwells with horizontal railings only, there is a potential for members of the public to walk over the horizontal railings and fall through the open grate. The applicant is concerned that by not introducing vertical railings there could be a legal challenge if a member of the public is injured.
2. Precedent: A previously refused application on this site included larger lightwells and vertical railings with one of the reasons for refusal given by the Conservation Officer being that lightwells and vertical railings were not a feature of commercial buildings in the area and as such she would only be happy to recommend for approval if the lightwells were limited and covered with a horizontal railing. It is clear that this is not the case as the Queens Head & Artichoke public house at the southern end of Albany Street has both large lightwells and vertical railings.



3. Existing external wall treatment: As the premises was stripped out as part of the works to construct approval 2010/6561/P it became apparent that the street facing side of the front elevation wall at basement level was rendered and painted. It would seem highly unlikely that the wall would have received this treatment if it was originally built as a cellar for the public house only. We would argue that the proposal would be returning the site to its original form. This render is still on site and can be clearly seen with a site inspection.



4. Light to Basement Bedrooms: With the view that perhaps the Conservation Officers assessment as noted in point 2 was not correct then by extending the lightwells there will be a good deal more natural light provided to the basement bedrooms.

3.0 Pre-Application Advice:

Rob Tulloch suggested a new planning application should be submitted in isolation for the new lightwells to 87 Albany Street.

We have consulted the Crown Estate's Architect (Purcell) regarding the proposal and have received the following response;

'We would recommend to the Crown Estate that a scheme showing the introduction of new light wells guarded by railings would be of long term benefit in the future residential use of the property and, if suitably detailed, would not be detrimental to the appearance the building

4.0 Design & Policy:

Development Policy 24 – Securing high quality design

The proposed vertical railings guarding the new lightwell will be the same style and colour as the existing railings to the side of the property to maintain the high quality of design to the front elevation of the property. The introduction of a glazed walkway to the front door will still the front elevation to the main focal point while providing the habitable rooms to the basement with more natural daylight.

Development Policy 27 – Basement and Lightwells

The proposal doesn't harm the appearance or setting of the property or the established character of the surrounding area. As the above images shows the commercial properties down Albany Street have lightwells with metal railings to provide more natural light to the basement level of the property. With this the architectural character and surrounding area of the building is protected.

5.0 Summary:

In summary, we feel that the proposal will greatly benefit occupants of the residential units but perhaps more importantly will reduce the potential for injury to members of the public and subsequent legal claims.