

Planning, Design & Access Statement

64 Charlotte Street, London W1T 4QD

Our Ref: 1305/PA/DA

Planning Application 09.02.2012

1. Introduction:

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared for the Planning Application for the Change of Use and redevelopment of the upper floors of the above site to create six self-contained residential units, the removal of existing pavement lights, the addition of new railings around the perimeter of the building, the addition of new windows to the basement of the property, alterations to Ground Floor windows, replacement of existing windows with double glazed timber framed to match existing and infill extension to the rear upper floors with associated alterations to the roof and the addition of a rooflight.

2. General:

The site is an existing 19th Century 3-storey property with basement situated on the corner of Charlotte Street and Tottenham Street. It is located within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area but it is not Listed.

The existing building currently comprises 6 No. B1 office units over the existing four levels as listed below:

- Unit 1 – Basement and Ground Floor
- Unit 2 – Front First Floor
- Unit 3 – Rear First Floor
- Unit 4 – Front Second Floor
- Unit 5 – Rear Front Floor
- Unit 6 – Third Floor

3. Proposed development:

The proposal is to create a mixed-use development that will enhance the local area encouraging use through the day and night that will allow the property to achieve full occupation.

Basement and Ground Floor (B1 office unit)

At basement and ground floor levels the proposal will retain the existing B1 office unit accessed from the existing entrance on Charlotte Street. Existing partitions will be removed to create 2 open plan spaces linked with an internal staircase. To increase the amount of natural light to the unit it is proposed to remove the existing area of pavement lights around the perimeter of the building and to create 5 new windows at basement level. Alterations are also proposed to the ground floor windows' framing and a new enlarged shopfront window. New traditional railings are proposed to secure the opened-up lightwell with stairs at the front of the property providing access from pavement level. These proposals are made to create a more attractive and viable office space than the existing situation.

Rear Ground, First, Second and Third Floors

It is proposed to convert the rear ground, first, second and third floors into 6 residential units with 1No. 1 bedroom apartment and 1No. 2 bedroom apartments on each floor. A new entrance for the residential units is proposed on Tottenham Street using an existing opening. The units will be accessed via a new staircase to the rear of the building.

Additionally it is proposed to infill 2 existing areas to the rear of the property that are currently void spaces. The infilling of these areas will allow a continuous floor plan over the three floors and will maximise the available floor space for the residential units. It will also allow the units to be stacked thus making the development efficient in terms of internal planning and construction.

The layouts of the residential units and the proposed new floor levels necessitate the realignment of existing windows to the second and third floors to give suitable floor to ceiling heights. It is proposed to adjust existing

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window head heights to be aligned with the existing windows at the adjacent property 66 Charlotte Street and to continue these across the front and side elevations on Charlotte Street and Tottenham Street. There will also be associated alterations to the roof over the proposed infill and a new hinged rooflight over the new staircase for maintenance access.

4. Planning History:

Pre-Application advice was submitted in October 2011 for the:

“change of use from B1 to C3, erection of a mansard roof extension, an infill extension to the rear at upper levels and realignment of the windows at 2nd and 3rd floor levels”

Pre-Application Report dated 18th January 2012 was received with reference CA/2011/ENQ/05906. The case officer assigned was Ms. Jenna Litherland.

This application has taken into consideration the comments given in the report and the proposal has been developed accordingly.

5. Change of Land Use:

Existing:

The building use is currently categorised as B1 office throughout comprising 6 office units as detailed above.

Proposed:

Ground and basement floors to remain as a B1 office unit.

Change of use to C3 residential to the rear of the ground floor (residential entrance lobby), first, second and third floors to provide 3 No. 1 bedroom and 3 No. 2 bedroom apartments.

Pre-Application advice stated that:

“it appears that the site is not suitable of flexible business use and is only suitable of B1(a) offices. Taking into consideration the above factors and the unsuitability of the existing buildings as office accommodation, the loss of B1(a) use and the change to permanent residential use is likely to be acceptable in land use terms...The principle of providing residential accommodation at the site is also supported by policies CS6 and DP2.”

The application for the change of use is based on the site not being:

“...not suitable for any business use other than B1(a) offices...” and *“that the site is not considered suitable for flexible employment”* with the reasons given that:

- *the building has relatively small floors arranged over 3 levels which are accessed by stairs only*
- *there is no realistic opportunity to provide flexible layouts due to the position of the supporting walls and columns*
- *the property is not located within or adjacent to a location suitable for industry or warehousing*
- *the property is not in a suitable location for a mix of uses including light industry and local distribution warehousing*
- *the site does not have the potential to be serviced by rail or water or vehicles*

Please refer to Annex 1 for a set of existing plans illustrating the current units and layouts.

Furthermore, the accompanying documents (Annexes 2, 3 and 4) provided by the Applicant illustrate that the existing office units have been vacant for a considerable amount of time and that the ongoing marketing of the building has not been successful in attracting potential tenants.

This is, as stated in the accompanying letter (Annex 2) from Laurence Braham (a lettings agent specialising in this area) due to the poor current layouts and services offered by the units.

Additionally, when viewed against available office spaces in the area, some of which have similarly been vacant for long periods (please refer to Annex 3 and 4) the units offered at 64 Charlotte Street compare poorly in terms of flexibility, modernity and servicing.

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A Change of Use allowing the upper floors to be redeveloped as residential units offers the property an opportunity to become fully occupied providing both much needed housing to the Borough and also enhancing and prolonging the useful life of the building rather than remaining in its current unoccupied state.

This view is supported by the lettings agent who states in his letter that the proposed change of use:

“...would appear to be the ideal solution in obtaining tenants at the premises who will also help support the local shopping and restaurant community.”

6. Design:

Care has been taken in the design of this proposal to preserve and enhance the positive contribution the building makes to the Conservation Area. The proposed works affecting the external appearance are listed below with justification and explanation given for the design proposals.

New railings, lightwell and steps to basement

The design of the new railings has taken as reference the existing railings at 70 Charlotte Street. These are traditional black painted metal railings with a plinth. These will replace the existing railings which are both not in keeping with the character of the building and in poor state of repair. The new railings will replace the existing on the Charlotte Street elevation and continue around the perimeter of the building protecting the opened-up lightwell.

Consideration has been taken of the many examples of basement lightwells with railings both on Charlotte Street, Tottenham Street and throughout the Conservation Area. This included in particular the building on the corner of Tottenham Street and Goodge Place that has a basement lightwell with railings wrapping around the corner of the property similar to the proposal. Please see Photosheet 2 for references.

New front external steps from street level to the basement are proposed to provide alternative means of escape and potential service alternative access. Their form and location are believed to be in keeping with established precedents on Charlotte Street and the local area.

It is our view that the proposal will enhance the building's positive contribution to the Conservation Area by providing continuity of an established pattern of lightwells and railings on both streets and a satisfying resolution of how the building relates to the streetscape and its context.

Window alterations

Ground floor shopfront windows

Alterations are proposed to the existing shopfront windows on both the Charlotte Street and Tottenham Street elevations. These are intended to improve both the quality of natural light received, rationalise and simplify the overall appearance of the ground floor and as a consequence broaden the range of potential tenants for the unit.

The new enlarged shopfront window on the Charlotte Street elevation has been designed so that its height aligns with the height of the existing front door and its width to the first floor windows so that it is proportioned to and respectful of existing elements on the elevation.

It is proposed to alter the framing of the existing Tottenham Street ground floor windows by removing the glazing bars which sub-divide the upper section of the windows to give a clear undivided expanse of glazing. The existing sizes and locations of the windows will be retained. By removing these glazing bars whilst retaining their overall form the windows and elevations are given a more contemporary appearance whilst maintaining their existing relationship to the streetscape and preserving the positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

New basement windows

By removing the existing pavement lights to open up the existing lightwell the opportunity arises to create new windows at basement level to substantially improve the quality of light and space for the unit. The current small non-original windows being located below the pavement lights provide very poor levels of natural light which contribute to its lack of appeal to potential tenants.

Please refer to Photosheet 1 for photographs of the existing basement windows.

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New basement windows (continued)

It is proposed to form four new windows to the side elevation and one new window to the front elevation at basement level. The new windows to the side elevation will be centred on the existing ground floor windows directly above thereby respecting the existing pattern of fenestration. Although centred on these windows they will be smaller thus preserving a subservient relationship with the ground floor windows and overall elevation and therefore respecting the building's character.

New Second and Third Floor windows – front and side elevations

It is proposed to realign the locations and resize the windows to the second and third floors to enable suitable floor to ceiling heights for these floors. The windows are to be aligned with and match the sizes of the existing windows of the adjacent building 66 Charlotte Street.

It is proposed to replace the decorative architraves around the new second floor windows; the new third floor windows will match those No. 66. The realignment of the windows will also require raising the existing cornice by 240mm. This is believed to be not detrimental to the building's character.

The new windows are proposed across both the front and side elevations to give continuity to and preserve the existing the fenestration pattern over the entire building. As noted in the Pre-Application Report: *"the alterations to the fenestration would not harm the character and appearance of the building"*.

All windows, both new and replacement are proposed to improve the building's energy efficiency. The new windows will be white painted timber framed double-glazed sash to match existing. The replacement ground floor windows will be fixed white painted timber framed double-glazed respecting the building's character.

Rear Infill

The proposed rear elevation of the areas of infill of existing void spaces to the rear (at first, second and third floor levels) and centre rear (second and third floor levels) of the existing plan will be built up in London stock brick to match the existing. The infill will be taken to the level of the existing parapet.

As noted in Pre-Application advice received by email from the case officer *"the infill would not create a significant increase in visual bulk"*. This may be viewed as not detrimental to the building's contribution to the Conservation Area.

The new windows to the rear elevation (on the newly formed infill wall) will be in the same location as the existing with their locations projected forwards into the new rear elevation wall. These are to be white painted timber framed double-glazed sash to match those throughout the building.

A new low (200mm) safety handrail will be installed on top of the parapet for maintenance and safety purposes. There is a similar existing low handrail at roof level on the front elevation.

New residential entrance to Tottenham Street

It is proposed to provide a new entrance solely for the residential upper floors on the Tottenham Street side elevation. This is to be located within an existing opening. Adjacent to this, new doors for a dedicated refuse and recycling storage area are proposed to be formed within the space of an existing recess.

The new entrance door will be clad in vertical metal strips with a fixed glazed panel adjacent. The phone entry system and letterboxes will be inserted within this glazed panel. The refuse storage doors will be clad in a vertical timber strip. The design aims to provide a suitably attractive contemporary entrance to the residential units which also respects the building's character and context.

Due to the existing ground floor level it is necessary to provide two steps up from pavement level to the residential entrance lobby. The first step will be aligned to the adjacent raised plinth of the existing A1 unit, within the demise of 64 Charlotte Street, which is not affected by this application. The new steps will be stone clad.

We believe these proposals will significantly improve the current appearance of the building whilst respecting its contribution to the Conservation Area.

Design of residential units

The residential units have been carefully planned to comply with minimum standards as set out in both CPG-2 Housing and the London Plan. The one bedroom units will have an approximate GIA of 54sqm, the two bedroom units approximately 72sqm, therefore comfortably meeting both sets of standards.

Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

It is proposed to upgrade the building fabric to meet current Building Regulations requirements to improve its energy efficiency and sustainability credentials as far as the existing building constraints will allow.

An EcoHomes Pre-Assessment Report has been carried out together with accompanying SAP calculations, both of which are submitted with this application as supporting documents.

Improvements will for example take the form of the replacement of existing windows and new windows to be double-glazed, the addition of new roof insulation to improve thermal efficiency, the installation of new energy efficient boilers and white goods in all residential units, amongst others.

7. Access:

The entrance to the B1 office unit is to remain as existing from Charlotte Street. An alternative entrance is also proposed from pavement level via a new external staircase with gate to the front of the building leading to the basement.

The entrance to the residential units is proposed to be from Tottenham Street as detailed above using an existing opening onto a wide lobby with a new staircase serving all floors.

Lifetime Homes Statement

The proposal has taken into consideration the guidelines given in the Lifetime Homes Standards published in July 2010 and has sought to meet these as far as is reasonably possible given the restraints of the existing building. The design response against these criteria is listed below.

Please also refer to drawings 1305-PA-01 and 02 for proposed plans with annotations and dimensions indicating the design response to meeting the criteria as required.

1. Car Parking Width

Not Applicable – as advised in Pre-Application report the development will be car-free

2. Access from Car Parking

Not Applicable – as advised in Pre-Application report the development will be car-free

3. Approach Gradients

The communal entrance is stepped due to existing floor levels but has a rise of not more than 170mm

4. Entrances

The communal entrance will be illuminated with a clear opening width of 900mm with a minimum 300mm nib to the leading edge.

To maintain the existing appearance of the property and in consideration of its location within a Conservation Area it is not proposed to provide a covered entrance.

All front doors to individual dwellings will have clear openings of 900mm with clear 300mm nibs to the leading edge of the door.

5. Communal stairs & lifts

The communal stairs are easily accessible and comply with the Lifetime Homes criteria with a maximum rise of 170mm and minimum going of 250mm with handrails extending 300mm beyond top and bottom, handrail height of 900mm, distinguishable step nosing and clear width of 1000mm.

6. Internal doorways & hallways

Convenient movement through internal doorways and hallways for the widest range of people is enabled by compliance with guidelines as set out in the Lifetime Homes Standards.

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7. Circulation Space

Convenient movement for the widest range of people is enabled in living, dining and bedroom spaces by compliance with guidelines as set out in the Lifetime Homes Standards with 1500mm diameter turning circles for wheelchair users.

8. Entrance level living space

All units will have entrance level living spaces.

9. Potential of entrance level bedroom

All units are on one level with entrance level bedrooms.

10. Entrance level WC & shower drainage

All units will have an accessible entrance level bathroom with provision for future installation of a floor drain.

11. WC and bathroom walls

Walls in bathrooms will be capable of firm fixing and future support for grab-rails.

12. Stairs & through-floor lift

Not applicable. All units are single level.

13. Potential for hoists

Structure above main bedroom and bathroom ceilings will be capable of supporting ceiling hoists and reasonable routes are provided from the main bedroom to the bathroom.

14. Bathrooms

An accessible bathroom providing ease of access in accordance with guideline as set out in Lifetime Homes Standards will be provided on the same level as the main bedroom.

15. Glazing and window handle heights

Windows will comply with the guidelines as set out in the Lifetime Homes Standards and will be easy to open/operate except those to the Second floor which due to the constraints of the existing building and its location in a Conservation Area will have sill heights above the recommended 800mm, views out are however still enabled by the windows extending to the full proposed ceiling height.

16. Location of service controls

Service controls will be within the recommended height band of 450 to 1200mm from the floor and at least 300mm away from any internal room corner.

8. Transport Links:

As noted in the Pre-Application Report the site is located within an “*area with excellent access to public transport*” being within walking distance of Goodge Street, Warren Street, Euston Square and Tottenham Court Road tube stations plus the extensive bus routes serving Tottenham Court Road, Gower Street, Euston Road and Oxford Street.

9. Car and Bicycle Parking:

As stated in the Pre-Application Report, the residential units “*would be secured to be car-free by a Section 106 Agreement*”.

Provision has been made to allow one cycle parking space per residential unit. The proposed bicycle storage area would be located at ground floor level within the entrance lobby.

10. Recycling and refuse collection areas:

A dedicated refuse and recycling storage area is proposed adjacent to the proposed residential entrance on Tottenham Street with its own lockable doors.

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Recycling and refuse collection areas (continued)

The space allocated for this is based on the waste storage requirements guidelines (obtained on the Camden Council website) for separate wheelie bins for household waste and recycling.

These are indicated in red on the proposed ground floor plan, drawing no: 1305-PA-01.

11. Section 106 legal agreements

Open Space

As stated in the Pre-Application Report developments creating 5 or more dwellings require the provision of 9sqm of open space per person or

“...by making land available as open space or by paying a financial contribution.”

As it is not possible due to the nature of the site to provide open space a financial contribution secured by a Section 106 legal agreement would be applicable.

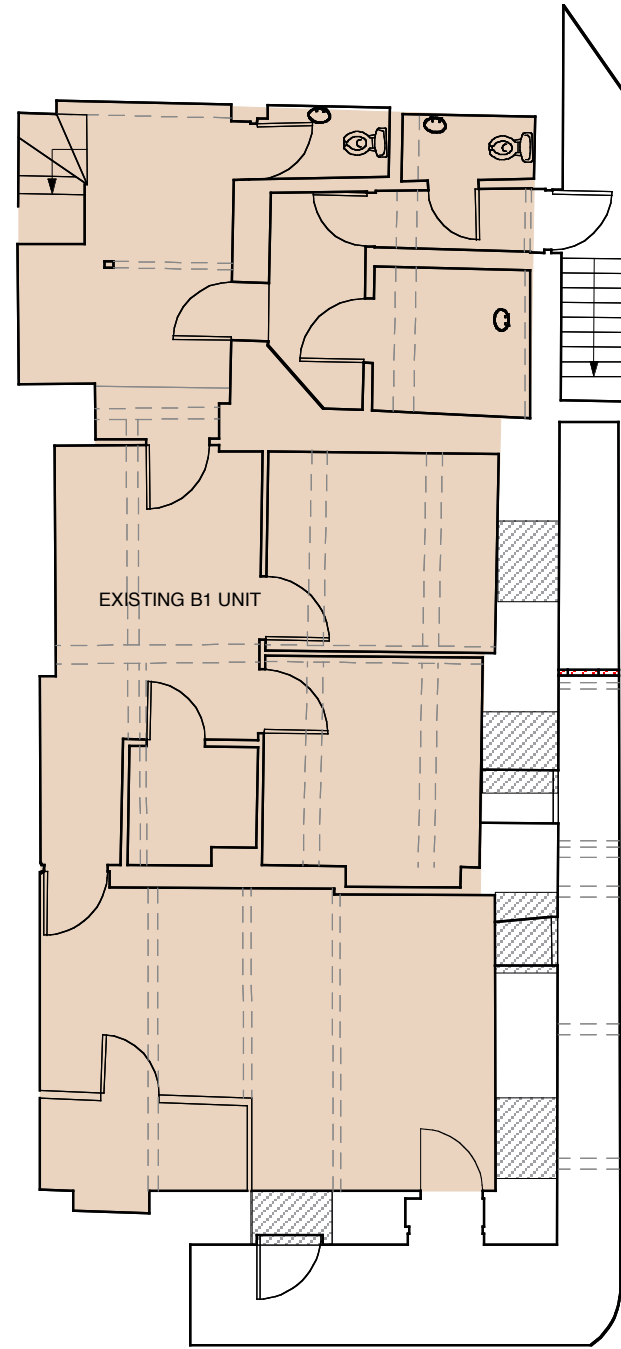
Education

As stated in the Pre-Application Report

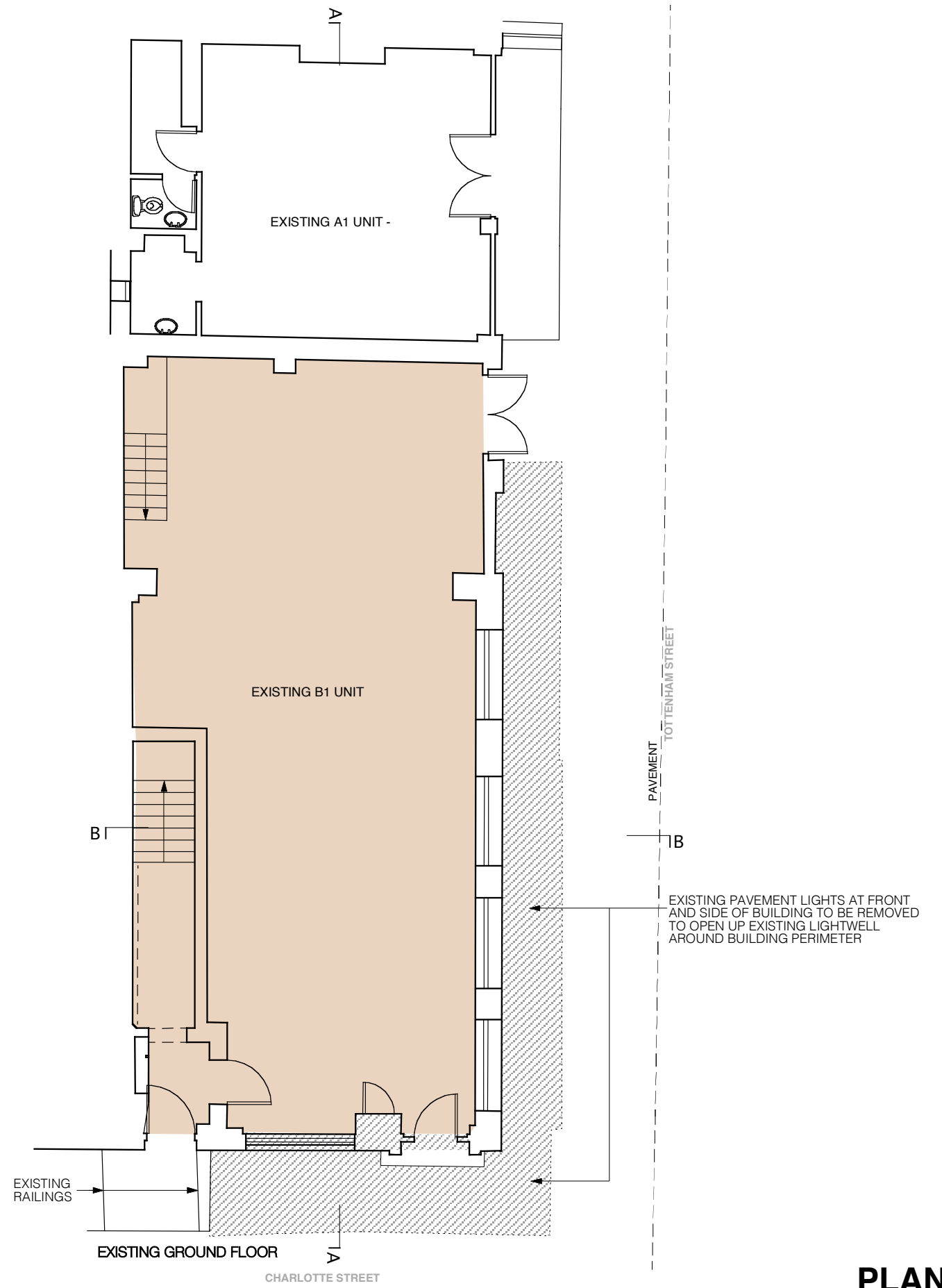
“developments creating 5 or more dwellings would normally be expected to provide a contribution towards education provision in the Borough. The contribution sought is proportionate to the size of dwellings proposed, and is not sought for single-bed units...”

The financial contribution to be secured by a Section 106 legal agreement would be applicable only for the 3 new 2 bedroom units.

Further to the above and enclosed drawn proposals we respectfully ask for this proposal to be favourably considered.



EXISTING BASEMENT LEVEL



EXISTING GROUND FLOOR

CHARLOTTE STREET

PAVEMENT
TOTTENHAM STREET

B

EXISTING PAVEMENT LIGHTS AT FRONT AND SIDE OF BUILDING TO BE REMOVED TO OPEN UP EXISTING LIGHTWELL AROUND BUILDING PERIMETER

PLANNING

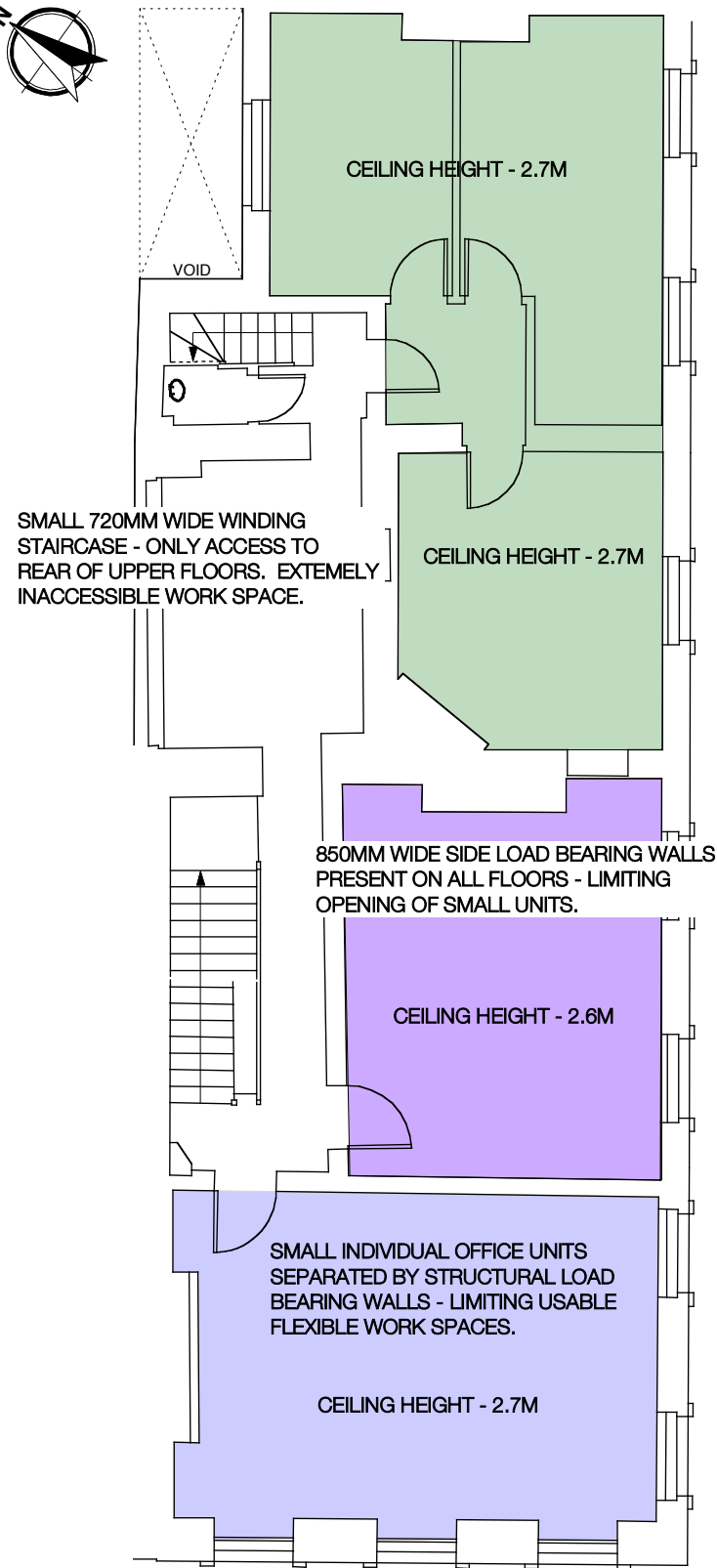
- EXISTING BASEMENT & GROUND FLOOR OFFICE
- INDICATES AREAS FOR REMOVAL/DEMOLITION



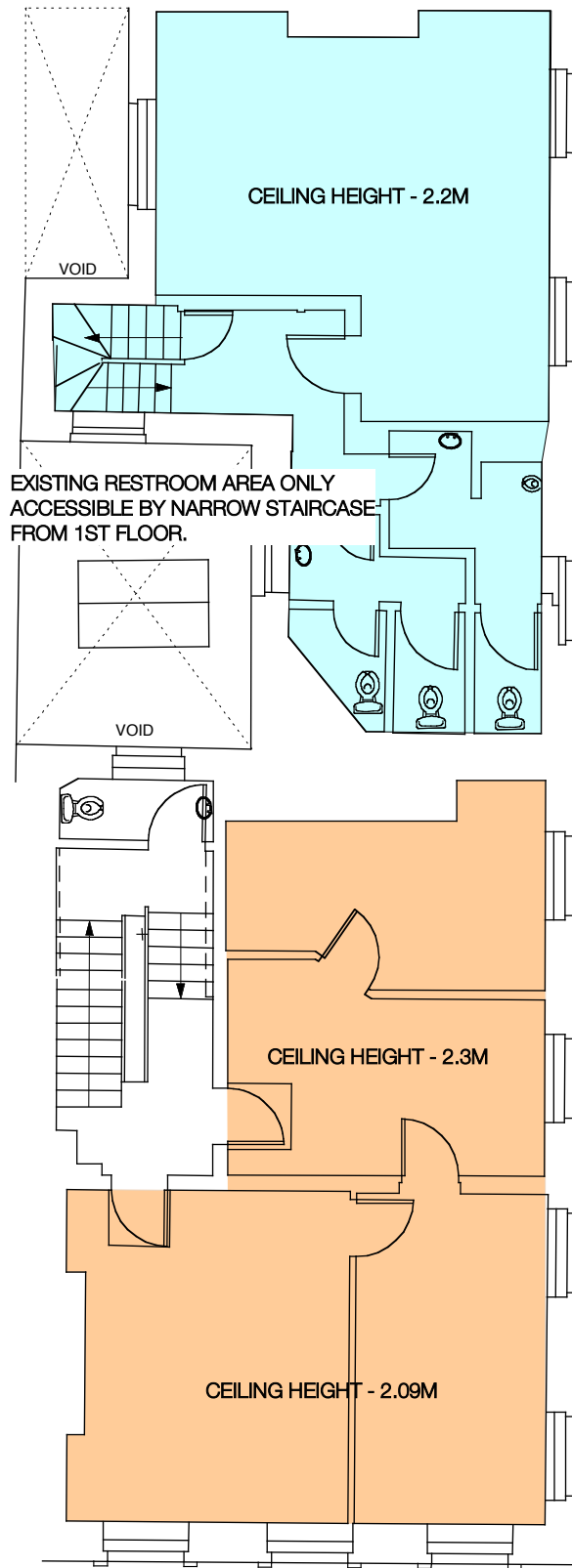
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Project 1305: 64 CHARLOTTE STREET LONDON W1T 4QD		
Drawing Title ANNEX 1 EXISTING BASEMENT & GROUND FLOOR PLANS CURRENT UNIT LAYOUT		
Dwg No. 1305-EX-08	Revision	
Scale	Date JAN. 2012	Drawn by MP

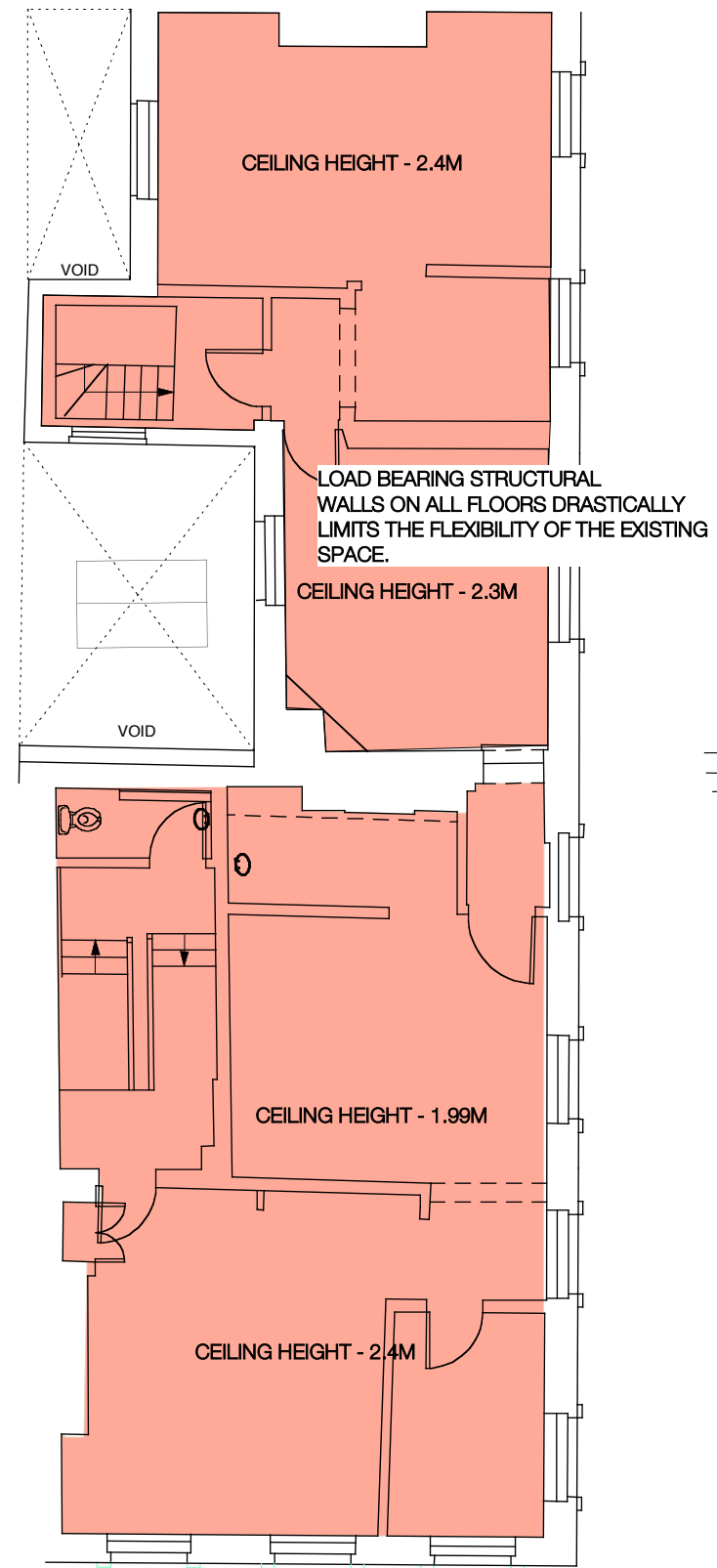
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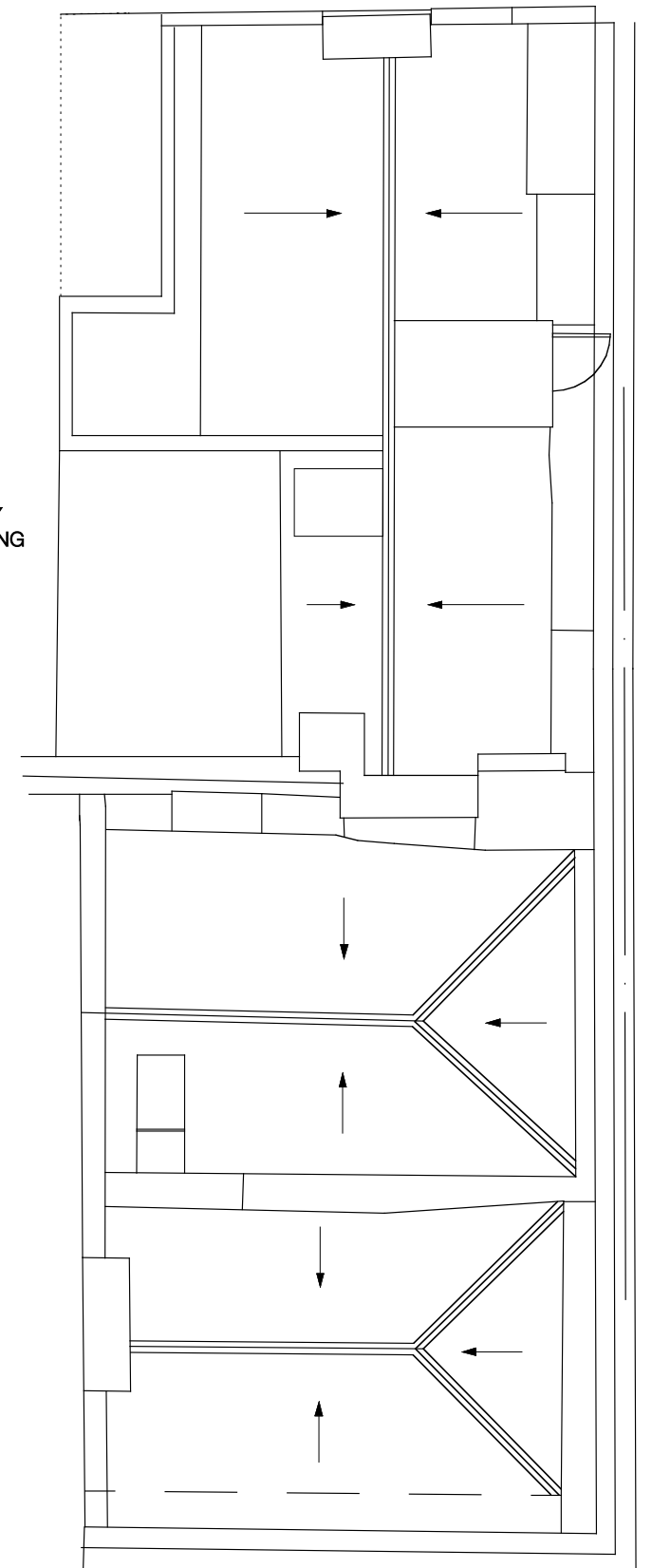
EXISTING FIRST FLOOR



EXISTING SECOND FLOOR



EXISTING THIRD FLOOR



EXISTING ROOF PLAN

- EXISTING 1st Floor Front Office
- EXISTING 1st Floor Boardroom
- EXISTING 1st Floor Rear Office
- EXISTING 2nd Floor Front Office
- EXISTING 2nd Floor Rear Office
- EXISTING 3rd Floor Office



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Project 1305: 64 CHARLOTTE STREET LONDON W1T 4QD	
Drawing Title ANNEX 1 EXISTING FIRST, SECOND, THIRD FLOOR & ROOF PLANS CURRENT UNIT LAYOUT	
Dwg No. 1305-EX-09	Revision
Scale	Date JAN. 2012
	Drawn by MP

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PLANNING