

LIFETIME HOMES STATEMENT

171 Finchley Road, NW3 6JY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report assesses the Lifetime Homes implications of a proposal to convert the upper floors of 171 Finchley Road (also known as 5 Fairfax Mansions) to 4 x self-contained flats.
- 1.2 The Council requires a Lifetime Homes and wheelchair housing statement to accompany planning applications for new residential developments (including houses and flats), mixed use developments, developments that include a change of use or other type of conversion. The Council states that 10 per cent of all new housing should be designed to be wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users.
- 1.3 This statement will explain how the proposed development will address the 16 design criteria listed in the Lifetime Homes standards as far as is possible.
- 1.4 The report demonstrates that due to the constraints of the existing building some criteria cannot be complied with.

2. Application Summary

- 2.1. The application site is located on the south-western side of Finchley Road, close to its junction with Fairfax Road. The site forms part of a 4-storey terrace of 9 properties known as Fairfax Mansions. The other 8 blocks in the terrace comprise retail uses on the ground floor and residential above. No lift is available. Access to all flats is via an elevated catwalk to the rear of the building with stairs leading up to first floor level.
- 2.2. The application is to change the use of the upper floors to provide 2 x one-bed flats and 2 x studio flats.
- 2.3. The rear of the ground floor would provide the entrance lobby to the flats, W.Cs and storage area. The two studio flats would be located on the first floor. The second and third floors would each comprise a one-bedroom flat.
- 2.4. Car parking spaces are located to the rear of the property at lower ground level. These are undesignated spaces and serve the commercial units and each of the 9 blocks. Access to the flats is at ground level to the rear via the access road between the blocks and the car park leading off Fairfax Road.

3. Lifetime Homes 16 Design Features

There are 16 design features that are considered under Lifetime Homes.

Parking

- 3.1 No parking is currently allocated to any of the units in Fairfax Mansions. The units are intended to be car free to encourage cycling and other means of transport than the private car.

Approach to dwelling from Parking

- 3.2 As there are no parking spaces allocated to the premises the approach to the dwelling from the parking area is not considered to be a relevant consideration.

Approach to all entrances

- 3.3 There is only one entrance to the flats which is via the elevated walkway to the rear of the building. The entrance lobby would contain storage space and then approximately 20 steps separated by mini landings to the entrance of the first floor studio flats. Once inside the flats there are no changes of level. The other flats have more steps from the entrance. Whilst these 20 steps are not ideal, the development represents the conversion of an existing building with an existing ground floor commercial use and therefore ground floor accommodation is not available.

Entrances

- 3.4 The entrance hall will be well illuminated and have adequate weather protection. It is not possible to create a level access to the entrance due to the constraints of the existing building. All flats would have doors of a minimum of 900mm width and level access.

Communal Stairs and Lifts

- 3.5 The communal stairs consist of small flights of steps separated by regular landings. This together with hand rails will give easy access to the upper floors.

Internal Doorways and Hallways

- 3.6 Wheelchair access is not possible due to the stairs. However doorways throughout the studio flat are all at least 0.9m wide giving easy access through the unit. The ground floor main entrance doors are wider for easy access for deliveries.

Circulation Space

- 3.7 Wheelchair access is not possible to flats due to the stairs. However all flats have generously-sized living areas of approximately to enable convenient movement around the room. The bathroom contains a bath and adequate circulation space around.

Entrance level living space

- 3.8 None of the flats have entrance level living space.

Potential for entrance level bed-space

- 3.9 The flats are unable to comply with this design feature as they are on upper floors.

Entrance level toilet and shower drainage

- 3.10 There would be no ground floor toilet and shower space as there would be no ground floor living space.

Toilet and bathroom walls

- 3.11 The inability to access the property by wheelchair means the need for load bearing walls is not relevant.

Stairs and potential through-floor lift in dwelling

- 3.12 This design feature relates to a dwelling of two or more storeys rather than individual flats and is therefore not applicable. The stairs to the building feature several small flights of steps and therefore would not be suitable for a chair lift. There is not the potential for a lift from entrance level to bedroom and bathroom level.

Potential for fitting of hoists and bedroom / bathroom relationship

- 3.13 It is unlikely the ceiling would be strong enough to support ceiling hoists and alterations would not be possible as works to the ceiling of one flat may affect the flat above. Therefore it may not be possible to comply with this design feature.

Bathrooms

- 3.14 The proposed bathrooms are spaciouly laid out with space in front of the WC, basin and the bath to ensure easy access.

Glazing and window handle heights

- 3.15 Each of the flats has a good outlook from the living rooms. The windows are existing and therefore the window heights cannot be amended.

Location of service controls

- 3.16 The location of service controls of the flats could be altered to be within 450mm to 1200mm from the floor if not already

4. Conclusions

- 4.1. This report relates to a proposal for a first floor rear extension and to convert the upper floors of 171 Finchley Road to 4 x self-contained flats.

- 4.2. The report shows how the scheme does not fully comply with the 16 criteria. However it should be recognised that the existing building dates back to 1911 and relies of stair access to all dwellings. The building is not readily convertible for disabled access, but those Lifetime Homes features that can be incorporated will be.
- 4.3. We therefore consider that within the constraints of the building, the proposal meets with Lifetime Homes requirements as far as is practicable.