

## **LIFETIME HOMES STATEMENT**

**173A Finchley Road, NW3 6JY**

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### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report assesses the Lifetime Homes implications of a proposal to convert the upper floors of 173A Finchley Road (also known as 8 Fairfax Mansions) to 2 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. However 12 criteria can be partially or fully achieved.

### **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. Block 8 is the exception as it has retail on the ground floor and offices on the upper floors. No lift is available.
- 2.2. The application is to change the use of the upper floors to provide 1 x two-bed flat and 1 x one-bed flat.
- 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 residential units. The units are intended to be car free to encourage cycling and other means of transport than the private car. As part of a separate application the car park is to be upgraded and cycle parking and 5 disabled spaces are proposed. In order to comply with the Lifetime Homes requirement, one disabled car parking space will be allocated to Studio Flat 1. The car parking space allocated would be No 1 in the south east part of the site (assuming that the car parking layout as shown in application 2011/2533/P is granted permission). This is the closest space to the access road to the flats which is located between the car park and the rear of the flats.

#### Approach to dwelling from Parking

- 3.2 For Studio Flat 1, the distance from the allocated parking space to the steps to the premises is approximately 90m over level ground. The entrance lobby contains a WC and then approximately 20 steps separated by mini landings to the entrance of Studio Flat 1. Once inside the flat 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.

#### Approach to all entrances

- 3.3 There is only one entrance to the flats that is from the access road between the rear of the flats and the parking area. Please see Design Feature 2 above.

#### Entrances

- 3.4 The main entrance to the flats has double doors (1.5m in width) leading to a lobby and a further door (0.9m) to the hall before the stairs to the flats. This 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.

#### 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 to Studio Flat 1 due to the stairs. However doorways throughout the studio flat are all at least 0.8m 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 Studio Flat 1 due to the stairs. However Studio Flat 1 has a good sized living kitchen area of approximately 21 m<sup>2</sup> to enable convenient movement around the room. The bathroom contains a bath and adequate circulation space around.

#### Entrance level living space

- 3.8 Whilst none of the flats have entrance level living space, they do all benefit from a spacious ground floor hall and WC where occupants could meet passing visitors especially those less able to use stairs.

#### 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 The flats have a communal ground floor toilet but no shower facility.

#### Toilet and bathroom walls

- 3.11 The WC/bathrooms of each of the flats have external or load bearing walls and are therefore suitable for firm fixing of grab rails if required in the future.

#### 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. Studio 2 is above the hall where a lift might be possible but there is a flight of steps between the living area and the bathroom.

#### 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 bathroom of Studio Flat 1 is spaciouly laid out with space in front of the WC, basin and the bath to ensure easy access. The flush as shown on the drawings can be altered to be away from the wall to improve 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, however Studio Flat 1 has sill heights of 797mm that meet the criteria. Heights of window handles can be amended if necessary.

Location of service controls

- 3.16 The location of service controls of Studio flat 1 can 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 change the use from Class B1 offices to 4 self-contained flats at Block 8, Fairfax Mansions, 167-175 Finchley Road.
- 4.2. The report shows how the scheme fully complies with 3 of the criteria (1, 11, 16), and partially complies with 9 of the criteria (2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15). There are only 4 criteria that cannot be complied with (3, 9, 12, 13) due to the constraints of the existing building. Drawing Nos 109C and 300B show how criteria 1, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14, and 15 will be addressed as far as possible.
- 4.3. We therefore consider that within the constraints of the building, the scheme and in particular Studio Flat 1 would provide an accessible unit capable of long term occupation.