

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

October, 2011

48 NEAL STREET, LONDON, WC2H 9PA

DOMESTIC ALTERATION & COVERSION TO RESIDENTIAL UNITS

CONTEXT:

The corner property is situated on the lively West End shopping area of Neal Street; close to underground stations (Tottenham Court Road, Leicester Square and Covent Garden) and numerous bus routes. It lies in the Camden Conservation Area of Seven Dials. Neal Street and Shorts Gardens generally comprise of 19th and 20th Century residential properties over shop and commercial units at street level.

48 Neal Street is a 5 storey end of terrace period property of traditional construction with solid brick walls and mansard roof, and also has a lower ground floor basement. Family owned and lived in for over 40 years, the patriarch of the family still occupies the four storey maisonette residence on the upper floors over the shop. The ground floor and basement are currently shop premises and their associated storage in the basement. Originally purchased as three flats, the property was converted circa 1960's into a single family dwelling with some subsequent approved roof modifications and a second floor level addition of a conservatory. This existing natural aluminium single glazed 1984 structure is showing its age and is in need of replacement.

Context photographs are provided in the site location drawing 08-166_03.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE BRIEF:

The residential part of the property is currently occupied by the elderly father of the family, and children have long left home. It is the aim of our clients, the children, to once more convert the property and return it to three residential units above the shop. The intention is to provide an apartment at 1st floor level for their increasingly frail 94 year old father, who though mobile, could benefit from DDA compliant facilities at his principal living level. He would thus continue to reside more comfortably in his long standing home. It is possible that in due course he will require personal care and the use of a wheelchair and unit 'A' is planned for such circulation.

In keeping with Camden Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Policy **DP29 - Improving Access**, the proposals provide changes to the existing property that address the needs of the client to improve quality of life, while being sympathetic and sensitive to the aesthetic and heritage of the area as set out in **DP25 - Conserving Camden's Heritage**.

RESPONSE TO THE BRIEF:

The proposal sub-divides the residential part of the property into a first floor self contained 1 bedroom apartment A, where doors will be reconfigured for disabled access with 900mm clear openings, DDA compliant bathroom with wheelchair accessible shower, and new kitchen layout with lowered worktops and appliances.

Apartment B on the second floor level will also be reconfigured into a 1 bedroom self contained apartment, where the clients see potential occupation by the father's carer. The existing conservatory will be replaced with a double glazed enclosure to match in

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pattern the existing in polyester powder coated aluminium thermally broken framing, forming a habitable space to be used as a Kitchen and Dining Room. The existing cill and external appearance and details will not be altered.

The upper two floors will form a two bedroom apartment C, that will be rented and has the potential of income being used to finance the fathers care. Entry to this duplex unit will be through an internal 'front' door at second floor level. The two bedrooms are located on the third floor with a new en-suite and bathroom configuration. The layout with new separating partition will result in the replacement of the existing single glazed timber sash window on the side facade, with two number double glazed timber sash windows into the existing opening to match pattern elsewhere. No other elevation or external alterations are proposed. The top fourth floor will provide a new Kitchen and Living environment with fine roof top views over the city and use of the existing external spaces.

All apartments will enter the property through the existing shared front entry, where no change to the existing envelope or aesthetic is proposed. Each apartment will be accessed via the existing internal stairs with only modest partition modifications needed to provide for fire separation requirements.

There are no changes required for access to the residential units, in the front facade or change to the existing shop front. The existing alternative fire escape route on the fourth floor mansard roof and its railing to the neighbouring property are to remain unchanged.

With high attention to detail and design, the proposal follows LDF **DP24-Securing High Quality Design**; while its minimal impact is respectful to local character, has no detriment to the street frontage, and responds to the existing features of the property while providing the necessary improvements. The proposal with its minimal alteration to a single window on the side of the property, provides the area with enhancement of residential opportunities and increases the stock of new homes, outweighing any minor aesthetic change. Camden's Development Policies describe aims for providing new homes and "meeting our need for homes", that also includes homes for wheelchair users. LDF-**DP5** states a requirement for "Homes of different sizes" with reference to subdividing residential properties into self-contained apartments. This proposal does such with two number one bed apartments, and a two bed apartment and notes that in the Dwelling Size Priorities Table two bed properties are listed as a 'very high' priority.

Mixed use development is to be promoted in Camden's **DP1**, and this proposal maintains the commercial premises underneath residential self-contained apartments.

SUMMARY

These proposals will allow an ageing father to remain in the house where he has lived for a significant part of his life and will develop the facility and financial help for the family to provide the required elderly care. In a densely populated central London, the additional housing provisions will be of great benefit to the locality. With no alterations to the front façade and busy shopping parade, and only a minor fenestration change within an existing opening on the side façade, the proposal has little if no impact on the character and aesthetic of the street and urban context.

LB Camden policy set out in **DP6-Lifetime home and wheelchair housing**, foresees an increasing requirement for new build disabled provisions. We are of the opinion that the same strategic view should be focused on the adaptation and refurbishment of existing properties. At 48 Neal Street these proposals can ensure that a householders home can be for life.

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ARCHITECTS PROFILE:

Architect YOUR Home *Camden* is a parallel domestic orientated division to the Chartered Practice of Andris Berzins and Associates with over 30 years of experience in London and the British Isles. Work spanning from residential new build, extensions and refurbishment to museum and visitor centre projects has established good design, a caring reputation and Civic Trust and other award recognition. The practice has an extensive background of heritage work; that includes quinquennial inspections as Anglican Parish church architect/surveyors for the London Diocese; there are also recent and ongoing refurbishment and regeneration projects at Myddelton House for the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, where amongst a number of conservation projects the practice received an Enfield Design Award (Listed Buildings) for the elegance and simplicity of its solution to new front entrance access with a stone disabled ramp and steps.