

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1.0 The Site

The site is known as No. 242 Grays Inn Road and comprises a terraced property of 3 storeys plus basement, with a street frontage of approx. 6.5m and depth varying from 5.3m to 12m. The existing building was built in the early 19th century, constructed in traditional materials to a traditional pattern, albeit with a reduced depth due to its relationship with the adjacent corner property. The property forms part of an intact terrace of small shops / residential properties between Wren Street and Calthorpe Street on the Eastern side of Grays Inn Road. The building is in reasonable condition for its age and is Grade II listed, with a potentially attractive road frontage once the assorted fittings mounted on and above the shop-front are removed.

2.0 Existing / Recent Use

Until early 2011 the building was used as a convenience store on the ground floor with shop storage facilities in the basement. The upper two floors form a residential unit which is occupied by the shop owner. This unit has its own entrance onto the street frontage and is also connected internally with the rear of the shop. The small rear yard is in ancillary use to the shop and residential unit.

3.0 Design Brief

The client is the owner of the whole building and the proprietor and operator of the shop, and has been associated with the property for many years. In recent years the viability of the shop as a business has been greatly reduced by the improvement of the Brunswick Centre and the introduction of similar shops in direct competition very close by on both sides of Grays Inn Road south of its junction with Calthorpe Street.

In view of this reduction in business, in 2008 the owner sought approval to convert the ground floor shop and basement area into residential use as part of the existing flat at 1st and 2nd floor levels.

Approval for this change of use was granted in June 2008 under application ref. 2008/2126/P and Listed Building Consent ref. 2008/2137/L and construction work to implement this approval was commenced in March 2011.

4.0 Basis for Amendments to Approved Design.

During the course of the initial opening up works into the original light well area, which had previously been blocked off for many years, it became apparent that certain aspects of the previously approved proposals could not be implemented without compromising the manner in which the client intended to use the newly formed ground floor and basement residential accommodation.

This change in pattern of use effectively involved moving the general “living” areas of the flat from the previously cramped 1st floor level down to the newly created ground floor and basement levels.

In addition, the drawings upon which the original approval was granted were incorrect in that they indicated the presence of 2 no. pavement lights above the basement light well when in fact only 1 no. ventilation grille existed, the remaining area being covered by a continuous concrete slab.

5.0 Amendments to Approved Design.

The amendments to the previously approved proposals for which consent is now applied are as follows:

- Re-location of proposed access stair in basement light-well as previously approved location would have necessitated stair obstructing emergency exit door from one of the new basement rooms. This new location also eliminates the obstruction to pedestrian traffic on Grays Inn Road that would have arisen from the opening and closing of the light-well access gate in its previously approved location.
- Re-design of the door and glazing arrangements to the newly created basement habitable rooms to provide more effective escape provision from each area.
- The provision of a basement cloakroom in a previously unused void beneath the original main staircase from basement to ground floor level.
- The inclusion of a small kitchenette at the rear of the ground floor living space.
- Refurbishment of the existing ground floor wc area off the access corridor to the rear yard and the combination of this area into a shower room formed from a previous shop storage area.



With the exception of the re-positioning of the basement access / escape stair and the revised glazing / door arrangement of the basement rooms, none of the foregoing amendments effect the external façade of the building.

6.0 Access

Historically no part of the premises has ever had level access due to ground floor level being approx. 200 mm above adjacent pavement levels, with no room for ramps due to limited space in front of the premises without encroachment on to the public footpath to Grays Inn Road. In view of the nature of the site and conservation constraints the previously approved proposals did not allow for level access and no variation to that approval are necessitated by the amendments now applied for.

None of the applied for amendments affect the nature of the previously approved access arrangements.