

**WREN HOUSE
43 HATTON GARDEN
LONDON EC1N 8EL**

**CHANGE OF USE FROM OFFICES (USE CLASS B1(a)) TO RESIDENTIAL (USE CLASS C3) AT
THIRD AND FOURTH FLOOR LEVELS TO CREATE TWO NO 3 BED FLATS AND ASSOCIATED
ALTERATIONS**

**FOR
RIVERCREST INVESTMENTS LTD**

**LPA REFS 2011/4797
 2011/4800**



LIFETIME HOMES ASSESSMENT

The applicant has been advised that it is necessary to assess the conversion scheme, described above and detailed on submitted drawing nos 116/01, 02 and 03, against the Lifetime Home (LTH) Revised Criteria, July 2010. Accepting that this development involves the change of use of an existing building, the lawful use of which is B1a, offices, that assessment is set out below;

Criterion 1-Parking

No parking exists on site, nor is it possible to provide parking, due to its constrained nature. Adopted LPA policy dictates against on site provision in this highly accessible location. However, access to the site is available by road and the nature of those highways is such that vehicles are able to stop outside both the Hatton Gardens entrance, and along St Cross Street to drop off occupiers and visitors to the proposed dwellings, including those with reduced mobility and/or those with children.

Criterion 2-Approach to dwelling from parking

See above. The set down point in Hatton Garden is within 3 m of the main entrance doors. The access path, effectively the pavement, is wider than 1200 mm, as required.

Criterion 3-Approach to all entrances

Only the entrance to Hatton Garden would be used in association with the proposed dwellings. The approach to that entrance is level and accords with the specification as set out at Figure 3.1, LTH Revised Criteria.

Criterion 4-Entrances

The route to the external doors of the building is already illuminated by the street lights along the adjoining public highways. These external doors, with a straight-on approach, have a clear opening width of 1550 mm and lead to an internal lobby with doors with a similar clear opening. The inner doors are automated and there is an existing door entry system. Both sets of doors have a level threshold and the lobby provides protection from the elements.

Access from the flats is also available onto an amenity terrace at fourth floor level with effective door widths of more than 1350 mm. These roof terraces, over bedrooms and bathrooms below, will be set at a level some 150 mm below that of the living area of the flats. As acknowledged in the LTH standards, such steps are commonly required, in this case due to the raised floors within the existing office areas. They are exempt from the requirements of Criterion 4, but the situation can be easily resolved by the provision of a temporary ramp arrangement at the threshold, should that be required by any future occupier.

Criterion 5-Communal stairs and lift

The proposal is to convert the upper floors of the building to two dwellings. The accommodation would be served by, both, the existing stair and lift. The stair, designed to comply with access requirements for office buildings, is also in accordance with Criterion 5a. They have an average width of more than 950 mm and a half landing arrangement. Risers do not exceed 170 mm and goings are in excess of 250 mm.

The existing lift has internal dimensions of 1400 mm by 1600 mm. And has entrance landings at all levels of a minimum of 1500 mm square. Lift controls are suitably positioned for wheelchair users. The lift arrangements are, therefore, in accordance with the requirements of Criterion 5b.

Criterion 6-Internal doorways and hallways

See above. The layout of the dwellings, and the access thereto, has been designed to be user friendly for all mobility classes. The existing lift, of a size and specification to accommodate a wheelchair, will be retained. No internal, private hallways or corridors within the dwelling will be less than 900 mm wide, even at the pinch points by existing structural columns. Heating will be underfloor, avoiding the need for radiators in these access hallways. The width of hallways and corridors outside the entrances to individual rooms within the flats will be no less than 1050 mm and all doorways will have a minimum unrestricted width of 840 mm.

Criterion 7-Circulation space

The lobby entrances are designed to allow full wheelchair access in terms of size and the location of door entries. Living/dining/kitchen areas are formed on an open plan basis on the upper floor with direct access out onto the individual terraces for each flat. Each such area is generous in size; more than able to accommodate furniture and leave wheelchair turning circles of 1500 mm in diameter. Kitchen units are arranged with clear runs to ease and maximise efficiency of use. In one unit, an island arrangement is shown around the light well to benefit from the natural light and outlook available, and distances of around 900 mm are shown between the units and walls/balustrades. Here, appliances will be positioned at the ends of the islands where clear distances in excess of 1200 mm exist. The kitchen layout of the second unit is more traditional with clear distances of more than 1200 mm are achieved, as required.

The bedrooms and bathrooms are located on the lower floor with stairs down from the lobby area. Lift access is, of course, available between floors. Each bedroom is of a size to accommodate a double bed with more than 750 mm of clear space on either side and at the foot of the bed.

Of course, Wren House is a listed building with an existing central service core and a rigid, grid pattern structural frame. The communal stair and lift shaft positions are pre determined. Services into the third and fourth floors are adjacent to the lift shaft, in terms of telecoms and electrics, and behind the stairs, for waste water, water and air handling. These factors have played a key role in terms of defining the internal layout of the two dwellings proposed and, whilst the aim is to seek full compliance with the requirements of the LTH standards, the potential for adjustment may be limited.

Criterion 8-Entrance level living space

It should be noted that the retention of the existing lift will enable any less mobile occupier of the dwelling to gain access to both floors. However, entry level in this case is at the fourth floor where the principal living area is located.

Criterion 9-Potential for entrance level bed-space

The open floor layout proposed would provide no opportunity for the use of a room as a temporary bedroom. However, there is ample space within the main living area to accommodate a bed on a temporary basis and lift access is available between floors. On this basis, the requirements of Criterion 9 can be met.

Criterion 10-Entrance level wc and shower drainage

Because of the limitations imposed by the location of the existing water supply to each floor and the location of the waste water connection, it is not proposed to provide a wc or connections for a shower at entry level into the flats. It has been set out above that any member of the household temporarily unable to use the stairs, for example, after a hip operation, would not need to sleep at entry level as the existing lift provides ready access between floors. The lift would also serve visitors to the units that are unable to use the stairs.

Criterion 11-Wc and bathroom walls

The plans show that three bathrooms will be formed within each dwelling. The internal walls will be constructed so that they are capable of providing secure fixing for grab rails, if required.

Criterion 12-Stairs and potential through-floor lift in dwellings

The existing lift will be retained to provide access between the floors of each unit, if required. In addition, the stairs provided within each unit are of a width and layout, with adequate clear space landings, to be fitted with a stair lift, if required.

Criterion 13-Potential for fitting of hoists and bedroom/bathroom relationship

The existing floors and ceilings are of a pre cast, concrete construction and are capable of supporting ceiling hoists. Bathrooms are either en suite or within easy reach of bedrooms along clear and unobstructed routes.

Criterion 14-Bathrooms

Five of the six bathrooms are of a size to cater for wheelchair users and will be laid out accordingly, should planning permission and listed building consent be granted. Approach zones to wc's will be in excess of the example given in Figure 14a to the LTH standards. Clear frontal zones to wash hand basins of more than 700 mm by 1100 mm can be easily achieved. A clear zone of at least 1100 mm by 700 mm can be provided alongside each bath.

Generally, the existing building has a raised floor with a gap of more than 100 mm between the concrete floor slab and the underside of the existing floor finish. Such a gap will be maintained and will enable wastes and water supplies to be connected to all bathroom areas around the central core, ensuring levels floors are maintained throughout and allowing for the installation of accessible floor showers either in the form of an entire wet room or inset trays.

Criterion 15-Glazing and window handle heights

Due to the listed nature of the building, only one change to fenestration is proposed. This relates to the door openings onto the terrace amenity areas. Here, the screens are full height, giving view out from the principal living areas, even when seated. Door handles will be at a level where they can be operated by a wheelchair user. Other external windows and doors will be retained as existing. However, the need to open windows for ventilation purposes is negated by the retention of the existing air conditioning/air handling system that serves the whole building, and the requirement for air extracts to each kitchen and bathroom area.

Criterion 16-Location of service controls

Individual supplies of water, electricity and gas will be laid on for each dwelling. Service controls, such as those relating to air handling and under floor heating will be positioned between 450 mm and 1200 mm above floor level and no less than 300 mm away from any internal corner, as required. In addition, to comply with the requirements of both LTH

(revised criteria) and the Building Regulations, all sockets and switches, tv and media controls, and mains water stop cocks will be located to be equally accessible. Good practice recommendations will be followed in respect of all services.

CONCLUSIONS

Policy requires that all new housing, including conversions and changes of use, needs to be accessible to all and to be built to Lifetime Home (LTH) standards. Additionally, 10% of all new housing should be designed to be wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users. As required, the submitted drawings show that the relevant requirements in respect of criterion 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 12 will be met. Criterion 1 and 2 do not apply as no parking is to be provided on site. Criterion 9, 10, 11 and 13 are explained above. Whilst bathroom layouts are not shown, it is clear that five out of the six bathrooms shown on the submitted floor plans are of a size to provide clear zones in excess of those shown on figures 14a and 14b of the LTH document and the requirements of criterion 14 can be met. The adapted doors onto the terrace will have handles at a height suitable for wheelchair users. No other new windows are proposed. The requirements of criterion 15 are, therefore met. Compliance with criterion 16 is explained above.

On this basis, it must be concluded that the dwellings to be created within the third and fourth floors of this existing building will, indeed, be reasonably suitable for occupation by a wide range of persons, including those with mobility problems or other disabilities. Accepting the limitations imposed on the development by the listed nature of the building and the fact that the scheme relates to a conversion, compliance with LTH revised criteria July 2010 is achievable.

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