

**Internal Remodelling of
132-134 Finchley Road London NW3 5HS
to Create 8 Self-Contained Apartments
and 14 Grade A HMO rooms**

Design & Access Statement



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**DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT FOR THE INTERNAL REMODELLING OF
132-134, FINCHLEY ROAD, LONDON, NW3 5HS TO CREATE 8 SELF-
CONTAINED APARTMENTS AND 14 GRADE A HMO ROOMS**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Project comprises the internal remodelling of the upper ground, first, second and third floors of 132-134, Finchley Road, London, NW3 5HS to form 8 self-contained apartments and 14 Grade A HMO rooms with shared kitchen facilities.
- 1.2 The scope of works involves the removal of the staircase in 134 Finchley Road and the reinstatement of original windows and doorway in the south facing flank elevation of 132 Finchley Road. Both 132 and 134 Finchley Road will subsequently be accessed and served via a single staircase located in 132 Finchley Road.
- 1.3 Both properties are presently quite dilapidated and in need of considerable repair, with Property Improvement Notices having been served on each individual building.
- 1.4 The type of accommodation proposed is typically occupied by students, lower paid workers and young professionals who require affordable private sector rented accommodation and there is very strong demand for it in the area.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 Consent was granted on 18 May 2010 in respect of planning application ref 2010/1650/P for the lawful use of 132 Finchley Road as four self contained residential units (Class C3) consisting of two studio flats at upper ground level and a studio and one bedroom flat at first floor level.
- 2.2 Consent was granted on 10 May 2011 in respect of planning application ref 2011/1310/P for the lawful use of 134 Finchley Road as three self-contained studio flats (Class C3) on parts of the upper ground, second and third floor.
- 2.3 132 Finchley Road is therefore deemed to be a mix of Class C3 self-contained residential and HMO accommodation, a sui generis use comprising 4 self-contained residential units and a further 5 HMO rooms.
- 2.4 134 Finchley Road is also deemed to be a mix of Class C3 self-contained residential and HMO accommodation, a sui generis use comprising 3 self-contained residential units and a further 8 HMO rooms.
- 2.5 Of the 5 HMO rooms in 132 Finchley Road, 3 have been deemed to be unsuitable for occupation by the London Borough of Camden (Flats 6, 8, & 9).
- 2.6 Of the 8 HMO rooms in 134 Finchley Road, 1 has been deemed to be unsuitable for occupation (Flat 11).

3.0 ACCOMMODATION STANDARDS

3.1 The existing and proposed accommodation is as follows:-

Property No.	Existing accommodation			Proposed accommodation			Net gain (or loss)
	Studio	1-bed	HMO room	Studio	1-Bed	HMO room	
132	3	1	5	0	4	6	1
134	3	0	8	0	4	8	1
<u>Total</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>2</u>

3.2 There is a net gain of 2 units, 1 of which is a self-contained 1-bedroom apartment and the other a Grade A HMO room. As such there is no requirement for additional affordable housing per se although the additional HMO room by its very nature represents an affordable form of accommodation for which there is demonstrably high demand.

3.2 We have noted Camden’s planning guidance with regard to minimum space standards and would confirm that all of the proposed new self-contained units exceed the minimum stipulated floor area of 32 sq.m with main bedrooms greater than 11 sq.m in every case.

3.3 With regard to the HMO element we have consulted Camden’s Minimum HMO Standards published in November 2008 in designing a scheme to provide the optimum level of accommodation. Each of the 14 HMO rooms

contains a WC, shower and wash basin within the stipulated minimum area of at least 2.2 sq.m. This leaves a clear minimum room area of 11 sq.m in the case of the double rooms and 9 sq.m in the case of single rooms.

- 3.4 On the second floor two kitchens have been provided of 6 sq.m and 11 sq.m each, catering for the 14 occupants who can be accommodated on this level. The latter contains duplicate kitchen facilities.
- 3.5 On the third floor a single kitchen of 11 sq.m has been provided to cater for up to a maximum of 10 occupants on this level containing duplicate kitchen facilities.
- 3.6 The scheme was designed as such on the basis that it is generally preferable for HMO occupants to share kitchens and have dedicated sanitary facilities.
- 3.7 With regard to external amenity space, the two ground floor units at the rear of the building presently each have access to a small garden or yard area. The proposed development retains this existing arrangement.
- 3.8 Regarding the storage of refuse etc, it is proposed to retain the existing bin store area accessed via Fitz-Johns Esplanade and Netherhall Gardens.

4.0 ACCESSIBILITY

- 4.1 The application site is in a highly sustainable location, being within 5 minutes walk of Finchley Road underground station and 2 minutes walk of a bus stop with direct transport links to central London and 15 minutes walk of West Hampstead Thameslink station and the London Overground.
- 4.2 As such it is possible to justify a development with no additional requirement for vehicle parking. The Applicant is satisfied that the additional 2 units being created may be deemed to be car-free and is prepared to sign a Section 106 Agreement on this basis.
- 4.3 Pedestrian access is by way of Fitz-Johns Esplanade, a walkway accessed from Finchley Road via two flights of steps and from the steep incline of Netherhall Gardens via a ramp.
- 4.4 Access to the site is already very restricted by its geography for those with impaired mobility and especially for those people reliant on wheelchairs. As such, to facilitate access for all pedestrian users would not be possible.

5.0 LIFETIME HOMES STATEMENT

In respect of the 8 self-contained residential units and their compliance with the key criteria of the "Lifetime Homes" standards, we would confirm the following: -

- 5.1 There is no on site parking. Only on-street parking is available to residents.
- 5.2 Due to the steeply sloping approach to the site it is not possible for occupants to disembark a vehicle and have a level or gently sloping approach to the property. Furthermore it would not be reasonably practicable to carry out works to improve the existing situation.
- 5.3 Other approach routes to the site involve existing external stairways and a public ramp linking Finchley Road to Netherhall Gardens which is too steep for wheelchair users.
- 5.4 The main communal entrance to the building is via an existing doorway which does not have a level threshold. However, access is made easier by the width of this doorway exceeding 800mm. Individual properties within the building all have level thresholds however and doors wide enough to enable people with impaired mobility to enter them. All entrances will be illuminated and have adequate weather protection.
- 5.5 It is proposed to remove the existing staircases and replace them with a new communal staircase designed to comply with the Building Regulations

requirements in terms of access for the ambulant disabled. There is no lift within the premises and it would not be possible to incorporate one.

- 5.6 Internal corridors are designed in accordance with the Lifetime Homes standards and are of a minimum 1,050mm wide with minimum clear door openings of 795mm (between door stops).
- 5.7 It is not possible for wheelchair users to access the upper floors, but all ground floor apartments could facilitate a 1,500mm wheelchair turning.
- 5.8 With regard to the accessibility of living spaces, 4 of the 8 self-contained units are located on the main entrance level. 3 of these have bedrooms accessed directly without any internal stairs.
- 5.9 The ground floor bathrooms could be adapted to accommodate a range of different users needs including hoists.
- 5.10 It would be possible at a future use to install grab rails etc within the toilet facilities of all units to assist ambulant disabled users.
- 5.11 All windows in the building are at a height to enable the occupier to see out while seated.
- 5.12 All controls and services etc will be located within easy reach for all occupiers with limited mobility at a height of between 450mm and 1,200mm above floor level.

6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.1 The application proposes to refurbish and revitalise a pair of dilapidated sub-standard buildings to provide a mix of 8 self-contained 1-bedroom apartments and 14 Grade A HMO rooms for which there is demonstrably high demand in the area.
- 6.2 The proposed application would not represent a change of use or in any way compromise the existing buildings' vitality. It would create additional residential living space at an affordable level in the private rented sector.
- 6.3 The proposed development will satisfy Camden's space standards in terms of residential development standards for both self-contained and HMO units.
- 6.4 The application site is in a highly sustainable location with very good access to public transport however the nature of the site i.e. on a steep incline makes accessibility difficult for those with impaired mobility.
- 6.5 We therefore consider this to represent a robust Planning Application and one which should be recommended for Planning Approval.