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Proposed Development at: 13 St Cross Street, EC1.

Design and access statement.

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This proposal is a revision of scheme 2010/1787/P ENQ 05512 which was previously withdrawn pending improvements following discussions with officers.

The site is situated at 13 St Cross Street EC1, in the London Borough of Camden. It is empty land beginning at basement level encased by an existing retaining wall to St Cross street and buildings adjacent, being 67 – 73 Farringdon Road and 44 Saffron Hill, EC1.

The original building to the site was residential, St Peters Rectory, the vicarage to St Peters Church (now 44 Saffron Hill). This was later converted to Office and workshop use after St Peters church was demolished around 1960. The site was cleared in 1982.

The design aim is to construct a viable and sustainable building in harmony with its surroundings taking into account the requirements of Camden's LDF. In addition, to examine the reasons for failure to complete previously gained consents.

Firstly ref: PL/8601926 dated 18th Jan 1988. A proposal for a mixed development of: Basement and Ground floor restaurant and wine bar and residential upper floors. This failed due to a lack of interest in the commercial/ restaurant part of the mixed proposal, due to its secondary location, coupled with excessive building costs. This scheme in order to provide a large expanse for the restaurant area meant the flats entrance area was compromised and poorly situated thus unable to provide wheelchair access.

Secondly proposal ref: PL/9000471 dated 16th May 1991, a building with B1 use. This was briefly commenced in 1992 but abandoned due to the lack of interest and inability to find clients since there is an excess of available B1 buildings in the area. It was also too far from the main Hatton Garden trading area to attract any interest from the diamond industry. However we feel the scheme provided a good layout and design appropriate for the site.

We have identified residential as the most viable proposal for this site. Whilst reflecting the spirit of the original building on the site, it also acknowledges the LDF's priority to increase the Boroughs housing stock. It should also cause less of an impact to local recent residential developments. We have taken on board previous advice given by Camden's Planning department in 1991. Namely that since this is a cleared site (now for 30 years) there are no existing planning rights. Therefore there would be no loss of any type of floor space, particularly B1 workshops and cause negative impact to Local industry.

The design has less than 1000 m2 internal floor space and is therefore not subject to the requirement in the LDF for mixed use.

The proposal is for a building of 20 Metres height from street level to provide eight self contained flats, 1x 1 bedroom, 6x 2 bedroom and 1x 3 bedrooms on basement/lower ground, ground and first to sixth floors. The main entrance is via ground floor level from south of St Cross street, and there is also an external semi ambulant stair at front to serve the basement/ lower ground level. The proposal provides a vented lobby (in lieu of a fire escape) to meet Building regulation requirements. The building is set back at ground floor and Basement level to provide adequate natural lighting to the lower areas.

We have taken consent PL/9000471 dated 16th May 1991 (the B1 scheme) as a starting point and have used an identical volume to that proposal, in order that the design considerations, entrance to the building and staircase location, impact to the adjacent buildings and surroundings, light factors, etc. will be identical to those discussed and approved previously. In addition we have removed the rear staircase and balconies reduced the size of the service shaft to the side (as a cloakroom was not needed) and cut away a chunk away to the rear east at ground and lower ground levels to allow natural lighting to these areas, similar to the original building on site.

The building is similar in scale to those adjacent in Farringdon Road but smaller than that in Saffron hill as shown on the proposed elevations. The design reflects and integrates into its surroundings in the use of colonnades and frames and imposes a formality in nature. However this is contrasted by the use of cantilevered bays, curved surfaces and curtain walling to reflect modern engineering. Glass and Glazed brick cladding is used to allow more natural light and to add a light reflective quality to the building aesthetics, to counterbalance a certain dark sombre nature to the location.

Although the site is on a slope the layout ensures that there is disabled wheelchair access to all floors. An important design element was the creation of an adequately large entrance area to allow for bicycle parking and to promote interaction between residents and a sense of community.

Internally the flats layout places living accommodation facing the noisier front street and the bedrooms to the rear which is quieter. The intention is to provide spacious accommodation above minimal standards, with good ceiling heights. Open plan living accommodation is used to enable a sense of spaciousness. Twin washing facilities are provided for lifestyles of busy working people and to enable provision of disabled facilities.

The scheme is designed to meet and exceed Lifetime Homes Standards Criteria in the provision of 100% wheelchair accessible units (or easily convertible) and to address the need for biodiversity measures in the provision of a 'Brown Roof' to protect and provide habitat for endangered species.

The scheme will exceed current Building Regulations standards in energy efficiency and is designed to meet the current criteria for The Code for Sustainable Homes as detailed in Camden's Planning Guidance.