

Our Ref: 887BA001

Date: 12th January, 2010

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

for

Demolition of existing dwelling house and Construction of 4 houses and 5 flats At 78 Adelaide Road, Camden

a. Physical Context

An existing detached house built over 100 years ago occupies the site. To the West of the Property lies a complex of 3 & 4 storey blocks of flats built about 30 years ago. To the East lies two similar (76 & 74) period properties to number 78 and then a further block of several flats (at 72 Adelaide Road) which were developed several years ago using 78, 76 & 74 Adelaide Road as a reference for its scale and its urban volumetric displacement.

The redeveloped property at 72 Adelaide Road has a much larger footprint though over its 4 stories than the adjoining Villas. To the North of the property extends the Estate of flats and the large and extended period properties of Fellows Road. To the South of Adelaide Road lies a mix of commercial properties opposite the site.

The front gardens are fully enclosed with 2 off street parking spaces and enclosed to the rear is a generously sized rear garden, which accommodates a 650 sq.ft garden building along the rear boundary.

Adelaide Road slopes gently from West to East. The ground also slopes visibly from a high point on the Northern boundary to the South. Although the slopes are gentle, the datum points for the ground and floor levels are disproportionately high (because the flats complex to the West was designed as an extensive integrated development, with scant regard to 78 Adelaide Road), resulting in this estate being inappropriately physically overbearing on 78 Adelaide Road when compared to the context of the near identical building to 78 (in the form of number 76) adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site.

Adelaide Road is significant due to its lack of urban cohesion, creating a very low threshold of visual amenity when compared to many of the streets adjacent to it. This is largely as a result of the lack of transitional urban design between differing building styles, forms and functions.

We have identified the site of number 78 as a very significant transition between two very

different built forms and functions (the large villas of 74, 76 & 78) and the repetitive blocks of flats of the estate to the West.

The site is placed between the urban centres of Swiss Cottage and Camden.

The gap between Hutchinson House and the existing building at 78 Adelaide Road affords a glimpsed view (from the grounds of Hutchinson House) of the spire of St Saviours on Eton Road. The previous approval for redevelopment extended the building at 2nd floor level by 4.025 Metres, which completely obscured this view of this spire.

b. Planning Policy Context

The site is not in a conservation area nor is the building Listed. Planning policy encourages reuse of existing properties and their extension providing the extensions do not encroach on the amenities of neighbouring properties and do not detract from the character of an area. Policy over recent years has focussed on the efficient reuse of brown field (previously developed sites) to ensure that these sites are redeveloped efficiently and appropriately to reduce pressure to build on the Greenbelt.

The start point for the design proposals were to identify if the visual amenity of the area could be enhanced with the demolition and redevelopment of the site. This was established through the approval of our application 2008/4572/P, which had been designed to clearly enhance the character of the area without any adverse effect on the amenities of adjoining properties, ensuring that Planning Policy supported the proposals.

This latest proposal differs in planning policy terms by seeking to provide better use of the site resource with 7 additional dwellings. In policy terms this is desirable as it not only provides more efficient use of this brownfield site but through the brief adopting smaller units, we are able to propose a range of unit sizes therefore complying with the UDP which seeks all development sites to accommodate a range of different unit sizes.

The proposal is the same however as the approval 2008/4572/P in that it seeks to enhance the visual amenity of the area by introducing a sympathetically scaled urban Villa in a traditional style. Although the style chosen for this application is the same as that approved, (as the Planning Policies support complementary design solutions) particularly where the areas have been identified as being inappropriate to have Listed Building or Conservation Status (by implication these areas do not have the quality of visual amenity necessary for this status, thus making these areas rational to achieve a better design quality so that they can progress towards this status).

The previous approval for redevelopment extended the building at 2nd floor level by 4.025 Metres, which completely obscured the view of the spire. This still meant that the existing relationship of Hutchinson House to the approved building created an impression of Hutchinson House overbearing the approved proposal. By extending the building further to the north adjacent to Hutchinson House this overbearing can be eliminated. Careful stepping back of the north elevation will additionally ensure that the proposal will not create overbearing for the rear façade of 76 Adelaide Road or the community gardens.

c. Involvement

Our client's brief was for us to reevaluate the existing built form (he already has permission for an extension of @ 1000sq.ft and a 9,200 sq.ft 2 house redevelopment) to establish a property with a carbon footprint as close as possible to zero, whilst balancing the refurbishment and extension of the existing property against creating new build dwelling or dwellings as the garden is larger than is required for just 1 or 2 properties.

We discussed informally with Planning Officers and Policy Unit representatives to ensure the proposals would be consistent with the policy aspirations for the site. It was noted to us specifically that any comprehensive redevelopment of the property would create Policy challenges, if it extended to a separate additional built form within the rear garden area.

As the site is not in a conservation area, nor is the building Listed, our feasibility study revealed the fact that this site is one of the largest containing a single-family dwelling house in the surrounding area (which is not subdivided into flats), which makes it worthy of being reappraised.

The brief extended to considering ways to improve the visual amenity of the Adelaide Road frontage, as despite the existing buildings being similar to the two properties at 74 & 76, the similarity emphasizes the visual incongruity between this row of 3 villas and the adjoining estate of blocks of much more recently built flats.

There is a proportionate shortage of large family houses in the area. Recently attempts have been made to rebalance this shortage, by financially well resourced individuals purchasing several small flats within one original house and reforming them into a single dwelling at the expense of the several much more affordable smaller dwellings.

d. Evaluation / Design Process

The existing house is approximately 100 years old, however the adjoining estate of flats has been built for only about 35 years. We first studied the visual amenity of 78, 76 & 74, (which is not of the high standards of visual amenity of the Fellows Road properties which adjoin the northern boundary of the site) but are certainly important within the visual context of Adelaide Road. The fact that Fellows Road had a far higher visual amenity than Adelaide Road led us to conclude that 78 could be replaced by a visual form that was sympathetic to the remaining buildings at 76 & 74 but of enhanced presence and detailing to achieve an enhancement in the visual amenity of Adelaide Road, bringing Adelaide Road one step closer to the visual amenity of Fellows Road which has been formally recognised as a Conservation Area.

The existing property is a single-family dwelling house of about 4000sq.ft (5000sq.ft with the permitted extension). To utilise the site more efficiently, redevelopment needed to offer substantial gains to offset the Carbon footprint for redevelopment. The existing dwelling house is detached with no shared party walls and a very high carbon footprint.

Our outline study concluded that due to the large rear garden, the property could easily accommodate the space necessary for recycling of all the demolished existing building and incorporate these recycled materials within the new construction. The study also identified that in this part of London the market does not require a dwelling to be detached to meet

the needs of single-family ownership. An attached dwelling would also satisfy this market whilst having a much reduced Carbon Footprint as a result of the shared wall that reduces the amount of construction material whilst improving the like for like thermal efficiency of the development.

This latest proposal used this as the start point for us to develop this assessment, but to attach greater emphasis to the need to provide additional dwellings located close to good public transport links and to seek a design solution that would create a significant urban marker for the 21st century, setting the design standard for the inevitable redevelopment that will occur at Hutchinson House once these buildings reach the end of their useable life.

The brief was finalised to seek a contemporary design form that was in a single built form and used the scale and mass of the adjoining buildings to create a sculptural form and provide a range of houses and flats to ensure a diverse social mix was encouraged by the final development.

The units are all designed to have heat and power generation within the latest CHP domestic units that will be on the market at the commencement of building works. These units not only provide for the space heating but also generate 80 to 90% of all the electric required by the properties.

e. Use

The property was constructed originally as a single-family house on 4 floors. For several years the property was used as a language school, however over recent years it has been changed back to a single-family dwelling house.

The site is large enough to allow it to be split into a number of dwelling houses with gardens and flats with balconies, which are consistent with the aspirations of “Lifetime Homes”

f. Layout

The accommodation has been laid out to enhance the link between the “day use spaces” with the garden, to ensure that the external amenity spaces use is maximised. The design therefore put the day space accommodation all on the lower floors with the bedrooms on the upper floors.

In the designing of the new dwellings, the lower floors have been carefully arranged to ensure that areas can be converted into bathrooms and bedrooms should this be necessary for occupants with mobility issues (as required within the Lifetime Homes initiative) without compromising the ability of the dwellings to act as substantial family accommodation.

g. Scale

The proposals have been designed to ensure that they are a sculptural visual amenity. The building lines of the frontages to the east of the existing house are maintained by the proposed development.

The rear bulk of building will of course be greater, however these additions have been carefully located to ensure that they do not protrude beyond the existing urban design rhythms within the street forms that make up the visual collective.

To act as the urban marker that will form the transitional feature between the Villas and the blocks of flats, we have been faithful to the function of the proposed building by developing their form as a visually cohesive built form of attached dwellings. The entrance door of the new development will be located centrally within the built form the same as the original Villa. This will create a very visually literal transition between the detached Villas aesthetic (of 74 & 76) and the blocks of flats, whilst still being in scale sympathy with the visual urban forms within the wider aesthetic character context of Adelaide & Fellows Roads.

Finally we have sculpted the familiar forms in a uniquely sympathetic cohesive collage, giving the proposals a unique but familiar identity.

The result is a sculptural form that is in scale with its surroundings yet acts as a visual focus within Adelaide Road frontage of quality contemporary design, which will act as a catalyst for the improving visual amenity of Adelaide Road.

h. Appearance

The proposed development has been designed as sympathetic to the visual material scale of the original designers intent (over 100 years ago), with a compositional reassessment, which has been necessary as a result of later buildings adjoining the site.

With the redevelopment, the material appearance of the property will remain faithful to the original in terms of scale, materials and colour.

i. Landscaping

The proposals envisage retaining 2 parking spaces to the front of the property, and providing one additional space to give 3 in total. There will three separate pedestrian accesses. The rear of the property will remain as garden area, which is large enough to easily be split into 3 well, proportioned gardens allowing each attached house to stand in its own grounds.

j. Access

The property lies on the North side of Adelaide Road close to both Chalk Farm and Swiss Cottage Tube stations. It is similarly just a short walk from the urban centres of both Chalk Farm and Swiss Cottage. With Adelaide Road being a main arterial route between Camden and Swiss Cottage, frequent buses are available to travel anywhere within the London conurbation.

The new properties will be formed both externally and internally, allowing full account to be taken of the aspirations of “Lifetime Homes”, in terms of accessibility, access doorways, bathroom facilities, level access between inside and outside.

Donald Shearer