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Design and Access Statements

**Goldington Buildings
Royal College Street
NW1 0PA**

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Design and Access Statements

Goldington Buildings, Royal College Street, NW1 0PA

Contents:	Page
Existing Environment	3
Proposed Design	4
Materials	5
Access Statement	6
Amenity	7
Waste & Recycling	8
Energy	9
Transport	10
Safety	10
Construction Management Plan	10
Planning Policy	11

Design and Access Statements

Goldington Buildings, Royal College Street, NW1 0PA

Existing Environment

Goldington Buildings is located in the Kings Cross St Pancras Conservation Area. It is positioned at the southern end of Royal College Street opposite Goldington Crescent Gardens, at the junction with St Pancras Way and Crowndale Road.

It was constructed in 1902/03 by Whitehead & Co. to the designs of K. D. Young FRIBA, and built under the auspices of St Pancras Borough Council.

The building is 5 stories high over the ground floor, with the top storey designed as a mansard. It is constructed in good quality brickwork, the ground and first floors in red brick, the floors above in yellow London stocks with embossed red brick quoins and detailing, the whole offset with terracotta work forming window surrounds, corbelled brackets to the spine walls, string courses, scroll panels and needles. At some point in the past, the terracotta has been painted in what appears to be red masonry paint. Dormer windows are set into the mansard roof, which currently has an artificial slate finish. Substantial chimney stacks with red pots rise above the roof to the skyline. Cast iron ogee gutters, hoppers and downpipes finished in black carry the rainwater from the roofs. The windows are traditional white-painted timber sliding sashes with small glass panes. These are set into boxes with forward-mounted timber frames in the Queen Anne style. On the south side, a large semi-circular arched entrance with ornamented terracotta spandrels surmounted by a small pedimented terracotta nameplate, the whole 2 stories high, leads through to an inner courtyard. A foundation stone in the outer wall makes philanthropic reference to "housing of the working classes", and this is reflected in the interior layouts, with relatively small rooms, simple detailing and modest ceiling heights.

In plan form, the building is long and thin, with a horse-shoe shaped footprint facing south which wraps around the road junction, creating the sheltered internal courtyard facing north. It is punctuated along its length by communal access staircases which are expressed on the exterior elevation by slightly inset gabled facades with richer decoration. These staircases were originally open to the elements on the courtyard side. They take up the full depth of the building and form natural breaks in the length of the floor plan. The very compact flat layouts were laid out with one dwelling each side of every staircase landing. Due to the narrowness of the plan form, all the flats have double aspect onto both the street and the courtyard. The levels drop down the site at the compartment wall locations between the flats (approx. 380mm drop to each level change).

In the 1980s, a conversion scheme enclosed the stairwells on the courtyard side, fitted external steel porches, inserted lifts adjacent to the stairwells (within the building footprint), removed some of the interior structural walls, replaced all of the limited interior fittings, provided better access facilities, fitted sound-insulating secondary glazing to the street windows, and created a hard-landscaped courtyard. This scheme resulted in a mix of mainly 1 bedroom and bed-sitting room flats with some communal accommodation, including a laundry area and a management office.

Design and Access Statements

Goldington Buildings, Royal College Street, NW1 0PA

Proposed Design

The current scheme has now come to the end of its life-span and Origin Housing Group wish to take the opportunity to convert the building to create a greater element of family accommodation, with a mix of mainly 2 and 3 bedroom flats, and a smaller number of 1 and 4 bedroom units to suit the layouts.

To achieve the larger family units, we have combined pairs of flats between staircases in the centre of the floor plan. At the ends of the floor plan, where smaller flats cannot be combined, duplex maisonettes have been created over two levels with internal staircases, to provide accommodation of the required size. The resulting flats and maisonettes are stacked to reduce the effects of sound transmission between dissimilar rooms. The maisonettes have reverse stacking to ensure like-to-like rooms are maintained across compartment floors.

The ceiling heights within the building (generally 2550mm high) will inhibit the installation of dropped ceilings. It is therefore intended to install suitably specified floating floors over the existing structures, in tandem with material inserted within the floor voids, to reduce both impact and airborne sound within the dwellings.

The flats have been designed to comply with the requirements set out in the National Housing Federation document, Standards and Quality in Development (NHF SQD 1998), incorporating as far as practicable within the space available the specific new build standards for Part C (Internal Environment), including the relevant furniture schedules, "activity zones", "access zones" and "passing zones". This has largely been achieved with the present scheme; in those situations where the new build space standards have not been met, the effects are not significant and do not affect the usefulness of the spaces concerned. Similar standards for internal storage laid down by the NHF document have been applied to the flats.

The NHF SQD document has been adopted for the internal design parameters as this is recommended practice defined in the Homes and Communities Agency's publication, Design and Quality Standards (Housing Corporation / April 2007 - Rehabilitation Performance Standards). These standards are adopted by all Registered Social Landlords in order to demonstrate that individual rooms within flats have sufficient space and the correct shape and layout capable of achieving the desired functional use.

There are currently 5 lifts in the building. It has been determined that 2 of these are redundant with the proposed alterations and these 2 will be removed to make further space available for residential accommodation. In this regard, we have applied the lift standards recommended in the London Housing Federation document, Higher Density Housing for Families (A Design and Specification Guide). The number of flats served by each staircase & lift core is limited and well below the 60 bed-space maximum for a single lift (being 22, 33 and 41 respectively). Only one unit is not served by a lift; this flat is located at mid-level in the building, and its entrance is at first floor level.

Design and Access Statements

Goldington Buildings, Royal College Street, NW1 0PA

Materials

The property is in the Kings Cross St. Pancras Conservation Area. It is proposed to retain the existing street elevation unchanged other than small scale repairs and careful reinstatement of some of the original detailing, a window upgrade, removal of redundant ventilation and flue terminals, and removal of extraneous wiring.

The brickwork is generally in good condition, but there are a considerable number of small areas, usually consisting of only a few bricks, which have been rather poorly repaired over the years with incorrectly coloured and constituted cement pointing, and in some instances with coloured cement facing rather than more appropriate brick slips. These areas will be identified on the facade, carefully removed to prevent damage to adjoining brickwork, and replaced with correctly coloured and textured bricks and brick slips carefully bedded into an appropriately coloured lime and aggregate mortar mix. The parapet and chimney stack brickwork appears to be in relatively good condition. A full assessment will take place upon erection of the scaffold, and any necessary repairs carried out in a like manner as described above.

On the courtyard elevations, the brickwork is stained from leaking pipework which has resulted in salt efflorescence and mould growth on the surface. Careful cleaning and neutralising will be required. At low level within the courtyard on the west side, a cement rendered plinth has permitted damp to migrate up the external wall, spalling the red brick surfaces due to freeze-thaw action. This plinth will need to be carefully removed and the brickwork carefully repaired.

The artificial slate roof finishes are now about 20 years old and at the end of their useful life. It is proposed to replace the artificial slate with natural slate using lead flashings, soakers and valleys.

It is intended to investigate the potential for the careful removal (by specialist) of the masonry paint applied onto the terracotta finishes, using appropriate non-abrasive means compatible with and non-destructive of the terracotta finish. Discrete test areas will be identified in less visible locations on the facades to find out the best approach to removing the paint.

The windows at lower levels are in repairable condition. Those at the upper levels, particularly to the more exposed mansard roofs, have been subject to decay. The windows are single-glazed and not draft-stripped. It is proposed to replace them with high performance traditional timber sliding sashes with double-glazed units to match the existing box frame profiles and to retain the original mullion configuration.

A number of window openings were removed from the courtyard elevation during the 1980s conversion to make way for the installation of the lifts. These will be reinstated where the lifts are removed, including two small windows to the east side of the building, and five to the west. The bricked up top landing of the east stairwell can be opened up and glazed to match adjoining windows.

The 1980s glazed entrance lobby with blue corrugated roof on the east side of the courtyard is no longer required. This will be removed and the facade behind treated with facing brickwork and sash windows to match the rest of the elevation.

Repairs to the elevations are intended to enhance the appearance and reinstate the character of the original building facades, which are highly visible from the surrounding streets in the conservation area, whilst at the same time providing a minimum 30 year life for the major building elements.

Design and Access Statements

Goldington Buildings, Royal College Street, NW1 0PA

Access Statement

The proposed conversion scheme is constrained by the existing building footprint, specifically the size of the original flats defined between the stairwell enclosures, the ceiling heights, and the need to maintain the external elevations within the conservation area. Despite these limitations, level access is possible to the entrance areas of all stairwells and there is lift access proposed to nearly all the flats.

We have investigated the possibility of including wheelchair adaptable units within the scheme. The form and layout of the existing building construction effectively mitigates against it. This is due to a combination of the change in levels within each floor plan either side of the old compartment walls (380mm) and the relatively restricted ceiling heights (2550mm), which prevent the alteration of floor and ceiling heights to create flats at one level. However, subject to specialist assessment of the lifts, including internal lift dimensions, the combination of existing lifts with level access provision at all levels indicates that it should be possible to ensure that many of the flats will be able to accommodate wheelchair visitors to the upper levels, as well as to the ground floor.

Despite the difficulties created by the constraints of working within a very tight existing building envelope, some Lifetime Homes features can be incorporated into the scheme. Please refer to the separate Lifetime Homes Assessment report for a detailed description and analysis together with drawings showing the 16 Lifetime Homes criteria.

The application of new surface finishes in the common areas will provide an opportunity to ensure that colour contrast is used to aid those with impaired eyesight.

Origin Housing Group has an Equality and Diversity Strategy applicable to its residents. Where appropriate, professional advice is taken and acted upon to tailor or adapt living accommodation to suit individual resident needs. Registered Occupational Therapists are engaged to undertake individual resident consultations at the dwelling to provide best advice for specific situations.

Design and Access Statements

Goldington Buildings, Royal College Street, NW1 0PA

Amenity

Goldington Buildings wraps around its courtyard on the south, west and east sides forming an enclosing horseshoe, with a relatively open side facing north. All proposed flats are double aspect, and look both onto the courtyard and out to the street.

The courtyard is substantially hard-landscaped with brick pavers. Service vehicles, including waste and recycling lorries, need to access and reverse into the courtyard, so hard landscaping must continue to feature in the new scheme.

A landscape architect will be engaged to prepare a scheme to soften and enhance the current courtyard layout. The high brick walls facing south at the northern end of the courtyard have the potential for the addition of vertical soft landscaping. It may be possible to expand the planting areas and at the same time develop on-site surface water attenuation.

There are a number of trees within the courtyard. Several have trunks greater than 75mm at 1.5m above ground level, and all are subject to TPO control within the Conservation Area. The trees will be the subject of a specialist arboricultural report in accordance with BS5837.

The conversion scheme will create 30 units of mainly family accommodation from the existing 57 mainly 1-bedroom and bedsitting room flats. The scheme will provide accommodation for up to 70 children and young people on the site. The courtyard is overlooked by all flats and has a secure entry arrangement. It is therefore an ideal environment for younger children. The possibility of including a play facility will be investigated, though space is at a premium and play facilities would need to take account of the potential conflict with service vehicles. Safety, quality, durability and robustness will be important factors.

There is a public amenity space, Goldington Crescent Gardens, directly opposite the mansion block. A number of other smaller parks are located nearby and the site is within 1.2km reach of Regents Park, a District Park as identified in Local Planning Guidance. The location is within the 400m catchment area of publicly accessible natural & semi-natural greenspace & green corridor as defined by Planning Guidance, and there are 3 playgrounds in the immediate vicinity, with a further dozen not far away (Camden Playgrounds Distribution). A multi-use games area (MUGA) is in the immediate vicinity of the site, and a further 2-3 not far away (Camden MUGA distribution).

Design and Access Statements

Goldington Buildings, Royal College Street, NW1 0PA

Waste and Recycling

There are sound existing waste and recycling arrangements for the buildings at present with an enclosed storage area with raised platform for resident access located in the most suitable position at the rear of the site, away from residential windows but accessible to the service lorry. This brick-built enclosure is secure and well-ventilated, and holds several galvanised steel cylindrical Paladin containers, which serve the existing 57 no. mainly 1-bedroom and bedsitting room flats, administrative office and communal accommodation. This arrangement works well and the storage area is clean and tidy.

The intensity of use and bulk storage requirement will not change greatly, but will reduce slightly as there will be 30 units of family accommodation in the new scheme.

Current Requirement:

(5x2B/3P@3HR, 35x1B/2P@2HR, 17xBS/1P@2HR, Ancillary)

= 11.65m³ (plus requirement for ancillary office)

Proposed Requirement:

(1x4B/6P@6HR, 12x3B/5P@5HR, 8x3B/4P@5HR, 7x 2B/4P@4HR, 2x1B/2P@3HR)

= 10.00m³

It is proposed to retain the existing storage facility, but to consult with Street Environment Services over updating of current arrangements in connection with the proportions of storage given over to waste and recycling. If necessary, use can be made of one of the adjoining outbuildings for additional recycling storage.

Design and Access Statements

Goldington Buildings, Royal College Street, NW1 0PA

Energy

Origin Housing Group is committed to finding ways of reducing energy use in new developments through the adoption where practicable of low energy and renewable energy technologies for the provision of power, heating, lighting, ventilation and water supply. Origin Housing Group is also committed to reducing embodied energy in new developments through choice of materials and achieving energy efficiencies through the design of built fabric and reduction of construction waste.

It is proposed to sensitively refurbish the existing building, to retain all viable existing elements of construction, and re-use, where appropriate, existing materials to achieve the desired 30 year life.

Goldington Buildings is located in a conservation area and there are limited options for visual changes to the building exterior. It is therefore intended to add thermal insulation to the interior face of the external walls, to enhance the levels of insulation within the mansard roof structures whilst retaining the required constructional ventilation levels, to reduce thermal cold bridging and uncontrolled air movement within the building, to make maximum use of natural ventilation, and to improve thermal buffering in communal areas wherever possible.

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in its Design and Quality Standards development guide (Housing Corporation publication, April 2007) has determined that, in order to address sustainability issues for refurbishment schemes, developers should aim for the 30 point benchmarking standard as defined in the Housing Quality Indicators (HQIs Version 4, April 2007, updated 2008) Sustainability Profile. It is intended to follow this approach and make use of the BRE's Ecohomes standards for refurbishment and the BRE / Energy Saving Trust's Good Practice Guide 155.

An Energy Assessor registered with BREEAM will be engaged to assess the scheme proposals and to provide appropriate advice on energy and water saving measures, including the calculation of, and proposals to reduce, CO₂ emissions and viability of use of renewable energy sources.

Design and Access Statements

Goldington Buildings, Royal College Street, NW1 0PA

Transport

The site is near to central London with excellent public transport connections. There is currently no private car parking provision on the site. It is not proposed to change this arrangement.

Goldington Buildings is located on Royal College Street, which is one of the major Strategic Cycle Route arteries in Camden. The guideline requirement for cycle parking for the proposed development is 30 spaces plus 2 visitor spaces. It is intended to provide Sheffield Cycle parking stands located at the rear of the site, which is secure and overlooked.

There is existing satisfactory access for service vehicles into the courtyard, particularly the waste and recycling lorries, and this access is proposed to be retained in the new scheme. Consultation is currently taking place with Camden Street Environment Services to ensure this is the optimum arrangement.

Safety

This is a refurbishment scheme rather than a new build with all the constraints that this sometimes imposes in terms of a full "Secured by Design" certification. However, it is proposed to undertake full consultation with the Crime Prevention Design Advisor. We intend to obtain a Secured by Design assessment, and to incorporate the advice of the CPDA into the scheme.

Construction Management Plan

A construction management plan will be prepared by the building contractor to safeguard the amenity of local residents and businesses, provide environmental protection around the site and ensure suitable screening in proximity to the highway.

Design and Access Statements

Goldington Buildings, Royal College Street, NW1 0PA

Planning Policy

UDP (especially):

Chapter 1: Sustainable Development

Chapter 2: Housing

Chapter 3: Built Environment (B7)

Chapter 5: Transport (T3, T8)

Appendix 3: Conservation Areas

Appendix 6: Parking Standards

Camden Planning Guidance (December 2006)

Sustainability Appraisal Report (July 2006)

Street Environment Services Guide (May 2005)