



lawray architects

MAYFAIR PROPERTY  
DEVELOPMENTS LTD

3, 5 & 7 FITZJOHNS AVENUE,  
NW3 5JY

Design & Access  
Planning Statement  
Interior Layout Changes to Apartments

July 2009

Lawray architects  
Southbank House  
Black Prince Road  
London  
SE1 7SJ

tel: 020 7138 3560  
fax: 020 7138 3567

---

## Planning History

The development received Planning and Conservation Area consent on 20 February 2009, Ref: 2008/4976/P and 2008/5100/C. The Consent is also the subject of a separate Section 106 Legal Agreement dated 20 February 2009.

The application drawings accompanying this Design and Access Statement are submitted as an amendment to the parent applications noted above. We are of the opinion that the proposals are essentially '*de minimus*' in planning policy terms - i.e. they do not affect the proposals in any significant way and do not effect or impact on the special character or appearance of the conservation area in which the building sits.

## Rationale - Existing Interior Layouts

The consensus of the developer and his professional advisors is that the consented scheme has already achieved the optimum range of apartment sizes, the number of habitable rooms and the unit mix.

The internal arrangement of the apartments has previously majored on 3 aspects:

- All habitable rooms were arranged off a protected corridor from the flat entrances in the stair core areas.
- Providing full bedroom 'suites' for all bedrooms (rather than some secondary / tertiary bedrooms with shared bathroom facilities).
- Living spaces at the rear of the properties wherever possible to benefit from and enjoy the aspect of the garden.

These guiding principles have proved to be generally robust, but, with end-users in mind, (with as broad a spectrum of purchasers as possible) and allied with the current sales climate, there is a desire to:

- Reduce inefficient circulation space to attain better storage and practicality.
- Maximise open plan living space with well defined areas for kitchen and dining spaces.
- Move away from a concept of multiple bedroom 'suites' and instead focus on secondary or tertiary bedrooms with shared bathrooms.
- Smallest shared bedrooms to fulfil dual role/function of bedroom and/or study.

These points raise the question as to whether significant added value is being missed on a site which already has extremely high development costs.

It is for that reason that the interiors of the flats have been re-assessed by Knight Frank as Property Agents and advisors to the developer in an effort to further refine the scheme and mitigate the effects of a volatile market (Refer to Knight Frank letter dated 30 June, 2009 – Appendix A).

## Circulation & Corridor Space

The (general) prescribed guidance for fire safety and means of escape, is Approved Document B - recommendations for dwelling flats. In the consented scheme noted above, each apartment was formally arranged with a protected corridor between the entrance door / common stair and the habitable rooms within.

The Approved Documents are regarded as being the most obvious means of achieving or securing Building Control approval and for that reason are usually the default for designers. They are not the

only method for achieving compliance and the AD's largely exclude enhanced technologies and systems or fire engineering strategies in a residential context.

The problem with protected corridor layouts, particularly in large apartments, is that valuable and usable habitable space is expended in providing a functional corridor space. This becomes even more acute where there are other fixed constraints on the design, such as with an existing building or where a previous planning history influences the design.

The apartments proposed have always been generously proportioned, well over and above that which might be the 'expected' norm for leasehold property. Unfortunately, because of the necessary positioning of the common parts circulation cores (with duplicated stair and lifts in the case of 5 & 7), the consented arrangements fail to achieve an impressive entertaining/living room space, which should account for at least 25% of the gross internal areas of the principal apartments .

### Adjusted Layouts

The developer's ambition is to attract owner-occupiers whose desire will be to attain the architectural 'feel' of large, open plan single family dwelling houses, (even though this is possibly at odds with the regulatory constraints which apply to ordinary means of escape in flats) but without necessarily having the responsibility for full freehold property ownership.

The ubiquitous protected corridor arrangement in the consented proposals at FJA , does not set the development apart from more 'ordinary' (or less innovative) leasehold developments. Moreover it impacts on the developer's ability to achieve a better balance between living room space and other spaces as the protected corridors tended to 'eat' into living room spaces.

The regulatory requirement for providing protected corridors has not been overlooked. Instead it has been achieved via other physical means (fire rated roller curtains and fire rated glass screening) and is discussed under the heading of Fire Strategy below.

In addition to reducing unnecessary circulation space, there is an opportunity to create impressive master bedroom suites but with the more secondary bedrooms relying on shared bathrooms rather than full en-suites.

The revised interior layouts have been re-worked to achieve a better balance of accommodation

### Economic Climate / Sales

The slump in property sales over the last 12 months has exacerbated the situation and meant that those buyers who are left in the market are being extremely fastidious with their purchases. For the developer to attain sales commensurate with his development costs at FJA, requires a more individual and unique approach to the design of the interior layout.

### Fire Strategy / Compensatory Measures

A Fire Strategy document based on the revised layouts (with 'inner' rooms) has already been sought and agreed with Camden Building Control (Refer Faber Maunsel Fire Strategy report dated Jan 2009 – Appendix B) and this should provide the necessary reassurances to Development Control that the proposals are satisfactory for means of escape.

### Lifetime Homes Requirements

The changes will necessarily cause the applicant re-address the overall aspects / assessment for Lifetime Homes, i.e based on the new layouts, but the obligation is no more or less onerous than it

---

was in the first instance. It merely requires a re-working and re-submission under the Section 106 Agreement.

## Impact on External Appearance

The consequences of the revised interior changes have only had the effect of requiring the addition of 1 new window within the development (W5/LG 10), i.e. on the southern elevation of flat 5.1 overlooking the ramp. This will be identical in appearance to the sash window above.

Within the lower ground floor level of block 3 (flat 3.1), i.e. in the southern area lightwell, the windows have also been adjusted to French doors with sidelights with segmental arches over to match the arrangement in the adjacent bedrooms looking into the east area lightwell. This is to provide more daylight to these rooms and to provide an alternative means of escape from these rooms.

## Conclusions

We ask the Council to support these new proposals for the following reasons:

- The Section 106 Legal Agreement in force does not preclude future applications for consent to re-arrange the interiors of the flats, particularly where the agreed Gross Internal areas are unchanged.
- Knight Frank's adopted recommendations essentially only comprise changes to internal partitions and space designation within the apartments.
- The addition of 1 sash window and the substitution of 2 consented windows to French doors with sidelights below the surrounding ground level will not have any adverse effect or impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- Bedroom quantities remain identical in blocks 5 & 7 at 28 no. overall. Bedroom quantities in block 3 change from 22 to 21 (flat 3.6 - where change is from 3 bed to 2 bed). This is an overall insignificant change from 50 to 49 bedrooms.
- The exercise has had the added benefit of improving the apartment layouts in a number of instances, in addition to the prime objective of appealing to as broad a spectrum of purchasers as possible.
- The means of escape strategy for the flats has been carefully considered and discussed at length with the local authority Building Control officers and resolved to their satisfaction.

## Appendix A

**Private and Confidential**

Mayfair Property Development Ltd  
Richmond House  
St Julian's Avenue  
St Peter's Port  
Guernsey  
GY1 1GZ

**Attention: Alan Chick**

03 July 2009

Dear Sirs

**3, 5, 7 Fitzjohn's Avenue London NW3 5JY**

We were invited to review the consented apartment layouts for your development at 3, 5 and 7 Fitzjohn's Avenue in November 2008. You have now asked Knight Frank to comment on the reasoning behind our subsequent recommendations.

Following the onset of the credit crisis which began in 2007 and continued with upheaval in the financial markets during Autumn 2008, we advised you to refine the scheme in order to support end sale prices in the face of weakening demand.

In our view, the consented scheme has already achieved the optimum range of apartment sizes, number of habitable rooms and unit mix. This has resulted in a bias towards the owner occupier market with larger unit sizes and dual aspect units, which benefit from the quiet outlook to the rear. A 'high-end' apartment scheme of this type will attract buyers who do not require the extra accommodation provided by a large family-sized house (or cannot afford it), but who will still expect generous proportions and spacious living areas.

We recommended that the standard of specification and finishes should be increased and that apartment layouts should be enhanced to broaden the target market.

In our view the target market is likely to include a significant proportion of older 'down-sizers' as well as younger couples/ singles without children. However we also envisage that the development will attract family buyers and we believe our recommendations will ensure the requirements of this group are met.

With end-users in mind, we therefore believe that the development should move away from a concept of multiple bedroom 'suites' and should focus instead on bedrooms with shared bathrooms (outside the principle suites) in order to improve living space and practicality.

We recommended that individual apartment layouts should be tested against the following criteria:

- Impressive entertaining/living space accounting for approximately 25% of gross internal area
- Defined kitchen/ dining areas
- Impressive master bedroom suite with excellent dressing/storage space
- Separate utility room (or cupboard) with washer/dryer

55 Baker Street London W1U 8AN  
T +44 (0)20 7629 8171  
[www.knightfrank.com](http://www.knightfrank.com)



- Separate cloakroom with WC
- Storage

As a result of our review, we believe that the layouts have been improved with superior living/dining/kitchen areas, better master bedroom suites and more storage. This has in part been achieved by reducing the size of secondary bedrooms and bathrooms.

We also commented on the importance of preserving the existing period character of the buildings and for example recommended that internal corridors to ground floor apartments in numbers 5 and 7 should be aligned with individual front entrance doors. Elsewhere we have advised that ceiling heights should be retained and that individual rooms should be centred on existing window locations.

In our view, the revised layouts (which have not departed from the consented scheme in terms of size, mix or number of habitable rooms) have resulted in a better scheme which ensures the key selling points of the development are optimised. The development now provides a range of unique apartments that will attract resident purchasers with attractive garden aspects to the rear, underground parking and impressive reception areas – which will still command a premium in a difficult market.

Please feel free to contact us, if you require further assistance.

Yours sincerely

**Simon Barry**

Partner, Residential Development

[simon.barry@knightfrank.com](mailto:simon.barry@knightfrank.com)

D/L +44 (0) 20 7861 5442

F +44 (0) 20 7861 5401

## Appendix B

**3, 5 & 7 Fitzjohn's Avenue, NW3 5JY****Introduction**

This Fire Strategy majors on a proposed 'inner room condition', all other comments generally being ancillary to this issue. Having discussed the proposals with Camden Building Control on 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2009, this note outlines the agreed provisions. It has been agreed that the proposed 'inner room condition' will be acceptable by the inclusion of a combination of fire doors and detector-operated fire curtains, both of which operate to form a protected route from bedrooms to flat door.

The properties are arranged as a single detached property (No. 3), and a pair of conjoined detached blocks (nos. 5 & 7). Both comprise lower ground plus four storeys. The link (common parts) structure between 5 & 7 also extends between ground floor down to a sub-basement level, and links below the garden areas to a car park and associated plant room areas. A portion of the link is not actually buried below ground. A glazed bridge structure also links between the buildings 5 & 7 at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor level.

The following Fire Strategy plans accompany this document:

**Nos. 5 & 7**

AL(2)02 RevG Lower Ground Floor  
AL(2)04 RevG Ground Floor  
AL(2)06 RevF First Floor  
AL(2)08 RevE Second Floor  
AL(2)10 RevD Third Floor  
AL(2)12 RevA Roof Plan  
AL(2)43 Sub-basement Plan

**No. 3**

AL(2)01 RevC Lower Ground Floor  
AL(2)03 RevC Ground Floor  
AL(2)05 RevC First Floor  
AL(2)07 RevD Second Floor  
AL(2)09 RevD Third Floor  
AL(2)11 RevB Roof Plan

The east (front) and south façades of no.3 have been retained. (The intention was also to retain the front facades of 5 & 7, though this is now being achieved by building facsimile copies of the facades). The FFL's of the buildings have, therefore, largely been dictated by the original buildings on the plot.

The height between the external ground levels and the 'carpet of the top floors' is as follows:

No. 3 11.78m  
No. 5 12.90m (Stair rises to 9.5m only – capped at 2<sup>nd</sup> floor)  
No.7 13.20m

Each landing level has no more than two flats per floor accessed off a single stair. The main issue concerns the flats with bedrooms [up to three] as 'inner rooms' with respect to the living areas, including the kitchens. Other aspects of the building design addressed in this note can achieve conformity with the AD B recommendations.

### Summary

The main Fire Safety issues in the building are:

- The flats in the building are served by single stairs in the normal manner and bedrooms within them are inner rooms. AD B para 2.5 points out that bedrooms as inner rooms are not advised.
- The inner room condition is removed when required by smoke / fire detector-operated curtains under controlled descent which complete a protected route consisting also of 'pass' fire doors. This protective corridor provides at least the same standard of enclosure as anticipated in the AD B.
- The enclosures will be formed from a combination of minimum FD20 fire doors, closed on in-unit detection, 30/30 insulated glazed screens, and 30/30 insulating fire curtains. In every respect, a suitable protected route is formed from bedrooms to flat exit doors by these means upon operation of the in-unit detection system.
- This proposal includes the equivalent of the recommended two-door 30 min protection to the single stair condition serving the flats as shown in AD B, Diagrams 7 and 9. In the instance of the ground floor flats in 5 & 7 this is achieved with a door and adjacent shutter.
- Camden Building Control has pointed out the need for a risk assessment under the Regulatory Reform [Fire Safety] Order for the common access spaces. That assessment needs to recognise the need for assurance of successful operation of the means of providing the internal protected corridors; the need to gain access for the Responsible Person under the Order for testing etc has to be written into the terms of occupation.

### Outline Fire Strategy

This report summarises the agreement with Camden Building Control on the fire safety considerations raised from drawings for the proposed layouts. The base document for design guidance is AD B, fire safety, Volume 2 [the AD B].

## **B1. Means of escape**

1. Fire scenario – an analysis of the critical fire scenario results in selecting one starting at night in the living areas. Bedroom fires are accommodated by their being separated off the circulation space by fire doors. Similarly, living area fires during the day do not give rise to

the same concern in the context of bedrooms as inner rooms. AD B assumes living room fires at night compromising means of escape from bedrooms.

The selected scenario then, is a fire starting at night in the living areas, most probably within the kitchen section. The usual detection system, enhanced if required to accommodate any perceived shortcomings in the proposals, will raise the alarm in the bedrooms, and the occupants will be able to reach the escape stairs, suitably separated from the fire by provision of the protected corridor formed by the 'active systems' outlined above.

2. Evacuation regime – a regime conventional for flats is proposed; persons respond to an alarm in their flat, others on the building / development remain if they wish, until advised by the attending fire brigade to make their way out.

3. Alarm / detection – a code-compliant detection alarm system to AD B is proposed, enhanced to operate fire doors and fire curtains provided to complete the protected routes from bedrooms to exit doors.

4. Inner room conditions – in all flats, bedrooms are proposed as inner rooms but that condition is removed upon operation of the detection / alarm system in each flat. A protected route is formed by the combination of fire doors and fire curtains, their operation initiated by the detection system. Detector heads will be located at code-compliant locations and distances from the held-open doors and fire curtains. The Building Regulations Application will include marked up drawings of each flat showing how the agreed principles have been applied.

5. Smoke curtain operation automatically linked to the fire alarm system, will need regular checking since they would otherwise not be a requirement for normal living. The curtain rate of descent will be adjusted to allow alert and awake persons to make their way through the doors section in the event of operation [expected or otherwise] while the living areas are occupied.

6. Internal layout to flats – The proposed formation of the internal corridor upon operation of their internal fire alarm system, results in a code-compliant internal layout to accommodate the single stair condition.

7. Single stair protection – the AD B recommendation for double door protection is achieved by the combination of the flat exit door, and the protected corridor internal to each flat.

## **B2. Internal fire spread (linings)**

Class 0 linings will be provided on the circulation stairs, the Class 1 standard will be applied elsewhere.

## **B3. Internal fire spread (structure)**

1. Fire resistance – all new structure in the building will provide a 1-hour standard, a code-compliant condition.

2. Compartmentation – each flat will be in its own 1-hour fire compartment, a code-compliant condition.

#### **B4. External fire spread**

The construction of all new roofs and external walls is assumed to be code-compliant for the residential purpose group, and proximity to boundaries.

#### **B5. Access and facilities for the fire service**

For code-compliance, a 45m distance is recommended to the farthest point within the highest flat from the agreed vehicle locations. Since this condition may not be achieved, dry mains could be incorporated within the stairs, a usual provision within blocks of flats. Inlets should be within 18m of the agreed vehicle stand.

#### **Fire Safety Order**

The FSO requires a risk assessment in places of work, and Government guidance provided to assist in its application to flats, identifies common access areas as coming under the Order – addressing maintenance and inspection duties, and postal etc services.

This situation means that the Responsible Person [RP] identified under the Order is required to assess the risk to people working in the common access spaces from fires within it, and outside. A code-compliant design to the AD B recommendations, would imply a satisfactory set of provisions to ensure an adequate risk assessment [RA], although the Order still requires the risk assessment to be undertaken and recorded. Thus, risks associated with the stairs will be addressed by applying the AD B recommendations. These include two-door protection within flats as shown in AD B, Diagrams 7 and 9.

However, the ‘engineered approach’ concerning achieving the two-door protection, is provided by the ‘active system’ outlined in this Note. The reliability of the active system is therefore implicated is support of the RA, and the RP needs to record adequacy of provision and maintenance of the active components. The RP, or their representative, will require access to the flats, a factor that raises issues of privacy. The project manager and Client are therefore advised to investigate implications on the occupancy terms.

Factors that will need to be considered include:

1. Legal position as to rights of access to ‘check’ suitable operation of the ‘active’ systems forming the internal protective corridor.
2. Communication to occupants of the terms and conditions of rights of entry.
3. Check and recording of successful operation of the active systems at a regularity agreed with the suppliers / installers of the systems – detection, door closers, fire curtains etc.
4. Setting up and monitoring that occupants are aware and respect the need to keep the potential internal corridor free of obstructions.

5. Maintenance of all fire precautions within the single stairs – flat access doors, manual venting, quality of final exit door [used for smoke venting the stairs], and any call points and first aid firefighting equipment etc that the Order might seek, Class 0 wall and ceiling linings, and omission of fire load within the whole escape route.

*Prepared by:* John Hopkinson  
Regional Director

*Checked by:* Phil Johnston  
Fire Engineer