

**09/691: 41 – 42 WINDMILL STREET, LONDON W1T 2BE**

**DESIGN STATEMENT**

**1. THE SITE – URBAN AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA**

- 1.01 The site is located on the western side of Tottenham Court Road between Whitfield and Charlotte streets in the Fitzrovia Conservation Area. The area has mixed established uses of restaurants, flats, office and retail premises.
- 1.02 No. 41 - 42 is a five storey building with a basement on the North side facing onto Windmill Street, in a terrace of mixed uses and styles. There is a Public House on the west side next door at the corner of Windmill and Charlotte Streets with a warehouse on the East side.
- 1.03 The building fronts onto the pavement with no space for car parking. There are separate accesses to the ground floor shops and to the flats above.
- 1.04 The north boundary of the site backs onto a building site where flats and houses are being constructed at 7 – 15 Whitfield Street.
- 1.05 The existing building consists of a ground floor and basement retail units, a vacant first floor linked to the warehouse at 38 – 40 Windmill street and 6 flats in the second, third and fourth floors above.
- 1.05 Planning permissions were granted to insert a new shopfront in 42 in 2003 (reference no. 2003/1842/P) and to add air conditioning units in 2006 (reference No 2006/1819/P).

**2. GOVERNMENT AND CAMDEN'S PLANNING POLICIES**

**2.01 PS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development:**

This refers to ways in which planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban development, protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design and the efficient use of resources.

With regard to the prudent use of resources, reference is made in Paragraphs 21 and 27 (viii) to building at higher densities on previously developed land and promotion of more efficient use of and through higher densities. This site clearly falls within the definition of previously developed land.

**2.02 PS3 – Housing:**

This includes, amongst its main objectives, making efficient and effective use of land, including the re-use of previously developed land and the construction of housing development in suitable locations which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure. The application site is clearly "previously developed land" in a suitable location, as Windmill street has a multitude of jobs, restaurant, retail, transport and other services.

High quality design is also of importance. Paragraph 12 refers to good design being fundamental to the development of high quality housing contributing to the creation of sustainable and mixed communities. Paragraph 13 refers to design, which is inappropriate in its context, not being acceptable.

In this respect, as the proposed drawings and Design and Access Statement refer, the design has been developed to respond to the scale, form and materials of existing and proposed buildings and the urban context of Windmill Street.

Paragraph 16 specifies the matters, which should be considered assessing design quality. In accordance with these requirements, the application site is extremely well connected to public transport and community facilities, with many bus routes passing along Tottenham Court Road with the Underground station at Goodge Street within a short walking distance. The development is well laid out so that space is used efficiently. It is safe and as referred to in the Design and Access Statement; it is fully accessible to accord with Lifetime Homes standards.

Paragraph 36 refers to the priority for development being on previously developed land. The application site falls within this definition. Paragraph 40 refers to a key objective being that the Local Authorities should continue to make effective use of land by re-using that which had been previously developed. Reference is made in paragraph 41 to the national target being at least 60% of new housing should be provided on previously developed land. The proposals thus help to contribute towards this target.

Paragraph 47 refers to 30 dwellings per hectare being used as a national indicative minimum towards making efficient use of land. The development site has an area of 230 sq m and the proposals would involve adding 2 flats to the existing 6 flats, to make a total of 8 flats which give rise to a density of 347 dwellings per hectare. The proposals thus clearly comply with the requirement to make efficient use of the site.

PPS3 recognises that the design and layout of new development can lead to a more efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the local environment and it is considered that these proposals achieve this.

## 2.03 The London Plan:

The London Plan continues the themes of PPS1 and PPS3 in encouraging higher density developments and sets a target of 16,940 homes to be provided between 1997 and 2016, an annual target of 850 dwellings per year. Policy 3A.3 requires Local Authorities to assess the capacity of housing sites in accordance with urban design and the density policies of the London Plan.

Policy 4B.3 states that the Mayor will, and the Boroughs should, ensure development proposals achieve the highest possible intensity of use compatible with the local context, and these should conform with density ranges set out in Table 4B.1. As the site is "Central within 10 minutes of a town centre", the appropriate density range is stated as 650 – 1100 habitable rooms per hectare or 240 – 435 units per hectare.

The proposed scheme would provide 8 flat units and 23 habitable rooms on a 230 square metre site, which would provide a density of 1,000 habitable rooms per hectare or 347 units per hectare, both of which are within the specified ranges.

Policy 3C.22 requires that the Mayor, in conjunction with the Boroughs, will seek to ensure that in site car parking at new developments is the minimum necessary and that there is no over provision that could undermine the use of more sustainable non car modes. The policy in Annex A4.2 states that for flat developments in areas of good public transport and town centres should aim for less than 1 space per unit. The local planning officer has confirmed that the proposal for a car free scheme is desirable in this location.

#### 2.04 Local Plan:

Camden's Replacement Unitary Development Plan, adopted in 2006, states that providing housing is one of the most important issues facing the Borough. The aim will be to provide and retain a range of high quality housing to meet housing needs. Policy SD3 states the Council will seek a mix of uses in development including a contribution to the supply of housing.

Policy B1 states that development should be designed to a high standard and respect its site and setting. It should be safe and accessible, improve spaces around and between buildings and be sustainable by promoting energy efficiency and efficient use of resources and should seek to improve the attractiveness of the area and not harm its appearance or amenity.

Policy B9 states that strategic and important local views must not be harmed by any new development. The development will not change the appearance of the building from the street with only minor alterations at the rear to reduce the building and provide rear terraces for each new flat.

Policy H1 seeks to meet and exceed the strategic housing target for the Borough. "The Council will grant planning permission for development that increases the amount of land and floor space in residential use and provides additional residential accommodation, as long as this reaches acceptable standards." High densities are encouraged particularly near Town Centres and where well served by public transport and this can assist in contributing to sustainable development as policy SD4

Policy H2 states that the Council will expect all residential developments of 0.5 hectares or more and those with a capacity of 15 or more dwellings to make a contribution to the supply of affordable housing. The development has a site area of 0.023 hectares and it is proposed to provide a total of 8 flats and therefore these are below the thresholds for the provision of affordable housing.

Policy H7 encourages all new housing developments to be accessible to all. All new housing should be built to "Lifetime Homes" standards and 10% of new housing should be designed to be wheelchair accessible. The proposed scheme complies with these standards with the 2 new flats designed to "Lifetime Homes" standards and could be adapted to wheelchair use if required.

Policy H8 requires an appropriate mix of unit sizes including large and small units. The mix should suit site conditions and the locality. The conversion will provide a mix of a 2 bedroom flat and a single bedroom flat.

Policy T1 states that the Council will grant planning permission for a development that would encourage travel by walking, cycling and public transport. Moreover, Policy T8 goes further by stating that the Council will grant planning permission for car free housing in areas of street parking control. This site is served by many bus routes along Tottenham Court Road to other parts of North and Central London and is within a short walking distance of Goodge Street underground station.

#### **4. PROPOSALS**

- 4.01 The scheme would convert the vacant first floor to create a 2 bedroom flat and a 1 bedroom flat using the existing lift and staircase serving the 6 flats above.
- 4.02 The rear of the first floor would be reduced to introduce external terraces for each new flat with screens and planning around the rear and side perimeters to avoid any overlooking.
- 4.03 Access to the flats would be by the existing staircase and lift leading from entrance lobby at ground floor. Both flats would be fully accessible with wider door openings, level access and other features to comply with Part M of the Building Regulations and to accord with Lifetime Homes' standards in accordance with Policy H7 of the revised UDP, as explained in the Design and Access Statement.
- 4.04 Appearance:

The design intention is not to alter the appearance of the building except for replacing louvers with fanlights over the front elevation French doors and the rear terraces described above.
- 4.05 There is no space for a shared refuse store so individual refuse and recycling storage cupboards next to each flat entrance.
- 4.06 Documents are attached to this report to demonstrate that the first floor has been used as a Warehouse until 1994 when the owners, Giordano Limited ceased trading, that since 1993 the Valuation Office has accepted that the premises at 41 – 42 Windmill Street should be treated separately from the adjoining building at 38 – 40 Windmill Street and Business Rates advice that since 1993/1994 the building has been empty. Together with a letter from Camden Council dated 11<sup>th</sup> January 2005 confirming that the first floor was empty. In addition letters are attached from Last & Mazin confirming that they have unsuccessfully tried to lease the first floor since 2008 and from Ruth Neman, the Private Development Officer at Camden Council dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 2003 and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2003 suggesting that "it may be possible to get planning permission to convert the vacant warehouse premises to residential if it is surplus to requirements..."

## **5. LEGAL UNDERTAKING**

- 5.01 The applicant is willing to enter into a Section 106 legal agreement to accept a car free development for the new first floor flats. The planning officer confirmed that the scheme is below the threshold for Educational Contributions in accordance with the latest addendum to the adopted SPG clause 3.13.

## **DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

- 1 The site is located within a short distance of Tottenham Court Road, which has good transport access, with major bus routes running north and south, with good connections to most of London and within walking distance of underground and main line stations.
2. Site access is through an entrance hall directly off the footway, with entrance doors from the street leading to lift and staircase serving the first floor flats as well as the upper floors.
3. Both flats have been designed to accord with Lifetime Homes standards. The lift and staircase are existing and comply with Building Regulations, Part M, paragraphs 1.33, 3.55 and 3.51, with handrails on both sides and contrasting colours to identify the nosings of the steps.
4. A 1000mm wide doorway leads from the street to the entrance lobby for the flats and all entrances will be well illuminated (3, 4, 5).
5. Both flats have been designed so that there is space for turning wheelchairs in kitchens, dining / sitting rooms (7) and adequate circulation for wheelchair users elsewhere, with minimum 1200mm wide corridors and 900mm wide internal doors (6). Toilets are at the same level as the entrance to the flats (10).
6. Living room window sills will be at 800mm or lower, with easily openable operation (15). Switch, sockets and service controls will be at a height usable for all, between 600 and 1200 from the floor (16).
- 7 Both flats are accessible from the existing lift and staircase running up from the ground floor entrance.

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