

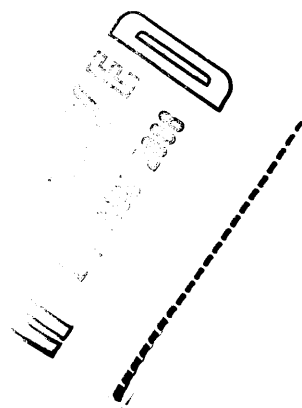
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

on behalf of

SLLB Ltd

In support of a planning application for the demolition of an existing building and erection of a new development comprising 40 flats with associated car and cycle parking, amenity space and landscaping at:-

**1-7 Mill Lane
West Hampstead
London, NW6**



CTP ref:
Date:

ITP/4819/AB/Mill Lane/D&AS
August 2008

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cunnane Town Planning LLP have been instructed by SLLB Architects to prepare a Design and Access Statement in support of a planning application for the development of 40 one, two, three and four bedroom flats with car parking, access, landscaping and open space on land at Mill Lane, West Hampstead.

1.2 This Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with the following drawings and images which have been submitted as part of the relevant planning application;

Drawing Number	Description
• P-001	- Photographs of site
• P-002	- Photographs of site
• P-003	- Photographs of site
• DAT/9.0	- Site survey
• EC/201	- North and west elevations as existing
• EC/202	- South and east elevations as existing
• EC/203	- Section A-A, B-B as existing
• EC/204	- Minster Road entrance : existing and proposed
• A100	- Site plan as proposed
• A101	- Basement plan as proposed
• A102	- Ground floor plan as proposed
• A103	- First floor plan as proposed
• A104	- Second floor plan as proposed
• A105	- Third floor plan as proposed
• A106	- Fourth floor plan as proposed
• A107	- Fifth floor plan as proposed
• A108	- Roof plan as proposed
• A201	- North and south elevations as proposed
• A202	- West and east elevations as proposed
• A203	- Longitudinal and cross sections
• J38.54/01	- Tree constraint plan
• J38.54/02	- Tree protection plan

- 981-02 Rev. B - Open space outline landscape proposals
- 981-03 Rev. B - Soft landscaping proposals
- 981-04 Rev. B - Hard landscape proposals

- 1.3 This statement should also be read in conjunction with the various reports and assessments that accompany the planning application, in particular the Planning Statement and Sustainability Statement.
- 1.4 A large part of the site has been cleared by the current owners (not the applicants) of all buildings and vegetation, but one building remains in the south-west corner. This remaining building would be demolished to make way for the new building which will stand on the Mill Lane frontage of the site, with the remaining land to the rear laid out as open/amenity space.
- 1.5 This Statement is submitted in support of the application and details the nature of the site and the surrounding area, together with a full explanation of the design of the proposed development and its context within the surrounding area.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is located on the north side of Mill Lane, between Cricklewood and Kilburn in north-west London.
- 2.2 The site is an irregularly shaped parcel of land with an overall area of 0.4027 hectares. The land slopes gently downwards from south to north. The main frontage of the site is on to Mill Lane, with a width of approximately 55 metres, narrowing at the northern end of the site to 18 metres. The main body of the site is approximately 100 metres in depth, but there is a further "tongue" of land some 8 to 10 metres wide which affords access onto Minster Road.
- 2.3 There is a single vacant building on the site and this is situated in the south-west corner fronting onto Mill Lane. It is a substantial four storey red brick house with a pitched and hipped roof above, probably constructed during the early part of the last century. The site is otherwise mostly clear of buildings and trees/vegetation although a number of trees are situated along the embankment that forms the north-west margin of the site.
- 2.4 The site is currently enclosed by timber hoardings approximately 2.4 metres high on the Mill Lane and Minster Road frontages, and along the west boundary by fences and walls belonging to the properties that front Fordwych Road. Along the north-east boundary of the site there is a high boundary wall which demarcates the edge of the railway cutting.
- 2.5 With the exception of the railway lines to the east, the application site is adjoined by residential development on all sides. Fronting Fordwych Road to the west, the existing development is characterised by very substantial semi-detached Edwardian villas, the majority of which are believed to have been converted into flats. These properties mostly have accommodation at semi-basement, ground, first, second floors and roof level. The properties are arranged with fairly uniform front and rear building lines and limited off-street front garden car parking. The rear gardens are approximately 23 metres deep, backing onto the application site. The notable exceptions to this would appear to be Mill Court on the corner of Fordwych Road and Mill Lane which is a four storey post-war style block of flats and Nos. 100 to 104 Fordwych Road which also appear to be purpose built blocks of flats of similar age.

- 2.6 Fordwych Road continues to the south of Mill Lane and the road is similarly characterised by substantial semi-detached dwellings arranged on four levels including roofspace accommodation.
- 2.7 To the south of the application site, and on the opposite side of Mill Lane, there is an arc of terraced houses, dating from the 1890's, which are mostly two storeys in height but including accommodation in the roofspace. There is further residential development along Mill Lane beyond the railway lines to the east, and standing on higher ground there are residential properties fronting onto Westbere Road.
- 2.8 The application site has good accessibility to public transport services. Mill Lane itself is a bus route and there are other services passing along Shoot-Up Hill approximately 150 metres to the west. Rail services on the London Underground Jubilee Line are situated at Kilburn Station some 600 metres from the site, and Brondesbury Station on the North London Line is 230 metres further south.

3.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSAL

3.1 The application entails the demolition of the remaining dwelling on the site and the construction of a new part five, part six storey building and a smaller, detached two-storey building, comprising 40 apartments ranging from 1 to 4 bedrooms.

3.2 The accommodation is arranged on 6 levels as follows:

- (i) Basement – provision of 20, including 5 disabled, car parking spaces and 11 motorcycle parking bays, with access via a car lift, and a cycle store room providing 23 cycle parking spaces.
- (ii) Ground floor – 6 apartments are proposed within the main building and 2 terraced houses in a separate two storey building at the rear. Four of the units are full wheelchair units, with every room designed to disabled standards. Four of the units to the rear of the main block incorporate private patios, and a communal garden is also proposed. 22 cycle parking spaces, refuse storage and recycling are also included on this level. An area of 101 sq m is also included adjacent to the main entrance, and this area would act as the lobby/entrance for the apartments on the upper floors. The vehicular access to the site, wide enough for two cars to pass each other clear of the public highway, is included in the south-west corner of the building.
- (iii) Floors 1 to 3 – each floor incorporates 9 apartments ranging in size from 54 sq m to 91 sq m.
- (iv) Fourth floor – at this level there are 5 units of accommodation, 1 of which is a split level apartment on both the fourth and fifth floor levels. The overall floor area is reduced in comparison to the floors below as the flank walls are inset on each side.
- (v) Fifth floor – accommodation at this level is confined to the eastern side of the building only, comprising the 1 split-level apartment referred to in (iv).

- 3.3 The residential development described above is confined to the Mill Lane frontage of the site and it is proposed that the remainder of the land to the north, including the access onto Minster Road will be laid out as open space.

4.0 DESIGN AND FORM OF THE PROPOSALS

Policy Background

- 4.1 Guidance at paragraphs 33-39 of Planning Policy Statement 1 reinforces the need for good quality design and this is deemed to be indivisible from good planning. Local planning authorities are urged to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all developments and this should contribute positively to making places better for people. High quality and inclusive design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and this means ensuring that a place will function well and add to the overall character and quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.
- 4.2 Whilst paragraph 34 reminds authorities that design which is inappropriate in its context or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted, equally paragraph 38 points out that local planning authorities should not attempt to impose architectural styles or tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is however proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness particularly where this is supported by clear plan policies or supplementary planning documents on design.
- 4.3 The imperative to promote good design is similarly expressed in Planning Policy Statement 3 which at paragraph 10 has a specific housing policy objective for the planning system to achieve high quality housing that is well designed and built to a high standard. Good design is regarded as fundamental to the development of high quality new housing and local authorities should promote designs and layouts that make efficient and effective use of land.
- 4.4 Policies in the adopted development plan (4B.1 in the London Plan and B1 in the UDP) similarly seek to ensure that developments are designed to a high standard. Camden's policy includes a number of criteria against which new developments will be considered, and these criteria are now considered individually.

Height, Bulk and Scale

- 4.5 Immediately adjoining the site there are very substantial semi-detached Edwardian properties with accommodation on four or five floors and these are situated close to each other so that in oblique views they appear as a single built mass. There are also 1930s style blocks of flats on the corner of Fordwych Road and substantial nineteenth century semi-detached and terraced houses, again with accommodation on three or four floors, to the south of the site. Further along Mill Lane closer to the junction with Shoot-Up Hill, there are even more substantial mansion blocks with accommodation on six or seven floors.
- 4.6 The curved frontage of the proposed main building is set back from Mill Lane and its curvature carefully replicates the curve of the highway, creating an attractive arc along the historic building line and broadly reflective of the original pre-war development on the site. This curved frontage would also complement the similar curved frontage that is a strong feature of the properties on Mill Lane directly opposite the application site.
- 4.7 The flank walls of the proposed main building are considerably set-in off both flank boundaries to ensure that this building neither dominates the site itself nor the surrounding area, and this is further aided by the fact that, at fifth floor level, the flank walls are set-in further than the lower floors. Finally, the only part of the development at sixth floor level is positioned facing the south-eastern corner of the site, to ensure that no harm is caused to the amenities of occupiers of properties in Fordwych Road.
- 4.8 The overall height of the proposed main building therefore steps up from four storeys on its western elevation to five/six storeys on its eastern elevation. The four storey height on the western elevation is wholly in keeping with the existing street scene, with the adjoining property on the north-eastern corner of the Mill Lane/Fordwych Road junction, which fronts Mill Lane, also comprising a four storey block of flats. The stepping up of the proposed main building towards the railway line is regarded as a natural progression along the street, making a positive enhancement to the local street scene and a beneficial addition to the character of the area.
- 4.9 The smaller terraced building proposed would be sited to the rear of the main building, along the same eastern building line as the main building. The sensitive

scale and positioning of this smaller building, being two storeys high and positioned away from shared boundaries with other residential properties, ensures a sympathetic and complementary relationship between both the two proposed buildings and their surroundings, with the height of the development gradually reducing from south to north so that the development is sensitively positioned in relation to the area of open space proposed to the north.

- 4.10 Whilst the proposed main building would be visible in the street scene it has no adverse impact on views or skylines in the sense that those which are specifically protected by policy remain unaffected.
- 4.11 It is therefore considered, particularly given the great variations in nature and scale of accommodation in the immediate vicinity of the proposal site, that the application proposal fits in well in this local context in terms of its height, scale and bulk.

Design issues

- 4.12 Although some of the local streets display a unity of house design reflective of the period in which the properties were constructed (nineteenth century), there are also other buildings of more recent vintage (1930s), but few of modern construction and certainly none that yield any hopeful or valuable design cues. It is therefore appropriate that a suitably qualified and experienced architect should be given free rein to design an attractive high quality housing development on this site, and it is considered that this is amply achieved by the application proposals.
- 4.13 The proposed building has a simple but rhythmic appearance on its main elevations with a rendered plinth at ground floor level and vertical panels of brickwork interspersed by rectangular paired windows, some with glazed balconies. The new building deliberately omits some of the more decorative architectural detailing to be found on the older houses nearby but the simple rhythmic pattern is reflective of some of the larger buildings in the vicinity such as the mansion blocks further along Mill Lane.
- 4.14 Following pre-application comments from the Council's Senior Design and Conservation Officer, the applicant sought to address his concerns in respect of the appearance of the elevations. Glazing bars appropriate in proportion to the window openings have been added in order to break down the scale of the building, whilst the

articulation of the facade was further nuanced by the addition of terne coated stainless steel planters to wrap around the building at the back of setback on the fifth floor, accompanied by the change of material from brick to glass.

- 4.15 This serves to promote a greater visual understanding of the transition from the lower brick storeys to the glass storey, unifying the composition of the building and the green hedges also providing a visual manifestation of the sustainable approach to the design, complementing the proposed green roofs, the bulk of which is considerably reduced by a thin edge of terne coated stainless steel that serves as an elegant top of the main building. It is not until the roof recedes behind the grey enamelled glass that it drops to its full depth.
- 4.16 It is the applicant's view that the proposed building creates an interesting and active frontage onto the street that reflects the requirement to produce a high quality design whilst at the same time respecting the scale and appearance of adjoining buildings. The architect of the scheme takes issue with the suggestion that this is a landmark building but it is most certainly a modern building and reflective of its time, and one which has been carefully revised following valuable input from Design Officers at the Council.
- 4.17 Boundary treatments proposed typically comprise 2.2 metre high boundary fences, which are typical of the surrounding area and the precise materials to be used in such means of enclosure could be controlled by condition.
- 4.18 It is considered therefore that the proposed design and treatments to be used for this development are entirely appropriate and ensure that the development makes a positive contribution to the surrounding area, and the applicants acknowledge that the materials to be used in the implementation of this development can be controlled by condition.

Landscaping

- 4.19 It is a central tenet of this proposal that it should result in the re-establishment of a cohesive open space on the site in the interests of restoring and reflecting the UDP land use designations. The concept of a land swap has been agreed with Officers and these proposals would in fact result in an increase of open space compared with the amount of designated open space that formerly existed. Significantly the new space

that would be created as a result of this application would also be more cohesive in its size and shape and hence of greater potential value to the community at large.

- 4.20 The applicants propose that all of the application site would be appropriately landscaped in order to positively contribute to the appearance of the surrounding area, whilst the open space provided as part of the land swap would also be landscaped with semi-mature trees and shrubs. It is envisaged that the new open space will afford a significant opportunity to create a bio diverse habitat with a view, eventually, to restoring its former designation as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance, and these proposals may be secured by way of appropriate planning conditions and a Section 106 agreement to ensure the ongoing management of any landscaping scheme, or alternatively ownership of this newly created open space could be transferred to the Council.
- 4.21 The Arboricultural Implications Assessment that accompanies the planning application outlines the condition of the 23 trees and groups within the existing site, identifies which trees need to be removed on safety grounds, which trees should be removed or have works undertaken to facilitate this development, and includes at Appendix 3 an Arboricultural Method Statement detailing measures that would need to be taken to protect retained trees during the course of the proposed development.
- 4.22 Drawing Numbers 981-03 Revision B and 981-04 Revision B provide details of the proposed hard and soft landscaping, including a landscape design statement and proposed planting schedule, in order to provide an appropriate setting for the development, ensuring its integration within the existing street scene and also providing high quality amenity space for use by the residents.
- 4.23 It is therefore considered that the landscaping scheme and the creation of the area of designated open space would assist in the seamless integration of the proposal into the surrounding area.

Secured by design

- 4.24 In formulating their proposals, the applicants have carefully considered both national and local planning policy to ensure that the development would create a sustainable community by incorporating measures to address personal safety and to both reduce and prevent crime. A meeting was held in June 2008 with the local Crime Prevention

Design Advisor, and observations made during this meeting have been incorporated into the final scheme. The scheme now incorporates automatic closing full-height gates/shutters, boundary treatment of an appropriate height and design, and windows and doors all designed to meet/exceed the relevant standards. As part of a Secure by Design application, a Crime Impact Assessment has also been produced.

5.0 ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 Vehicular access to the site is provided by way of a car lift arrangement providing off-street access to the 20 underground parking spaces and 11 motorbike spaces. The proposal incorporates a total of 45 cycle parking spaces on the basement and ground floor to facilitate and encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport.
- 5.2 Five of the car parking spaces are allocated for disabled parking, whilst four of the flats on the ground floor would be full wheelchair units, with every room designed to disabled standards.
- 5.3 The development is to be implemented in accordance with the guidance contained in Part M of the Building Regulations, in respect of the doors and windows to be used, and all corridors would be sufficiently wide to provide passing places within corridors for wheelchair users.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY AND WASTE

- 6.1 The proposed development satisfies the tests of sustainable development as set out in PPS1 by providing social, economic and environmental benefits. Where possible, construction materials will be recovered from demolition or earth moving, whilst the use of recycled materials will be considered where suitable materials are available and it is commercially viable.
- 6.2 As set out in the Sustainability Statement which accompanies the application, low energy design has been incorporated into the proposal, which meets Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 6.3 As shown on the submitted drawings, the applicants have provided facilities for the disposal of waste, including a separate area for the disposal of waste that can be recycled, and precise details of this can be controlled by condition.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The applicants do not in any way condone the actions of the current owners of the site in clearing it of trees and vegetation last year but seek to now bring forward proposals that will enable a housing development on part of the site and the restoration of open space on the remainder which will ultimately mature to provide a valuable natural habitat.
- 7.2 The design of the application is an imaginative and attractive solution for this site that relates well to adjoining properties and the character of the area in general. The proposals have been assessed in relation to their relationship with adjoining residential properties and it is concluded that there will be no adverse impact thereon, according with the adopted policies of the Council and national planning policy.
- 7.3 The proposed development will facilitate the laying out of open space on the remainder of the site, accompanied by a sensitive and appropriate landscaping scheme. The proposed layout would also facilitate the re-establishment of wildlife habitats that would eventually be restored to its original condition, justifying its designation as a site of nature conservation importance.
- 7.4 The proposed development would be served by suitable access arrangements providing safe and secure access/egress for all users, and in terms of its internal arrangements and layout the development has been designed with both access and sustainability considerations at the forefront.
- 7.5 It is therefore considered in conclusion that the application proposals offer a high quality development for this site and would make a positive contribution on both the site itself and the surrounding area.