

# Tom Young Architects

19 Bassett Street London NW5 4PG

t+f\_020 7466 6150

m\_07765 378 502

thdyoung@mac.com

4b Highgate West Hill N6 6JS: DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT 3/5/07

*This document is part of a planning application for change-of-use from D1 to C3, with minor internal alterations, at no. 4b Highgate West Hill, London N6 6JS.*

This property forms part of a recognised Neighbourhood Shopping Centre around Swains Lane. 4b Highgate West Hill is a shophouse. The ground floor is occupied by a functioning estate agency. 4b is a vacant basement unit. The upper parts of the property are in residential use.

Access to 4b is from Highgate West Hill via a well-maintained public pavement. There are good bus services available on the street (C11, C2, 214). Overland rail services to a wide range of destinations are available from Gospel Oak Station (North London Line/Barking Line) which is relatively short walk away across Hampstead Heath (approx 5-10 minutes). Underground services are available at Tufnell Park. The route there is somewhat circuitous. The C11 service, on the other hand, goes to Archway where there is also an underground station.

There is no wheelchair access to the premises at the moment. Arranging it would be extremely expensive since the unit is accessed via an external stair covering a vertical distance of 2.4m. Modifications are feasible to improve access for the ambulant disabled.

## RELEVANT UDP POLICY & COMMENTARY ON RELEVANCE TO APPLICATION SCHEME

### RELEVANT UDP POLICY

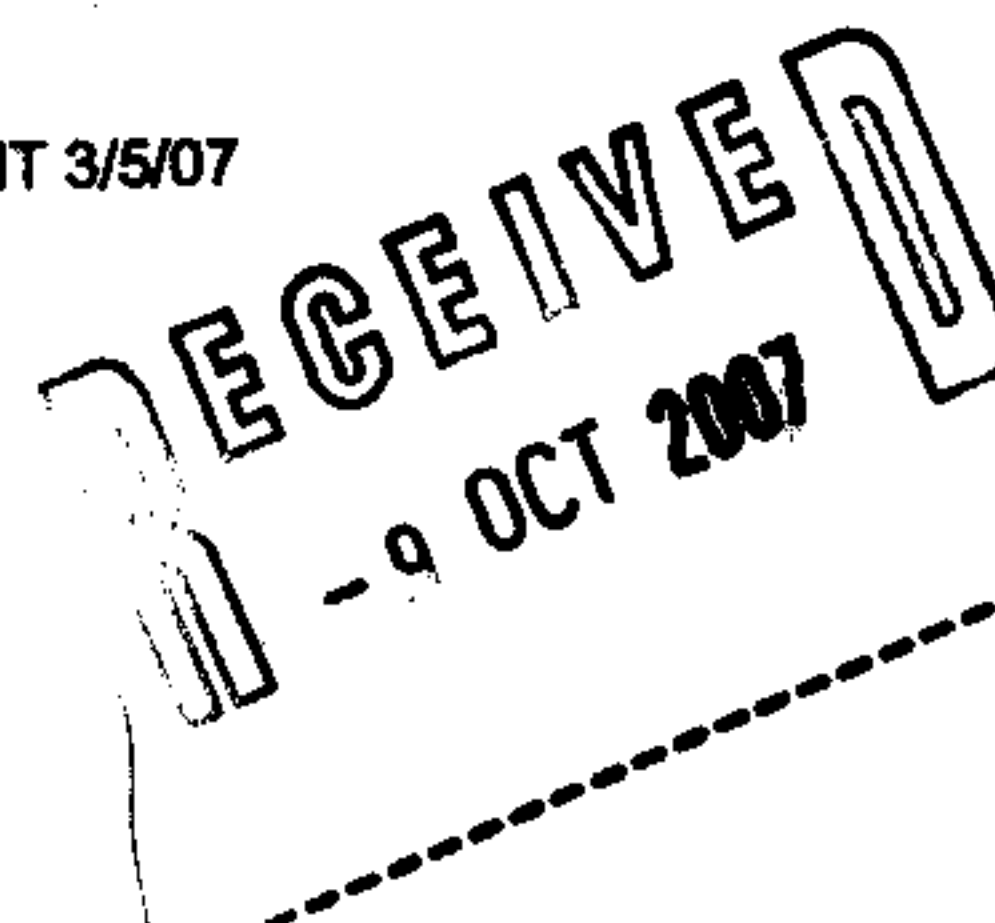
**S1 The Council will seek to ensure that all development is sustainable with regard to social needs, the protection of the built and natural environment, the sensible use of resources and the maintenance of a viable economy.**

Reuse of a vacant basement unit as a flat in a neighbourhood centre is sustaining of social need (housing need), a sensible use of resources and contributes to the maintenance of the local retail economy by adding a local inhabitant(s). The degree to which the unit's reuse as a dwelling is a sensible use of resources is set more fully in the drawings forming part of this application and in the remarks set out below.

**S2 The Council will seek to ensure that development promotes a high quality of life for all members of the community, contributes to sustainable land use patterns and does not harm local amenity.**

The proposal to convert the basement unit at 4b into a dwelling does not harm local amenity insofar as the C3 is consistent with the "vitality" of the local shopping centre where it is situated.

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**S4 The Council will seek to provide housing to meet strategic housing needs. It will seek to secure net additions to the housing stock wherever possible and retain existing permanent residential accommodation. Housing is the priority use of the UDP.**

The proposed dwelling adds to the borough's housing stock.

**S5 The Council will seek the provision of affordable housing for those on low and middle incomes.**

The proposed dwelling is precisely of the type which will be affordable to those on low and middle income.

**S9 The Council will seek to reduce the need to travel, manage and reduce the amount of traffic on Camden's roads and encourage forms of travel that cause the minimum environmental harm.**

The proposed dwelling is situated close to bus-routes (with stops at local tube stations) and the overland station at Gospel Oak. It is therefore highly suited to reliance on public transport. Proximity to Hampstead Heath will also serve as an encouragement to walk to local destinations.

## **T1 - Sustainable transport**

### **A - Sustainable transport development**

The Council will grant planning permission for development that would encourage travel by walking, cycling and public transport. The Council will not grant planning permission that would be dependent on travel by private motor vehicles.

The proposed dwelling does not encourage travel by motor vehicles being close to amenities which can all be reached on foot (shops, open spaces, public transport options).

## **SD1D - Community safety**

The Council will require development to incorporate design, layout and access measures which address personal safety, including fear of crime, security, and crime prevention.

The existing external stairway giving access to the existing unit could possibly be used by a rough sleeper at night. The proposal to convert the unit to residential use reduces the likelihood of this simply because the lawful occupant of the dwelling can be expected to police the stair.

**2.61 Larger units of three or more bedrooms provide flexibility and can be used by a range of household sizes, including families. Where possible, large units suitable for families should be provided on the ground floor and should have access to gardens or public open space where children can play in safety. Where they are provided above the ground floor and do not have access to a garden, units should be within 400 metres of public open space; or with access to alternative external amenity space.**

Whilst it is out of the question that the proposed dwelling should house more than one or two people (a couple) it is worth noting that any occupant will be well within 400m of public open space. Hampstead Heath is less than 50m from the front door.

