

17a Murray Street London NW1

Design and Access Statement

accompanying planning application dated October 2007

Design Process

The design is significantly informed by the criteria established by the granting of planning consent ref 205/3722/P granted on 18.11.05.

The site is currently cleared and was formerly covered with sub-standard shed accommodation of varying materials which were both dilapidated and of poor quality. The effect was one of poor visual amenity which could only be improved by redevelopment.

The existing shed structures were illegally erected by the current tenant over a period of some years and have been and continue to be the subject of Enforcement Orders from the Council.

A redevelopment of the site must be considered an improvement to the Camden Square conservation area.

Since the granting of planning consent ref 205/3722/P there have been two significant changes to the scheme parameters.

Firstly Network Rail have relaxed their requirement for a 3m access zone between the railway retaining wall and the rear wall of the proposed building. The consequence of this is a larger building footprint which would facilitate an additional set back floor to the proposed scheme.

Secondly after discussion with the planning authority the B1 content of the scheme has been retained and increased and relocated largely to the basement with a separate access and reception area on the ground floor.

In consequence a further 2 residential units have been introduced to the ground and basement floors.

Design Context

Policy B1 and SPG (Camden Planning Guidance 2006)

The site is an island site as it is bounded on 3 sides by Murray Mews, Murray Street and St Augustine's Road (with a small triangular plot in between) and on the fourth side by the railway cutting. The most direct relationship with other buildings therefore is with those opposite in Murray Street.

It is unlikely that the small triangular site for which parking is proposed will ever be developed as this is located on the bridge over the main east coast railway line and Network Rail require unrestricted access to it.

The long elevation showing the street scene of the Irish Centre and the large villa facing onto St Augustine's Road however demonstrate that the height and scale of the proposals are in keeping with the general street scene and scale of buildings in Murray Street and the neighbouring road – St Augustine's Road.

In the organization of the front elevation facing Murray Street into 4 'bays', the proposals take into account both the historical context of the buildings which stood on the site and the continuing grain and plot width of the buildings on Murray Street opposite.

The proposals keep the front of building to back of pavement line in common with other properties on Murray Street. To the rear there is a 1.5 metre gap between the back of the building and the wall to the railway cutting. This is a Network rail requirement for future possible maintenance of their property. Originally the buildings which stood on the site for more than 100 years, abutted this wall.

In summary the proposals make a positive contribution to their surroundings.

Design Character

The proposals are contemporary in design. Planning consent reference 2005/3722/P was granted for a development of very similar character which was considered by the Council to represent an acceptable character and an enhancement of the conservation area.

Use

The principle of change of use of the site to residential with employment generating use on the ground floor was established by the granting of planning consent ref 205/3722/P granted on 18.11.05.

The application proposes a mix of 4 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed flat and 1 x studio in accordance with policies H1 and H7. Each flat would meet the internal space standards set out in the SPG.

The provision of new B1 space of 171m² gross represents a significant contribution towards continuing employment on the site and provides a significant increase in the work space than the previously consented scheme at 121m²

Layout

The proposed building covers most of the site with the exception of a 1.5m access and maintenance strip to the rear of the site on the boundary adjoining the retaining wall to the railway cutting.

Scale

The proposed building is 3 storeys in height. This is very much in keeping with the terrace facing the proposals on the south side of Murray Street.

The height scale and bulk of the proposals have historic justification as described more fully in the statement of compliance with planning policy – planning history.

In the context of the conservation area where the design should be sympathetic to the established and historical urban grain and pattern it is particularly important to recognize the elements of street scene which the development should relate to.

Appearance

The house lies within the Camden Square Conservation Area.

The proposals pay respect to the urban grain of the area whilst using modern materials and detailing.

In character the proposals are similar to those approved by the Council planning consent ref 205/3722/P granted on 18.11.05 which were considered to be an enhancement of the Conservation Area.

Sustainable Design and Construction Statement

The scheme has been designed in accordance with Code for Sustainable Homes and achieves level 3 of the Code. A copy of the BEEAM assessment and report undertaken by Briary Energy Consultants forms part of this application

Residential Amenity

The main area of concern in the development is whether the flats opposite the application site to the south side of Murray Street would be adversely affected in terms of privacy or daylight implications. To the rear of the proposed building lies the main railway line some 28 metres in width with a consented (but not built) residential scheme a further 3metres from this boundary.

Firstly the proposed building would be no higher than the Irish Centre on the corner of Murray Street and Camden Square and no higher than the semi-detached villas along St Augustine's Road. The principle of buildings of this height in proximity to each other with the conservation area is therefore well established.

The face to face distance between the proposal site and the north elevation of the terrace to the south side of Murray Street is 18 metres – a condition which is extant at ground level. 18 metres would normally be considered to be an acceptable distance between the windows of flats especially when taken in the context of the existing urban grain.

This distance of 18 metres would be maintained at first and second floors except for the set back of 2 metres at the western end to accommodate the mature plane tree.

In terms of privacy therefore there can be no demonstrable harm to the occupants of the flats to the upper floors of the terrace on the south side of Murray Street.

Daylight and sunlight : Taking the 20 degree rule of thumb angle from the centre of the first floor window in accordance with BRE document *Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight : a guide to good practice*, this easily clears the top storey of the proposed building at 17a. There is no need for any more detailed analysis of the effect on daylight and sunlight to the existing dwellings and the proposals can be considered to meet the criteria set out in the BRE digest.

Landscaping

The confined nature of the site precludes any significant landscaping scheme however the developer proposes to plant climbers over the rear wall of the building overlooking the railway line.

In addition to this a 'green' roof is proposed for the whole of the 'flat roof' area. It is proposed that the green roof will be provided to an amenity standard for residents and further details of this will be developed and submitted in due course.

Specific measures will be taken to ensure the protection of the mature plane tree adjacent to the site – both during construction and in the permanent state of the building.

Access

Vehicular access to the site will remain unaffected by the works.

Access to Public transport is very good with bus stops in Agar Grove and Camden Road both with very frequent services. Camden Road Network Rail overground station with the north London Line is only 5 minutes walk away and Camden Town Underground Station is 10 minutes walk away.

Cycle parking : secure cycle parking for 7 cycles is provided for in the basement and at ground floor level as indicated on the drawings.

Inclusive Access : the proposals provide for level entry wheelchair suitable access to both residential and live work elements of the scheme.

A disabled persons standard lift is proposed to provide inclusive access for the upper parts.

Lifetime Homes

The new flats are designed to have inclusive access with particular reference to the relevant requirements of the 'Lifetimes Homes' standards namely :

1. There is no car parking : the scheme is a car free scheme.
3. The new approach to the residential element of the site is level entry with a level entry threshold.
5. The lift provided will be fully wheelchair accessible.
6. The width of doorways and hallways shall be as described in the lifetimes homes standards.
7. Turning spaces for wheelchairs are provided in living rooms and adequate circulation space elsewhere.
10. A wc will be provided on each entry level- all flats are accessed from the lift.
12. No stair lift is required as the flats are served by a wheelchair accessible lift.
- 14 Bathrooms will be designed to 'lifetime homes' standards accessible lift.
15. Living room glazing shall be max 800mm above FFL and easy to operate.