

**7 – 15 Whitfield Street  
London W1T 2SB**

**Full Planning Application &  
Conservation Area Consent Application**

**DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

**Prepared by:  
ADZ Architects Limited**

**On behalf of:  
Artesian Property Partnership**

**October 2007**

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**7 – 15 Whitfield Street, London W1T 2SB**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by ADZ Architects on behalf of Artesian Property Partnership to accompany a Full Planning Application and Conservation Area Consent Application for a mixed use development at 7-15 Whitfield Street, London W1T 2SB.

1.2 The Statement follows the guidance set out in Circular 01/2006 and under Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which requires that a Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of planning applications. In particular, in accordance with guidance set out in Circular 01/2006, this Statement will:

- demonstrate how the proposals respond to the Application Site's context;
- explain the amount of development proposed for each use, its distribution across the site, its relationship to its surroundings, and how accessibility is maximised;
- explain the scale of building proposed (height, width, and length), why the selected parameters have been chosen, and how they relate to their surroundings;
- explain and justify the principles behind the choice of locations of each use within the Site;
- explain and justify the principles behind the intended appearance;
- explain and justify the principles behind the proposed landscaping scheme;
- explain and justify how all users of the buildings will have equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the public transport network in perpetuity;



- illustrate how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed;
- explain the approach to access and how policies / standards relating to access have been taken into account, as well as explain the principles which will inform the access arrangements at all scales from neighbourhood movement patterns where appropriate, to details of individual access points to buildings;
- indicate who has been consulted in relation to access for all, particularly the disabled; and,
- explain the access for emergency services, including circulation routes around the site.

1.3 This statement is to be read in the context of the drawings prepared by ADZ Architects and in conjunction with the other documents submitted in support of the Proposed Development, including:

- Planning Statement, prepared by Barton Willmore (October 2007);
- Transport Statement, prepared by Paul Mew Associates (October 2007);
- Design & Access Statement, prepared by ADZ Architects (October 2007);
- Sunlighting & Daylighting Report, prepared by Schatunowski Brooks (October 2007);
- EcoHomes 2005 - Preliminary Assessment, prepared by Scott Wilson (October 2007);
- BREEAM for Offices 2006 - Preliminary Assessment, prepared by Scott Wilson (October 2007);
- Energy Statement, prepared by Scott Wilson (October 2007); and,
- Ecological Appraisal, prepared by Waterman CPM (October 2007).



## **Structure of Statement**

1.4 The remainder of this Statement has been divided into three further sections:

- Section 2.0 – The Proposed Development
- Section 3.0 – Design; and,
- Section 4.0 – Access.



## 2.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 As previously indicated in Section 1 of this Design & Access Statement, the Proposed Development includes the redevelopment of the Site for mixed-use purposes comprising 22 residential units (2,896 sqm GEA), 1,289.2sqm (GEA) of Class B1/D1/D2 floorspace and 45.7sqm (GEA) of sub-station floorspace (Sui Generis).
- 2.2 Further details of the Proposed Development are set out in Chapter 4 of the Planning Statement prepared by Barton Willmore and set out on the architectural drawings prepared by this Practice.
- 2.3 From a design point of view, the Proposed Development has been tailored to fall within the footprint of the existing structures on the Site. The rationale behind this is threefold:
- i) the dictates of the site constraints;
  - ii) economy of structure, given the configuration of both existing below ground and above ground structure; and,
  - iii) the optimum configuration to achieve a well considered scale and massing in the urban context.
- 2.4 An important feature of the Proposed Development is the creation of a private mews running along the northern edge of the site and accessed through a gated archway in Whitfield Street. The mews provides the urban setting for seven three-storey private town houses, four private and nine social rented flats located in the Whitfield Street building and two shared ownership units at the western end of the mews.
- 2.5 The Proposed Development comprises four distinct components ;
- Retention of a small local substation at basement with ground floor access at the north east corner of the Site.



- A residential building along the Whitfield Street frontage at ground, first, second, third, fourth and set back penthouse floor accommodating nine affordable rented units, four private units and access to the below ground commercial space.
- Seven 4-bed, 3-storey town houses located off an access mews orientated towards Crabtree Fields and the playground with a 2-storey unit at the western end of the site providing two 1-bed shared ownership units.
- B1(a) / D1 / D2 use floorspace at Lower Ground and Basement Levels with the Ground Floor entrance at the southern end of the Whitfield Street frontage through the Whitfield Street building.





## **3.0 DESIGN**

3.1 This section of the Design & Access Statement will summarise the Proposed Development in relation to the following:

1. Site location
2. Urban Context
3. Constraints and opportunities presented by the Site
4. Design rationale
5. Visual appearance (including materials)
6. Landscape

### **Site Location**

3.2 Full details of the Site's location can be found in Chapter 2 of the Planning Statement and on drawings A07.58 C4 and C5 submitted in support of the Proposed Development. However, set out below is summary of this location.

3.3 The Site is located within Fitzrovia in the heart of Central London and to the west of Tottenham Court Road (A400).

3.4 The Site is rectangular in shape, measuring approximately 63.5m in length (from east to west) and approximately 24m in width (from north to south). It is extremely accessible from a variety of frequent modes of transport.

3.5 The Site is also located within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, which gained this status in July 1985, and is characterised by a mix of residential and commercial uses. The Site is located within the Central London business, commercial and entertainment core of this Conservation Area.



## Urban Context

- 3.6 The existing development on the Site was constructed in the late 1950's and comprises a double height basement, plus a part two-storey, part four-storey commercial building. The two-storey element of the building occupies the central and western parts of the Site. The exterior of the existing building has not been changed since its original construction.
- 3.7 To the side of this depot / sub-station building is an access road, leading to a service yard. Twenty car parking spaces are designated and marked out within this part of the Site.
- 3.8 The depot / substation part of the existing building (i.e. the two-storey element of the building), which originally housed 4 transformer chambers and 3 service bays, is a 4.8m high structure (floor-to-ceiling height). To the south of the depot / substation is another single-storey substation (approximately 693sqm and 3-4m floor-to-ceiling height). Four coolers were located on the roof of this single-storey substation.
- 3.9 The southern boundary of the Site comprises the flank wall and rear boundary walls of properties fronting Whitfield Street and Windmill Street and the western boundary walls and rear outbuildings of properties fronting Charlotte Street. The north boundary of the Site comprises a 2.6 metre high brick wall (topped by a 1.65 metre high fence and barbed wire) that also defines the southern boundary of Crabtree Fields (a public open space and playground).
- 3.10 Beyond Whitfield Street to the east is a terrace of four and five-storey commercial and five-storey residential buildings, a proportion of which is used by the London Transport Police. The fifth storey of some of these commercial buildings is set back from the main façade (see drawing no A07.58 C5 of the Architectural Drawings). Beyond Crabtree Fields to the north is a terrace of four-storey townhouses that front onto Colville Place and Crabtree Fields.
- 3.11 A Grade II listed building abuts the Site at no.26 Charlotte Street. Nos. 1 and 11 to 16 Colville Place are also statutory listed buildings.



### **Constraints and opportunities presented by the site**

- 3.12 The proximity of the Site within a conservation area and adjacent to listed buildings and a public open space and in close proximity to neighbouring residential properties presents significant design constraints for the Site.
- 3.13 The narrow rectangular form of the Site and its double height basement that needs to be retained from a viability point of view also create difficulties when designing for the future occupiers of the Site.

### **Design Opportunities Offered by the Application Site**

- 3.14 The following list outlines the site-related opportunities that have had a material bearing on the evolution of the Proposed Development:
- (i) Immediate proximity to excellent public transport by bus, tube and train;
  - (ii) Office / private medical and leisure demand in this location provides an opportunity relating to item (i);
  - (iii) The setting for the Site provided by neighbouring listed buildings, the context of a conservation area and public open space;
  - (iv) Exploit the potential to create improved ecological enhancements on the Site, which is devoid of such provisions; and,
  - (v) Exploit the potential to improve the character and appearance of the Site in a more contemporary manner.



## **Design Rational (or Objectives), Visual appearance (including materials) & Landscape**

3.15 Our design objectives can be summarised as follows: -

- 1) To provide a high quality, modern mixed-use development with a high standard of accommodation to satisfy occupiers needs.
- 2) To optimise the use of this 'previously-developed' site.
- 3) To produce a development of quality that fits into and enhances the character of buildings and surroundings in the local environment.
- 4) To improve the local surrounding amenities and context of the neighbouring park.
- 5) Improving the quality of the space by creating an access mews to the town houses incorporating soft and hard landscaping.
- 6) Introducing building frontages overlooking Crabtree Fields that will improve the security of the public space in accordance with Metropolitan Police guidelines.
- 7) Replacing the large expanse of flank brick wall with an elevation comprising a Portland stone base, panelled facing brickwork and windows giving a vertical emphasis more in keeping with the conservation area.
- 8) Introducing 'green roofs' to extend and improve the local ecology. A detailed Ecological Report has been submitted in support of this application.

3.16 There are also a number of principle design issues raised by the Council during past consultations that needed to be considered as part of the design rational, visual appearance and landscape proposals for the Proposed Development. These are summarises below under following topic headings:

- Urban design principles;
- Whitfield Street frontage;



- Crabtree Fields - Treatment of the northern boundary; and,
- Facing materials.

### **Urban Design Principles**

3.17 The Council's policy objectives in respect of the setting of new development are set out in the "7-15 Whitfield Street Planning Brief " No.33 dated 2002; the design policies contained in the Charlotte Street conservation Area Special Planning Guidelines; and, London Borough of Camden Revised Deposit Draft UDP (May 2004)

3.18 The Council considers the key issues as follows: -

- In view of its location and size, the Site is regarded as being of great urban design importance and therefore buildings are expected to be of the highest quality to reflect the site's prominence;
- That the proposed design should respect the character and appearance of the surrounding Charlotte Street Conservation Area and surrounding listed buildings;
- The acceptable height of any proposed development on the Site would depend on a detailed assessment of the quality of the design and its responsiveness and compatibility with the nearby buildings in the conservation area;
- The "7-15 Whitfield Street Planning Brief" states that *"There is potential for a building of up to five-storeys along the Whitfield Street frontage where there are no sensitive boundaries that need to be protected. The elevations along the northern, southern and western boundaries of the site will have to be treated more sensitively as these elevations have implications with regards to overlooking and rights to light issues. "....." However it is considered that any*





*building should be stepped down in height to the rear of the building exceeding no more than 3 storeys."*

- The frontage onto Whitfield Street should be prominent to reflect the importance in townscape terms of this element of the development; and,
- The corner of the proposed building (that which jointly fronts the Crabtree Fields and Whitfield Street) should form a suitable transition between the two abutting facades.

### **Whitfield Street Frontage**

3.19 The Council considers the key issues for Whitfield Street frontage to be as follows: -

- A building of a comparable height to the adjoining building, which is five-storeys. As there are no sensitive boundaries at the front, a set-back fifth floor would be acceptable; and,
- Verticality of the elevation was considered appropriate, in order to be sympathetic in streetscape terms to the adjoining buildings (Nos. 3-5 Whitfield Street.)

3.20 All these points have to be taken into account and it is considered that the proposed Whitfield Street elevation will be a significant improvement over that of the existing building. The new building will: -

- be of a more appropriate scale, in keeping with surrounding buildings in Whitfield Street;
- have an improved visual character with appropriate proportions in keeping with the surrounding conservation area;
- be of improved quality with the use of natural Portland stone base, panelled facing brickwork and grey finish window frames; and,
- have a consistent return elevation that acknowledges the public open space.



3.21 The overall design also incorporates the following considerations: -

- the EDF 24 hour access, which is required on the north-eastern corner of the site and has been reduced to a minimum, thereby allowing more natural daylight into the access mews below the Whitfield Street building, through an opening above the screened refuse bin store;
- a lightwell has been created set back from the pavement along Whitfield Street to provide natural daylight into the lower ground floor floorspace. This will allow a clear width of 1.5 metres between the lightwell and the existing bollards;
- the access mews is secured by metal gates and will allow servicing with adequate space for two 2-tonne service vehicles in tandem;
- soft and hard landscaping along the access mews including the sunken court, which allows natural daylight into the Lower Ground Floor, will enhance the quality of this part of the Site; and,
- as highlighted in Section 3 of this Statement, both the commercial and residential entrances are at pavement level, thereby affording wheelchair and ambulant disabled access. Suitable passenger lifts provide access to all floors.

### **Crabtree Fields Frontage**

3.22 The Council considers that the Crabtree Fields frontage is an important elevation as it fronts directly onto the public realm.

3.23 The Whitfield Street building is pre-dominantly five residential storeys in height in accordance with Camden's Planning Brief No.33 (Approved 2002), with an additional penthouse floor that is significantly set back from the main facades of the buildings.

3.24 Over 50% of the north elevation overlooks the wide pavement to Whitfield Street with the remainder abutting Crabtree Fields. Each return corner is fenestrated with balconies, providing the vertical articulation sought in the conservation area and will



also provide sufficient overlooking to support Secured by Design policies.

- 3.25 The town houses are approximately 8 metres away from the boundary wall to Crabtree Fields, along the alignment of the existing sub-station building. This residential element comprises seven town houses and one smaller courtyard building behind the existing high boundary walls at 26 & 28 Charlotte Street, which comprises two 1-bed shared ownership units.
- 3.26 The town houses are three storeys in height in line with Camden's Planning Brief No.33 (Approved 2002) and they reflect the rhythm and scale of the Georgian terraces in Colville Place, being 5.75 metres in width. The principal elevations comprise panelled facing brick, off-white render, grey finish window frames and timber boarding.
- 3.27 The overall appearance is designed to be elegantly, recessive and in conjunction with a 'green' roof, will enhance the ecological value of this Site.
- 3.28 Given the sympathetic scale of the Site, its setting in Crabtree Fields and the backdrop of mostly taller buildings to the south and west, it is considered that this Proposal will significantly enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation area, the public open space, and the setting of the listed buildings located within close proximity to the Site.

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### **Facing Materials**

- 3.29 The principal facing materials in this part of the conservation area are London stock brickwork, Portland stone and render.
- 3.30 Kirkman House, directly opposite the Site is a Portland stone clad building and the adjacent British Transport Police building is brick and stone building.
- 3.31 Other buildings, including the Colville Place terraces are a combination of brick and render.
- 3.32 This together with the Council's express recommendation to use natural facing materials has led to the choice of Portland stone as a base with panelled facing brick





as the principal facing material for the Whitfield Street component, supplemented by grey finish window frames.

- 3.33 The town houses, on their principal north facing elevation will be a combination of panelled facing bricks, off-white render and Iroko timber boarding. The rear of the town houses and the non-residential floorspace will be principally rendered and punctuated with timber boarded elements.
- 3.34 The flat roof of the residential element, being the 'fifth' elevation will be a 'green' roof including shrubs and nesting boxes for local birdlife and invertebrates.

#### **Other Design Matters**

- 3.35 The application site is unique insofar as it has extensive and deep basement areas covering virtually the whole of the site, and in some areas being of double basement depth.
- 3.36 This has presented a big challenge both in identifying a suitable use and in finding ways to introduce natural daylight into these areas without compromising the upper levels.
- 3.37 The identification of the B1/D1/D2 uses has helped to resolve this major design issue with the introduction of a lightwells along the northern and southern boundaries providing daylight to the relevant areas as well as contributing to the character of the spaces at ground floor level.
- 3.38 The Applicant is also conscious of the Planning Committees concerns when determining the previous planning applications, one of which is currently being considered at appeal (the 2005 Application, see the Planning Statement for further details). In this respect, attached as Appendix 1 to this statement is a brief summary of the differences between this current proposal and the 2005 Application.



## 4.0 Access

4.1 This Section of the Design & Access Statement will consider the Application Site's accessibility opportunities and constraints before considering the Proposed Development's credentials in terms of the following matters:

1. Accessibility;
2. Pedestrian circulation;
3. Vehicle and cycle provisions;
4. Service access for maintenance and refuse disposal; and.
5. Emergency Services Access.

### Access Opportunities & Constraints

4.2 The Site is well served by public transport (bus, London Underground and rail). Bicycles and service vehicles only can easily achieve access to the Site.

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4.3 Pedestrian access into the Proposed Development is currently easily achieved from the public footpath on Whitfield Street. The main entrance into the existing building will not full accord with wheelchair access standards.

#### 1. Accessibility

4.4 The Proposed Development has been designed to be in accordance with the *Approved Document M: Access to and Use of Buildings (ADM)*, published by The Stationery Office. *Lifetime Homes Standards*, as published by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation have also been taken into consideration during the design stage of the residential units.



4.5 The Proposed Development has borne in mind, and will be developed in accordance with, the access standards set out in set out in the following documents:

- *Designing for Accessibility*, published by CAE
- BS 8300:2001 *Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people - Code of practice*, published by the BSI
- *Sign Design Guide*, published by the Sign Design Society
- *Meeting Part M and Lifetime homes*, published by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- *Wheelchair housing design guide*, published by the National Wheelchair Housing Association Group and Home Housing Trust

## **2. Pedestrian Circulation**

4.6 It is considered that there are no pedestrian constraints that need to be addressed as part of the Proposed Development. It is the intention that pedestrians can gain access to the Proposed Development at the level entry provided from Whitfield Street. This access arrangement will ensure that the Proposed Development, which has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of 6 is fully accessible to the 17 bus routes being accessible within a 640m walk distance from the Site, as well as Goodge Street Station , Goodge Street, Tottenham Court Rd Station, Warren Street Station, Oxford Circus Station and Euston Square Station.

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### Access to Residential Units

4.7 All residential units located in the front part of the building are accessed by stairs and an eight person disabled standards lift. Separate lifts serve both private and affordable apartments. The mews houses and the studio flats at the rear of Proposed Development will all be accessed from the level entry point from Whitfield Street.

4.8 The core access to the private and intermediate apartments is via the secure gated entrance fronting Whitfield Street. Access to the affordable apartments is also from Whitfield Street via a separate secure gated entrance via double doors (min. width 1500mm).



- 4.9 Corridor widths to access lifts/stair cores to both private and affordable apartments are at a minimum of 1200mm.
- 4.10 At all the external residential entrances to the Proposed Development, a level landing of min.1500 x 1500mm will be provided at the entrance doors to the lift/stair cores in accordance with the *Wheelchair housing guide*.
- 4.11 Internal layouts of the residential apartments are indicative at this stage and will be refined during the detailed design process with the intention to comply with requirements as recommended in *The Accessible London*, supplementary planning guidance issued by the Mayor of London in April 2004. *Lifetime Homes Standards*, as published by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation have also been taken into consideration during the initial design stage of the residential units.

Access to B1/D1/D2 floorspace:

- 4.12 The main entrance to the B1/D1/D2 reception area of the Proposed Development is at street level, off Whitfield Street. The office floors are accessed from the entrance foyer by stairs and an eight person disabled standards lift.

**3. Access to Vehicle Parking & Cycle Parking Provision**

- 4.13 The Proposed Development will be Car Free. However, a commercial and residential service yard is proposed at the entrance to the residential mews and above the secondary substation chamber. This yard is capable of accommodating two transit van sized vehicles.
- 4.14 In terms of cycle parking provision for the residential units, adequate sheltered and secured cycle spaces are proposed, including visitor spaces within the commercial reception.

**4. Service Access for Maintenance and Refuse Disposal**

- 4.15 Service access into the Application Site is off Whitfield Street. Service and delivery vehicles progress into the Site via the gated entrance off Whitfield Street. All servicing and deliveries are undertaken at ground floor level.



## **5. Emergency Services and Emergency Maintenance Access**

- 4.16 Emergency service and maintenance vehicles will not be able gain direct access to the rear of the Application Site, but they will be able to gain access to the service yard area.



**Appendix 1**





This Proposal, in comparison to the determined June 2005, has been improved in design terms by way of: -

- A significantly set back the top floor level of the Whitfield Street block from the main facades;
- A reduced height of the residential element along Crabtree Fields from four to three-storeys;
- A reduced depth of the Whitfield Street element from 14.5 metres to 8.7 m metres along the northern boundary and to 11.3 metres beyond the corner balconies;
- An increase in the distance from the Crabtree Fields boundary to the residential element from 6.7 metres to approximately 8 metres;
- A reduction in the amount of overlooking of Crabtree Fields from the Whitfield Street block by 50%; and,
- A reduction in the amount of overlooking of Crabtree Fields and the playground from the rear element by reducing from four to three-storeys and introducing town houses in lieu of flats thereby introducing bedrooms at the second floor level.

