# PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

In respect of

## 47-49 BELSIZE ROAD, LONDON

Planning Application for

THE INSTALLATION OF NEW SHOPFRONT, INCLUDING ATM UNIT, AND LANDSCAPING ENHANCEMENT WORKS.

On behalf of

**TESCO STORES LTD** 

CgMs Ref: JM/BR/7087/SHO

Date: AUGUST 2007

CONTENTS		PAGE(S)
1.0	INTRODUCTION	3
2.0	CONTEXT TO APPLICATION SITE AND PLANNING HISTORY	5
3.0	RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY	7
4.0	PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS ISSUES	8
5.0	CONCLUSIONS	13

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the instructions of Tesco Stores Ltd who have an interest in the ground floor and basement of 47-49 Belsize Road, London, NW6 4RY. The ground floor of the unit has been used as a public house since the development of the site circa 1968. Due in part to complaints from locals due to anti-social behaviour this use has recently ceased. It has not been possible for the freeholder to find an alternative Class A4 use therefore alternative uses have been explored.
- 1.2 As the site falls adjacent to the Fairfax Road Neighbourhood Shopping Centre it is considered most suitable for retail use. Indeed, the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (as amended) 1995, Class A of Part 3 of Schedule 1, permits the change of use from Class A4 of the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 2005 to Class A1. Therefore, as the established use of the ground floor is Class A4 use, planning permission is not required fro the introduction of a retail use.
- 1.3 We are mindful that the existing ground floor unit has limited visual appeal and has poor linkages with the Neighbourhood Centre. Accordingly it is proposed to open up the ground floor frontage and enhance the courtyard in front of the building, which formally accommodated a beer garden. Planning consent is therefore sought for:
  - a. Installation of a new shopfront at ground floor level;
  - Enhancement works to the open area at the corner of Belsize Road and Hillgrave Road including ramped access, new boundary treatment and low level landscaping; and
  - c. New signage associated with the use of the site as a Tesco Express store.
- In conformity with the provisions of Circular 01/2006 and Section 327A of the 1990 Act this statement sets out the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development and demonstrates how access issues have

been dealt with, having regard to the relevant policies. It has followed the guidance contained within the CABE guidance booklet 'Design and Access Statements – How to write, read and use them'. This statement will also demonstrate the proposed works comply fully with relevant national, regional and local planning policies.

- Informal discussions were held at the pre-application stage with Bryan O'Donell in the Council's Planning Policy team who believed retail use would be consistent with the site's location adjacent to the well established Neighbourhood Centre. These comments were given whilst discussing a previous scheme that included the provision of new Class A1 floorspace at the site by extending the existing building. Although this scheme is no longer proposed, it is considered that Mr. O'Donnell's comments are appropriate as the development works are proposed to enable the site to be used for Class A1 purposes.
- The proposed works at the site also include the installation of plant equipment comprising a condenser unit and air conditioning equipment to be located within a fenced compound at ground floor level to the rear of the site. These works are considered under a separate application and Planning, Design and Access Statement (ref JM/BR/7087/PLA).

## 2.0 CONTEXT TO APPLICATION SITE AND PLANNING HISTORY

## Description of Application Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The application site is located on the corner of Belsize Road and Hillgrove Road. Built development comprises a four storey building with a vacant public house at ground floor and part basement levels and 16 residential units above. Car parking spaces are provided at basement level accessed off Hillgrove Road. Further car parking spaces are provided at the rear of the site at ground level.
- The area to the north and east of the application site is primarily residential in nature of a relatively high density comprising both purpose built flats and conversions of large houses. There is a small retail parade opposite the application site, on the corner of Fairfax Road and Fairhazel Gardens which comprises a mix of commercial units with Use Classes A1, A2 and A3 represented.
- 2.3 The application site is highly accessible by public transport, with South Hampstead Railway Station located immediately to the south and Swiss Cottage Underground Station approximately 300 metres to the east. There are also a number of bus routes running along Belsize Road.

## **Heritage Context**

The site is not listed nor does it fall within a Conservation Area therefore no heritage controls have an implication for the application proposals.

## **Planning History Context**

The Council's statutory register confirms planning permissions ref. 3326 and ref. 5734 both granted consent for the erection of a public house with a block of 16 self contained flats over and a basement garage, in February 1967 and 1968. The planning history following this relates to ventilation ducting in the 1970s and changes to the front elevation.

Our understanding is the building was erected in accordance with planning permission ref. 3226 and ref. 5734 and the public house use instigated at the majority of the ground floor level and part of the basement. The established use of this element of the building is therefore Class A4. As outlined in Section 1, the provisions of Class A of Part 3 of Schedule 1 of the General Permitted Development Order allow the change of use from Class A4 to Class A1.

## 3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan comprises the London Plan (2004) and the London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan (2006).
- Consideration has also been given to Supplementary Guidance produced by the London Borough of Camden. Other material considerations include Government Guidance, in particular PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005).
- 3.3 Having regard to the relevant planning policies we provide an appraisal of the proposed development works against the key planning, design and access issues in the following section.

## 4.0 PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS ISSUES

- This section addresses relevant planning, design and access issues in relation to the proposed works to enable the ground floor unit at the application site to be used as a Tesco Express store.
- 4.2 Having regard to the CABE guidance and relevant planning policies this Section examines the design principles and concepts that have been applied to particular aspects of the proposal. In undertaking this assessment we have had regard to adopted UDP Policy B1 which encourages standards high standards of design in all developments. This echoes PPS1 and London Plan guidance. The policy states that all proposals should be sensitive to, and compatible with the scale and character of their surroundings.

#### Use

- As explained in Section 1.0 the established planning use of the ground floor and basement floorspace is Use Class A4. The provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order allows the change of use from Class A4 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 2005 to Class A1.
- 4.3 The installation of a new shopfront and signage is entirely appropriate in this location, as the site is adjacent to the Fairfax Road Neighbourhood Centre and the elevation treatments will be solely associated with the commercial use, a characteristic that is prevalent in the adjoining retail frontage.
- 4.4 Enhancement works are also proposed which include a new ramped access off Belsize Road, boundary treatment and low level landscaping. This will considerably improve the visual appearance of the site, as it currently an eyesore due to littering problems. The introduction of ramped access to the retail unit is a necessity to provide good access for all users to the site and accords within policy SD1 of the UDP.

## **Amount of Development**

- As intimated above, there is no net gain in commercial floorspace proposed as part of the application. The existing ground floor and basement will be used as retail space.
- The works to the ground floor unit will comprise a new entrance, new high level fascia signs at the site and the introduction of an ATM unit on the Belsize Road frontage. It is also proposed to install a new 'totem' sign at the application site, at the western boundary of the site at the junction of Belsize Road and Hillgrove Road.
- 4.7 The proposed boundary works and new ramped access are to be of an amount and scale that is considered acceptable for the use of the application site as a convenience goods store and will have no overbearing impact on the existing aesthetic of the property or that of the surrounding area.

## Scale

- It is considered the scale of the proposed works are entirely appropriate at this location as they respect the character and proportions of the existing built form at the application site, in accordance with Policy B3 (A) of the LB Camden UDP and Section 43 'Shopfronts' of the Camden Planning Guidance 2006.
- 4.9 The proposed design of the new shopfront and external works are considered entirely appropriate for the proposed use of the site as a convenience goods retail store. The proposed works have been kept to a minimum whilst allowing the ground floor retail unit to efficiently and effectively trade as an Express store. The shopfront and signage will match the scale and layout of existing shopfronts in the area.
- 4.10 The Councils planning guidance of 2006 considers that the proportions of the fascias of shops should promote the prevailing pattern in the area and not obscure architectural details on the building to which they relate. It is considered the existing property has little architectural detailing to define the scale and

form of a new shopfront and therefore the proposed new ground floor fenestration is entirely appropriate at the site.

## Landscaping

- 4.11 The application site includes an area of hardstanding between the ground floor unit and the site's frontage with Belsize and Hillgrove Roads, which was formerly used as a beer garden. Aside from the lime trees fronting Hillgrave Road, this space is of poor quality and detracts from the character and appearance of the local area.
- As part of the development works it is proposed to provide enhanced soft and hard landscaping which ensures the trees on the Hillgrove Road frontage is retained. A new pedestrian ramp is proposed off Belsize Road to ensure the development is accessible to all. These works are entirely appropriate at the site as they will accord with Policy B3 (A) and (B) of the UDP by maintaining the form and scale of the existing built form, whilst enhancing the appearance and amenity of the locale. The introduction of additional landscaping will enhance biodiversity consistent with UDP Policy N5.

## Layout

- The proposed building works will provide access to the Express store off both Belsize Road and Hillgrove Road, and, whilst not affecting the layout of the building itself, will create new pedestrian flow routes around the ground floor commercial unit. The development works will allow people to move freely and uninhibited to and around the commercial unit and will therefore meet the requirements for access within developments as laid out in the Camden Planning guidance (2006) and Policy SD1 (C) of the UDP (Access for all).
- The proposed works to the ground floor will create a new active frontage to a site that is currently vacant. The enhanced natural surveillance will improve safety and security. The introduction of a retail use at the premises will reintroduce activity and pedestrian flow, thus enhancing vibrancy.

4.15 Alterations to the shopfront will not alter the existing entrance / exits of the first floor residential units nor affect access to / from or around the property.

## **Appearance**

- The key element of the proposed works which have implications for the appearance of the building are the works to the ground floor elevations. A new shopfront will be introduced comprising glazing along the majority of the Belsize Road frontage, and the introduction of new glazing on the Hillgrove Road elevation. The façade will include a new entrance to the unit located halfway along the shopfront fronting Belsize Road. Having regard to the bland bordered up façade of the existing building it is considered that the works to the ground floor elevation will have a significant and positive impact on the site and surrounding area.
- 4.17 In considering the design approach for the proposed development works, we were mindful the building had an absence of architectural features of merit. The introduction of contemporary materials, largely comprising of glass, is considered to enhance the appearance of the building and its contribution to the Belsize Road and Hillgrave Road streetscape. This approach is consistent with UDP Policy B3. The Councils Planning Guidance considers that materials used in the installation of shopfronts should be carefully considered, suggesting timber, stone or render in conservation areas or on listed buildings. The guidance within the document does however judge that more contemporary materials may be appropriate in some circumstances. It is considered that the materials chosen for the new shopfront at ground floor level of 47-49 Belsize Road reflect the architectural materials and detailing off the existing building and are therefore appropriate.
- The new shopfront will also include the installation of new signage which will take the form of new 'Tesco Express' signage along the Belsize Road façade, above the proposed glazing, and two small protruding signs on either end of the frontage. The amount and location of the proposed signage is 'typical' of a shop, will be of the same characteristics of existing retail frontages in the adjacent neighbourhood centre and the surrounding area and will not be excessive in size or luminance.

The signage is proposed to be located to sit between the cornice and shopfront itself on the facade of the property and will not affect any architectural detailing at the building. Although more than one fascia sign is proposed at the site, only one is to be located on any elevation of the property. Two ancillary protruding signs are proposed, however due to the length of the frontage of the site it is considered that there will not be visual cluttering, as the signs are to be located at either end of the Belsize Road elevation. It is therefore considered that the works are in accordance with guidance laid out in section 43 (signs) of the Camden Planning Guidance document of 2006.

## **Access**

- 4.20 A key benefit of the proposed development works is that it offers the ability to upgrade the main pedestrian access off Belsize Road. A new pedestrian ramp will be added here to deal with the change in the levels. This will ensure the ground floor commercial unit is accessible to all potential users.
- 4.21 The existing, established servicing arrangements will continue unchanged and no changes are proposed to vehicle access as a result of the planning application.
- As there is no increase in floorspace it is considered the works will not give rise to any additional car parking needs. The site is highly accessible by public transport being a short walk from Swiss Cottage Underground Station and South Hampstead Railway Station. This is supported by the fact the existing car parking area at the site is underutilised.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- Tesco propose to occupy the existing ground floor unit as an Express. The provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)

  Order allows a change of use of the floorspace from a public house (Class A4) to retail (Class A1).
- A package of largely cosmetic refurbishment works have been brought together including the opening up of the Belsize Road elevation to address the current state of the vacant unit, the enhancement of the area of hardstanding abutting the Belsize Road and Hillgrove Road frontages and associated upgrading of the Hillgrove Road elevation. The various works proposed to enable the use of the site as an Express store are considered appropriate in this location, and will enhance the amenity of the surrounding area.
- 5.3 The proposed works will facilitate the use of the site to be used as an Express store selling 'top up' convenience goods, providing an enhanced service to local residents and workers and will enhance the vitality and viability of the adjacent retail centre.
- The re-use of the existing vacant site will heave a positive effect on the character and appearance of the existing building at the application site and will not compromise the current access arrangements to the residential accommodation above the commercial unit. The proposed boundary works will also open up new entrance points that do not currently exist, enhancing access to/from and around the application site. Additional landscaping is proposed which will enhance the site's biodiversity.
- 5.5 It is considered that the proposed alterations to the existing shopfront, landscaping works and the installation of new signage at ground floor level of 47 49 Belsize Road, will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance to locale, are in keeping with both local and national policies and we therefore respectfully request that the council grant permission for the works.