

**Design and Access Statement
prepared on behalf of
St Mungo Community Housing Association Ltd
relating to
34 Argyle Street, London WC1H 8EN**

**Proposal: Conversion of property into five one-bed self-contained flats and
the erection of a mansard roof extension**

**Prepared on behalf of
St Mungo Community Housing Association Ltd
by
Howard J Green FRICS**

March 2007

34 Argyle Street, London WC1H 8EN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The attached Planning and Listed Building Consent applications are submitted following refusal of similar proposals in December 2005 (Camden Ref. Nos. 2005/4374/P and 2005/4562/L respectively).
- 1.2 Specialist advice has been obtained from Mr Karl Hulka of CgMs Ltd in respect of the refusal of listed building consent.
- 1.3 He has been in contact with the London Borough of Camden's Conservation Area Officer. He has produced the attached 'Statement of Significance' relating to this Grade II listed building which is to be read in conjunction with this Design and Access Statement.

2.0 SITE AND LOCATION DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The property is situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It lies on the west side of Argyle Street just to the south of St. Pancras Station.
- 2.2 It is comprised of accommodation on basement, ground and first and second floors with an attic room and is currently used as a hostel by St. Mungos as individual bed-sitting rooms with communal facilities with a part-time manager's office in the ground floor front room.
- 2.3 For a more detailed history of the building and development of the area please refer to Mr Hulka's Statement.

3.0 RECENT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 On 19th December 2005 planning permission was refused for the "change of use and works of conversion from a communal hostel/HMO (Sui Generis) to five one-bed self-contained flats (Use Class C3) and the erection of a mansard roof extension". (Ref. No. 2005/4374/P).

3.2 The reasons for refusal were:-

- “1. The proposed change of use would result in the loss of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) which would reduce the supply of low-cost accommodation within the private rented sector, detrimental to the choice and availability for those with few housing alternatives within the Borough; contrary to Policy HG17 (protection of Houses in Multiple Occupation) of the London Borough of Camden UDP 2000.**
- 2. The proposed roof extension would, by reason of its inappropriate design and form, appear incongruous in relation to the host building and out of character with the terrace of buildings it is part of, to the detriment of the special historic and architectural importance of the Grade II listed building and contrary to Policies EN1 (General Environmental Protection and Improvement), EN13 (Design of New Development), EN24 (Roof Alterations and Extensions) and EN38 (Preservation of Listed Buildings) of the London Borough of Camden UDP 2000”.**

3.3 However, with regard to Reason for Refusal 1 an Informative was attached stating:-

- “2. Subject to the resolution of all matters relating to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building, the conversion of the existing HMO may be considered acceptable providing any subsequent application is supported by the submission of a written undertaking to a Section 106 Legal Agreement confirming that the accommodation would be restricted in use for homeless people, that it would be managed by a registered social landlord with a maximum rent level to maintain its affordability”.**

3.4 The listed building consent application (Ref. No. 2005/4562/L) was refused for two reasons ie:-

- “1. The proposed roof extension would, by reason of its inappropriate design and form, appear incongruous in relation to the host building and out of character with the terrace of buildings it is part of, to the detriment of the spatial historic and architectural importance of the Grade II listed building and contrary to Policies EN1 (General Environmental Protection and Improvement), EN13 (Design of new development), EN24 (Roof Alterations and Extensions) and EN38 (Preservation of Listed Buildings) of the London Borough of Camden UDP 2000.
2. The proposed internal alterations including the breaching of the central spine wall, the removal of the staircase from ground to basement level and the removal of the chimney breast through the full height of the property would be detrimental to the special interest of the listed building by virtue of the loss of historic fabric, architectural detailing and historic plan form. It is therefore contrary to Policy EN38 (Preservation of Listed Buildings) of the London Borough of Camden UDP 2000.

3.5 With regard to Reason for Refusal 1 an informative was attached to the refusal notice stating:-

“A traditionally detailed true mansard roof extension may be considered acceptable. This should take the form of a lower slope (usually 60-90 degrees) that should rise from behind and not on top of the parapet wall by a substantial gutter. Modern casement windows on the front and rear elevations should be replaced with traditional 6 over 6 style sash windows”.

4.0 REVISED LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION

4.1 It was apparent that the issues relating to the listed building aspects should be addressed first before consideration could be given to the planning reasons for refusal.

- 4.2 The design of the proposed mansard roof extension has been revised in accordance with the informative and specialist advice has been taken from Mr Karl Hulka of CgMs Ltd in respect of Reason for Refusal 2 of the listed building consent.
- 4.3 The revised internal layouts, prepared by the applicant's Consulting Surveyors, Consul, have taken into account Mr Hulka's advice which is contained in Section 6.0 of his 'Statement of Significance' and which will not be repeated here. In conclusion, with regard to the listed building consent aspects of this project:-
- The mansard roof has been amended to accord with the authority's informative.
 - The internal layouts have been amended in consultation with Camden Council's Conservation Area Officers.
 - There will be a distinct improvement to the external appearance of this listed building by the replacement of the existing unsympathetic windows on the front elevation with traditional sliding sash windows.

5.0 REVISED PLANNING APPLICATION

- 5.1 From the informative attached to the refusal of planning permission it was apparent that if St. Mungos are prepared to enter into a suitably worded Section 106 Agreement that planning permission would be forthcoming for this proposal.
- 5.2 St. Mungos are one of the leading charities providing accommodation for homeless people in London. Every year they help more than 5,000 homeless and vulnerable people with housing, employment, training and health facilities.
- 5.3 The accommodation they provide varies; ranging from 'walk-in' hostels for homeless persons, hostels for homeless persons referred to them by other agencies and their own 'Outreach Teams', different forms of 'move-on' accommodation such as presently existing at 34 Argyle Street where there are 'semi-supervised' bed-sitting rooms and then onto small self-contained units as now proposed.

- 5.4 It was always their intention that the self-contained flats would be used as 'move-on' accommodation for homeless persons. They are, therefore, prepared to enter into a Section 106 Agreement along the terms indicated in the Informative.

6.0 ACCESSIBILITY

- 6.1 St. Mungos' operations are spread widely across the Greater London area but their main concentration of hostels and other forms of accommodation are within the London Borough of Camden.
- 6.2 The premises are well placed in terms of accessibility being close to King's Cross and all necessary facilities. Inherently, and by the nature of their circumstances, the residents do not own cars and hence this is a good position for this form of accommodation.
- 6.3 Since this is a listed building there are severe constraints in terms of accessibility within the building itself. Indeed, it would not be possible to upgrade the premises to full accessibility standards without seriously damaging the historic fabric of the building.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 These revised proposals, which have taken into account Mr Karl Hulka's 'Statement of Significance', have overcome the previous reasons for refusal attaching to the listed building consent.
- 7.2 The proposal will provide five excellent small units of accommodation which will help St. Mungos to continue their invaluable work for the homeless persons of London.
- 7.3 St. Mungos are prepared to enter into a Section 106 Agreement covering the matters raised by the London Borough of Camden. They have instructed Mr Tom Manderson of Devonshires Solicitors. Tel. No. 020-7628-7576.
- 7.4 In conclusion, it is considered that listed building consent and planning permission should now be forthcoming for these proposals.

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