

## **DESIGN STATEMENT**

### **TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT AT 67 FORTRESS ROAD, LONDON NW5 1AG**

## **PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE:**

**Your Ref: 2007/1444/INVALID**

**2005/0085/P**

**Attention : Victoria Lewis**

## **DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

The development proposed is through retention of the existing shop façade to sensitively bring new living space into the popular Kentish Town area. The mix of units is particularly focused on the single person household as with the rent of a one bed flat being circa £250 per week there is a desperate need for single person units around the £150-180 per week price point without creating a bed-sit culture.

All units fall within the UDP guidelines in terms of square meterage and to satisfy LB Camden's preference for a family unit a 78.12 sqm unit has been provided. The

Other units are as follows

The development benefits access to all upper units via the common parts staircase of the adjoining right hand side property (69 Fortress Road) which was converted to 4 flats in 2004 under planning permission reference PEX0200619/P (4<sup>th</sup> March 2003). It is this shared access that enables the development to be simple in design terms and the proposed postal addresses follow the point of access, ie, if the access to a unit is from the main common parts staircase at 69 Fortress Road then the units add to the existing postal numbering sequence at 69 Fortress Road. The units created are therefore:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>No. Persons</u>	<u>Suggested Postal Address</u>
Family Unit	78.12 sqm	6 persons (3 double beds)	Maisonette/Flat 1, 67 Fortress Road
Retail	56.71sqm	retail	Shop at 67 Fortress Road
Studio Unit	30.03sqm	1 person	Flat 5, 69 Fortress Road
Studio Unit	31.07sqm	1 person	Flat 6, 69 Fortress Road
Studio Unit	36.55sqm	1 person	Flat 7, 69 Fortress Road
Family Unit	74.16sqm	4 person	Flat 8, 69 Fortress Road

It is Flats 5, 6, 7, and 8 that are in fact accessed from the shared common parts staircase of 69 Fortress Road.

Externally the changes to the front façade comprise the installation of 3 new velux windows only there being no need to change the current access arrangements which will serve the ground and lower ground floor units only. Similarly 3 new velux windows are proposed to the rear elevation main roof. It is the installation of the velux windows that will enable the internal volume of the property to be maximized and an additional floor created.

To the rear elevation it is proposed that the back addition will be underpinned and then raised one storey. This will visually be infill development to the rear profile of the terrace which comprises numbers 63-73 Fortress Road (odd numbers) as 73, 71, 69 and 65 already have their back additions raised. The materials used will be mock stock bricks to be sensitive to the colour and shade of the

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existing brickwork, if required by building control a ring beam will be incorporated before raising the back addition.

A new build extension single storey is proposed to the lower ground floor at the rear. This will mirror that permitted in both the planning permission granted at 69 Fortress Road and at 65 Fortress Road (the two adjoining properties) and is as granted under planning applications reference PEX0200619/P (4<sup>th</sup> March 2003) and PEX9201029/P (12<sup>th</sup> November 1992) it having been established as a principle from discussions with the duty planner that the preference of LB Camden is for infill extensions rather than extensions that build behind the existing rear building line. The proposed rear extension will not result in any loss of light to the adjoining property 65 Fortress Road as there is already a mirror of the proposed extension on their land which currently is causing loss of light to 67 Fortress Road, the infill extension will in fact assist in bringing more natural light into the new family unit.

Materials for this lower ground floor extension are proposed to be flat roof (built up felt/asphalt), brickwork mock stock bricks to be sensitive to the colour and shade of existing brickwork. Rainwater goods to be black PVC-U sensitive to the traditionally painted black cast iron that the building would have been built with.

#### **Design & Interpretation of Policy H1 – New Housing**

The proposal takes into account the guidance in paragraph 2.2 of Section 2 Housing of the Camden UDP Revised Deposit Draft 2004 in so far as the scheme provides 3 x studio/1 person units to assist in providing relatively lower priced accommodation for market entry in a borough where high prices are a major barrier to residency in Camden.

In accordance with paragraph 2.6 the application brings back into use the upper parts of 67 Fortress Road which have lain disused since the decline and eventual sale of Frederick Phelps Violins business in 2003. What remains of business is relocating to the West End in a much smaller premises.

Policy H1 is surely echoed as the proposal not only brings an opportunity to consider a change of use but also through raising the back addition and bringing the attic level to beneficial use for the first time to "secure the fullest possible residential use of vacant and under-used sites and buildings".

In the spirit of paragraph 2.7 of Chapter 2 the scheme brings a whole new floor into beneficial use, ie, the attic via internal re-arrangement (lowering) of the suspended timber floors to second and attic levels which has so far in conversion only been brought into being in the adjoining property at 69 Fortress Road. The benefit to the borough being the street scene and building mass remains exactly the same (save for 3 velux windows) with new accommodation brought into use within the existing shell.

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#### **LIFETIME HOMES ISSUES**

##### **Design & Interpretation of Policy H7 – lifetime homes & wheelchair housing**

The designers approach with regards to accessibility to the development has been to improve the building within the constraints of it being a conversion that

- a) does not lend itself to the provision of a lift, and
- b) being on a busy trunk road is likely to house busy working professionals.

Even so the it is with policy H7 in mind that a 6 person family unit has been

- a) placed over the ground and lower ground floors,
- b) provided with a washroom and bedrooms at ground floor level and
- c) been provided with level street access (therefore meeting paragraph 1.8 of supplementary planning guidance), and
- d) the existing larger than standard circulation hallways have been retained.

Consultations with building regulations have led to a design change of the staircase within the Flat 8 and the internal staircase serving the two attic bedrooms to be to ambulance staircase dimensions. Otherwise a meeting with Mr Gilham of Camden Building Control otherwise confirmed Part M Building Regulations compliance. (therefore meeting paragraph 1.10 of supplementary planning guidance)

Other consultations have included consideration of The Mayor of London's Accessible London: Achieving an Inclusive Environment (Supplementary Planning Guidance April 2004) in addition to guidance given in LB Camden's UDP.

However, we are of the opinion that the Council needs to recognize that the proposal is not new built but a conversion and that paragraph 2.50 recognises that it is not always possible within the constraints of a conversion to construct units to mobility standards.

It is offered to the Council that in negotiation of the application should the Council be willing to consider the loss of the retail/office element then a full mobility accessessible unit could be provided at ground floor level. There are precedents to support the whole building being converted to residential use ie, numbers. 63 Fortress Road and no. 59 Fortress Road where this is the case. This would necessitate the loss of a family unit but still be in compliance with paragraph 2.62 which does in certain cases support conversion schemes to wholly smaller units, we feel the mixed use nature of the area and the trunk road it sits upon being reasons why such a compromise may be felt to be worthwhile. Furthermore the property has not previously provided any family accommodation in any event. At this stage discussions with the duty planner proved inconclusive as to whether the Council would support excavation of the forecourt belonging to 67 Fortress Road to facilitate a wholly ground floor unit.

We submit as further information to assist the Council in consideration that it is also a fact that since conversion of no. 69 Fortress Road in 2003 the commercial element has stood vacant (ie, for some 3¼



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years now so arguably if the council should prefer the application could be modified to provide a full mobility unit at ground floor. Such a proposal may require railings and excavation of the forecourt belonging to No. 67 Fortress Road to deal with issues of light to the lower ground floor level, but are not ruled out by the applicant.

**Design & Interpretation Policy H8 - Mix of units**

In choosing the mix of units the scheme has been considered in the context of the wider development of 67 and 69 Fortress Road as whilst the redevelopment of 69 Fortress Road was completed in 2004 both buildings are now in the same freehold ownership and many units will share the same access staircase. Policy H8 requires an appropriate mix of unit sizes. Being that the property is in on a main trunk road, not in a purely residential area the need for lower priced smaller units has been mixed with a 6 person family and a 4 person unit also. Within the context of the wider development achieved via the 2004 completion of 69 Fortress Road and the proposal at 67 Fortress Road overall the following mix is achieved.

<u>69 Fortress Road</u>	<u>67 Fortress Road</u>
3 Bed Ground & Lower Ground Floor Maisonette Shop/Office	3 Bed Ground & Lower Ground Floor Maisonette Shop/Office
2 Bed First Floor Flat	1 Person Studio Flat First Floor
1 Bed second/third floor maisonette	1 Person Studio Flat First Floor
2 Bed second/third floor maisonette	1 Person Studio Second First Floor
	2 Bed second/third floor maisonette

The proposal brings about the possibility of high quality 1 person units for those who are a single person household but do either can afford to or do not wish to live in a bedsit or house in multiple occupation. The scheme therefore accords with paragraph 2.60.

Safe off-street refuse storage as required in paragraph 2.63 could be provided should the council wish to consider the use of the private forecourt belonging to 67 Fortress Road for the use of a rubbish compound to house wheely bins. We suspect that for safety from vandalism such a proposal would require railings to enclose bins. At the time of making the application it is believed that the Council does not favour storage of rubbish on Fortress Road itself.