

Proposed refurbishment and extension

91 – 94 Saffron Hill, London EC1N 8PT

For

AXA REIM

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

EXISTING BUILDING

The existing building is divided into two distinct parts – 91-94 Saffron Hill and 1-4 Hatton Place. The Saffron Hill building was designed and occupied on ground floor to third floor by a diamond merchant, while the Hatton Place side of the building and the basement was occupied by recording studios and a media group. There are two entrances currently to the building, one on each side leading to a common lobby including the lift. The second floor of the building was only partly occupied as the other half was a terrace garden. However, the elevation fronting onto Hatton Place, where the roof garden is located at the second floor also includes a blank elevation to the full second floor height.

PLANNING NEGOTIATIONS AND PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

The Tooley & Foster Partnership, Architects, wrote to the South Area Team on the 8th September 2006 with a brief description of the proposals and preliminary sketch plans for comment. We were contacted by Stuart Minty from the South Area Team and organised a Planning Meeting which was arranged for the 7th February 2007. The meeting helpfully covered all of the major issues and Mr Minty recommended that a Pre-Application was made to allow the interests of all parties within the Planning Department to make comment. Mr Minty also pointed out Camden's policy with regard to increased office space, which has been addressed by the Design Team and described below.

A subsequent formal response was received from Mr Minty, Senior Planning Officer, by email 12 April 2007 which confirmed that 'the design of the roof extension is considered acceptable, given its limited visibility from any vantage point within Hatton Place, and would not be harmful to the amenities of any neighbouring residential property by virtue of overlooking, loss of sun/daylight etc'. Additionally 'there would be no objection to the loss of D1/D2 studio accommodation on the lower levels of the building and its replacement with office floorspace, whilst the uplift in office floorspace of around 300sqm is likely to be, on-balance, considered acceptable'.

Although the UDP policy SD3 (Mixed Use) states that any increase in floorspace of over 200sqm should allocate 50% of the floorspace for housing purposes, as the floorspace is to be used in connection with the existing user, the location of residential on the upper floors is deemed to be inappropriate for physical reasons i.e. the requirement for a separate core and noise implications to and from the office use below.

The Senior Planning Officer further noted that 'the uplift in floorspace that has potential to be converted to premises suitable for Jewellery purposes is considered to meet the regeneration objectives associated with the Hatton Garden area and overall could be treated as an exception to policy SD3'.

THE PROPOSALS

The crucial element of the Design has been the building's unification. This has been achieved by rationalising the circulation, improving the lift, creating two large open floors on the first and second floors, enlarging the third floor and providing a partly glazed over-sailing roof over both third and second floors. At lower ground floor level improved office space has been created on the Hatton Place side by removing the floor slabs within the garages to provide light down to that level. The lateral wall between this area and the lower area of the lower ground floor has also been punctured to introduce more light.

The existing lift shaft is to be extended down to serve the lowest level of the lower ground floor and the shaft throughout the building has been increased in size to accommodate a fully accessible lift. A platform lift will be provided from the lower area of the lower ground floor to the Hatton Place level to provide full accessibility.

The area of second floor created from the existing roof/terrace utilises the existing external wall and introduces new windows within the blank openings. The third floor is extended to include the existing walkway and an additional area to the next line of structure. The over-sailing roof, referred to earlier, spans between the upper plant room area and the top of the existing wall to Hatton Place. It is therefore not visible from street level and does not affect day-lighting on adjacent properties.

GROSS INTERNAL AREAS

FLOOR	EXISTING	PROPOSED	PLUS/MINUS
LOWER GROUND	498	498	0
GROUND	468	374	(-114)*
FIRST	464	464	0
SECOND	239	421	+182
THIRD	204	325	+121
TOTAL	1873 sqm	2082 sqm	+303 sqm

The loss of 114m² at ground floor level as a result of the removal of the garage floor slabs and formation of open void space to the lower ground floor level has been discounted on the advice of the Planning Authority.

SUSTAINABILITY

The existing services within the building are to be replaced, improved or retained in order to meet current regulations. The Design team's policy is to retain as much as is possible within a building that was last modernised over 10 years ago. All new and refurbished works within the building will meet current Building Regulation Standard and wherever possible improve upon that. A preliminary BREAM assessment will be made to establish the level of improvement. This will be carried out in conjunction with the services engineers who are already initiating areas of improvement.

The partly glazed new over-sailing roof is designed with North facing glazing, to reduce the problems of solar gain and to help reduce the air conditioning loads.

The specification for highly insulated replacement windows, curtain walling and the new roofs will meet or exceed the requirements under the Building Regulations and will minimise heat loss. The heating and cooling systems will again be specified as high performance/efficiency. Heating and cooling control systems will use zoning, thermostatic controls, valves and timers to maximise efficiency.

Low energy light fittings will be specified throughout the building linked to photoelectric cells or infra red detectors to again maximise the building efficiency.

VEHICULAR/PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The proposed works will remove the current on-site parking provision (eight spaces).

Secure on site cycle storage will be provided from Hatton Place and the building will have a shower for use by cyclists on arrival.

ACCESSIBILITY

The main entrance to the refurbished building will be from Saffron Hill which provides level access to the lift core. The new 8 person lift is designed for full disability access and provides access to all floors, save the upper level of the lower ground floor which is served by a separate platform lift. Circulation throughout the building has been improved, wherever possible, to allow for those in wheelchairs. The lower ground, ground, first and third floors include a toilet for the disabled. A communal shower facility at ground floor level will also be designed to meet the requirements of Approved Document M for disabled users.

PROPOSED PROGRAMME

The client and their advisors have produced a preliminary programme to meet the client's desire to have a completed building by July 2008. To achieve this date and following the Pre-Application advice received recently the client has instructed the Design Team to produce detailed design and working drawings during the period of the Planning Application.

CONCLUSIONS

A very thorough investigation into the refurbishment opportunities for 91-94 Saffron Hill and 1-4 Hatton Place has been carried out by the Design Team and has convinced the client and their advisers that the proposals are viable. However, the investment verses the return is finely tuned and will rely on careful cost-planning during detailed design. We believe that the current proposals are ideally suited to the client's requirements and hope that the Planning Authority will support the proposal and recommend it, in due course, for permission.

We look forward to receiving the council's comments and recommendations in due course but meanwhile if you require and further information please do not hesitate to contact us.