

# **DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**4-12 DORRINGTON STREET  
&  
17-29 LEATHER LANE**

**LONDON EC1**

**APRIL 2007**

## **Introduction**

This document sets out the design and access strategy to create an inclusive development to meet the needs of all groups of people accessing the site, including disabled people, the young, old and those with push chairs. Given the nature of the development for a change of use of the premises, no significant alterations are proposed externally or internally and therefore the design and access arrangements have been considered within the remits of the existing arrangements.

Council policy SD1(c) and B1(b) advocates access for all, and expects to see the highest standards of access and inclusion. Buildings should be designed to improve access and use for all as well as being safe and accessible to all. Policy C1(a) – promotes new community use in suitable locations and stipulates that they should be easily accessible to the community that they serve. Under current policy E2, the Council would not normally grant permission for development, which involves the loss of a business use, unless it is considered that there is no potential for continued business use. The building has been vacant for 18 months, is of a domestic scale and has not facility for servicing. As an exception to the general approach, the Council will seek a change to either residential or community use. The development is compatible with Council policy in that it is providing a community use and will bring an otherwise vacant building back into beneficial use. The site is easily accessible, has good links to the public transport network, and also has the benefit of an existing inclusive design.

## **Site description**

The site comprises a basement plus four-storey building. The basement and ground floors are currently vacant and have been for the last 18 months. The upper floors of the building are used for residential accommodation.

The land-use characteristic of the area is of a mixed-use nature, comprising residential, commercial, and retail uses. The built form is predominantly four storey heights although there are buildings of five and six storeys within the immediate vicinity of the site. To the north lies a part 3, part 4 storey residential development, to the south directly opposite the site lies a piece of public open space and a 4 storey residential development. There is also a 6 storey office building located directly opposite the public open space to the south. To the west lies a 4 storey church building, and to the east 4 storey retail buildings.

## **Development proposal**

The proposed development is for a change of use of the basement from offices to a community leisure facility, which will be exercise based. It is envisaged that

the proposal would result in bringing an otherwise vacant space back into beneficial use, and provide a leisure service, where there currently is not one, to the local residents, the local workforce as well as those visiting the area, thus benefiting the community as a whole, and creating a sustainable place.

The use is proposed to operate between 7.00am and 8.00pm. Approximately 15 people can be accommodated in the building at any given time, and therefore it is considered that the level of pedestrians visiting the site will not have any detrimental effect upon residential/general amenity by way of creating a noise nuisance.

### **Design and Access**

Given the nature of the development for a change of use, no alterations are proposed on the external façade of the building; therefore the existing aesthetic quality will not be compromised in terms of how the building will relate to the existing vernacular. Access into the site will be off Dorrington Street via a single level access. The opening is flush and will not be recessed, and also the residential developments located adjacent to and opposite the site could provide informal surveillance. It is considered that these measures will provide a safe and convenient access point for all. Once inside the building patrons will be able to access the basement via an existing lift and staircase. The existing escape route into the ground floor courtyard located to the west will be used in the event of an emergency and can be accessed via an existing staircase and lift.

The site has very good permeability and legibility and can be reached through a series of roads within the vicinity of the site namely, Brooke Street, Leather Lane, Dorrington Street, Baldwin Gardens and Leigh Place. **(See attached plan showing potential pedestrian movement).**

In terms of the internal layout, a majority of the space to which the development proposals relate will also remain in situ. Minor alteration to the internal layout will include a series of partitions on the north side to create small rooms/offices. The space measures 498.97m<sup>2</sup> and provides for the accommodation needed. The basement, which is where the use is proposed to be operated, will be fairly open in nature comprising two studios, which will be in keeping with the ethos of access and inclusivity as the space will be flexible making it easily adaptable. It will also provide good circulation for all types of people, as they will be able to move through the spaces easily with minimum interruption/obstruction. The existing door widths at basement and ground floor level access are of a sufficient width to accommodate all types of people including those with wheelchairs and pushchairs. The main access door measures 1m in width, and those in the basement to leading to the operational space measures between 1.2 m, which are DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant. The above measures will create a pedestrian friendly environment, and provide access for all.

### **Landscaping and open space**

The area is very built up and the site is bounded by existing developments, to the north, west and east, therefore there is no opportunity to provide private open space. There is a piece of public open space situated directly opposite the site to the south (with trees and benches), which would complement the proposed use as patrons will be able to use the space if so desired.

### **Vehicular and transport links**

Buildings on all sides surround the development site. Given the constraints of the site no car parking is proposed, however, there is an element of on-street controlled parking. The site has access to very good public transport links. The site is in close proximity to an underground train station (Chancery Lane), which is approximately a 4-minute walk to the site. There is also four bus routes that serve the site along Holborn High, where the approximate walking distance to the site is 3 to 4 minutes. There are also two bus routes that serve the site along Clerkenwell Road, with a walking distance of approximately 3-4 minutes. These will form an important role in terms of the mix of access modes, which is considered, will cater for all types of people travelling to and from the site. The transport links will also encourage potential users to walk or cycle to the site, which is in line with Council policy to reduce the use of the private car, and in turn reducing pollution levels.