CENTRE HEIGHTS, FINCHLEY ROAD
CAMDEN

PLANNING REPORT

05-303

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Introduction

The following planning statement has been prepared in association with the planning application for Centre Heights, 137 Finchley Road, Camden and contains the following individual reports:

- Planning Report:

This report outlines and examines key issues such as: Internal layout, Outlook and Orientation, Open Space Provision, Waste Management, Sustainability and Energy.

- Design & Access Statement:

This report outlines a number of features of the proposal including: Use, Amount, Layout, Scale, Landscaping, Appearance & Design Rationale and Access.

- Daylight & Sunlight Report:

This report examines the existing and proposed daylight and sunlight levels to the existing and neighbouring properties to the proposed site.

- Eco-Homes Pre-Assessment:

A pre-assessment has been undertaken regarding the proposed residential development in relation to various issues including: Energy, Transport, Pollution and Water.

PLANNING REPORT

Centre Heights, Finchley Road, Camden
Planning Statement – Revision B
05-303

Existing Conditions and Site Context

1.1 The existing site is approximately 0.08 ha in size and enjoys one vehicular access onto Belsize Road. The site offers an excellent opportunity to create a contemporary residential scheme within the heart of the Finchley Road area.

1.2 Under the provisions of the UDP the site lies just outside the shopping and service centre for Swiss Cottage and Finchley Road. Therefore the proposal is well placed in terms of convenient access to services and facilities for prospective residents. The proposed apartment development would also be well served by public transport.

Internal Layout

1.3 The units within the development are self-contained with their own kitchen, bathroom, WC, storage area and bedrooms. Most apartments also enjoy the use of an en suite bathroom. Each apartment has a secure entrance located off a shared corridor. The living area and the kitchen are open plan in nature allowing natural light from the south east to flood this habitable area. Bedrooms are separate from these areas and generally located to the north west of the building.

1.4 In general, the design solution has used vertical stacking of the apartments to ensure the reduction of potential noise disturbance between apartment units. Party walls and floors will be adequately sound proofed in line with Part E1 of Building Regulations Approved Document E (Resistance to the Passage of Sound 2003 edition).

1.5 The headroom of each unit is approximately 2.4m and internal floor space range from between 45 sq m - 54 sq m for the 1 bed apartments, 63sq m – 81 sq m for the 2 bed apartments and 73 sq m - 81 sq m for the 3 bed apartments. Internal storage for each compartment comprises a general storage space and a linen store. The main bedroom size in the development

ranges from 12 sq m to 17.1 sq m, the second bedroom size ranges from 7.9 sq m to 15.1 sq m with the third bedroom ranging from 5.8 sq m – 6.6 sq m.

1.6 In terms of storage for bicycles, 12 communal cycle spaces have been located within the basement parking area. This provides one cycle parking space per apartment as requested by Camden Borough Council. Cycle parking will be discussed in a later section.

1.7 The design solution has also taken account of the need to ensure compliance with Policy H7 Lifetime Homes and all units have been designed to this standard. The scheme illustrates that 10% (2 apartments) of the proposal has been designed specifically to be wheelchair accessible. These apartments are found on the ground floor illustrating turning ellipses and large living /kitchen areas and bathrooms (see drawing 05-303-10 Rev B).

1.8 An eco-homes pre-assessment in support of this proposal has been undertaken and is found in Appendix B.

Open Space Provision

1.9 In accordance with policy HG 13 of the UDP, the proposal has incorporated private amenity space within the scheme. The design solution has included open space for all residents to enjoy.

1.10 Each apartment has its own private open space located off the open plan living room/ kitchen area. This is either in the form of garden, balcony or roof deck. A communal garden area has also been provided. Access to this space has been provided in the form of a wheelchair accessible ramp from midway between the ground and upper basement floor. This is accessed through a secured gateway in order to protect the personal safety of residents who wish to use the area.

Car parking and Cycle parking provision

1.11 The proposal is a car-free scheme. The existing site comprises a multi-storey car park with 31 no. existing car park spaces. These spaces are currently used by employees of local businesses in the area, in particular the Centre Heights building. An integral objective of the proposal for our client was to retain some of these former spaces as contract spaces. The scheme will provide 21 spaces for contract car parking. The car parking facilities have been situated underneath the main structure of the development. These spaces are presently managed by and will continue to be managed and controlled by a management company, BTW Shiells. At present, only 21 spaces are being used on a regular basis with the parking spaces that are being lost surplus to requirements (see letter from BTW Shiells and Transport Assessment). Therefore, it is demonstrated that no overspill or harmful displacement of parking onto the street will occur.

1.12 These spaces will be linked to named users who are employees within the Centre Heights building, under the same ownership as the applicant and other businesses in the neighbourhood.

1.13 The design of the car park as a secure unit located in the basement of the residential development will mean that intended users only occupy the car park. The area surrounding the site and access from the Belsize Road has distinct double yellow lines, actively discouraging additional on-street car parking.

1.14 A ramp to the car parking area has been provided. This is at a gradient of 1:11.5, in line with current guidance within the UDP. In terms of entry control to the car park area, this will be gained by a remote control system, which will activate a roller shutter at the bottom of the ramp to open.

1.15 Communal cycle spaces have been indicated on the plans. These are located on the upper basement floor. Bicycle stands will be provided in order to allow

for this parking. Working to the very good eco-homes standard will ensure that storage is provided for 12 cycles, one per apartment.

Waste Management

1.16 A range of materials generated from an average household can be recycled. These include paper, cans, glass and textiles. Under the very good eco-homes standard the intention is to provide internal recycling storage capacity at the minimum of thirty litres in a dedicated position in each apartment. This is further supplemented by external storage capacity for recyclable materials that will be collected.

1.17 An internal refuse chute has been incorporated within the design of the scheme. This chute is intended to allow the residents to dispose of any household waste, which is not recyclable. The chute will deposit this material into large bins on the ground floor ready for collection. The chute can be accessed at each floor, except for the penthouse apartment. It is located in a separate area located off the main stairwell in the scheme. This allows convenient access to all residents.

1.18 The bins, which we have proposed, are 1100 litre wheelie bins, which can store between 12-15 black refuse sacks per bin. Using the calculation for residential properties, there are three floors in total within the development, which are between 3000-5000 sq ft (278-464 sqm). This therefore requires the provision of 3 m^3 of space for non-recyclable household waste. Three of these bins will allow for the storage of up to 45 black refuse sacks in the upper basement floor.

Examples of Eurobins for collection of non-recyclable waste

1.19 The vehicular access to the site is via the Belsize Road. The waste collection vehicle for non-recyclable waste can drive to the site without reversing and comfortably turn within the service yard to the east of the site. The management company of the building are to ensure the Eurobins are at ground floor level in order for the collection vehicle to empty the bins.

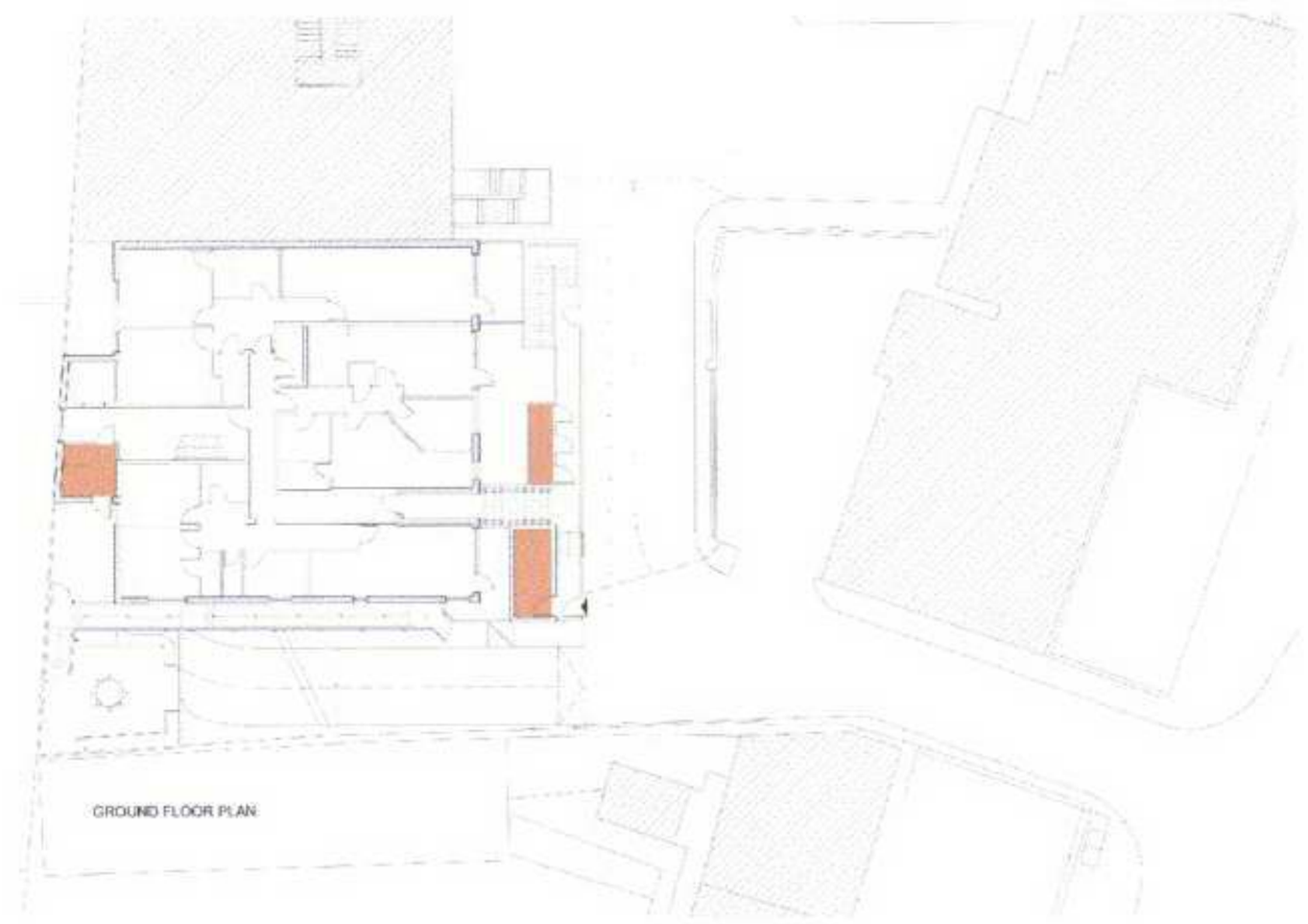
1.20 Residents can also avail of the composting facility, which is located within the communal garden on the ground floor level. This area is accessed via a secure gateway located on the vehicle ramp to the underground car park. Each resident will have a key in order to access this communal garden. Garden waste regenerated within the private garden areas of the units can be brought to the ground floor shared garden and disposed of. The resultant compost can then be used within the communal garden and within the open space areas located for each apartment.

Examples of Compost Bins

1.21 Water butts will also be provided to enable more efficient measures regarding water consumption. This water can be employed for suitable uses such as watering plants etc.

1.22 A storage area of 7.5 sq m has been provided for the storage of bulky materials on the ground floor. The materials, which can be stored in this area, include furniture, washing machines and refrigerators. This is located close to one of the main entrances to the site, allowing ease of access at collection time. These items can be temporarily stored here ready for collection. An additional storage area for recyclable material has also been provided to the front of the proposal and again ensures an ease of access and collection.

1.23 An information pack describing the management of waste within the apartment block will be provided for the residents of each property. This will explain the use of the recycling facilities within the apartments and the internal refuse chute and the materials that can be lodged within it. This information will also explain what kind of material can be put in the composting facility located in the communal garden, as well as the temporary storage facility for bulky items from the home.



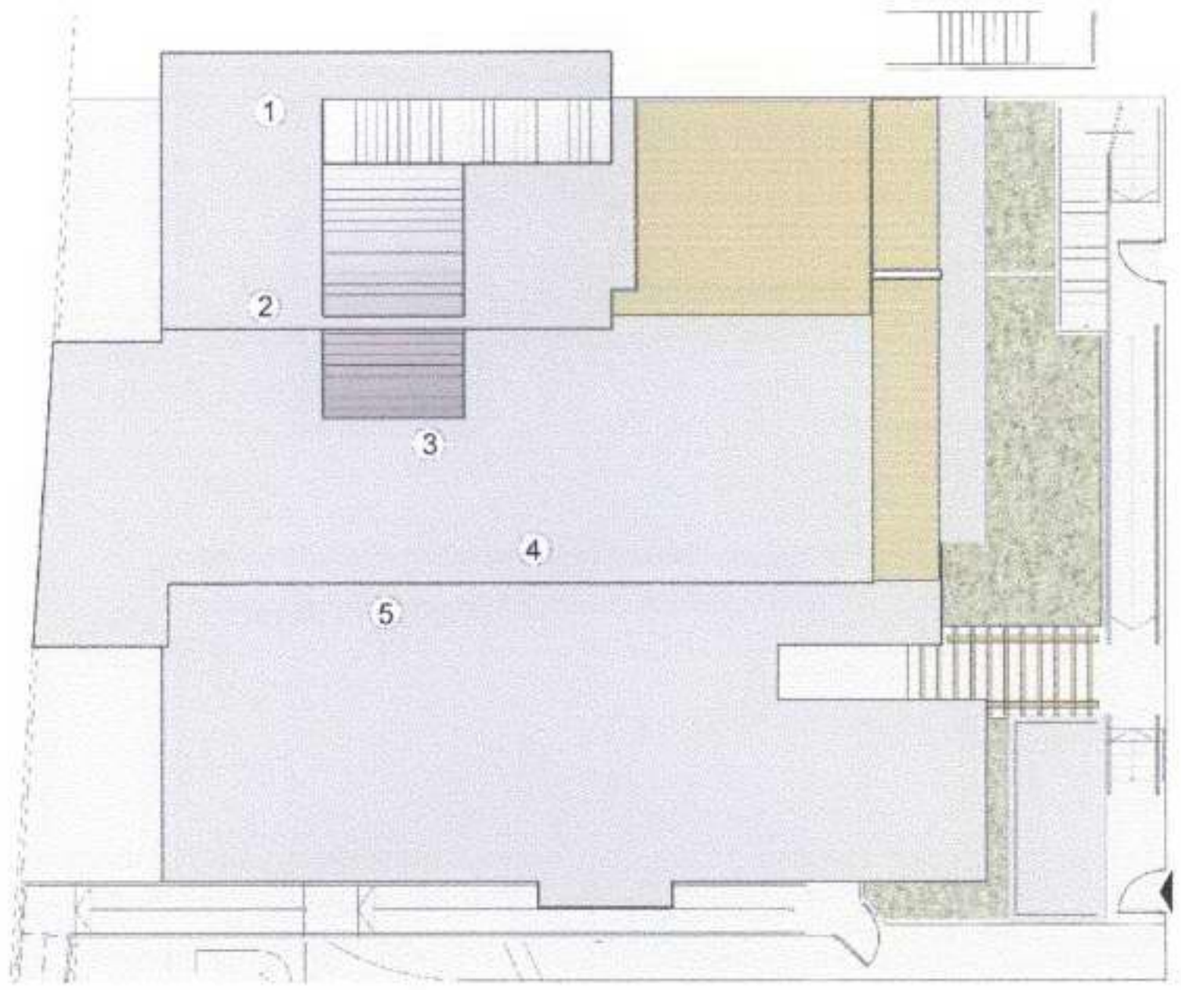
Locations of bins stores

Energy Assessment

1.24 Having undertaken a review of the guidance in 'Integrating renewable energy into new developments: Toolkit for planners, developers, and consultants' it would appear that due to the location and nature of the site (close proximity of tall buildings) the development would not readily lend itself to many of the options available, such as, wind turbines, photovoltaics, biomass heating, or ground source heating

1.25 It is possible to accommodate solar thermal systems within the proposal. It is anticipated that these could be accommodated on the flat roof areas. Five individual apartments, unit nos 7, 9, 10-12 would each have their own unit in tandem with a water storage tank within these units. The locations of the systems are identified below.

1.26 With specific regard to our proposal, the total energy usage for the building will be 90,291 kWh per year. Therefore, in order to meet the 10% renewable energy target 9,029 kWh per year will need to be provided for the proposal. As stated above, the solar thermal systems for this proposal will be located at five individual positions on the proposed building. In order to achieve the 10% threshold figure, each individual solar thermal system must achieve a figure of 1805 kWh per year (1805 x 5 = 9029). To achieve this figure, 2 no. vacuum tube cell systems, each with an area of 1.6 m^2, will be required in the 5 locations below. The maximum output per tube cell system is 875 kWh/m^2 per annum. When this output figure is multiplied with the area figure of 3.2 m^2 (1.6m^2 x 2 tube cell systems), the output for the each of the five locations is 2800 kWh, well above the 1805 kWh required. Using the same calculation method, the minimum output for each location is 1680 kWh (minimum output for each tube cell system is 525kWh). In percentage terms, the minimum figure of 1680 kWh per location will provide the proposal with 9.3% renewable energy, which is slightly below the 10% threshold required. The maximum figure will provide the proposal with 15.5% of renewable energy well over the 10% required.



Locations of solar thermal systems

1.27 In addition to this, the proposal focuses on minimising energy requirements and using energy and resources in the most efficient way. The eco-homes pre-assessment submitted with the application addresses a number of these points. As part of the proposal we will:

- Provide for dedicated energy efficient lighting throughout the scheme;
- Providing ultra low NOx boilers
- Providing information to all residents on energy efficient appliances, the composting facility, and recycling
- Providing information on location of local facilities to encourage walking, and information on local bus routes to encourage use of public transport as well as providing cycle storage within the scheme
- Enhancing the insulation within the proposed development
- Providing retractable over bath lines to allow for clothes drying along with humidistat – controlled extract fans
- Providing 6/4 litre dual flush WC, low flow WHB taps and bath maximum 150 litre to overflow

- Providing water butts within the site to enable efficient usage of water for certain purposes such as watering plants
- Providing double sockets and 2 telephone points within the second bedroom to facilitate home working and thereby reducing the need to travel
- Sourcing of materials for construction will be carried out in a responsible manner to ensure any timber comes from sustainable resources etc

Outlook and Orientation

1.28 The apartments are orientated north west to south east and incorporate a building line setback to each of these elevations. To the south east elevation, the set back from the site boundary is almost 5 metres, to provide space between this main façade and the building opposite at Swiss Terrace. In terms of privacy for adjacent properties a separation distance of 15 metres has been created at the closest point between opposing windows at this location as the Swiss Terrace building is not a residential one. Elsewhere, within 18 metres of residential buildings and space, high level windows are used. A setback to the rear of the property will also ensure the preservation of privacy for the surrounding properties. The extensive use of glass and shading devices achieves good lighting conditions to the main living spaces and some bedrooms.

1.29 A daylight and sunlight report has also been undertaken. This report has been formulated to determine the existing and proposed levels of daylight and sunlight existing properties enjoy and will continue to enjoy in relation to this development proposal. In short, the report illustrates that the existing buildings will continue to experience a Vertical Sky Component well above the 27% threshold as outlined within the BRE publication. The lowest proposed VSC for any window in the report is 32%. The sunlight report also illustrates Annual Probable Sunlight (APS) hours to all examined windows over and above the BRE threshold. The daylight and sunlight report is found in Appendix A. In accordance with these findings the building plate of the proposal reduces in size from ground to fifth floor to negate any adverse

impact. The ground, first and second floor have 3 units each, the third floor having 2 units and the penthouse apartment is the only fourth floor unit. This penthouse is designed as a solitary timber unit on top of the rendered building and has been designed and located to cause minimal impact upon the surrounding area. Through the consideration of the findings of the report, the development adheres with Policy SD6 (b) of the Replacement UDP.

Sustainability

1.30 In general planning terms, this proposal provides a sustainable solution for the re-use of this site through the provision of housing on previously developed land. We have designed this scheme within the parameters of the Replacement UDP and prevailing planning policy for the area. This has in effect ensured that the proposal will exhibit positive environmental and social implications as detailed in other parts of this statement.

1.31 The proposal has been designed to ensure an efficient use of land within this highly accessible location. It is located in close proximity to local facilities and can therefore allow for journeys on foot. It is also located close to a public transport interchange. Facilities will be made available within the apartments to allow for home working.

1.32 It has done this while ensuring the amenity of proposed residents is safeguarded through design. Amenity space is provided within the scheme in the form of communal open space and balconies.

1.33 Given the measures proposed the scheme will ensure the conservation of energy and resources through the energy efficiency measures proposed and detailed in paragraphs 1.35 to 1.37 as well as the recycling measures incorporated into the scheme.

Community Safety

1.34 Under the Camden Unitary Development Plan, Policy EN 20, *'The Council will encourage a sensitive design approach to the built environment which aims at reducing the opportunities for threatening and criminal behaviour and which promotes personal safety and security of the property'.* As a result we have included features within the proposal, which will address concerns regarding the above.

1.35 The design, layout and measures incorporated into the scheme strive to fulfil the Councils objectives for planning for community safety by:

- Encouraging greater surveillance of the public realm;
- Increasing the pedestrian movement in and around the site;
- Design for personal safety;
- Use lighting to encourage a safer environment;
- Educate residents about personal safety in the apartment building; and
- Encourage the use of surface materials, which discourage graffiti.

1.36 The design solution for the site provides a healthy balance between glazed and solid areas, allowing for a good level of privacy for the individual tenant and also a good level of surveillance to the area surrounding the development. Living rooms have been located to the front of the building in order to encourage informal surveillance and in turn reduce criminal opportunities. The site is set back from the main Belsize Road. This access will remain to be shared with those vehicles visiting the rear of the Centre Heights building to the immediate north east of the site. The combined vehicular and pedestrian movement will provide greater informal surveillance of the public realm by promoting this as an active frontage.

1.37 The site itself enjoys an elevated position in terms of the land to the south west and north west providing informal surveillance from the apartments and the communal garden. To the north west elevation, private garden areas have been provided allowing the building line to be set back. Although these areas are located off the bedrooms of units 1 and 2, direct access from these

rooms to the space outside is not possible. This is to provide security to the ground floor apartments. There is an obvious change in the land levels to the north west in comparison with the site itself but this will discourage the incidence of opportunistic crime via access from the rear of the building through these open space areas.

1.38 In general terms, the site is highly visible from a number of surrounding properties; Hickes House, Centre Heights and Swiss Terrace and Campden House. The location and juxtaposition of the site to the surrounding buildings has created a valuable natural surveillance, which already exists.

1.39 In order to create a safe and secure area in the late evening and night, it is intended to provide energy efficient lighting within the communal garden using bollard lighting and recessed wall lighting along the ramp to the garden. The lighting within the garden itself can be set on a timer to turn on and will be controlled and monitored by the management company of the building. This will ensure the safety of the residents if using the garden area late in the evening.

1.40 In information pack in regard to security within the apartments and in the main building will be provided for residents. This will educate residents in terms of lobby security, the lift, car park, door and window security, and energy efficiency measures and appliances. A list of contact numbers of the building management company, local police service and fire service will also be provided. This information will ensure that residents are aware of what measures within the building are there to help protect their personal safety.

Summary

1.41 This statement has outlined a number of elements for consideration in regard to the proposal for this site. The statement has addressed such issues, which include access to the site, consideration for community safety, measures incorporated for the management of waste, the designing out of crime, provision of open space and energy usage within the site. We believe that