DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Design & Access Statement

Use

2.1 The application site is located within the Borough of Camden and is currently occupied by a multi-storey car park to the rear of the Centre Heights building, Finchley Road. The site is accessed by an existing vehicular access from the Belsize Road.

2.2 It is proposed to demolish this car park and erect 12 residential units comprising the following; 3 x three-bedroom apartments, 7 x two-bedroom apartments and 2 x one-bedroom apartments. Each unit will have access to private open space in the form of either a terrace, balcony or roof deck.

2.3 The proposal has been designed to be a car-free development. A communal garden is located on the ground floor of the development. This provides a secure area for residents to enjoy together with planting and compost making facilities. A refuse store has also been provided for bulky items, which is located on the ground floor, close to the access to the site through a gated entrance.

2.4 This residential proposal will fulfil the overarching objectives of the Replacement Camden Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and prevailing planning policy in a number of ways including;

- Actively contributing to the existing housing stock;
- Re-use previously developed land within the urban area;
- Exhibit good design;
- Design for the needs of the disabled;
- Provision of a range of unit sizes;
- Encourage sustainable waste management practices;
- Provide a level of open space for all residents; and
- Actively design out crime through a number of design and technological measures;

Amount

2.5 The proposal is a residential building over 5 floors (ground to fourth) incorporating 12 no. residential units comprising 3 x three-bedroom apartments, 7 x two-bedroom apartments and 2 x one-bedroom apartments.

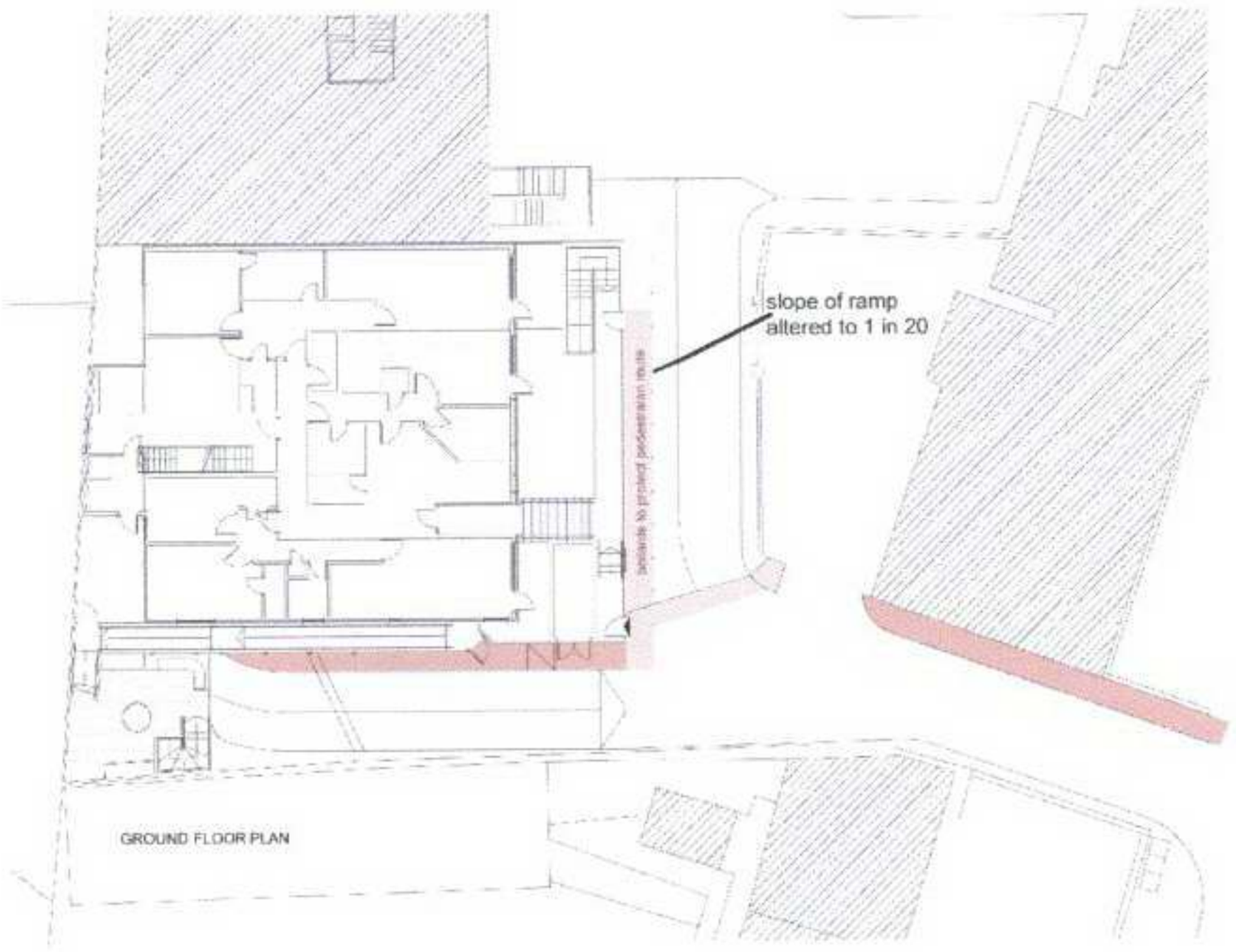
2.6 In terms of residential density, this site is located in an area noted as the 'rest of the borough' under the provisions of the Replacement UDP. From the calculation for areas within the 'rest of the borough', the guidance would state that habitable rooms are 'all separate living rooms and bedrooms, plus kitchens with a floor area of 13 sq m or more. This proposal has 36 habitable rooms and the site area is approximately 0.08 ha. This calculation results in a residential density of around 427. Although this would fall outside the recommended range, it is characteristic of the higher densities within the adjacent area. Under Policy SD4 this proposal would therefore fall under an exception where the need for compatibility with the existing character of the area and the nature of adjoining development would dictate a higher density. This site is also in close proximity to public open space at Primrose Hill but more importantly, located adjacent to the Major Centre of Finchley Road/Swiss Cottage.

2.7 Although this scheme leans towards the higher density bracket, this does not result in lower standards of space in terms of the internal layout within each unit. Each apartment, whether 1, 2 or 3 bedroom, has a generous combined open plan living room and kitchen area. Located off this is an area of private space allocated to each apartment. Each individual apartment has a unique sense of place.

Layout

2.8 The proposal is located on the current site of the multi-storey car park. Existing and proposed site layout plans have been provided for this application as well as axonometric views and photomontages. The general layout of the units have been designed so that living rooms and balconies will face in a southerly direction to take advantage of sunlight that will flood the primary living and amenity areas of the apartments.

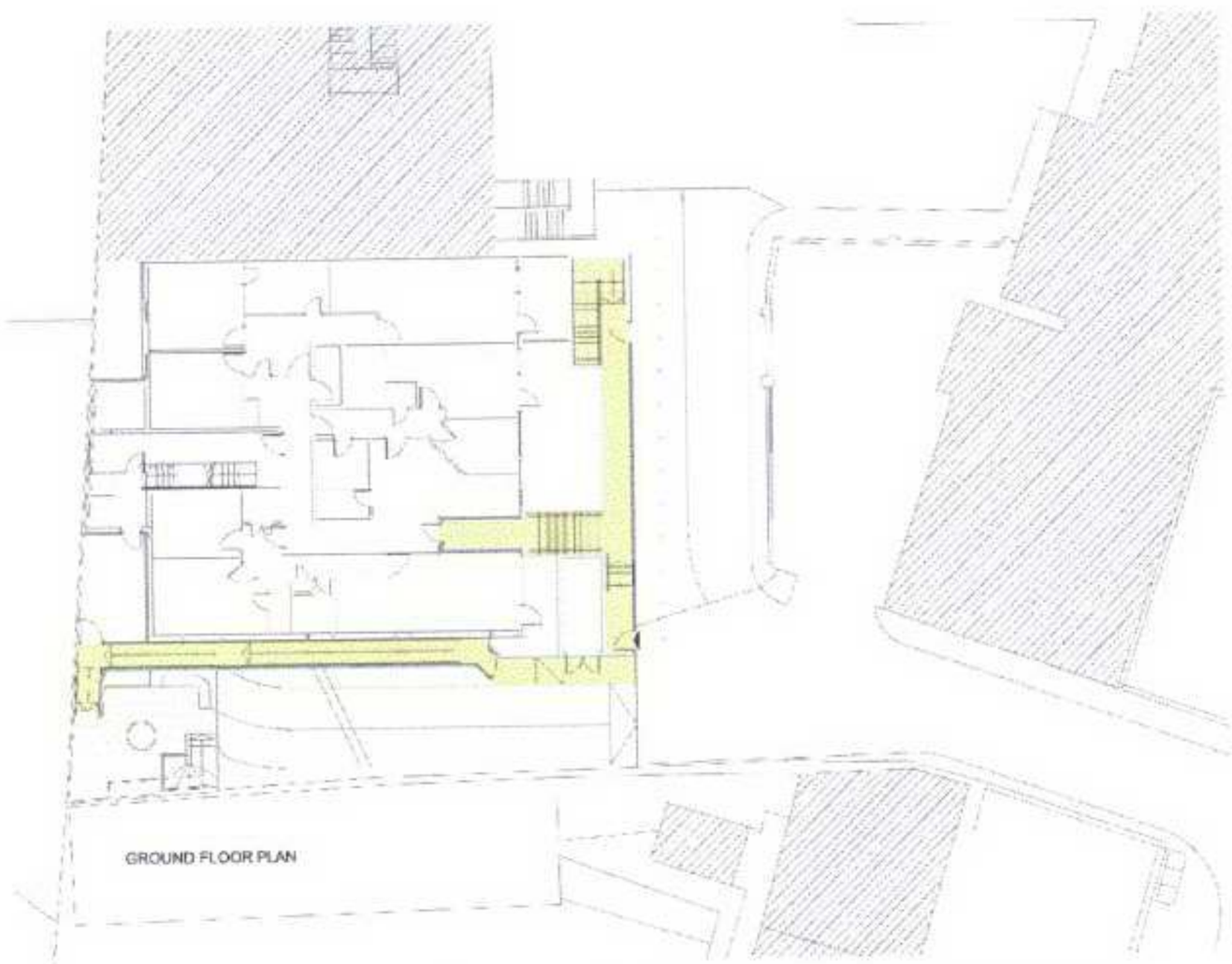
2.9 The design for the site has incorporated a 1.2 m wide pedestrian footpath along the access to the site from the Belsize Road. Bollards at 1.2m from the front wall of the building create a flush pedestrian route, which connects the two entrance gates. A ramped approach to the outside of the building has been provided. As the topography of the site is sloping in nature in a north east to south west fashion, a ramp has been incorporated in order to allow access to the grounds of the building. This ramp is a gradient of 1:20 in line with the requirements of Part M of the building regulations.



Pedestrian Route

2.10 Two gates mark the entrances into the site itself on the external wall outside the main body of the building. Bollards have been placed along the frontage of this area to allow for the safe passage of pedestrians in and around this area. The design has also incorporated a ramp, designed to Part M specification, to facilitate disabled access to the building through one of the gated areas. This area to the frontage of the building will also be well illuminated using recessed wall lighting in order to ensure that visitors and residents can see the building clearly in the evening and at night.

2.11 An intercom system will be provided at both these gated entrances in order to facilitate conversation between the householder and any visitors to the site. From the periphery of the site a person in a wheelchair can travel from outside the grounds of the site so as to arrive at the entrance to the building. The entrance gates are designed to Part M. The entrance ramp and steps are designed to Part M and local planning requirements.

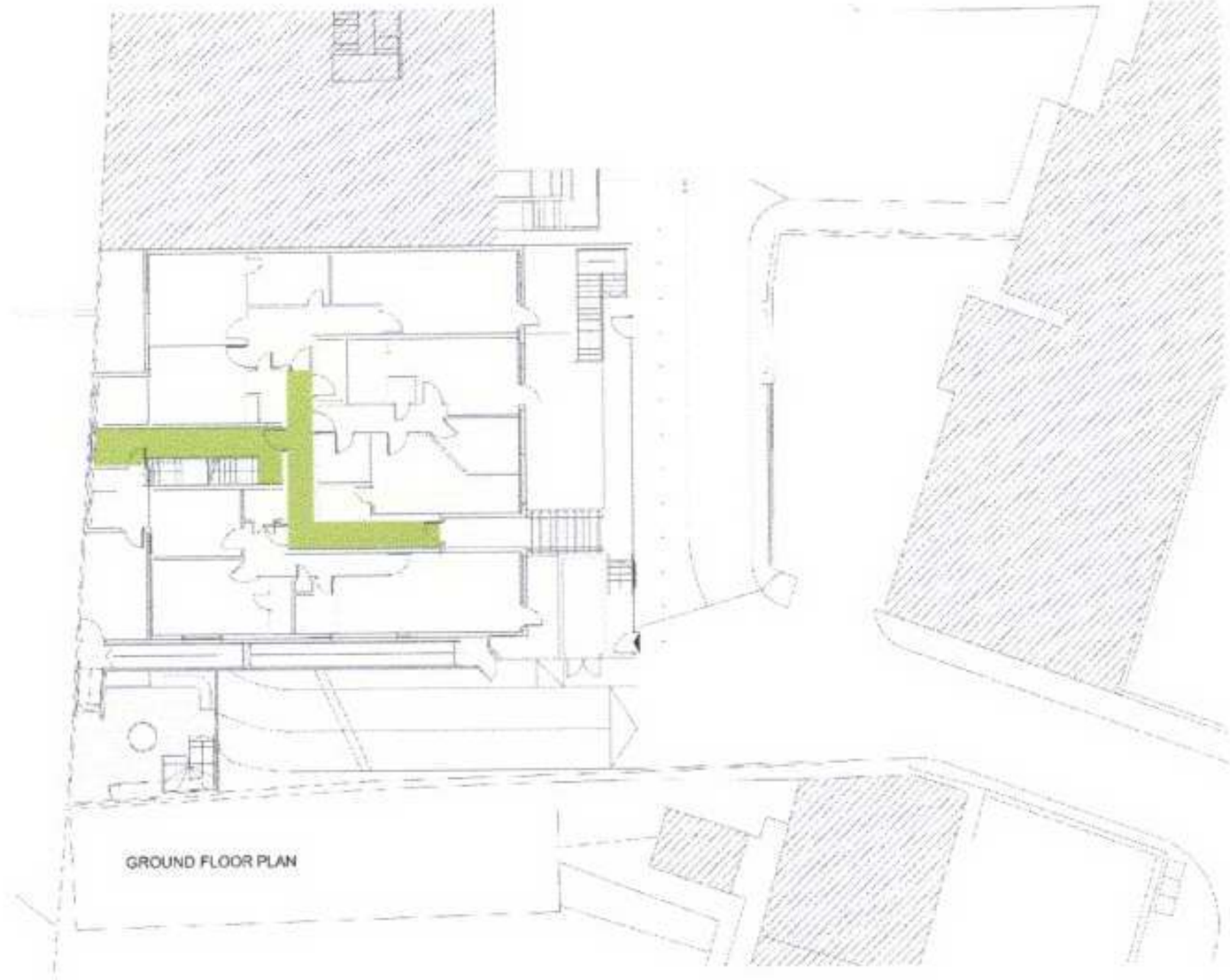


Entrance walkways to building and Communal Garden

2.12 In terms of entering the building itself the first main entrance is located to the north east elevation of the development on the main public frontage. This entrance leads to the first three apartments, which are located off a shared corridor. Access to other floors is provided via a lift or open staircase. The entrance door is glazed with appropriate signage and manifestation as recommended in BS 8300.2001. The main entrance door into the building has been designed in accordance with Part M Building Regulations at a door opening width of 1 metre.

2.13 In terms of circulation within the entrance storey of the building, we have designed the corridors to be 1.2 m wide. The colour scheme will be chosen to highlight walls, floors, doors and ironmongery. The guidance used will be from design guidance produced by ICI Paints and the Royal National Institute for the Blind. The staircase is

designed to the design recommendations of Part M, with appropriate colour and luminance contrast being provided to the handrail and nosings. Lighting will meet the recommendations of the Charters institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) Code for Lighting.

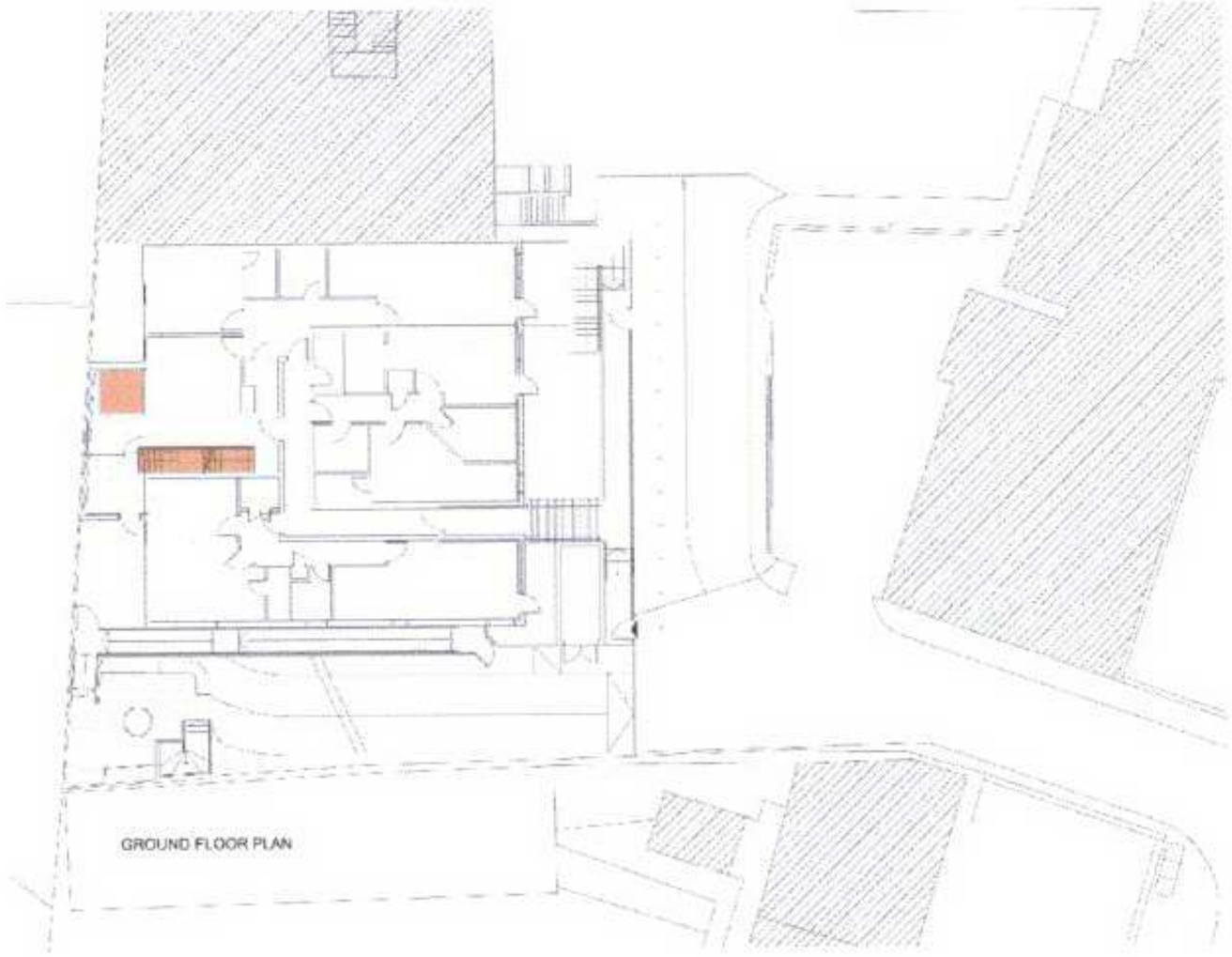


Internal corridors

2.14 As discussed earlier, a vehicular ramp leads to the basement car park area. A pedestrian footway has been provided along one side of the access. A roller shutter is to be installed at the entrance to the ramp and a remote control, which can be operated from the vehicle, will be used to open this shutter from outside of the building. It will also be possible to operate the shutter from inside the ramp via a keypad. By providing a roller shutter at the entrance we are ensuring that only particular persons can gain access to the car park and to inside the apartment block.

2.15 The car park itself will be artificially lit using energy efficient sensor lighting in accordance with the relevant parts of BS 5489:1992. Lighting will be consistent, very bright and not allow areas of shadow to be created, especially between the cars. This method of lighting will provide adequate illumination when someone is in the car

park area but also reduce the total amount of energy used while being sensor operated. Between the two floors of the car park it is intended to provide six slim line pillars. This will ensure that the area is open to view as much as possible and does not create secluded areas within the car park.



Internal lift and stairwell

2.16 The proposal has incorporated a lift, which will travel between the lower basement floor and the third floor. It is intended to install a lift, which is suitable for an unaccompanied wheelchair user. The proposed lift shaft is capable of accommodating a 1100mm x 1400mm lift and a 1500mm x 1500mm clear landing entrance is provided on all applicable floors. Measures will also be included for people with sensory impairments in terms of the type of lift installed.

2.17 Another entrance to the building has been incorporated via a stairwell leading from the ground floor outside the building to the upper and lower basement levels. This entrance is also secure from the outside and can only be accessed via a gateway at the ground floor level. A door secures the access at the bottom of the stairwell. It is intended to light this stairwell using recessed wall lighting, which will be energy efficient and sensor-controlled.

Scale

2.18 The scale of the building has been an important consideration in the design process as the site is presently surrounded by large buildings of varying uses. It is considered that a residential building over five floors is suitable for this development site. The building scale and shape tapers towards the top floors with a single unit found to the fourth floor so as to prevent any adverse impacts on the existing buildings. The resulting scale of the building has ensured that the occupiers of neighbouring properties will still experience appropriate levels of amenity, daylight and sunlight for example whilst negating any potential issues of overlooking.

Landscaping

2.19 A communal garden area has been created within the design solution in order to provide a pleasant planted area for residents by designing for safety in this semi-landscaped area. This has been provided on the ground floor level of the building. This secure communal space enjoys an elevated position in terms of land to the south west and north east. The open space area can be accessed via a secure gateway from the footpath along the ramp.

2.20 The entrance to the building will be laid with smooth paving slabs rather than loose laid materials such as gravel and shingle in order to ensure the safe approach for the disabled in wheelchairs or ambulant disabled persons. Each unit will have access to private open space in the form of either a terrace, balcony or roof deck.

Appearance & Design Rationale

2.21 The design solution for the site evolved through the consideration of a number of different elements. This has included the brief from our client; an analysis of the strengths and opportunities of the site; the results of the daylight and sunlight report; and consideration of the Replacement Camden Unitary Development Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance and other relevant prevailing planning policy. The

design solution for the site has also taken account of a number of our central objectives.

These objectives are as follows;

- Provide high quality residential development within the Finchley Road area of Camden;
- A contemporary architectural approach to city residential space, which utilises previously developed land while contributing to the housing stock in Camden;
- A design solution, which maximises the use of the site without impinging on the residential amenity of surrounding properties.
- Retention of contract car parking for the operational needs of the businesses in the neighbourhood.

2.22 The overall façade composition of the building is harmonious and vibrant using a pale render to reflect light into the surrounding spaces. The use of timber screens and infill panels on the elevations accentuate the regular fenestration pattern and introduces a new layer to the scheme. While the window openings on the south east façade are large to take advantage of the natural light that will flood these living spaces, well-finished handrails, panels and screens re-introduce a sense of proportion to this elevation. Window openings to the other elevation are placed just so in order to address potential issues with overlooking from adjacent properties. In come cases high-level windows have been used for bedroom areas.

2.23 A timber and glass pergola signals the main pedestrian entrance to the building located on the ground floor of the south east façade. Individual external finishes and materials are illustrated on the 'Shaded Elevation' drawings (nos 05-303-17B, 05-303-18A).

Access

2.24 The issue of access for disabled persons has been considered by the design team in the formulation of a residential design solution for the site in line with other objectives for the scheme. We recognise that an important marker of the quality of

our scheme is the degree to which is it inclusive of users with a diversity of abilities. By considering accessibility at all stages of the development, we seek to provide an environment that can be enjoyed throughout its lifetime by all, with independence and safety.

2.25 Part M of the building Regulations (2004) sets out requirements for access into and within new development, including housing. It our intent to liase with the Building Control team in order to ensure conformity with the relevant standards relation to the access for the disabled. There are five points of access to the area around the site and the building itself. These are as follows;

- Via the car park entrance;
- Via the two gated entrances on the north east elevation;
- Via a door which leads to the upper basement floor car park; and
- Via the main entrance door at the front of the apartment block.

2.26 Access via each of these entrances and measures which we have incorporated in order to ensure the safety of the residents and visitor to the site will be outlined below. The access points to the site and building have been designed to deter suspecting opportunistic criminal activity and to promote the personal safety of the individual resident.