

57 FITZJOHN'S AVENUE, LONDON NW3 6PH

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

SITE CONTEXT

The site is located in an area characterised by very large detached and semi-detached Victorian and Edwardian villas on tree lined streets with generous sized gardens. Many of the properties are four or five storeys high and are typically red brick with slate or tiled roofs. Elaborate detailing, typical of the era, provides attractive elevations and virtually every property has a distinct character.

Due to the proportions of the properties, many have been converted into apartments over recent years and some more recent infill has taken place.



57 Fitzjohn's Avenue is typical of the area and comprises a five-storey structure in red brick with a slate roof, as half of an identical pair of semi-detached dwellings. The next-door property has been refurbished and converted into separate apartments and the original character of the building has been compromised by the addition of a crudely detailed extension to the front bay window on the second and third floors. An underground car park has also been incorporated with consequential loss of soft landscaping around the base of the property.



57 Fitzjohn's Avenue is predominantly in its original condition, and only appears to have been altered by the introduction of some new toilets and bathrooms, resulting in additional fenestration and external soil pipes. Whilst the structure is in need of some maintenance and looks rather tired, early inspections reveal that the building is very sound and can be successfully reinstated to a good condition. A small parking court exists in

the front garden with a corresponding vehicular access to the street. A large garden exists to the rear. The site contains several substantial trees which are to remain.

The property is very well located for family homes and is a short walk from all nearby facilities, including shops, a post office, banks, schools, etc. It is also very convenient for the underground station and buses at Hampstead.

USE AND AMOUNT

The existing building was originally a large family house but in recent years has become multiple occupancy comprising some three self-contained one-bedroom flats and three small studio units. The proposed scheme does not extend or alter the existing external envelope in any way but simply reconfigures the internal accommodation to provide a good sized apartment on each floor.

In developing the design great care has been taken to minimise the impact on the original fabric within the building to retain the character and proportion of the original rooms wherever possible, and to retain the grand existing staircase which has considerable architectural merit.

The mix of accommodation has been developed in close consultation with Camden's Housing Department to meet the most pressing need for families in the area, and all of the units are large affordable housing apartments. As part of the refurbishment, new kitchens and bathrooms will be provided to housing corporation standards, and the building will be brought up to modern day standards in terms of insulation, air-tightness, and sound attenuation, to provide comfortable homes incorporating the concept of "affordable warmth".

SCALE, LAYOUT AND LANDSCAPING

As no new buildings are proposed, the scale and layout are predetermined. To ensure that each family has access to good quality external amenity space, the rear garden is to be sub-divided into five separate areas. A detailed landscaping scheme will be prepared to satisfy any future condition.

ACCESS

As the building is a significant period property in a conservation area, there is little opportunity to substantially improve the access for people with disabilities. The lower ground floor apartment is reached by a short flight of some six steps at the side of the building, whilst a series of steps lead to the grand main entrance accessing the remainder of the building. We feel that it would be difficult to incorporate ramps to either of these two principal entrances without seriously compromising the aesthetics of such an important building in the conservation area.

On entering the building only one flat is accessed off the main lobby on the ground floor, therefore, even if a ramp was provided to the main entrance, it would only assist disabled access to one flat. It is not economically viable to install a passenger lift to service so few dwellings as the resulting service charge would be unaffordable to the tenants in this category of tenure.

PLANING CONTEXT

The existing building is Use Class C2 and, as such, is generally protected by UDP policy, as the loss of small rental units within HMO's is discouraged. As the proposal is to retain the accommodation as affordable rental units but to a higher standard, this policy is not compromised.

SUSTAINABLE FEATURES

The existing building is typical of its period, comprising 337mm and 215mm thick solid brick walls, plastered internally, with a slate roof and little or no insulation. The windows are ill-fitting, single glazed, sliding sash units, and open fireplaces also compromise the air-tightness of the structure. The proposals are to carry out a complete refurbishment of the structure, upgrading the thermal insulation of the walls by adding an internal insulating layer, and providing substantial insulation in the loft spaces. The windows will either be replaced with modern double-glazed sliding sash units, to exactly match the proportions of the existing, or they will be repaired and refurbished prior to secondary double-glazing being installed. The lower ground floor will also be insulated, and modern heating with energy efficient controls will be installed. These measures will dramatically improve the thermal performance of the structure and reduce carbon emissions significantly.

In the design of the project we have considered the sustainability of the dwelling, in particular thermal insulation.

By the use of insulated plasterboard, all the external walls of the property will have the thermal properties of the walls updated to comply with the latest Part L of the Building Regulations. Also by the use of mineral wool insulation, the roof space insulation will be improved to comply with the latest Part L of the Building Regulations.

Sound Insulation

Using acoustic insulation board to all re-used separating walls, new separating walls will be designed to the latest Robust Details. All separating floors will be improved to comply with the latest Part E of the Building Regulations.

Security

The design will be developed in detail incorporating the principles of "Secured by Design" and advice will be sought from the Crime Prevention Design Adviser to ensure that future residents enjoy a sense of security in their homes.

Ecohomes

From the issues assessed in the categories:- energy, transport, pollution, materials, water, ecology and land use, and health and wellbeing, we have addressed the most appropriate and beneficial issues for this particular project.

- Energy
Minimising the emissions of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.
Improving the insulation through good fabric performance.
Encouraging the use of energy efficient internal and external lighting.
- Transport
Providing cycle stores to promote the use of bicycles.
Providing the residents with the necessary space and services to be able to work at home.
- Pollution
Specifying insulation materials that avoid the use of substances that have a global warming potential of 5 or more, and specifying an ODP of zero.
Using efficient heating and hot water systems.
- Materials
Specifying the use of materials that have less impact on the environment, taking into account the full life-cycle.

Specifying the use of responsibly sourced materials.
Providing recycling bins for residents.
- Water
Specifying a water system which will collect rainwater in water butts.
- Ecology
Protecting ecological features from sustainable damage during any works on site.
Considering the most efficient use of the building footprint.
- Health and Wellbeing
Providing good day-lighting to the properties, within the constraints of the fenestration of the existing building.
Providing good sound insulation to reduce the likelihood of noise complaints.
Providing an outside space for residents' use.

5.2.07

