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DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

203-209 NORTH GOWER STREET, LONDON, NW1

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW FLATS AND RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION –

This design statement is intended to be read in conjunction with the following documents;

- Photographs of the existing site.
- Existing and proposed plans, sections and elevations of the proposed development.

THE SITE

The site is to the south corner of North Gower Street and Drummond Street and contains a 3 storey building plus a basement. The current lawful use of the site is for B1 offices and the existing total area of the site is 348 square metres (0.0348 hectares). Pedestrian access to the building is via the main entrance to the north east elevation on North Gower Street. An existing covered vehicular entrance to the north west façade also exists off Drummond Street and this leads to an open yard to the rear of the building. From this rear yard there is also a further entrance door to the rear of the building in the south west elevation.

THE EXISTING BUILDING

The front elevation of the building, facing onto to North Gower Street is set back from the pavement by approximately 1.2 metres. The ground floor level is above the adjacent external pavement level and is accessible by 4no. existing steps, facing directly onto the pavement. The existing basement level is approximately 1.95 metres below the pavement level.

The front facades of the building (those facing onto North Gower Street and Drummond Street) are faced in buff coloured brickwork, whilst the rear elevations are faced in a lighter 'stone' coloured brickwork. The existing windows throughout are white painted metal and are in a poor state of repair. The building currently has an asphalt covered flat roof.

THE PROPOSAL

The following proposals have been designed and developed following consultation given by the planning officer Ms Kiran Chauhan and design officer Mr Leo Hammond during a formal pre-application advice meeting held on the 6th July 2006 and a subsequent pre-application meeting report dated 17th July 2006 (ref: 2006/2660/NEW).

The proposal is for a 'change of use' class for the building from B1 office to residential use and to provide 12 flats in total . The existing building is to be retained whilst the incorporation of a third floor extension to

the roof and a part extension to the rear yard at basement level is proposed in order to provide the following mix of units – 3no. 1 bed units
4no. 2 bed units
3no. 3 bed units
1no. studio
1no. open plan maisonette

The proposed mix of units has been revised following discussions held during the pre-application consultation meeting and has been subsequently agreed by the planning officer.

Please refer to the plans for individual unit positions within the building and unit layouts. These have been designed in reference to the councils supplementary planning guidance document, section 2.3 'internal arrangements'. The inclusion of an 8 person passenger lift to give access to all floors has also been incorporated into the scheme. The proposed lift position is to be within the existing building and will form part of the third floor extension to also give level access to that particular floor.

SITE POSITIONING AND VISUAL APPEARANCE

The external fabric of the building is to be retained, with the exception of the external windows, main entrance porch and existing roof covering. Modifications to the fenestration on the north east elevation at basement level have been made, in order to unify the overall composition of the façade and to improve the natural daylighting provisions to the internal spaces at this level, in accordance with the requirements as set out in SPG section 2.3.6 (basements). The rear extension at basement level not only vastly improves the natural daylighting provisions to the adjacent, internal spaces, but also aesthetically enhances the rear façade. The proposal to replace all the external windows to the building will improve its' acoustic and thermal properties, in order to comply with the current building regulations and the proposal to install white painted metal framed windows, to the existing facades is 'in-keeping' with the original design aesthetic of the building. The existing main entrance porch and doors are in need to updating and it is proposed to replace the doors and canopy with a new glazed canopy and glazed doors, in order to create a more contemporary and welcoming entrance; whilst also creating a 'visual focus' to the façade.

The third floor flat roof extension is to be set back from the existing front parapet, so as to prevent any loss of light to the neighbouring properties. This 'set-back' arrangement also exists on the neighbouring property at 195 North Gower Street and to the adjacent property on Drummond Street.
The proposal of a flat roof matches the roof type of both the adjacent properties (as referred to above), whilst minimising the overall height of the building and its' overall massing. The window pattern to the third floor at both the front and rear elevations, relate to that of the existing windows.

AMENITY SPACE PROVISION

The provision of external terraces to the 2no. third floor flats gives a total proposed amenity space of 45 square metres. The requirement for open space provision under the UDP policy N4 is to provide 9 square metres per person. There is a shortfall for the required provision and therefore the applicant agrees to enter into a 'section 106 agreement' to provide the necessary monetary contribution as required under the relevant policy of the UDP.

EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTION

The applicant agrees to enter into a 'section 106 agreement' to provide the necessary financial, education contribution, as required under the relevant policy of the UDP.

TRANSPORT/PARKING

There are excellent public transport provisions to the development, with a number of main bus routes within close proximity to the site, both on Euston Road to the south and Hampstead Road to the west. Euston mainline railway station is also within 5 minutes walk of the site to the east.

Provision has been made for a covered cycle store to be positioned in the existing external yard and to give a total of 12 cycle storage spaces. The pre-application meeting report states that all new units are to be car free. The applicant agrees to enter into a 'section 106 agreement' in order for this requirement to be legally secured.

REFUSE STORAGE AND RECYCLING PROVISIONS

An enclosed refuse store has been proposed, positioned in the external rear yard. This will have ventilated doors and contain 1no. 1100 litre 'Eurobin' for refuse and 1no. 1100 litre 'Wheelie' bin for recycling. Also 55 litre recycling boxes have been proposed for each individual unit. Possible positions for these have been indicated on the plans. These proposals have been designed whilst referring to the provisions of Camden council's 'Waste storage requirement' document.

DISABLED ACCESS

The development will comply with Part M of the current building regulations and will thus provide appropriate clear door widths and level access amongst other design provisions as required within the document. Due to the existing access levels of the building, the configuration of the front entrance steps and there proximity to the adjacent public pavement, a short rise vertical platform lift to the rear of the property has been proposed to give wheelchair access to the basement level, from which the main passenger lift can also be accessed to other floors. Flats no. 2 and 3 at this basement level have been designed to meet with the lifetime homes standards and to give access to approximately 17% of the new units; this figure being in excess of the requirement of 10%, as stated within policy H7 of the UDP.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

An 'EcoHomes' assessment has been carried out and the pre-assessment report forms part of this application. A rating of 'Very Good' has been achieved. Following consultation and during the preparation of the EcoHomes report, as the scheme proposes to retain the existing surface finish to the rear yard, it was decided not to provide grey water and rainwater collection. However, the flats are to have certain water saving design features, such as low-flush cisterns, aerating taps and medium flow showers, etc.

Renewable energy production equipment is to be provided in the form of solar panel collectors, to be positioned on the proposed flat roof. Following consultation with the planning and design officer, it was decided that the use of the flat roof to house the solar panels was a preferable function to that of providing an 'extensive' green roof.

The choice of traditional construction materials for the development, in keeping with its surroundings, is expected to result in a long design life for the scheme - ensuring that the embodied carbon dioxide emissions of the construction materials relate to a longer lifecycle and that minimal remedial works will be required to maintain the building's serviceability, thereby limiting future resource use.

The excellent public transport links and cycle provisions, as previously described in the transport section will also form a significant contribution to the developments' sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The above proposals will help to regenerate and improve the appearance of what is, currently a dignified, yet tired building. The scheme also presents a great opportunity to provide a sustainable and desirable residential development that will enhance both the local environment and surrounding community.