



design statement

ARLINGTON ROAD.
PICASSO INVESTMENTS (CAMDEN) LTD

Design Statement – Arlington Road, Camden



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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1.1 ESA Architects and Urban Designers have been instructed by Picasso Investments (Camden) Ltd to prepare architectural designs for the application site, currently occupied by surface car parking, hard standing and service bay facilities to the retail unit fronting Camden High Street.
- 1.2 The clients design brief is for a high quality urban residential scheme.
- 1.3 The development will provide modern and highly accessible residential units of a size and mix suitable to this location. The scheme provides an appropriate urban response to this key site within the conservation area and will enhance both the site and surroundings, with particular reference to the neighbouring listed buildings.
- 1.4 This design statement should be considered in conjunction with all other material comprising the planning application, with particular regard to the access statement, submission drawings, schedules and illustrative material.
- 1.5 This statement describes the rational behind the design, its detailed development and why it is considered entirely appropriate for this key town centre site.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE APPLICATION

2.1 The scheme proposals have been developed and refined through pre application meetings and consultation with Officers.

2.2 Discussions have covered:-

- The poor visual quality of the existing site.
- The poor environmental quality associated with the servicing and plant facilities (reference made to complaints from neighbours).
- The suitability of residential use and the desire for a mix of flat sizes.
- Density.
- Urban design, with particular reference to the streetscape and relationship to the adjoining Grade II listed building.

2.3 It is considered the submission proposals follow the guidance given and make a positive contribution to the appearance, environment and vitality of the street.

3.0 SCHEME PROPOSALS

3.1 Proposed Urban Design Strategy

3.1.1 The proposals represent an opportunity to replace the existing surface car parking and screen the unsightly back of house retail service yard, stock and plant facilities; infilling and repairing the fabric of the streetscape where the quality of the buildings and external areas are of poor quality detracting from the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings, both adjoining and opposite.

3.1.2 Our design approach comprises:-

- Analysis and appraisal of the site and its context (see appendix 1 and 2).
- Incorporation of survey information.
- Incorporation of advice from specialist consultants in respect of accessibility and highways.
- Incorporation of input from Officers.
- Incorporation of our client's objectives and brief to provide a high quality and attractive development with accommodation to meet market requirements ensuring a viable and successful future for the site.

3.2 Uses

3.2.1 The scheme comprises a high density urban residential development with a mix of studio, one bedroom and two bedroom flats.

In accordance with the accessibility study car parking has not been provided, however secure facilities for residents cycle parking are provided.

3.3 Layout

- 3.3.1 The layout of the scheme has evolved through analysis of site and adjoining context, resulting in a form which continues the adjoining terrace with residential accommodation addressing the street frontage, whilst maintaining the existing retail service facilities and access to surface car parking.

At ground floor level the cycles and refuse store are positioned to act as a buffer between the flats and retail service bay.

The plan form is articulated at both ground and upper floors to address massing/urban design issues, provides limited private amenity areas and a buffer strip to the back edge of pavement.

3.4 Design and Massing

- 3.4.1 Integral with the uses and layout, the massing of the scheme and its external envelope respond to both the context of the site and Officers views/observations with regard to the setting of the adjoining listed building.

Architectural diagram is both dramatic and rational, comprising four key and interrelated elements:-

- 1 The set back ground floor 'plinth' which aligns with the adjoining tram shed, provides separation between ground floor residential units and back edge of pavement, creates interest at street level and the opportunity to introduce a landscape element to the street. The banding and materiality of the building at this level replicates that of the terrace opposite.
- 2 The main body of the development (the first and second floors) follow the building line of, and is flush with, the adjoining terrace, respecting and reinforcing the existing building line and parapet height. The façade is expressed as an applied element as it is with its neighbours, most notably the listed tramshed. The rhythm

- 3 The third floor, set back from the building line, and is a modern interpretation of the gables of its neighbours. It peels back from the façade in plan and projects slightly above the service access to the south. There is a clear and distinct visual break between the listed building and the new proposal, in accordance with the recommendations of the design officer. The form of this element is such that it ensures the building relates to both adjoining properties, achieves an appropriate visual scale in the streetscape and addresses the restrictions imposed by the service access.
- 4 The three horizontal elements above are linked and sub divided by the recessed entrance and circulation bay, the scale of which again relates to the massing of its neighbours. This device, together with the vertical aspect to the fenestration, maintains a scale and rhythm appropriate to the streetscape.

3.5 Materials

- 3.5.1 The selection of materials to both the overall scheme and individual elements within the building enclosure respects and enhances those of existing properties within the streetscape, being directly derived from them. Whilst responding to the constraints of the context and surroundings, the integration and contemporary interpretation of the materials within the design avoids 'pastiche', maintaining a clear and modern approach.

4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

4.1 In summary the development will provide modern, high quality and centrally located residential units regenerating this site; enhancing the streetscape of the conservation area and setting of adjoining listed building. The computer generated views demonstrate clearly the contribution of the form, scale, materials and massing to Arlington Road and the adjoining tram shed, in particular:-

- The relationship between key parapet and roof heights with the neighbouring buildings.
- The enclosure and screening of the unsightly properties behind, repairing the streetscape.
- The care and consideration given to enhancing the setting of the listed tram shed.

The scheme uses, layout, design and materials will substantially enhance Arlington Road and the conservation area.

APPENDIX 1 – SITE ANALYSIS

This site analysis should be read in conjunction with the attached plan and site photographs.

Site Location and Context

The site forms the rear surface car parking and service yard to a mixed used retail and office development fronting the High Street.

The site is located in the Camden Town Conservation Area, which contains a mix of building types and uses, including a substantial number of Grade II listed buildings.

The following section provides an appraisal of the site and its immediate context.

Site

The site frontage to Arlington Road comprises the unsightly open surface car parking and service yard bay to the retail accommodation. This is contained within a substantial brick boundary wall with two service access positions. Only the southern of these is in use.

To the rear of the car parking area is the loading bay, rear façade and roof plant enclosure of the retail property. The materials, design and overall appearance distract from the streetscape and it is understood from Officers that neighbours have expressed concern with regard to nuisance from the plant and service yard.

Overall the site represents an unsightly gap in the streetscape detracting from the setting and conservation area.

Arlington Road

The residential properties on the opposite side of Arlington Road form a substantial terrace of Grade II listed buildings creating a strong and cohesive streetscape.

The neighbouring properties to the site vary substantially. To the north of the site is a purpose built office building of three storeys in height (four domestic storeys). Whilst substantially greater in plot width than the adjoining residential properties and of questionable design merit the building responds in scale, form and massing to the general streetscape, however the blank flank wall adjoining the site and the properties to the rear are unsightly and detract from the setting. Further to the north are traditional brick terraced properties of three/four storeys in height with their individual plot widths articulated by two storey projecting bays.

The Grade II listed tram shed to the south comprises two principle elements.

- A single storey ancillary shed adjoining the site with a strong gable and roof profile. The façade is primarily brickwork with stone copings and incorporates a single opening to the street frontage.
- The main building is substantially larger in scale, responding to the mass and bulk of its neighbours; however the design, profile and scale of the limited openings to the frontage contrast with neighbouring properties and give this building a strong and individual identity.

As with the lower element the roofscape of the building and roof lights are clearly visible from the north, provide interest and variety to the skyline and relief to the streetscape.

To the south of the tram shed the three storey terraced traditional properties continue, re-establishing the general form, materials and height of the general streetscape.

Summary

In summary the site detracts from the streetscape within the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings.