

# 3073 Centre Heights

## **Design + Access Statement** **Centre Heights: Entrance Alterations**

December 2014



Centre Heights residential entrance at Belsize Road

### **Introduction**

The drawings contained in this application outline proposals for the refurbishment of the Centre Heights residential entrance at Belsize Road, opposite Swiss Cottage Underground Station.

The stained and in places damaged finishes add little to the current streetscape; the entrance itself is recessed and poorly lit, creating an uninviting and unsafe entrance for residents and visitors to the building.

These proposals seek to address safety concerns and provide an improved and more prominent entrance to the building.

## Site Analysis

Centre Heights is located on Finchley Road in the London Borough of Camden. It was completed in 1961 in a Rationalist architectural style, to the designs of Panos Koulermos and Douglas Stephen. It is a twelve storey mixed use tower with a retail plinth, constructed in a combination of in-situ and panelised concrete. The basement and ground floor provides retail use, the next five floors provide B1 office accommodation and the top five storeys accommodate residential units with balconies.

Architecturally the building is somewhat austere, partly an aspect of its functionalist architectural character and partly a result of physical deterioration through a combination of concrete staining and uncoordinated additions to the urban block.

Centre Heights is located on differing levels as it progresses from Finchley Road to the rear courtyard. Whilst these proposals maintain the existing layout and arrangement of the entrance, the refurbishment does not address wheelchair access at this level; there is a second entrance to the building on Finchley Road which will continue to provide level access into the building.

## Proposals

Residents have raised concern over safety at the existing entrance. The currently poorly lit entrance with its mix of dark materials creates an unwelcoming entrance from a non-overlooked street.

The objective of the proposed alterations is therefore to considerably improve the appearance and safe use of the residential entrance. These designs seek to respond to the identified character of the existing building in order to enhance the architectural quality of the entrance and the streetscape it is situated within. By upgrading the materials and improving the level and quality of lighting these proposals seek to address residents concerns and enhance the prominence of this entrance into Centre Heights.

## Materials

Cohesion between the stairs and the planter will be achieved through replacement of the existing tile and brick finishes with new stone finishes, applied to the horizontal and vertical surfaces. The upgrade of surfaces will create a safer entrance as the current tiling is cracked and misaligned in places.

Existing painted surfaces are to be re-decorated and existing steelwork is to be re-decorated. The unsightly existing handrail is to be replaced with a new one, as are the existing gutter and downpipe.

Unsightly plant on the roof of the canopy is to be re-positioned away from view.

Lighting is to be improved by replacement of and addition to the existing fittings with new, higher spec. wall mounted fittings.

The door is to be replaced with a high quality, thermally broken, double glazed steel door with fret cut translucent film highlighting the entrance to the residences.

New planting will be provided in the planters.

## Sustainability

In association with the quality and character of the original building the finishes and materials used in the proposed scheme will be of a high quality and robust finish. The buildings envelope will also be upgraded due to the addition of the thermally broken double glazed entrance door.