

August 2015

Planning Statement

Origin Housing Group

Ashton Court
254-256 Camden Road, NW1 9HF



Contents Page

1	Introduction.....	2
2	The Site and Background	3
3	The Proposed Development	5
4	Planning Policy Analysis	8
5	Planning Benefits	12
6	Consultation & Scheme Development.....	14
7	Conclusion	16
	Appendix A – Site Location.....	17
	Appendix B – Public Consultation Boards	18

1 Introduction

1.1 Jones Lang LaSalle has been instructed by Origin Housing Group to prepare a Planning Statement in support of a detailed planning application for the redevelopment of Ashton Court, 254-256 Camden Road, Camden (“the site”). The scope of this report is to set out the considerations relevant to the proposed residential scheme in the context of the relevant national, regional and local planning policy.

The Applicant

- 1.2 Origin Housing Group is a Registered Provider (RP) of affordable housing. Origin owns and manages over 5,500 homes, providing care and support services in north London and Hertfordshire. Based in Camden, The organisation was originally known as St Pancras and Humanist Housing Association and was formed by the British humanist movement in order to provide accommodation for needy and elderly humanists.
- 1.3 The Group has a significant presence in the borough. Examples of their proven track record of delivering high quality homes are the award winning schemes at Churchway in Euston, and at 154 Loudon Road.
- 1.4 Origin is undergoing wider redevelopment of their sheltered accommodation to bring the units they offer to the elderly up to standard with the London design standards. The upgrade at Ashton Court is focused on enhancing the standard of living for the growing group of old people, whilst bringing their housing stock to modern health and safety standards.
- 1.5 The proposals have been subject to pre-application consultations with the London Borough of Camden as well as relevant stakeholders and members of the public. This is covered in more detail in Section 2 and Section 6 of this Statement.

The Planning Application

1.6 This application seeks full planning permission for:

“Refurbishment and reconfiguration of Ashton Court from 36 flats into 24 flats; and the demolition and new build at Camden Mews to provide 5 x 2bedroom Mews houses”

1.7 A site location plan has been included in **Appendix A**.

Scope of the Report

1.8 The structure of this Planning Statement is as follows:

- **Section 1** provides the setting and introduction to the report;
- **Section 2** puts the site into context of its surroundings, relevant planning history and site constraints;
- **Section 3** sets out the details to the proposed development;
- **Section 4** outlines the relevant planning policy documents and provides an analysis to demonstrate compliance with the policies;
- **Section 5** outlines a number of planning benefits proposed to the scheme;
- **Section 6** sets out the stages of consultation and scheme development, summarising the pre-application discussions with planning officers and Secured by Design officers, as well as consultation events with residents and neighbours;
- **Section 7** provides a summary of the document and the conclusion.

2 The Site and Background

The Wider Area

- 2.1 Camden Road is the main route from Camden to Holloway and Finsbury Park. Camden Park Road links King's Cross (leading on from York Way) to Kentish Town. The area is predominantly residential, with buildings of three to four storeys high. Camden Town and Kentish Town are busy commercial centres. A small neighbourhood centre with some convenience retail units is located on York Way. An industrial area is located between the residential area of Camden Square and the King's Cross regeneration area along York Way.
- 2.2 The nearest underground tube stations between 10-18 minutes' walk from the site are: Kentish Town served by the Northern Line/National Rail, Caledonian Road for Piccadilly Line and Camden Town for the Northern Line. The closest Overground stations are Camden Road (12 minutes) and Kentish Town West (16 minutes, 0.8 miles). King's Cross and St Pancras International Stations are 30 minutes' walk away, with access to other underground, National Rail and Eurostar services.

Site Characteristics

- 2.3 Ashton Court is located within the Camden Square Conservation Area, of which the nearest heritage asset is on Camden Mews. Three mature trees are located within the site, one of which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (see below). This tree is located along the Camden Park Road elevation is of relevance to the redevelopment of the link building. The main building fronts onto Camden Road, which is considered a heavy traffic route with the highest levels of noise and air pollution.

Planning History

- 2.4 The full history of Ashton Court is listed in the table below. No significant applications have been submitted recently.

Planning Reference	Description of Proposal	Date Approved
PE9700283	Erection of 2 main entrance gates and 1 car park shutter. (Plans submitted)	Withdrawn
2011/1854/T	(TPO Ref: S9) REAR GARDEN: 1 x London Plane - Reduce and reshape crown by 30%.	03/05/2011
2011/1852/T	COMMUNAL GARDEN: 1 x Ash & 1 x Cherry - Reduce and reshape crown by 25-30%. Remove deadwood and clean out crown. FRONT GARDEN: 1 x Sycamore & 1 x Cherry - Reduce and reshape by 30%.	03/05/2011
TC9906436	Reduction works to one Ash, one Plane, one Poplar, one Cherry, one Sycamore and one Red Chestnut tree on property.	08/06/1999
T9602209	Carry out reduction works to 1 X Poplar and 1 X Plane	08/08/1996
8692216	Advice on Black Poplar tree on frontage and fell Ash tree in rear garden	05/11/1986
8670140	Demolition of the existing common room as shown on drawing nos.105B 108A WD1A and WD2A.	14/05/1986
8600282	Reconstruction of the existing common room as shown on plan Nos.105B 108A WD1A WD2A	14/05/1986
33236	The erection of new metal boundary railings and means of enclosure.	17/07/1981

Site Location

- 2.5 Ashton Court is a sheltered housing facility providing accommodation for people over 60, and those over 55 with support needs. The site fronts onto Camden Road, Camden Mews and Camden Park Road. The apartment block fronting onto Camden Road is a four storey building, set back from the main road. At the rear of this building, a row of three storey mews flats are linked by a one storey communal building on Camden Park Road.
- 2.6 The three buildings will from herein be referred to as: main building on Camden Road, link building along Camden Park Road, and mews building along Camden Mews.



Images: Main building and link building from courtyard

Mews building from Camden Mews

- 2.7 A small inner court is located within Ashton Court and functions as a communal courtyard and garden. Other communal facilities include: associated kitchen, laundry, guest room, storage, office & WC. Two refuse chutes are located within the main building and Mews building at half landing level. The building only has one fire exit, located at the back of the main building leading to the courtyard. One lift serves the complex and is also located in the main building.
- 2.8 The buildings currently accommodate 44 bedrooms in 36 flats. It comprises of 29 x studio flats, 6 x 1-bed flats, 1 x 2-bed flats, all of which are affordable homes.
- 2.9 The facility is part vacant, with 12 units void at present. There are 24 residents currently living at Ashton Court.
- 2.10 The current homes fail a number of modern standards. They do not meet Lifetime Homes requirements, wheelchair accessibility standards or National and London Plan Space standards.
- 2.11 The table below illustrates the significant space discrepancies in comparison with the adopted Mayor's minimum space standards. A total of 255 m² would need to be provided to bring every single flat up to the *minimum* acceptable standard. None of these units comply with Lifetime Homes and wheelchair standards, which require adequately wide and nearby entrances, large communal lifts and staircases, wide hallways and internal doors, and circulation space within the units and bathrooms.

	Size (m ²)	No. of units	Habitable rooms	London Plan (m ²)	Discrepancy m ² (%)
1bed/1p	25	3	3	37 m ²	-12 m ² (-32%)
1bed/1p	31	26	26	37 m ²	-6 m ² (-16%)
1bed/2p	37	3	6	50 m ²	-13 m ² (-26%)
1bed/2p	41	2	4	50 m ²	-9 m ² (-18%)
1bed/2p	47	1	2	50 m ²	-3 m ² (-6%)
2bed/3p	58	1	3	61 m ²	-3 m ² (-5%)
Total	1,179	36	44		-255 m²

3 The Proposed Development

Development Context

- 3.1 This application for the redevelopment of Ashton Court seeks to increase the living standards for its current residents. In light of national trends confirming that the ageing population is increasing exponentially, the need for dedicated care facilities is rising concurrently. The elderly population can be divided into several categories of the level of care required. This application is for older people in need of sheltered accommodation, with a small degree of care, with the facilities to increase the care of its residents where needed. The units will remain self-contained, designed with their own bathroom and kitchen.
- 3.2 The standards of living are intrinsic to people's mental and physical health. This application aims to improve the space, access and amenity criteria to bring Origin's sheltered accommodation housing stock up to modern housing standards. The retirement housing caters for people over 60, or over 55 with support needs.

The Principle of Development: Residential Use

- 3.3 As described in greater detail below, the scheme has been driven by the aim for high quality, spacious homes that maximise circulation space. Origin has indicated the urgent need to improve the cramped and unsafe conditions at Ashton Court; the Mayor of London Housing Supplementary Planning Document has therefore been used as a basis to designing the new flats.
- 3.4 The proposal comprises of 32 flats of the following sizes: 7 x one-bedroom 1 person units; 20 x one-bedroom (2 person) units and 5 x two-bedroom (4 person) units. The one-bedroom units will be affordable rented units, and the family units on Camden Mews will be put up for private sale to enable cross-funding.

	Private Sale	Affordable Rent	Total	
	Units	Units	Total Units	Total Habitable rooms
1bed/1p	0	7	7	7
1bed/2p	0	17	20	34
2bed/4p	5	0	5	15
Total Units	5	24	29	56

- 3.5 A large number of the one bedroom flats have been designed to accommodate 2 people, which would be favourable to elderly couples moving into the retirement home. Two new units will be built above the link building and a guest room has been added on the ground floor.
- 3.6 The scheme proposes 24 affordable units, to be re-provided on an affordable rent basis. This results in a technical net loss of 12 affordable units and a moderate net loss (117 m²) of affordable floorspace and affordable habitable rooms (from 44 to 41). However, there is a total increase of 12 habitable rooms across the development which means that, in theory, more people can be accommodated into Ashton Court.
- 3.7 Whilst there is a net total loss of 59 m² (GIA) of affordable floorspace within units, the extensions to the link building ensure that every unit is large enough to comply with all standards. In addition, 56.5 m² has been invested into the communal areas, proposing for example the additional guest room. On the second and third floors there is a net gain of floorspace of 35.5 m² and 37.5 m² respectively.
- 3.8 These renovated homes will continue to function as sheltered accommodation for older people but be superior in qualitative (fit out) and quantitative (internal space) measurements.
- 3.9 Five family units are proposed on Camden Mews, to be sold on the private market to cross-subsidise the redevelopment scheme. The funds generated from these 2-bed units will enable Origin to provide affordable units that are wholly compliant with London Plan minimum space standards. These units will have access to private balconies and to a private terrace and deck garden to the rear. The mews houses will operate independently from Origin's retirement home.

- 3.10 It is important to note that there is a total net increase of 585 m² of floorspace within the entire scheme. This takes into account the extensions to the link building and the basement extensions to the mews houses.



Design of Scale, Mass and Bulking

- 3.11 The design of this redevelopment project has been prepared to respect the bulk and height of neighbouring properties within the Camden Square Conservation Area, but to maximise the amount of floorspace and circulation space needed to deliver a viable scheme. As such, the development has been divided into three components that are described in more detail below.
- 3.12 The main building will retain its outer core and appearance. Internal reconfiguration will utilise the floorplates to deliver bigger units that are all compliant to Lifetime Home standards, adaptable to care facilities and are more accessible. On the ground floor of the main and link building a number of communal facilities has been provided in cooperation with current residents and staff: communal hall, kitchen, post and laundry facilities, storage room for mobility scooters and bikes, a guest room with WC, refuse area, communal WC and a WC and office for staff. To enable all these facilities, the main building will include a small extension on Camden Park Road, with windows on the side elevation. To the rear of the main building, the units will have access to a private balcony or communal garden. Juliet balconies at the front façade are proposed to enlarge the existing windows but largely to retain existing façade features.



- 3.13 The link building, connected internally with the main building only, will retain its existing communal use at the ground floor. An additional storey is proposed to this building, providing for 2.5 more units. With a different pitch, the sloped roof has been re-designed into the extension to retain a similar elevation. More windows will feature at ground floor level to maximise natural light. The new units will have sloped windows to match the roof design facing the road, and balconies looking out into the courtyard. The scale of the link building will remain subordinate to the rest of Ashton Court at a more similar height to surrounding buildings of three to four storeys high.
- 3.14 The existing Camden Mews building will be replaced by five separate mews houses. In line with the diverse mews houses on Camden Mews, the new houses will feature a two storey frontage, with an additional third storey set back from the street level. The vertical lines of the mews will be replicated in a more suitable scale and massing to other mews houses that enhance the Conservation Area. A basement level is proposed to add storage facilities to the mews houses that have

otherwise designed with an efficient use of living space. The addition of lightwells into the basement provides the opportunity to use the basement as a habitable room, if desired.

Access, Parking and Servicing

- 3.15 One of the key drivers to this project is to improve current internal and external access. The main building will be subject to a complete internal reconfiguration to allow for wide corridors, a larger lift installation, larger flats and a more logical layout of its features. The corridors of the link building will be merged with those in the main building.
- 3.16 The buildings are currently accessible via two main entrances, with a core in each of the main buildings. The existing hallways and corridors are narrow and do not allow for a comfortable circulation (with wheelchairs). Only one lift is present in the main building with access to all four floors of this building. Due to the single storey height of the link building, no corridors connect to the mews building flats. A number of flats on the second on third floors on Camden Mews are therefore unsuitable for those less able to use the stairs. In the event of an emergency or need for wheelchairs, residents in those units cannot access their own flats. The existing lift will be upgraded and enlarged to fit wheelchairs and a larger number of people, and can now be accessed on all floors at a reasonable distance from the lift. The fire exit will be re-provided at the rear directing residents into the courtyard, with more spacious turning circles. The mews houses will be independent units with their own front doors and individual staircases.
- 3.17 Four parking spaces are currently located under the set back ground floor of the mews house building. These spaces, used by residents, their visitors and staff will no longer be available.

Lifetime Homes and Wheelchair Access

- 3.18 A Lifetime Homes Standards checklist has been submitted as part of the Design and Access Statement.

4 Planning Policy Analysis

Introduction

- 4.1 This section provides a summary of the relevant national, London and local policies, accompanied by an analysis to demonstrate compliance to the policies or to provide justification.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.2 The Government adopted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 27th March 2012. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies at a national level for England, and provides guidance on how these should be applied. The underlying theme running through the NPPF is that sustainable development should be sought by the planning system, which takes form in three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. This should be achieved by contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy; supporting strong vibrant and healthy communities; and contributing to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 4.3 From 6 March 2014 the Government published a comprehensive, online resource providing guidance on the application of the NPPF. The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) database completely overrides the diverse mix of Circulars, Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and other supplementary documents. This statement takes into account the latest updates, as of June 2015.

The London Plan

- 4.4 The Mayor of London adopted a Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP) in March 2015 in order to secure increased housing delivery across London. This updated spatial development strategy document overrides the London Plan adopted in July 2011, as the FALP comprehensively incorporates all of the changes made to policies and the supporting text.
- 4.5 This Planning Statement also assesses the Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (adopted November 2012).

North London Joint Waste Plan

- 4.6 In February the 2012, the North London Waste Plan was submitted for independent examination. The Inspector advised that the forthcoming plan did not confirm to the Duty to Cooperate and recommended non-adoption.
- 4.7 Subsequently, the seven north London Local Planning Authorities of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest have jointly been producing the North London Joint Waste Plan. The updated framework for waste management for the next 15 years is being prepared, and in the Summer of 2015, a draft plan (Regulation 18) document will be published for consultation.

Camden Core Strategy and Development Policies (2010)

- 4.8 Camden Council published their Local Development Framework documents in November 2010, formed of the Core Strategy and Development Policies.
- 4.9 Numerous Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) documents that support the strategic and development management planning policies. Those relevant to this application are: CPG 1 Design, CPG 2 Housing, CPG 3 Sustainability, CPG 4 Basements and Lightwells, CPG 6 Amenity, CPG 7 Transport and CPG 8 Planning Obligations.
- 4.10 The Local Development Framework has not allocated this site for any particular uses. The site falls within the Camden Square Conservation Area, but does not fall within any designated views. Ashton Court is not a Listed Building or locally listed by the Council.
- 4.11 The site falls just outside the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Area, and is not covered under any other currently approved Neighbourhood Area boundaries.

Principle of Residential Development

- 4.12 **Policy CS6** sets out the projected target for additional 8,925 homes 2010 to 2025. **Policies CS6, DP2, DP4 and DP7** respectively seek to minimise the net loss of existing homes, affordable homes and sheltered accommodation. **Policy DP5** seeks to ensure homes of different sizes, with large and small homes in all developments. The policy sets out the dwelling size priorities in paragraph 6.39. For market housing, the highest priority is to provide homes with 2 bedrooms; with family homes of 3 or more bedrooms are a medium priority. This need has been achieved by providing five additional market sale mews houses with 2 bedrooms.
- 4.13 In order to retain the existing number of units, the proposal would need to accommodate a further 255 m² of floorspace (as shown in Section 2). Within the site constraints of the Conservation Area, this was the maximum amount of viable and compliant flats. Therefore, this scheme proposes a net loss of 4 units which is instigated by enlarging the current sub-standard units to meet residential space standards. The proposals in reality increase the total amount of residential floorspace by 585 m².
- 4.14 As a renovation and refurbishment, the scheme cannot achieve Camden's highest priority of housing mix with regards to social rented housing for 4-bedroom or more, or the high priority of 3-bedroom flats; or the priority for 3-bedroom intermediate affordable housing flats. This is due to the bulk of the existing sheltered flats being undersized studio or 1-bedroom flats. 1-bedroom flats that have been updated to reflect the Mayor's internal space standards in the most efficient way. Furthermore, the mix is purposefully reflective of existing residents who will wish to return, and the elderly nature of occupants for whom they no longer live with their families. This size of units is most appropriate to sheltered accommodation where people would in practice only live alone or with their partner.
- 4.15 **Policy DP7** states that developments for older people must be suitable for the occupiers in terms of the level of independence, provision of support and/or care and standard of facilities. This scheme, with experience in caring for older people, will continue to provide sheltered housing with enhanced facilities. Although there will be a net loss of sheltered accommodation floorspace, the replacement units will be suitable, accessible and safeguard the existing community. Origin Housing have indicated the urgent need to modernise their facilities with reported circulation and ventilation problems, lack of access and undersized units that compromise the quality of life of their elderly residents. All sheltered units will be provided at an affordable rate, which will be cross-subsidised by the lost units along Camden Mews.
- 4.16 The development will continue to provide residential dwellings, in the form of sheltered accommodation and private sale flats. It is therefore in line with policy as the scheme proposes larger units replacing the sub-standard and poorly accessed flats to meet the space standards.

Affordable Housing & Lifetime Homes Standards

- 4.17 **Policy CS6** seeks to deliver high quality affordable housing; ensuring 50% of homes provided are affordable dwellings, negotiating towards the maximum deliverable amount with a target of 50% of the total addition of housing floorspace. Within this percentage, Camden's guidelines are for a 60% social rented and 40% intermediate affordable housing split. The policy also aims to minimise the net loss of affordable housing. In addition, the policy seeks to create mixed and inclusive communities with a variety of housing types, range in affordability, giving priority to housing for vulnerable people and affordable housing. The development provides 84% affordable housing within this scheme, which is in line with **Policies DC6 and DP3**.
- 4.18 **Policy DP6** requires all sheltered accommodation units provided will comply with lifetime homes standards and wheelchair housing standards. All units within the retirement home will comply with Lifetime Homes standards, of which 10% will be fully wheelchair adaptable. The Mews houses are also Lifetime Homes compliant; the checklist for both elements is provided in the Design and Access Statement.

Design Standards

- 4.19 **Policies CS14 and DP24** seek high quality places that enhance Camden's character. The Design and Access Statement demonstrates how the character of the area has been respected, the quality of materials, how it respects the protected tree on site, and details the provision of landscaping treatments and improvements to the amenity space and accessibility to residents. The Mews houses have been designed to the highest standard to form a valuable contribution to the Camden Mews. In line with the policy, this scheme proposes to improve the standards of access and circulation, by improving the internal design.

- 4.20 **Policy DP27** provides the framework to any basement development. The basement addition to the mews houses has been supported by a Basement Impact Assessment, Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Desktop and Ground Movement Assessment, all undertaken by Campbell Reith. It demonstrates the scheme does not affect drainage, flooding, groundwater conditions or structural stability. Due to the relatively small basement area, there are no cumulative effects on the site or neighbouring properties or a loss of amenity.
- 4.21 Each mews house will have a basement, with varying sizes to suit the structures and design. Windows to the rear look into the small rear garden, except for the flat next to the communal hall. The basement rooms are 22-26 m² each, with an additional utility/store room. Lightwells to the front will be fitted where possible.



Heritage

- 4.22 The **NPPF** (Chapter 12, pp. 128), states that applicants must describe the 'significance of any heritage assets affected, the level of detail being proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact on their significance'. Only where substantial harm or total loss of significance to designated heritage assets is caused by a proposed development, should an application be refused (pp. 133).
- 4.23 **Policy DP25** requires the proposals to respect Camden's listed buildings, heritage assets and the general character of the Camden Square Conservation Area.
- 4.24 The Camden Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) identifies the main building to be a positive addition, whereas the other two buildings are without any notation.
- 4.25 The Heritage Asset Assessment by West Waddy ADP takes into consideration the existing heritage value of Ashton Court and assesses the impact of the proposed application to Camden Square Conservation Area. The report argues that the retention of the Mews properties would not constitute a substantial harm or loss of significance to the heritage assets involved. The replacement building is recognised to provide a more positive contribution to the Conservation Area. The link building is described as a simple building without any notable features enclosing the courtyard open space; the loss of this building would not harm the setting of heritage assets.

Energy & Sustainability

- 4.26 Sustainable design and construction is promotion through **Policy DP22**. The Sustainability Statement and Design and Access Statement demonstrate how this design meets both high quality architectural standards and sustainable measures. **Policy DP23** requires Ashton Court to reduce their water consumption through efficient features. **Policy CS13** requires the need to reduce the effects of and adapting to climate change. This development displays an efficient use of the land and buildings, proposes to redevelop the building to minimise the carbon emissions and reduce the building's energy and water use.
- 4.27 A more in depth Energy and Sustainability Statement undertaken by RPS has been included in this submission. The changes in windows to Juliet balconies will provide for more natural light and ventilation. The window materials will also

control heat transfer and noise pollution better. The use of more sustainable materials and services, as well as an upgraded insulation and water consumption controls will reduce emissions and consumption at Ashton Court. A total of 17% of cumulative savings will be made to the new and converted units through savings from energy demand reduction and savings from renewable energy.

- 4.28 Solar panels will be placed on the roofs of the mews houses and pitched rear roof of the main building to provide a total of 7.85kWp of photovoltaics to comply with the BREEAM standards.

Amenity Space

- 4.29 **Policy DP26** requires high quality amenities for residents, giving fair access to sunlight and daylight without jeopardising neighbour's amenity. The scheme does not propose a different massing and therefore does not present any overlooking or overshadowing issues.
- 4.30 In line with the London Plan, the scheme provides as much private amenity space as is possible within the constraints of the Conservation Area: all four flats at ground floor, three flats at the rear on the first, second and third floors. The remaining residents facing Camden Road on first, second and third floors will have Juliet balconies fitted in place of their windows. For those residents without, the communal garden, front garden on Camden Road and strip of land on Camden Park Road will undergo some upgrades to encourage residents to socialise here. In cooperation with the current residents, a landscaping strategy has been devised to re-plant the areas to create a more pleasant environment. Residents will have access to sit in the strip of green space facing Camden Park Road, and the front garden of Camden Road will incorporate a more screened approach. The courtyard will be redesigned to encourage outside sitting, events and BBQs.
- 4.31 The mews houses will have access to their own rear gardens, at 7 to 11.4 m² each, except for the mews house directly backing onto the link building. These will be accessible through a deck at ground floor and a staircase to the lower garden. Each house will feature terraces in their first and second floors (at 2.3 m² each), facing to the south-east and north-west respectively.

Car Parking & Cycle Storage

- 4.32 The development is located within the Controlled Parking Zone, which limits the ability to park. 8.30am and 6.30pm Monday to Saturday. **Policy DP18** states that developments within the Controlled Parking Zone, fall within the low parking provision areas and should in principle be car free. With a PTAL score of 5, the site is well-located in the transport network and would further argue for a car free development. In line with this policy, the parking spaces on the mews have been removed and the development is entirely car-free as a result.
- 4.33 A cycle and mobility scooter room will be located in the main building to encourage an active lifestyle for the more able and staff members, and the additional space for mobility scooters.

Environmental Conditions

- 4.34 An Arboricultural Site Appraisal was undertaken by DF Clark Bionomique Ltd. One tree will be removed to facilitate the development, and be replaced by a more appropriate tree for the future amenity of the site. The report demonstrates the extent of the protected tree will be safeguarded and only proposes minor pruning to enable development to the link building. Recommendations have been made to ensure the tree is protected while undertaking the construction works.

Conclusion

- 4.35 This section has demonstrated that the proposed scheme has been designed and adjusted to comply with national, regional and local policies and the needs to Origin Housing. Where policies have not been met fully, supplementary reports have been submitted to provide justification in lieu.

5 Planning Benefits

5.1 The following improvements and planning benefits are proposed at Ashton Court.

Higher Quality Homes

5.2 The development has been designed to meet modern standards. The existing flats are substandard. Some are up to 32% smaller than the minimum London Plan Standards. The enlarged living space will help guarantee a better quality of life for residents. The replacement of windows and addition of (Juliet) balconies will give residents more daylight and better ventilation. The internal reconfiguration optimises how rooms can be organised which will further result in an increased perception of space.

5.3 The refurbishment of Ashton Court has included a detailed survey of the quality of materials and the energy and water efficiency levels. The Sustainability Statement has listed all the improvements proposed to insulation, pipes, utility services and the building's energy efficiency. As a result, residents should feel more comfortable in very warm and cold conditions, see a reduction in their energy and water bills and the service charge paid to maintain the building.

Better Facilities for Elderly Residents

5.4 The refurbishment of Ashton Court will provide better facilities for residents. Such facilities now include: laundry room, kitchen, guest room, management office space, storage space for mobility scooters and bikes. Whilst some of these areas currently exist in the building, they will now meet modern standards. For example current toilet facilities cannot accommodate a wheelchair, but refurbishment will include all equipment and furnishings together with an enlarged area for turning.

5.5 The outside areas, currently underused, will feature seating, improved landscaping and level access. The courtyard has an uneven grass area which will be levelled and resurfaced. The improved landscaping will cover the front garden, the side area on Camden Park Road and the courtyard. An outline is shown on the plans, but further details will be developed in collaboration with residents.

Enhanced Mews Houses

5.6 The Camden Square Conservation Area has been a positive influence on the redevelopment of the mews houses of Ashton Court. Archadia architects have taken inspiration from the eclectic mix of properties on Camden Mews, proposing two storeys at street level and an additional set back level on the top. The details reflect similar colour schemes and use of materials to integrate into Camden Mews while proposing a distinctive identity.

5.7 The approach to the mews homes has been subject to detailed scrutiny. The final design is the product of a rigorous consultation process with the Councils design officer.

Removes Undercroft Parking

5.8 The undercroft parking has reportedly attracted anti-social behaviour in the past and forms an unattractive addition of the Camden Mews. In addition, the parking does not conform to Camden's car-free development strategy. The application has sought to regularise the frontage by bringing it to the level of neighbouring properties. With the addition of defensible spaces in front of the ground floor bedrooms and modest setbacks to provide shelter from the rain to front doors, the scheme offers a varied frontage to the street scene.

Rigorous Consultation with Residents, Staff and Neighbours

5.9 The residents and staff members at Ashton Court played a key role in the redevelopment plans. As every residents will have the right to stay, it was imperative to ensure their suggestions and wishes were accounted for. Origin Housing recognises that such an approach is beneficial to gain invaluable insights and a pleasant atmosphere.

Car Free Development

- 5.10 Camden encourages all new developments to be car-free, with the aim to create more sustainable patterns of travelling. The borough's accessibility and public transport network is well developed and provides a good basis to limiting car travel of residents. This development proposes to lose the 4 existing car parking spaces and has included a dedicated storage space for mobility scooters and bikes instead. The new mews houses will not have parking facilities either.

6 Consultation & Scheme Development

Introduction

6.1 This section includes a summary of the pre-application discussions that took place with Camden Council and how this has helped shape and inform how the scheme has developed. This section also includes a summary of the public consultation event with neighbouring residents and staff and residents of Ashton Court that were undertaken prior to the submission of this application. In addition, it also includes details of our correspondence with a Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO).

Pre Application Advice

- 6.2 Three formal pre-application meetings were held with Camden Council planning and design officers, marking significant progress in the design stages of this development scheme. Alongside these pre-application meetings, several public consultation events were held to keep the neighbours informed and to gather well-rounded feedback to the scheme.
- 6.3 Camden's Housing team and the Metropolitan Police have also informed the proposals.
- 6.4 The first pre-application meeting was held on 2 October 2013 (ref. 2013/5730/PRE). The proposal under discussion was with regards to: Conversion of main building, extension to link building on Camden Park Road, and the creation of 26 x 1 bedroom sheltered accommodation flats, and new build to Camden Mews to provide 4 x 3 bedroom private units.
- 6.5 In response to the initial meeting, the officers found the link building too prominent at 3 floors and occupying an area of the courtyard. The mews houses were not in keeping with the setting and design of the rest of the mews.
- 6.6 The emphases in the policies resisting the loss of existing affordable homes and floorspace in sheltered accommodation are particularly relevant for the affordable and homes for older people; officer did anticipate remodelling of some homes that could include a reduction in the number of units. The cramped standard of the current bedsits was acknowledged but the remodelling had to be justified with regards to accessibility and the ability for people to have the ability and facilities to stay in their own homes whilst their care levels increase. The mix in units was considered appropriate.
- 6.7 The second pre-application meeting, held on 29 September 2014, discussed a change in the initial design of the Mews houses and Link Building. The proposed application explored an additional mews house whereby all mews houses would be reduced in width. This was supported, along with the addition of a basement level, subject to relevant surveys. The link building was still considered too high at three storeys and officers highlighted the importance of retaining the TPO along this elevation.
- 6.8 In response to this second meeting, the team redesigned the front and rear facades of the mews houses, with the inclusion of a basement. To avoid the crown of the protected tree along Camden Park Road, the link building was reduced by a storey.
- 6.9 The third pre-application advice was given in the form of an email on 26 January 2015. The conservation officer concluded on the most acceptable mews elevation of a set of drawings that was submitted. The proposed application comprised of the same number of flats as agreed at the previous pre-application submission.

Public Consultation Events

6.10 On 3 June 2015, members of the public joined the project team to discuss the proposals. Residents living within ½ mile of the site were invited to this consultation event that ran from 4pm to 8pm. Several aspects of the scheme were found positive such as the loss of the undercroft which caused anti-social activity. The basement gave rise to mixed reactions. The discussion was predominantly led by the design of the mews houses. It was urged that the window materials and colours must be of good quality and described within the proposals, that the design of the mews was accepted but perhaps too subtle.



- 6.11 The exhibition boards are included in **Appendix A**.
- 6.12 The current residents and staff of the Ashton Court home were also invited to participate in several consultation meetings. Between residents, staff and Origin Housing, a phasing plan for construction was discussed, as well as any personal wishes to feed into the proposals. In addition, residents were also offered the chance to select the new flat they would prefer to move into post-development. They will further participate in the landscaping and interior design strategies.

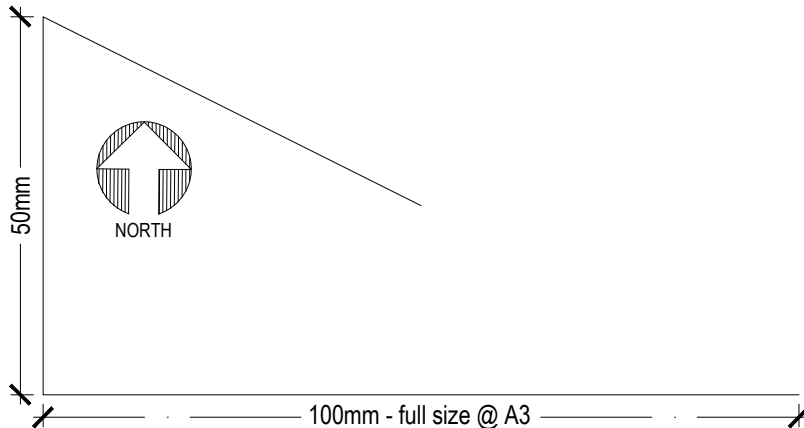
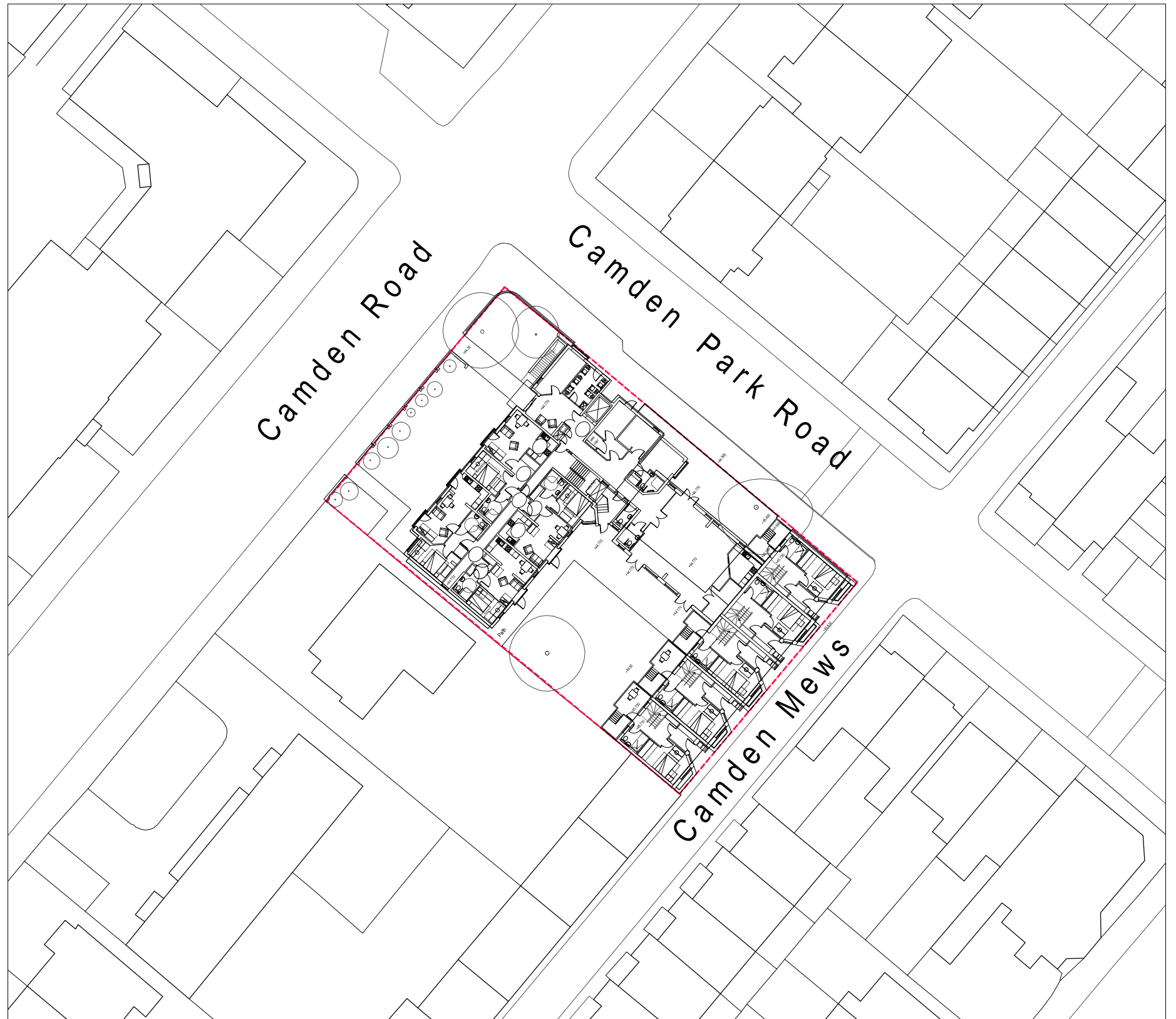
Secured by Design

- 6.13 The architects sought approval from DOCO Adam Lindsey of the Met police. He approved of the general layout and design and suggested including a number of secured by design measures that have been detailed in the Design and Access Statement.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 In summary, this proposal seeks to renovate an existing sheltered housing scheme home owned by Origin Housing. The bedsits and flats are undersized and do not meeting housing design standards. Origin Housing have indicated the urgent need to modernise the existing flats, of which a number are vacant, and are not providing much needed affordable accommodation. The refurbishment will be cross-funded through the redevelopment of the Mews block into five separate, private mews houses on Camden Mews.
- 7.2 This application falls within Camden's wider priority to upgrade substandard sheltered accommodation and care homes across the borough. The development presents overall improvements to the setting and architecture of the Mews elevation, improvements to the daylight, access and circulation of the individual units, and collectively provides better communal facilities and green space. The remaining sheltered accommodation will accommodate all current residents and greatly create a higher quality of life.

Appendix A – Site Location



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Archadia Chartered Architects
 Architecture : Surveying : Interiors : Space Planning : Design
 ASHLEY HOUSE, 58-60 ASHLEY RD, HAMPTON,
 MIDDX, TW12 2HU. Tel: 020 89 415161 Fax: 020 89 415050

Client: Origin Housing
 Project: Ashton Court- Re-modelling Existing &
 New Build Mews

Scale: 1:500 @ A3
 Drawn by: sm
 Checked by: jfh
 Date: 04-08-2015
 Rev Date: 04-08-2015
 Rev by: sm

Title: **Site/Location plan**
 Drwg No: **OH233-0-23** Rev: **P1**

Appendix B – Public Consultation Boards

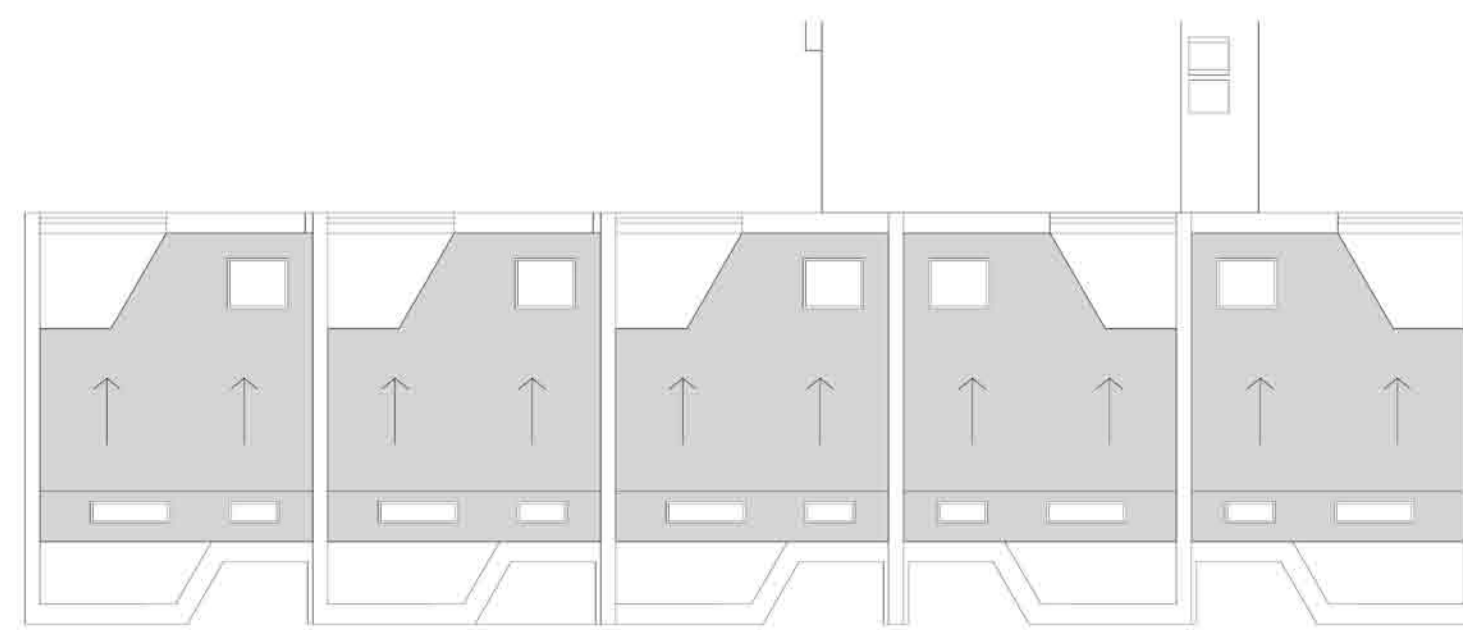


Ashton Court Consultation

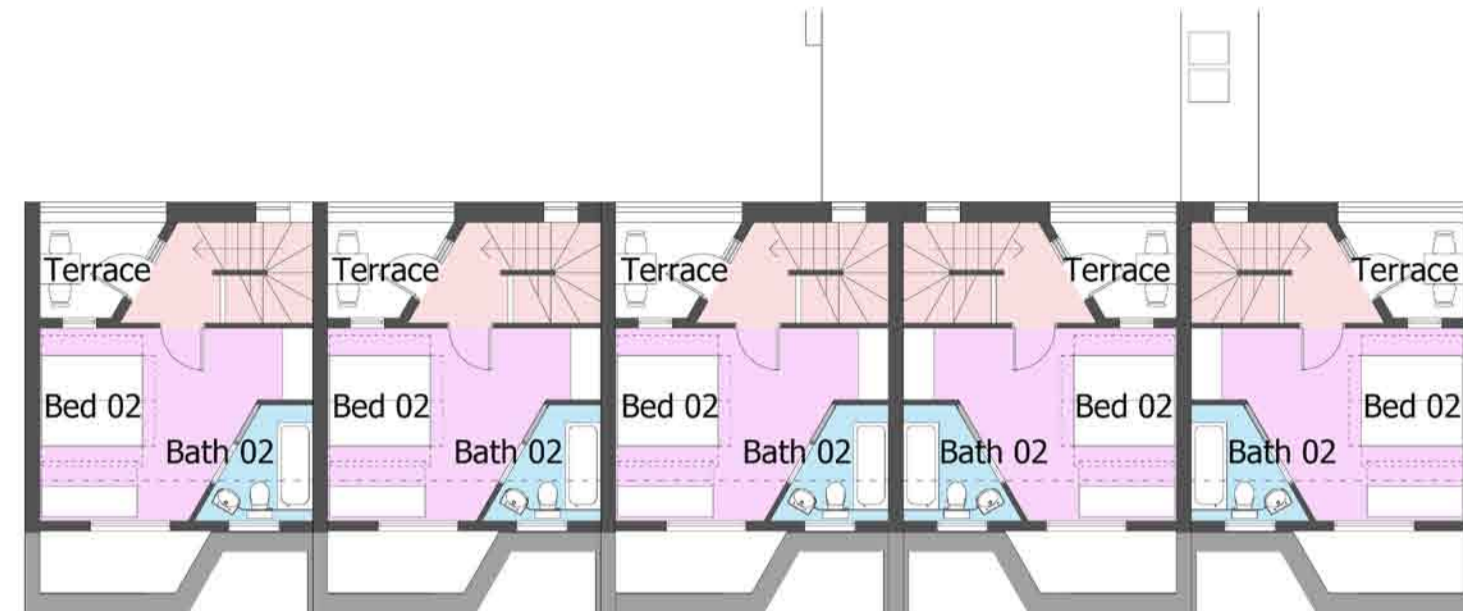
New Build Mews Houses

The 5 new houses have been designed to be in keeping with the low rise mews style and the original character of Ashton Court. The two bedroom homes include; a basement with living and storage space, a bedroom at ground level with a bathroom and utility, at first floor level there is a light open plan kitchen/living area with balcony. The master bedroom is on the second floor with ensuite and another balcony.

The homes will be designed with a fabric first approach and seek to meet code for sustainable homes level 4.



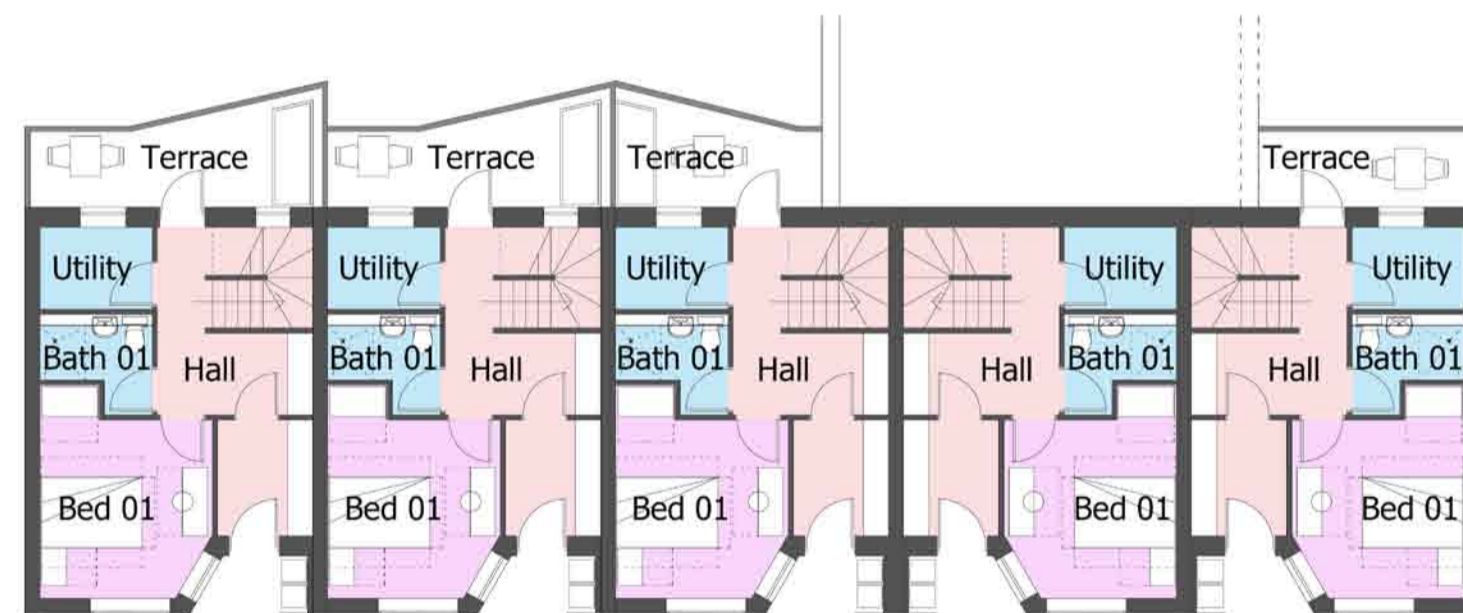
Roof Plan



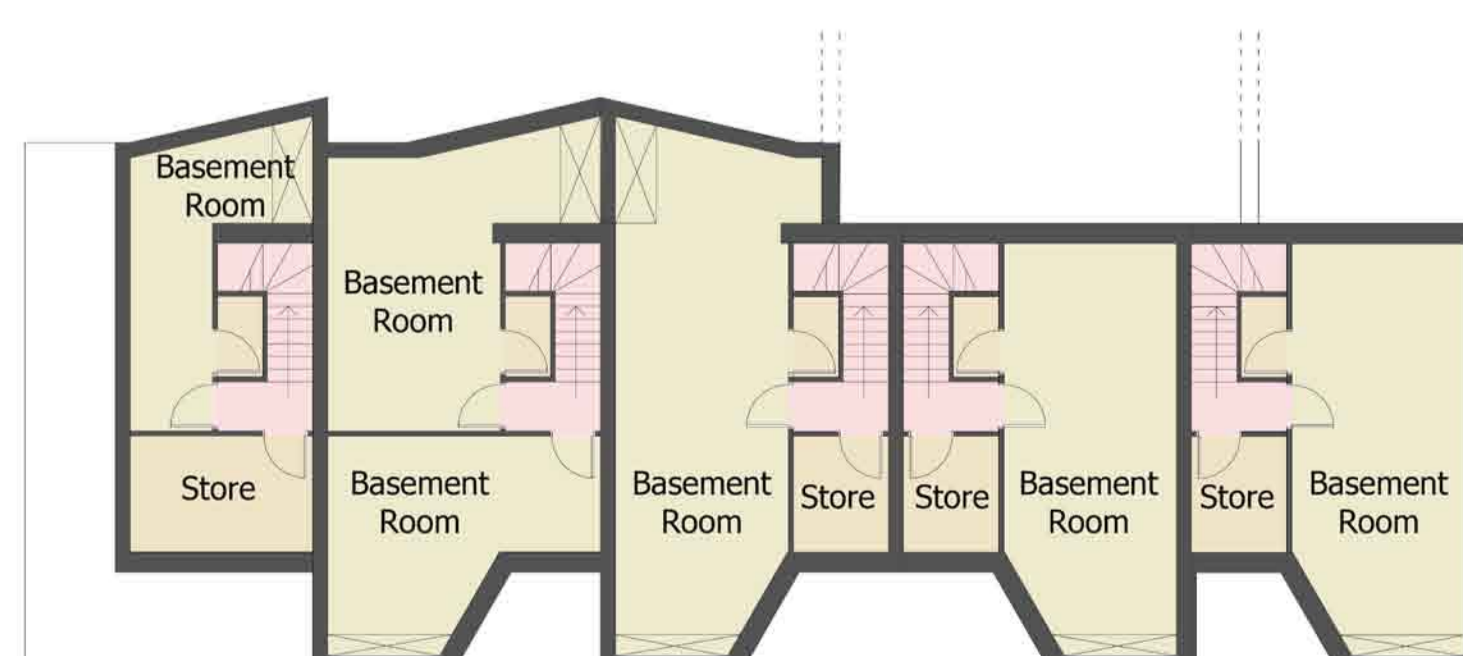
Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan



Basement Plan



Camden Mews Front Elevation



Camden Mews Rear Elevation



View along Camden Mews



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