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## **PLANNING STATEMENT**

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**NIDO STUDENT LIVING,  
BLACKBURN ROAD,  
WEST HAMPSTEAD**

**THE NIDO COLLECTION**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by CgMs Consulting on behalf of The Nido Collection (TNC) in relation to proposed development works at the existing student accommodation site located on the north side of Blackburn Road, West Hampstead.

1.2 Planning permission is sought for:

*'Erection of single storey extension at courtyard level to provide communal space, new canopy, new outdoor seating provision at street level and elevation alterations associated with use of the property as purpose built student accommodation'*

1.3 The development works are proposed in association with the reconfiguration of part of the internal floorspace at site to enhance the quality and function of the building, and accordingly the experience of its residents.

1.4 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to identify the context and need for the proposed development and provide an assessment of how the proposed development accords with relevant national, regional and local planning policies.

1.5 This Statement starts by analysing the details of the existing site and the surrounding area and additional context to application in Section 2.0; relevant planning history in Section 3.0, Proposed Development in Section 4.0; Relevant Planning Policy and Analysis in Section 5.0; and finally the conclusion in Section 6.0.

1.6 This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings.

## **2.0 APPLICATION CONTEXT**

### **Site and Surroundings**

- 2.1 The site comprises a part five, part seven and part nine storey block with flexible commercial space at ground floor. The main student entrance is on Blackburn Road, with the entrance to the commercial units at the ground floor of the right and left hand blocks.
- 2.2 The buildings form two 'L' shapes: one with its frontage on Blackburn Road and the side fronting trees separating the site from a Volkswagen showroom, the second backing on to the railway line with an arm at a perpendicular angle, fronting the office block to the west of the site. The blocks back on to a central courtyard, which is raised to sit at first floor level and is where the proposed extension will sit. This courtyard is accessed and utilised by students only, with skylights protruding from out of the courtyard providing natural light to the commercial premises below.
- 2.3 The site itself is bounded by Blackburn Road to the south, the railway line to the north and industrial units to the east and west. Approximately 100m west is West Hampstead Town Centre, which is served by the London Overground and Jubilee Lines. Finchley Road is to the east, which the o2 shopping centre and a number of restaurants and shops.

### **The Nido Collection (TNC)**

#### *Background*

- 2.4 In 2012 Round Hill Capital acquired the Nido Student Living housing portfolio from Blackstone. To manage the student housing portfolio, reposition the product, develop The Nido Collection (TNC) brand, and become a leader in the premium student accommodation market, Round Hill Capital developed the property management company, Nido Management UK (NMUK).

- 2.5 Both companies place the consumer at the heart of their strategies. They focus on consumer needs and trends to identify how to create superior product offerings and, ultimately, significantly increase value. TNC brings together the best from a wide range of industries, traditionally not associated with student accommodation, including learnings from the hotel, private residential, private members' club and luxury industries providing residents with superior facilities and an enhanced experience.
- 2.6 To bring their vision to life TNC focuses on developing exemplary digital platforms, Capex initiatives, additional services such as food and beverage offerings or concierge services, all sitting alongside a varied events programme.
- 2.7 TNC and Round Hill set the standard for the premium student housing market with an experiential led accommodation product.

*The Nido Collection*

- 2.8 In 2014 The Nido Collection was launched. It is a redevelopment of Nido Student Living, dedicated to creating an international club and residences for the under 27 global influencer.
- 2.9 Through a detailed understanding of their core consumer, TNC is positioned as a premium experiential offering, with a vision to rival and learn from the best in a wider range of industries, including hotels, private rental and luxury industries as well as private members' clubs.
- 2.10 To support their residents' ambitions TNC provides residences with exemplary facilities and premium services. These range from in-house food and beverage offerings to a 24 hour concierge service, alongside a varied events programme designed to enhance the residents' career opportunities and social lives as well as satisfy learning needs outside of university courses. This additional value proposition is unrivalled by other student or privately rented accommodation and allows TNC to position their rates at a higher level and to drive renewal and referral rates.

- 2.11 TNC's design and services principles are modeled on premium hotels and private members' clubs and aim at creating functional yet comfortable, aspirational communal spaces, and a more welcoming and warm environment for residents, without compromising on security.
- 2.12 Through their experiential programme TNC offers their residents access to a wide variety of events, ranging from 'Speaker Series' led by eminent industry leaders, leadership seminars, to a celebration of the Indian festival of colour, Holi. They partner with top brands and speakers, including Elite Model Management, designers who work with Paul Smith and Mr Porter, successful investors, entrepreneurs and charities as well as play host to culinary courses, CV writing seminars, fitness classes and presentation workshops.
- 2.13 To stay in touch with their current and potential residents, TNC publish an in-house newspaper, featuring student articles, neighbourhood hotspots and career advice. Furthermore, they invest in technology to manage music and screen content in any room at any Nido location at the touch of a button.

*Completed Site – Spitalfields*

- 2.14 In June 2014, TNC began the renovation of the flagship property in Spitalfields. The renovations have allowed TNC to create design focused social and study spaces including a private screening room, digital gaming and karaoke rooms, covered exhibition / lecture space, our 32nd floor panoramic restaurant, 33rd floor Library with Roof Terrace and Gallery Café serving premium coffee, bubble tea and artisan food.
- 2.15 To assist in understanding the principles of the development sought, images of the completed Spitalfields site are included in this submission.

### **3.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 A planning history search of the site has been carried out from publically accessible records made available by Camden Council and the relevant entries on the statutory register have been summarised below.
- 3.2 Planning permission was granted at Appeal on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010 for the *'erection of a part five, part seven, part nine storey plus basement building providing 2,110sqm. Of flexible B1 employment space at ground floor and 347 beds (39 cluster flats and 52 studios) of accommodation for students to upper floors (following demolition of existing car garage) at the former Mercedes Benz Garage, Blackburn Road, London, NW6 1AW,'* (Appeal ref. APP/X5210/A/10/2127151). All subsequent conditions have been discharged.
- 3.3 The successful Appeal follows Camden's Decision to refusal planning permission on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 (LPA ref. 2009/5823/P).
- 3.4 Amendments to the Appeal Decision were granted on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011, for the *'erection of a part five, part seven, part nine storey plus basement building providing B1 employment space and student accommodation, namely, to relocate plant, substation, cycle storage & student refuse store, relocation & alterations to main/servicing gates, yard and kerb, and alterations to ground floor fenestration,'* (LPA ref. 2011/3893/P).



## 4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 As noted above, it is the aspiration of TNC to provide a quality living environment to the occupiers of its properties to a much higher standard than of typical student living providers. The existing building is of functional form, with limited communal areas and a little used outdoor courtyard area. It does not meet its full potential. TNC propose to make better use of this underused courtyard area to provide facilities to the students via both informal relaxation and a structured programme of recreational and learning events.
- 4.2 The wider alterations to the building include internal changes to the reception area, access to the upper floors and the existing communal area to provide an enlarged student study space and re-located toilets. However, with these being internal works only, they do not form part of this submission.
- 4.3 The proposed development to which this application relates therefore comprises a 165 sq.m extension onto the courtyard at first floor level, maximising the space available and providing improved facilities for the students including:
- a) Events space with tiered seating at the western end;
  - b) Student lounge comprising informal seating area and study space; and
  - c) Café serving hot and cold food and drinks;
- 4.4 It is however the intention of TNC to allow the new structure to be used flexibly, dependant on the function or event being undertaken. It will however be used as ancillary floorspace to the existing structure to add wider benefits to the student population and student guests.
- 4.5 In physical terms, the proposed extension comprises one storey of floorspace, albeit with a high ceiling as required by the proposed event space use. The footprint will fill almost the full width of the existing northern elevation of the building facing the courtyard and will peak in the middle, with the sloping roof rising from the host building at a single storey height.

- 4.6 High quality, contemporary materials are proposed by way of standing seam roof, openable roof lights for natural ventilation, glazing across the frontage of the extension mounted on exposed concrete and structural framework detailing on the elevations to add interest whilst defining the structure from the current building.
- 4.7 In addition, it is proposed to make minor physical alterations to the front entrance area by way of a canopy, seating area and redesign the pedestrian area which is currently landscaped to provide tables and chairs for those using the building.

## **5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 This section assess how the proposal sits within Camden's Development Plan, which comprises of The London Plan (2015), including Minor Alterations to the London Plan, Camden's Core Strategy (2010), Camden's Development Management Policies (2010), Camden's Planning Guidance, Camden's Site Allocations Plan (2013) and Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (referendum version).
- 5.2 In addition to the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is a material consideration.
- 5.3 The site is located within the West Hampstead Growth Area and the London Plan Opportunity Area.

### **Principle of Development**

- 5.4 The Camden Growth Area and London Plan Growth Opportunity Area designations mean that growth and intensification of uses are encouraged in this area. The Council expect future development to be concentrated in growth areas including West Hampstead.
- 5.5 Generally, the Council expects improvements at West Hampstead Interchange and supports infrastructure to include:
- i. a mix of uses, including substantial new housing, town centre, employment and community uses, and open space;
  - ii. improved transport interchange accessibility and capacity and improved pedestrian and bicycle movement and routes;
  - iii. a substantially improved street environment around transport facilities, including improved crossing and wider pavements;
  - iv. sustainable and safe design of the highest quality that respects the character and heritage value of West Hampstead.

- 5.6 Broadly speaking, high quality development to support the role and function of the area in terms of access, economic viability and overall appearance will be encouraged by the Council. Whilst small scale, the proposed works will meet the above by way of increasing the quality of design in the area and seeking to create a better streetscape and active use of Blackburn Road that currently has limited quality in terms of public realm.
- 5.7 Camden Policy Guidance 2 (2013) notes the concern about over concentration of student accommodation, particularly with the wider housing mix in the community and residential amenity. This proposal does not however propose additional student beds on the site merely an extension and alterations to better the quality of the building for it's users. The extension will improve the communal space and provide additional services and thus the quality of the overall standard of the accommodation. Therefore the use and activity on the site will not be intensified but improved through assessing the needs of the student residents and improving the quality of their environment.
- 5.8 The Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan (NP) notes the number of large student schemes in the area and on Blackburn Road. Although additional large scale student housing has not been identified as a priority need for development within the area, this proposal seeks to maximise the potential of the existing site without increasing the intensity. The content of the NP in terms of student accommodation thus has limited relevance to the proposals.

### **Design Approach**

- 5.9 The current scheme was designed to meet a high standard, suitable and appropriate for the needs of the student residents. It provides an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the existing building given the works will be located within the central area which is sparse and underused.
- 5.10 In improving this communal space the design has been informed by relevant policies in Camden's Development Plan, namely Core strategy Policy CS14 which seeks to ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by:

- a. Requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;
- b. Seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible.

5.11 Further to this, Development Management Policy DM24 requires all development including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:

- a. Character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbourhood buildings;
- b. The character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;
- c. The quality of materials to be used;
- d. The provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;
- e. The appropriate location for building services equipment;
- f. Existing natural features, such as topography and trees;
- g. The provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;
- h. The provision of appropriate amenity space; and
- i. Accessibility.

5.12 Camden's Planning Guidance 2 on design of extensions states alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and its surroundings.

5.13 The Fortune Green and West Hampstead NP sets out design principles which all new development should achieve, which complements and enhances the distinct local character and identity of Fortune Green and West Hampstead. This shall be achieved through a number of criteria which seeks development to be sensitive to it's context and provides high quality design.

- 5.14 The Plan also notes the height of existing development makes a significant contribution to the overall character of the Area, however the height of the proposed development does not exceed that of the existing and therefore sits within the aspirations of the Plan.
- 5.15 In terms of the proposals, the detailing and materials are of an alternative and contrasting design to the built scheme which adds character and identity to the space without compromising the use or appearance of the building. This is in accordance with Camden's Planning Guidance which states alterations should always take into account the character and design of the property and surroundings. It notes that a harmonious contrast with the existing property and surroundings may be appropriate for some new work to distinguish it from the existing building.
- 5.16 The function, form and layout of the internal communal space will be improved significantly by the proposal and result in additional space for the residents to both work and socialise.
- 5.17 The existing street scene on Blackburn Road has been raised as a concern within the Fortune Green and West Hampstead NP including complaints about litter, dumping and a perception that it was a neglected and unsafe area. The new seating area outside the entrance seeks to increase the activity at street level and enhance the perception of the area, going some way towards the criteria in the NP.
- 5.18 The scheme presents an appropriate extension to the built form which meets the needs of the residents whilst presenting an interesting and attractive architectural feature on the building. Overall the extension will have limited impact on the wider area given its location in the centre of a much larger building, whilst addressing an opportunity to make better use of the property on Blackburn Road. On this basis it will make a positive contribution in visual terms.

## **Amenity Considerations**

- 5.19 Effort has been made to maintain the amenity of the existing residents through compliance with Development Management Policy DM26 which seeks to consider the following in determining applications:
- a. Visual privacy and overlooking
  - b. Overshadowing and outlook;
  - c. Sunlight, daylight and artificial levels;
  - d. Noise and vibration levels;
  - e. Odour, fumes and dust;
  - f. Microclimate;
  - g. The inclusion of appropriate attenuation measures.

*Overlooking / Outlook / Daylight & Sunlight etc.*

- 5.20 As stated in the Development Management document, development's impact on visual privacy, overlooking, overshadowing, outlook, access to daylight and sunlight and disturbance from artificial light can be influenced by its design and layout, the distance between properties, the vertical levels of onlookers or occupiers and the angle of views will be assessed by the Council.
- 5.21 Given the siting of the proposed works within the central courtyard area, there will be no overlooking implications on surrounding properties.
- 5.22 The computer generated images submitted with the application provide a clearer visual image of the proposal and how the outlook from the windows of the student rooms will be affected. The amenity of students in these rooms will not be compromised by the development and the proposed extension by way of its height and massing will not impact the daylight and sunlight levels which reach the flats at the upper floors.

5.23 There will be no impact in terms of occupiers of neighbouring buildings as the courtyard works will be set away from the boundary of the property, as well as limiting views from the existing courtyard area as the new structure will be comprised of materials on the west elevation that negate persons looking out of the premises.

5.24 Materials chosen in the development of the scheme are predominately glass and other lightweight materials which are not visually intrusive for the existing residents.

*Noise / Activity*

5.25 Development Management Policy DM28 states the Council seek to ensure that noise and vibration is controlled and managed. The development will increase the function and layout of the communal space but has been designed to mitigate against the noise created by activity in the space.

5.26 The development is controlled by a Student Management Plan that was required within the S106 Agreement associated with the master permission. TNC will continue to adhere to the Plan.

5.27 With regard to any noise or activity generated by the additional floorspace, TNC will manage events etc. put on where there may be interest from a body of residents. Management will ensure that there are no impacts on surrounding occupiers (including those in the building) by restricting attendance numbers / hours of use etc. Similarly the small outdoor seating area to the front of the building will also be managed, with the tables / chairs removed outside daytime hours.

5.28 In terms of plant or extraction kit, some will be required associated with the café use, however this will be amalgamated into the existing services within the building.



## **Sustainability**

- 5.29 All development should incorporate sustainable design and construction measures in accordance with DM22. Camden have set out sustainability guidance within Planning Guidance 3, which encourages all new development to reduce the demand for energy, use renewable energy and supply energy efficiently.
- 5.30 Given the proposed is approximately 200 sqm, a separate energy and sustainability statement has not been provided with this application in line with validation requirements.

## **Refuse**

- 5.31 The new structure will sit over an existing refuse chute to ground floor level, albeit the location of the bins etc. for the property will not change. To address this, the property will be managed by way of staff collecting refuse from locations stored centrally within each core of the property, then taken by staff down to the existing storage area via the parking / yard area.

## **Car / Cycle Parking**

- 5.32 As the proposed works as associated with the existing student accommodation use and will not incur any intensification of the site, the car and cycle parking provision at site will remain in its current form.

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The site is an existing student property with 347 rooms and this planning application seeks to extend the communal space at first floor level onto the terrace to house a new events space, student lounge, study space and café.
- 6.2 Relevant design considerations have been taken into account and it was chosen to create a feature extension of contrasting materials and form of the original building to give the building a unique identity.
- 6.3 The proposal will not increase the density of the development in terms of either occupation, or the activity on the site but will expand upon the existing communal space and provide an improved function and layout of the space available.
- 6.4 The design also considers the amenity of the existing residents. This has been preserved with regards to noise and daylight and sunlight issues, with the roof not blocking light into the student bedrooms at the upper floors.
- 6.5 In terms of amenity on the wider area, the use of the floorspace and enhanced wider facilities will be managed by Nido's on and off site Management Team to ensure that no detrimental impact on amenity occurs.
- 6.6 We consider this extension to be of an innovative design and appropriate way of maximising the space available. The scheme is in accordance with Camden's Development Plan and thus should be granted planning permission without delay.

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