



**WALSINGHAM PLANNING**

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**NOS. 4 – 8  
CRABTREE PLACE  
WHITFIELD STREET  
LONDON  
W1T 2AT**

**JULY 2017**

## 1.0 THE SITE

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- 1.1 Walsingham Planning has been asked to prepare and submit an application to create roof terraces and roof access on the roofs of six of the seven terrace/town-house dwellings on Crabtree Place (Nos. 4 to 8 Crabtree Place). This application is made on behalf of all of the owners of these 5 properties: Daniel Fitz, JCA Group, Richard Sykes, Caroline Whiteley and Kyrill Petrin (referred to as Dan Fitz et al. on the application form).
- 1.2 Whitfield Street lies around 60m west of, and runs parallel to, the A400 Tottenham Court Road. The area is characterised by a diverse mix of uses. There are shops, offices and restaurants etc. at ground floor level with residential uses and offices above.
- 1.3 Crabtree Place is the redevelopment of the former electricity substation and offices at 7-15 Whitfield Street. It is located on the west side of Whitfield Street, close to its southern end where it forms a T-junction with Windmill Street. Crabtree Place comprises several distinct elements:
- A small electricity substation at basement level in the northeast corner of the site;
  - Commercial floor space at lower ground floor level on the Whitfield Street frontage (accessed from Whitfield Street);
  - Thirteen residential flats (Flats 1 to 9 Crabtree House and Apartments 1 to 4, No. 1 Crabtree Place) on the ground to fourth floors and in the set-back fifth-floor penthouse on the Whitfield Street frontage;
  - Seven (three-storey) terrace/town-house dwellings (Nos. 2 to 8 Crabtree Place) facing north onto Crabtree Fields; and
  - Two residential flats (Nos. 9 and 10 Crabtree Place) in a two-storey block at the western end of the line of terraced houses and the site.



*Crabtree House / Place - 6 storey front element*



*Crabtree Place town houses and flats*

## 2.0 PLANNING HISTORY

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- 2.1 In January 2008 planning permission 2007/5162/P was granted for the “*Redevelopment of site comprising the erection of a part 2, 3, and 6 storey building with retained basement, for uses comprising 22 self-contained residential flats (Class C3), flexible Class B1/D1/D2 uses, a secondary electricity substation (Sui Generis) and ancillary facilities including a service area with retained vehicular access from Whitfield Street, refuse store and cycle parking.*” (Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the existing sub-station building was granted in December 2007, LPA ref: 2007/5188/C)
- 2.2 Application 2008/4667/P sought revisions to this original consent, but was refused. In June 2010, application 2009/1215/P was granted. This was a variation to the original consent that reduced the number of bedrooms in the townhouses from four to three and other minor changes.
- 2.3 Consent for the “*Installation of a new satellite dish and aerial, new air conditioning units within acoustic screen and boiler flue enclosure, all on roof of block fronting onto Whitfield St.*” was granted in January 2011 (application 2010/4355/P).

### 3.0 THE PROPOSAL

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- 3.1 The terraced houses at Nos.2 to 8 Crabtree Place have private outdoor space to their rear (south) at ground floor level. However, this space has always been overshadowed by the taller (up to six-storey) buildings fronting onto Windmill Street immediately to the south. The rear extension of 38-42 Windmill Street has exacerbated this problem (Application number 2010/5167/P consented 05/05/2011), creating an overbearing sense of enclosure in this space. As a result, its value as outdoor amenity space for the residents of Crabtree Place is severely curtailed.
- 3.2 Most of the residents of Crabtree Place (Nos. 4 to 8) wish to address this deficiency by creating new outdoor amenity space on their roofs. This will involve the installation of covered stairs from the second floor of each of these terraced houses onto the roof. Some of the building's existing green roof will be lost in the creation of these roof terraces, however, this loss will be offset by the use of green walls in the structures covering the new stairs. These green walls will also provide privacy, screening the roof terraces from the rear windows of the nearby buildings to the south and west (and vice-versa).
- 3.3 Pre-application advice (LPA reference: 2016/4337/PRE) has been received in relation to this application and the design of the proposed roof terraces has been significantly altered in light of that advice, with the built volume over the covered stairs and the actual area of the proposed roof terraces being reduced.
- 3.4 More details of the proposal are contained in the Drawings and the Design & Access Statement that are submitted in support of this application.



*Crabtree Place existing green roof*

## 4.0 PLANNING POLICY

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### National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 The NPPF is a high-level document that does not offer any meaningful policy direction on an application of this scale, beyond its general support for sustainable development and the desire to conserve and enhance heritage assets.

### London Plan 2016

- 4.2 London Plan Policy 3.4: *Optimising housing potential* states that *...development should optimise housing output for different types of location...* The lack of worthwhile outdoor amenity space means that the housing on this site has not been optimised and this application seeks to remedy this problem.
- 4.3 Policy 7.4: *Local Character* states that *...Buildings, streets and open spaces should provide a high-quality design...*and lists various requirements relating to orientation, scale, character etc. As indicated in the supporting Design and Access Statement, the proposed design and its integration with the local area's character have been carefully considered.
- 4.4 Policy 7.5 addresses *Public realm* and its supporting text mentions the importance of security in public spaces. As the proposed roof terraces will overlook the public open space of Crabtree Fields, they will make a positive contribution to the sense of security in that space.
- 4.5 Policy 7.6: *Architecture* echoes Policy 7.4 in terms of requirements for high quality design etc. As previously noted, the Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application addresses these points in detail.

## Local Development Plan

4.6 The extant Local Development Plan for the site comprises the Camden Core Strategy and the Camden Development Policies (both adopted November 2010). Core Strategy Policy CS5: *Managing the impact of growth and development* states that [inter alia] *...the Council will protect the amenity of Camden's residents and those working in and visiting the borough by: e) making sure that the impact of developments on their occupiers and neighbours is fully considered...* The impact on neighbours from this proposed development has been fully considered and the scheme has been designed so that the nearby buildings to the west and south are screened from the roof terraces, and vice-versa.

4.7 Policy CS6 is called *Providing quality homes* but its main focus is on the supply, size and affordability of new housing and so it is not particularly relevant to this application to alter existing homes.

4.8 Policy CS14: *Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage* states that:

*The Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by [inter alia]:*

- a) requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;*
- b) preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens;*

The submitted Design and Access Statement addresses part a) of this policy, while the Heritage section, below addresses part b).

4.9 Policy CS15: *addresses Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces and encouraging biodiversity*. As previously noted, the applicant believes that this proposal will improve the security of the nearby Crabtree Fields open space as it increases



surveillance of this area. The use of green walls will also contribute to encouraging biodiversity in this area.

- 4.10 Camden Development Policies Policy DP22: *Promoting sustainable design and construction* supports the incorporation of green roofs and walls into developments. The original building and these proposed improvements have taken this requirement into account and made use of green roofs and walls.
- 4.11 Policy DP24: *Securing high quality design* contains various design requirements including the provision of appropriate amenity space. It is a lack of (worthwhile) amenity space that this application seeks to address. Other design considerations are addressed in the supporting Design and Access Statement submitted with this application.
- 4.12 Policy DP25: *Conserving Camden's heritage* is relevant because, although it is not a listed building, the site falls within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area. Heritage issues are dealt with in Section 5 of this Statement, below.
- 4.13 Policy DP26 addresses *Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours*. This policy indicates that various factors will be considered to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. Of these, only the first two, ... *visual privacy and overlooking...* and ... *overshadowing and outlook...* are relevant to this application. Both of these have been carefully considered in the design of the proposed roof terraces. It should also be noted that this policy supports the provision of ...*outdoor space for private or communal amenity space, wherever practical...* and therefore supports this application.
- 4.14 Policy DP31: *Provision of, and improvements to, open space and outdoor sport and recreation facilities* seeks to protect open space. This proposal will provide private open space and will not have any detrimental impact on the adjoining public open space.
- 4.15 Overall, the relevant planning policies clearly support these proposals for greatly improved outdoor amenity space at Crabtree Place. There is nothing in the policies that indicates that consent should not be granted to this application.



## 5.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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- 5.1 Crabtree Place / House is a new building which is less than 10 years old. It does not therefore have any intrinsic heritage value of its own, rather, its only heritage value is in the contribution it makes to the Conservation Area in which it is located.
- 5.2 In this regard, it is important to note that Crabtree Place is not a “Mews” in the traditional/historic sense of the word. Mews were stables and coach houses (usually with servants’ quarters and/or storage above) located on alleys or backstreets to the rear of large terraced houses (to which they were functionally linked). Today, many mews have been converted into dwellings that are separate from the houses they originally served. The term “mews” or “modern mews” is now often used in marketing to make modern terraced housing (especially that with a garage integrated into the ground floor) sound more interesting and upmarket.
- 5.3 However, as noted above, this site was formerly occupied by an electricity sub-station with offices above. While Crabtree Place now runs to the rear of Windmill Street there was/is no historic/functional link between the two rows of buildings. In addition, Crabtree Place is pedestrianised and offers no access or storage for cars (or indeed horses and carriages).
- 5.4 Crabtree Place has therefore taken design queues from the mews concept and this has helped it fit in with the surrounding older buildings. However, it is an independent, modern building and it is clearly seen as such within the wider street scene. It must therefore be treated as such. This point is reinforced by the existing (and very modern) green roof, which is already present in views from many of the vantage points that would also give clear views of the proposed roof terraces.
- 5.5 The current design of Crabtree Place has been deemed appropriate for its location, otherwise consent would not have been granted. The Officer’s Committee Report on application 2007/5162/P states (para. 7.2) *...the design respects both the setting of the adjoining historic townscape and open space without detracting from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the usability of the public open space...*

- 5.6 As noted in the supporting Design and Access Statement, roof terraces and gardens are very common in this part of London, whether on historic buildings (such as the terraced houses of Colville Place) or modern buildings (such as the offices at 6-10 Whitfield Street). Many of these can be seen from street level and not just from more elevated vantage points. More generally, the skylines in the vicinity of the site are highly varied, with the homogeneity of the roof seen on Crabtree Place not repeated elsewhere.
- 5.7 As noted above, Crabtree Place already seeks to make use of its roof space by way of a green roof. The addition of roof terraces to this building would therefore be in keeping with both the host building and the wider context of the area. It can therefore be concluded that there would be no detrimental impact on either the host building or the wider Conservation Area from this proposed development.

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

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- 6.1 This application is intended to allow better use of the available space at Crabtree Place and to improve the amenity space available to residents. It is supported by relevant planning policies and there are no material considerations that indicate that consent should not be granted. This application is therefore commended to Camden Council.

**Euan Brown  
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July 2017**