

Crabtree Place
7-15 Whitfield Street
London W1T 2AT

Full Planning Application

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Prepared by:
ADZ Architects Limited

On behalf of:
Crabtree Freehold Inc

August 2017

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ADZ Architects
One Bonny Street
London NW1 9PE

T: 020 7485 9029
E: zsoltmoldan@adzarchitects.com

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by ADZ Architects on behalf of Crabtree Freehold Ltd, the Applicant, to accompany a Full Planning Application for roof terraces with covered access stairs to each of Nos. 4-8 incl. Crabtree Place, 7-15 Whitfield Street, London W1T 2AT

1.2 The Statement follows the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Guidance which requires that a Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of planning applications.

In particular, in accordance with this guidance, this Statement will :

- Demonstrate how the proposals respond to the Application Site's context
- Explain the amount of development, its location and its relationship to its surroundings
- Explain the scale of the development and how it relates to its surroundings
- Explain and justify the principles behind the choice of location of the proposed development
- Explain and justify the principles behind the proposed landscaping scheme
- Explain and justify how the relevant users will have access to the proposed development as well as access for the maintenance of the common parts

1.3 This statement is to be read in the context of the drawings prepared by ADZ Architects and in conjunction with the other documents submitted in support of the proposed development , including;

- Planning Policy Statement prepared by Walsingham Planning
- Draft Construction Management Plan prepared by ADZ Architects
- Design & Access Statement prepared by ADZ Architects

1.4 Pre-planning application enquiry

A pre-planning application advice request was submitted on 7th September 2016 together with the appropriate fee of £ 960.00

The allocated case officer, John Diver visited the site on 29th September 2016 and having given his initial assessment to the applicant's agent, Zsolt Moldan of ADZ Architects, the design was re-assessed and re-submitted on 6th October 2016

The formal letter included a detailed schedule of relevant planning policies and guidance, an assessment on design and conservation, residential amenity, transport/highways, a conclusion and planning application information on the basis that a planning application should be submitted which satisfactorily addresses the outstanding issues detailed in the formal letter.

The following Design & Access Statement, Drawings and Planning Policy statement demonstrate that all outstanding issues have been satisfactorily addressed.

2.0 THE EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

Nos. 7-15 Whitfield Street, now referred to as Crabtree Place, Whitfield Street is a mixed use development completed in 2010.

Prior to the development the site was occupied by a disused EDF Electricity Substation which included upper storey offices and transformers extending down to a double basement.

The existing development comprises four distinct components:

- i) The retention of a small local substation at basement with ground floor access at the north eastern corner of the site.
- ii) A residential building along the Whitfield Street frontage at ground, first, second, third, fourth and set back penthouse floor accommodating nine affordable rented units, four private units and access to below ground commercial space.
- iii) Seven 3-bed, 3 storey terrace units located off a pedestrian access route orientated towards Crabtree Fields and the playground with a 2-storey unit at the western end of the site providing two 1-bed shared ownership units.
- iv) Commercial floor space at Lower Ground and Basement levels with Ground Floor entrance at the southern end of the Whitfield Street frontage through the Whitfield Street building.

The site is located within the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, which is characterised by a mix of residential and commercial uses. The site is also located within the Central London business, commercial and entertainment core of the Conservation Area.

3.0 CONTEXT

3.1 Existing context

The most relevant neighbouring buildings that establish the character, setting, context, form and scale are Nos. 1-7 Colville Place which enclose the northern side of Crabtree Fields and are therefore directly opposite Crabtree Place. Numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 Colville Place are all three storey Georgian terraces. With the exception of No. 5, all these have had a subsequent fourth storey setback accommodation added with roof terraces and balustrades located directly above the main façades.

The various treatments are as follows;

- No. 2 Metal framed glass balustrade to roof terrace
- No. 3 Metal pipes/cables and screening balustrade to roof terrace
- No. 4 Metal railings to roof terrace
- No. 6 Glass balustrade to roof terrace
- No. 7 Wrought iron railings to roof terrace

The various treatments of balustrades to roof terraces continues above Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 Colville Place. What is significant here is that the concept of roof terraces added along with set-back accommodation has long been established directly overlooking Crabtree Fields.

The skyline surrounding Crabtree Place comprises Colville Place, Whitfield Street and the rear of Charlotte Street and Windmill Street. All of these have variety of height and detail and therefore this random variety establishes the character of the surrounding Charlotte Street Conservation Area.

The building at Crabtree Place has its frontage along Whitfield Street, and a set-back penthouse floor which is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area as described above. However the long flat roof of the seven terraced properties that run along the southern edge of Crabtree Fields would be more in character with the surrounding forms and uses with the addition of the proposals.

The proposal that is the subject of this Full Planning Application seeks to address this anomaly by introducing variety into the skyline along the southern edge of Crabtree Fields. It will consider the character, setting, context, form and scale of neighbouring buildings, and in the process, secure a high quality of design.

3.2 The Proposed Context Location

Five of the terraced residential units along Crabtree Place, Numbers 4-8 inclusive are proposing individual internal access stairs from the second floors, up to a covered stair leading to roof terraces. These have been located as centrally in the roof area as possible so as to retain the perimeter green roof and also to maximise the privacy of the facilities created.

The covered stair elements have been configured as three units, being a single at the western end with two paired units. This ensures that there will be no overlooking at the western end towards the rear of 22, 24 and 26 Charlotte Street, which properties are closest to the covered stair to No. 8 Crabtree Place at the western end.

3.3 Scale

The covered stair structures are modest in size, being adequate to accommodate the staircase and storage of garden furniture during the winter months.

Their overall height will not exceed 2.40 metres and they will occupy just 14% of the overall roof area.

The driving factor for this external amenity was triggered by the recent unneighbourly extension to the rear of 38-40 Windmill Street which has rendered the rear ground floor terraces of the properties very oppressive due to the dramatic increase in a sense of enclosure.

3.4 Existing uses

The existing roof has been finished as a green roof over its entire area, only interrupted by seven roof lights that provide daylight into the second floor hallways of the terraced properties. As the perimeter parapet is of minimal height, there is a 'mansafe' installation along the full length of the roof designed for the safety of maintenance operatives.

The main shortcoming of the present arrangement is that there is no access onto the green roof and therefore it has not had the benefit of maintenance since its completion some six years ago.

It is highly likely that there will be weeds and windblown debris present on the roof.

3.5 Proposed uses

Large areas of the existing green roof will be retained along the outer zones of the roof. Maintenance access will be provided by introducing a door off the staircase landing that abuts the green roof to the east. The 'mansafe' installation will be relocated to take account of the new layout.

The screening of the proposed roof terraces on the south side will take the form of double sided green walls that will;

- Go towards compensating for the reduction of green roof area
- Provide a pleasant outlook from the rear of the properties along Windmill Street
- Provide the scope for installation of bat and bird boxes that will serve to encourage wildlife
- Provide a pleasant outlook to the proposed roof terraces

The roof terraces themselves will be largely covered in artificial grass to match the existing at ground floor and will;

- Intensify the appearance of the green roof
- Be light in weight and relatively easy to maintain

Each of the owners of the roof terraces will introduce additional landscaping in the form of planting including small trees in containers that will add dimensionality to the overall green areas.

The variety and dimensionality of the proposed landscaping, enhanced by the installation of bird and bat boxes in carefully selected locations, will without doubt improve the local ecology.

3.6 Appearance

The covered access stair enclosures will be clad in horizontal timber boarding that will match the existing timber boarded bays along the southern elevation in order to retain the consistency and integrity of the overall design.

Similarly, the glazed areas giving access to the roof terraces will match the scale and detail of the existing glazing at first and second floors.

The curved metal railings have been designed specifically to soften the interface between the retained green roof and the new roof terraces and these railings themselves will merge with both the green roof in the foreground and the landscaped roof terraces in the background.

The small flat roofs will be of light weight construction and will match the flat roof over the penthouse unit along Whitfield Street.

To summarise the appearance of the proposed elements, all proposed materials and details will match relevant existing materials and details such that the overall consistency and integrity of the building is not only maintained but enhanced in the context of the surrounding Conservation Area.