

**7-9 PRATT STREET, CAMDEN, LONDON NW1 0AE  
FULL PLANNING APPLICATION TO THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN  
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF GLASS PRIVACY SCREEN ON EXISTING 3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR ROOF TERRACE**

**Planning statement v2 – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**Introduction;**

The applicant is seeking full planning permission to instal a glass privacy screen to an existing flat roof terrace at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor to the front of the building for use as break-out space by the tenants - Osbornes Law (OL) - an established firm of Solicitors providing a range of community-based legal services for local inhabitants of Camden Town. OL have exclusive occupancy of the entire building – including the ground floor.

**Planning background;**

Note: We are unable to provide a definitive planning history as historical records (pre 2010) are not currently available on the Camden Council planning applications search facility.

7-9 Pratt Street, Camden is a self-contained office block – possibly built circa 1980's.

The building façade to Pratt Street is in most respects unremarkable and 'of the period' in terms of basic brick and concrete construction with very little embellishment. There is however one distinctive feature – a semi-circular projecting bay at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor which cantilevers out from the frontage and provides a 'canopy' to the main Ground Floor entrance.

The 2004 planning application showed railings mounted on the existing parapets to all elevations – presumably in anticipation of the external terraces being used by the occupants. The planning consent however included a condition that there should be no access to the external roof areas other than for maintenance and repair – on the grounds that use of the terraces might give rise to issues of '*.. infringement of the privacy of adjoining owners*'.

The new 3<sup>rd</sup> floor penthouse office suite was presumably built in 2005 however the railings to the parapet walls were omitted. It should be noted that the penthouse office suite is not visible from ground level in Pratt Street (See photo on drawing P07) as the façade is set back from the main elevation by approximately 3.5m and the external walls - comprising full height panels of glass and zinc sheet cladding - are inclined at about 70 degrees.

In October 2005 an application was submitted seeking removal of the planning condition to restrict use of the external roof areas. The application was supported by a number of plans and elevations from the earlier full application but still showing the proposal for railings mounted on the parapet walls.

Although accompanied by a statement of support from the tenants (Osborne Solicitors – at that time new leaseholders) the application was refused for the following reason – '*The use of the flat roof as a terrace would be likely to result in unreasonable overlooking of neighbouring properties to the detriment of the amenities of the occupiers of these properties contrary to policies EN1 .... & ..... EN19 .... of the London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan 2000.*'

**Brief;**

Osbornes Law (OL) have occupied 7-9 Pratt Street for more than a decade and are an established legal firm providing essential services to the people of Camden and further afield. OL are keen to continue to work from 7-9 Pratt Street even though in recent years the success of the practice has led to an increase in the number of staff and a corresponding pressure on desk/floor space in the main offices. This has become particularly acute on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor where in a 'penthouse' scenario one might usually expect a slightly more relaxed open-plan work environment.

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The Partners, Clients and staff would all benefit from having the use of an informal multi-purpose 'break-out' space. The existing roof terrace to the front of the building has the potential to provide an occasional 'extension' to the general office – subject to planning .... and weather permitting.

Acknowledging that the earlier proposals for railings mounted on the parapets would fail to address the concerns regarding the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties the brief for this application was to develop proposals for the installation of privacy screens to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor front roof terrace and demonstrate that the above concerns can be satisfactorily addressed, achieve compliance with all current planning policies relative to the proposal and would be acceptable to neighbours – whether commercial or residential.

**Access, design & materials;**

The existing roof terrace has a timber-board deck installed onto a steel beam sub-structure with masonry parapets of varying heights to the principal elevations.

The proposed privacy screens will be fixed to the existing steel-beam sub-structure and set back behind the parapets so that only the upper parts of the screen would be visible from street level or the buildings opposite.

Access to the roof terrace is via an existing door in the east-facing elevation of the penthouse office. As with all other elevations at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor the fenestration is set away from the parapet creating walkways of varying width – currently used only for maintenance access.

To protect the privacy of the occupants of the top floor of 11-13 Pratt Street the proposed privacy screen will return north along the parapet to the Party Wall with nos 11-13 so that the screen will overlap and 'mask' the door to/from the penthouse office.

The design for the privacy screen adopts the following principles;

- The screen is to be a bespoke design using high-quality materials – befitting a successful commercial business. The detail design and specifications will be developed with a Structural Engineer and a preferred supplier to ensure compliance with appropriate standards for structural integrity, personal safety and security.
- The glass is to have a translucent white PVB interlayer so that natural light can permeate the glass in both directions but prevent visibility through the glass to ensure that there is no opportunity for overlooking adjoining properties and those across the road.
- The screen is to be a minimum 1.8m high and continuous for the full length of the Pratt Street elevation with returns to the east and west Party Walls.
- The screen will prevent inadvertent noise-spill that might otherwise impact the amenity of those in adjoining properties and those opposite. Laminated glass is often used for windows where acoustic attenuation is considered necessary to reduce potential noise disturbance from traffic and other sources.
- Steel posts at 900mm centres will support laminated glass panels and the screen is to be set back behind the existing parapet walls. The glass panels will oversail the steel posts with no top rail - to minimise the apparent visual impact when seen from street level. It is an established principle that when viewed obliquely from below translucent glass privacy screens 'de-materialise' as the glass will reflect the sky – particularly on cloudy or over-cast days.
- The screen will 'track' the semi-circular bay with curved glass panels – not faceted as the glazing on the floors below.

**Management and use;**

See supporting statement provided by Osbornes Law.