

Coram Mansions

64-66 Millman Street

London

WC1N 3EF

(Part Ground & Part Lower Ground Floor)

# Planning Application

Design and Access Statement

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Issue 1

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# 1 Introduction

1. The subject property is an existing building located on the eastern side of Millman Street, WC1.
2. The property consists of a lower ground floor, ground floor, three upper floors and a recently constructed mansard at fourth floor level. There is a garden to the rear of the property.
3. The property has two commercial units at ground floor, one to each side of a central entrance and stair core.
4. The upper floors are accessed via the central doorway on Millman street, which leads to an entrance hall and staircase which provides access to the upper four floors of residential accommodation. This stair also leads down half a flight to the rear garden level and then a further half flight to the lower ground floor.
5. The northern half of the property at ground and lower ground floors, is occupied by a restaurant. The southern half of the property at ground and lower ground floors, has been vacant for over two years, despite constant marketing over this time.
6. The applicant appointed the Colliers as the Agent to oversee the marketing of the property, as they are the dominant agent for west end commercial properties such as this. Colliers marketing report is enclosed with this application and explains the efforts made to let the space, local market values, demand and the lack of interest in the property.
7. The proposals explained in this application relate to the vacant southern part of the ground and lower ground floors, which has proven difficult to lease.
8. It is proposed that these vacant spaces are converted from their current use into C3 residential use class.
9. The existing property is not Listed but is understood to be within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
10. **Existing land use.** The restaurant use to the northern side (ground and lower ground) is understood to have an A3 use.

To the southern side the vacant spaces formerly had a B1a use. The upper four floors have a C3 use.

11. To the rear of the property at a level approximately half way between ground and lower ground is an open garden / yard which is in the same ownership as the ground and lower ground floors of the property, and as such will be considered as a part of these proposals.
12. The rear of the garden is enclosed by the rear wall of an existing building. This neighbouring property has very few windows and does not look into the garden or into the subject property.
13. The two shorter sides of the garden are enclosed by high brick walls.
14. There are two trees within the garden, species unknown.
15. The rear elevation of the building is quite functional, with a stack of small metal balconies to each side of the elevation, presumably one per dwelling.
16. Facing Millman Street, the restaurant has a small seating terrace, whilst the vacant commercial unit to the south, has a set of pavement lights over a lightwell, illuminating part of the lower ground floor.

## 2 Proposal

1. The proposed development would seek to convert the vacant B1a floor space at ground and lower ground levels into C3 use and to form two new high quality dwellings.
2. A small extension is added to the rear of the property at lower ground level, requiring some excavation. A smaller extension is made above this to provide additional space for the proposed ground floor flat.
3. It is proposed that the pavement lights outside the

ground floor commercial unit are removed, opening up the lightwell into the lower ground floor. At ground level, this lightwell is surrounded with metal railings of similar height, colour and pattern to those of the neighbouring buildings.

4. The lightwell will receive a cosmetic upgrade and the windows between the main body of the property and the lightwell will be slightly widened.
5. The flat at lower ground floor is accessed from the main communal street level entrance and staircase. The door at the top of the staircase leading down to the basement effectively becomes the front door to the lower ground floor flat. The ground floor flat is simply accessed via its own door at street level, in the same manner as the existing vacant unit.
6. The two new flats have been designed to orientate the open plan living spaces towards the private courtyard / garden at the rear of the property, whilst the bedrooms are orientated towards the street. The lightwell provides separation between the street and the bedrooms improving privacy and security.
7. The new ground floor windows are to be carefully designed to respond to the pattern of the upper windows, whilst responding to the shop-front nature of the existing building. The window will feature a grid which relates to the existing proportions of the building, and a number of clear glass panels, solid panels and openable acoustically absorbing air inlet panels.
8. The ground floor flat creates two bedspaces, and a generous living space which exceeds the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards. This flat has a small rear extension and small terrace. The large opening glass windows to this rear elevation and glass balustrade to the terrace will be carefully designed to provide ventilation and light, but also to provide privacy to the

residents.

9. The lower ground flat, also extends into the garden and also provides two bedspaces, although is slightly larger. The layout is similar, with the two bedrooms looking into the bright light-well which is also accessible from the rooms providing some amenity space. The living spaces face the rear garden, partially cut into the existing topography, although it is also proposed to terrace the rear hardscape up to the existing level, creating space for landscape, planting and seating for the basement dwelling.
10. **Trees.** The two trees in the rear garden need to be assessed for safety and sustainability as they are close to existing buildings on all sides. One of the trees is close to the proposed extension and some of the root zone may be affected, depending on the foundation requirements for the work. Should either or both of the trees be determined to be unsustainable in the present location, works will be proposed either to cut them back, remove them completely or replace with sustainable alternatives on or off site.
11. **Daylight & Sunlight.** This proposal has no impact on the amenity or daylight received by the neighbouring properties, equally the proposed dwellings will receive good levels of natural light and ventilation.
12. **Materials.** The Millman street elevation will be relatively unchanged. The large shop front type window will be redesigned using the existing stucco decorative surround. The entrance door and glazing will be carefully designed to balance the need for light and ventilation with privacy, security and acoustic attenuation. The rear elevation to the extensions will be simply and crisply detailed with large glazed windows and glazed balustrades

to the ground floor terrace.

13. **Refuse.** The new dwellings would have a recycling sorter in the kitchen. We understand this locality benefits from timed kerb-side refuse collections and it is proposed that this be utilized by the new dwellings.
14. **Transport.** The subject site is recorded as level 5 / 6a on the TfL WebCAT tool, served by numerous rail, underground stations and bus routes. Private car parking would not be essential to the residents and none is provided in this proposal.
15. **Cycle Storage.** The ground floor dwelling will have a large entrance level storage area which could accommodate cycles. The basement dwelling could bring the cycle into the dwelling or, could secure the cycle in their garden at the semi basement level.
16. **Flood Risk.** The property is situated in a Flood Risk Zone 1, and the site is below the 1 Hectare threshold, therefore we presume no Flood Risk Assessment is required.
17. **Noise.** The layout has been developed to minimize the risks of noise transfer between dwellings by stacking bedrooms above bedrooms and living rooms above living rooms.
18. **Air Quality.** A detailed ventilation strategy for the new dwellings will be developed to consider the Camden Clean Air Action Plan. The heat source for the dwellings will be either to use the existing communal plant or to use ultra low emission gas boilers. It is likely that a whole dwelling ventilation system will be employed using mechanical ventilation with heat exchange, and air filtration to ensure the air within the dwellings is clean and free of pollutants.



19. **Sustainability.** The development makes the best use of the available space to generate good quality much needed homes. The development makes a sustainable use of the existing structure extending its design life and adapting the building to suit current needs. The completed building seeks to play its part to enhance the townscape in this area. In constructing the development, care will be taken to create low embodied technologies and to design in a way which reduces energy use over the life of the property. Advice is sought from the Borough to confirm the design standards which should be met.

### 3 Access

1. The proposed dwellings are arranged over the ground and lower ground levels of this property. Whilst the ground floor flat could be accessed directly from the pavement, with no change of level, the only current means of accessing the lower ground level is via an existing staircase.
2. Generally the internal layout of the dwellings has been developed to provide ease of access within the flat for the occupant and to allow flexibility to adapt the layout to suit the needs of the occupant. Where possible the Lifetime Homes Standards have been applied to the design.

## 4 Summary

1. Great care has been taken to ensure that the proposals brought forward in this planning application fully meet the Boroughs expectations for high quality new residential development.
2. The proposed development supports Camden's Local Plan policies which encourage residential development and the sustainable reuse of this vacant properties. This is a property which has been vacant for some time, despite attempts to market the space. The proposals will bring a significant gain to the area and the Borough.
3. The development results in a very minor loss of external space, but the area is replaced with terraces and green roofs. The proposals have been designed such that the external views promote passive surveillance and increase the safety of the new occupants and those who currently use the area.
4. We understand the key consideration will be the change of use in the proposed development. We are able to substantiate the lack of demand for the commercial space, and the efforts made to find a tenant for the space. The property was difficult to lease prior to the current unusual circumstances, and it is inevitable that the market for this type of commercial space in this area will be worsened, hence this attempt to find a suitable sustainable use for the space in the future.
5. Another aspect of the design is to improve the continuity of the streetscape by reinstating the lightwell and railings common in Bloomsbury. This improves the internal quality of the ground and lower ground floors, and creates a more appropriate relationship between the building and the street. We trust the Borough will support this proposal and we welcome comments about this proposal, which may be brought forwards as a separate planning application, independently of proposals for the main building.
6. In making this planning application we request guidance

on the quantum of CIL and other payments which would be requested and any other contributions necessary.

7. We look forward to receiving comments back from the Borough which will help us refine these proposal so that we can being forward a planning application which can be supported.

## 5 Photos

Left: View from Millman Street





Left: View of rear garden area where new extension is proposed, with existing enclosing walls to rear.





Left: View of rear garden area looking south showing rear of property.





Left: View of rear subject property.

