

# DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT

OF

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION

FOR

EXTERNAL REFURBISHMENTS AT

BLOCK ONE, WOODSIDE HOUSE

WELWYN GARDEN CITY

FOR

WELWYN GARDEN CITY HOUSING ASSOCIATION



*Partnership*

Our Ref: 12146  
June 2010

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
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22 JUN 2010  
2010/1275

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This statement supports a Full Planning Application for proposed refurbishment works which have been brought about in part due to the recommendations made by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to improve the fire safety of residents.
- 1.2 The proposed works are to what is known as Block One of the Woodside House development which is a sheltered elderly housing development managed by Welwyn Garden City Housing Association.
- 1.3 In addition to the refurbishment works in response to the recommendations of the BRE, it is also proposed to undertake refurbishment of the external paving and entrances to the building.

## **2.0 THE APPLICATION SITE**

- 2.1 Woodside House falls within the Estate Management Area, and as such consideration needs to be given to any proposed alterations to the external appearance of buildings within EMA.
- 2.2 Block One was the first block to be built by WGCHA on the site and is the last to undergo refurbishment.
- 2.3 Block One was built in the 1960's by WGCHA, and its design and appearance has become tired. Recent maintenance has been undertaken to the roof, guttering and windows, which have greatly improved the appearance of the building.
- 2.4 Block One is the first building seen from the public highway and therefore its appearance does impact on the overall street scene.

## **3.0 DESIGN MATTERS**

- 3.1 The BRE have recommended to WGCHA that in order to improve the fire safety of its residents that new fire lobbies should be created from the individual flats, and that the common stairwells should be ventilated with Opening Vents (OV's) on the mid floors and with Automatic Opening Vents (AOV's) on the upper floors. This would ensure that the common stairwells would remain clear of smoke in the event of a fire.
- 3.2 In order to comply with the BRE recommendations it is necessary to change the existing windows on the stairwells. This is because the existing windows do not have sufficient opening vents and that they could not be provided with suitable automatic opening mechanisms.

- 3.3 Furthermore in order to fully comply with BRE recommendations the OV's and AOV's are required to provide a minimum area of 1.5sqm.
- 3.4 These requirements have resulted directly in the proposal to change the existing windows; it has also directly determined the configuration of the replacement windows. Given the need to provide 1.5sqm of openable area as well allowing for normal use of the windows to ventilate the landings and the new lobbies, side hung opening lights are required.
- 3.5 Whilst replacing the existing windows it was felt that it would be appropriate to improve on the overall appearance of the building. Therefore it is proposed to change the existing white PVC solid panels below the stairwell windows with new timber ship lapped cladding.
- 3.6 In addition to these modifications to the external appearance of the building, it is proposed to change the existing white PVC solid panels to the windows within the flats to double glazed panels with the existing blockwork behind painted black. This will bring Block One in line with previous refurbishment works undertaken to other existing blocks.
- 3.7 Finally in order to improve the means of access to the Block One as well as improving the overall appearance as one enters the site, it is proposed to replace the existing concrete footpaths which has become broken up from frost damage over the years.

#### **4.0 ACCESS**

- 4.1 There are two front entry points to Block One, one of which has a mixture of steps and a ramp, this existing ramp does not comply with the current Building Regulations. Therefore it is proposed to provide a new ramp that would comply with these requirements.
- 4.2 Whilst creating this new ramp it is felt that it would be appropriate to refurbish the existing pedestrian footpaths within the site.
- 4.3 The other front entrance will also be refurbished and new ramps will replace existing steps from the rear access to the building.
- 4.4 Finally new front entry doors in hardwood timber are proposed to replace the existing metal doorways.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

5.1 The refurbishments works proposed under this application can be divided into three key items:

- (i) Replacement windows to comply with BRE recommendations
- (ii) New ramps to improve means of access and to comply with building regulations
- (iii) Refurbishment to flat windows and external works to improve visual appearance of the building

APPENIX CONTENTS:

Photographs

Appendix 1



Front view looking back toward public highway



Front view looking at stairwell two with steps and ramp



Front view looking at ramp and steps



Front view looking at ramp and steps



Front view looking gable that faces building highway



Front view



Rear View