Proposed erection of eight flats with associated facilities
at
College Close, The London School of Theology,
Green Lane, Northwood

Planning, Design and Access Statement

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INTRODUCTION

This statement supports the application for eight flats, car parking and soft landscaping / amenity spaces. The statement should be read in conjunction with the plans prepared by Fluent.

This submission is submitted pursuant to the withdrawal of application xxxx following discussions with the case officer with concerns over the architectural image and the relationship to the boundaries. It has been produced with full consideration of the National Guidance Documents, the Core Strategy, the UDP and relevant SPD on behalf of Westcombe Homes Ltd.

The development is for eight x two bedroom flats. It partly uses the basement for two of the ground floor flats along with providing some of the parking in the basement. The flats are large and targeted at older people wishing to downsize to a flat but wanting greater space than the market norm. There is also parking at ground floor level providing two spaces for each flat.

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

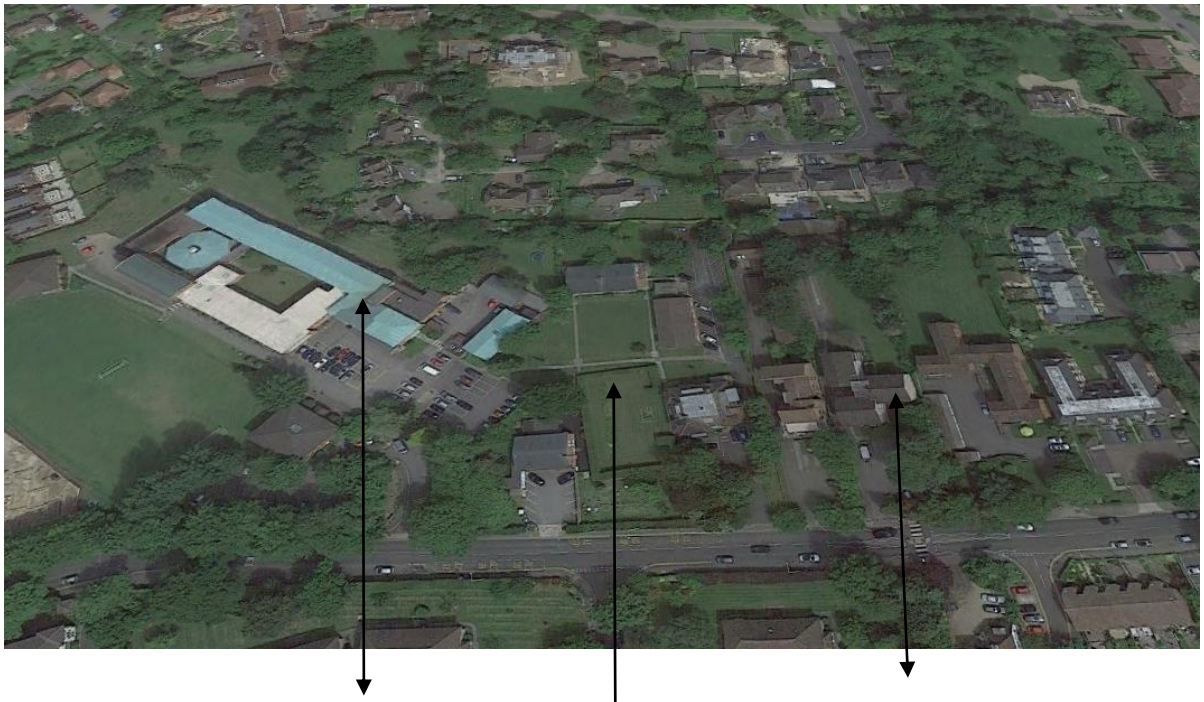
In 1970, the School moved to Northwood and onto the campus previously occupied by the London College of Divinity, an Anglican training college. The 1990s saw the opening of a dedicated postgraduate centre (Guthrie Centre), which also houses the Centre for Islamic Studies. In 2004, it became the London School of Theology (LST), a new name but with the same aim.

The proposed development site forms the eastern side of the grounds of the London School of Theology. It is accessed from Green Lane. The main college buildings are located to the west of the proposed development site. The site comprises two residential buildings which are now redundant. There is a change in levels across the college site, with this site occupying higher ground to the north. Adjoining the site to the north and west are traditional residential areas.

The application site is surplus to college requirements. The existing buildings date from the late 20th century and are undistinguished, being partly student accommodation in a two storey block and a pair of semi-detached houses, surrounded by lawn.

Between the site and Green Lane is Aldis Hall, a locally listed building. The main campus building to the west is predominately three storeys as shown overleaf.

The adjacent frontage development to Green Lane of Welcote Drive and Oak Court are three storey flat developments. This theme is repeated along Green Lane.



The main campus building

Three storey flatted development on Green Lane

The site

The context

Three storey flatted development on Green Lane

The main campus building

THE PROPOSAL

The design concept flows from addressing the concerns arising from application 2016-1060 which was a different, neo classical, design and closer to some boundaries. The most important context considerations are:

- The siting of the buildings in a position that does not impact on ecology or the landscape. The building has been moved away from the surrounding residential boundaries and as shown in the plans passes the 25 degree test. It also uses the change in levels. It is L shaped and provides an aspect over open space in the ownership of the college. The neo classical image has been replaced with that of the Arts and Craft style; an approach favoured by the Local Planning Authority. The image is that of a large house. The proposed building sits comfortably on the site and responds to the landscape and scale of the established street scene. Specifically, the depth and width would generate a three dimensional scale and form which is directly comparable to other buildings identified in the locality.

- The detailing of the building is thus drawn from the wider locality using traditional components. Parking is provided for each of the flats in a new court and partly in the basement albeit this is a function of the reduced levels at southern end of the site.

- The important landscaping role played by the existing on and off site boundary tree planting is retained. The layout in particular enhances the hedges and trees on the boundaries. Through this design approach to both building and landscape regard is had to the requirements of the Development Plan. The development will thus integrate into the landscaped setting. The proposal includes a communal amenity space that is generous by contemporary standards. Three flats have private balconies whilst the ground floor flats each have a private patio.

- The proposed development seeks to provide for eight flats which are large and targeted at older people wishing to downsize to a flat but wanting greater space than the market norm.

- The parking layout allows all cars to enter and exit the site in forward gear and incorporates proper turning facilities with surface and covered parking for residents and visitors. The design has regard to the visual impact and the possible disturbance on adjacent housing. There are two parking spaces for each flat.

- Cycle storage is provided in the basement.

- Dwelling entrance faces onto the parking area, providing a common identity and offering passive surveillance.

- The scheme has been considered during the design process to comply with the core principles of Secured by Design and the principles described in Safer Places - the Planning System and Crime Prevention.

- The common boundary structures with adjoining neighbours are to be retained.

- The proposed amenity space meets the standards detailed in Policy BE23 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Saved UDP Policies (November 2012) and the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document HDAS.

NATIONAL POLICY

The Government published the final version of the National Planning Policy Framework on 27 March 2012. It promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable economic development. Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. For decision taking, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

In terms of 'plan making', the Government states that local plan makers should plan positively for development. Policies should allocate sites to promote development and *flexible use of land*; and identify areas where it may be necessary to limit freedom to change the use of buildings, and support the restrictions with a *clear explanation*. The framework states that local plans should use a proportionate evidence base. It is confirmed that the National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration for the purposes of Section 38(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and that when determining development proposals, local authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Turning to the specific subject areas, the NPPF states:

> *The thrust of housing policy is to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.*

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which for decision-taking means: approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. The proposal complies with the development plan.
The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for

the short term but over the lifetime of the development and should establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live.

Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

The proposal will retain the character of the existing development and sit comfortably within the site. Its design presents well-conceived façades. The landscape setting of the site remains intact. The proposal seeks to perpetuate the rural theme by maintaining the landscape dominance, and with a minimal increase in the area occupied by buildings and hardstandings.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1- Strategic Policies (previously known as the Core Strategy) was approved for adoption at the Council meeting on 8 November 2012. Currently the development plan for the borough comprises:

- The Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1- Strategic Policies;
- The extant 2007 Saved Unitary Development Plan policies adopted as the "Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two", pending the preparation and adoption of subsequent site specific allocations, development management policies and a policies map; and
- The London Plan published by the Mayor of London in July 2011.
- Various SPD.

The Local Plan, being a strategic document, is silent over many detailed design requirements but Policies H1 and BE1 relate to the proposal and state:

Hillingdon Local Plan: Policy H1: Housing Growth

The Council will meet and exceed its minimum strategic dwelling requirement, where this can be achieved, in accordance with other Local Plan policies. The borough's current target is to provide an additional 4,250 dwellings, annualised as 425 dwellings per year, for the ten year period between 2011 and 2021. Rolled forward to 2026, this target equates to a minimum provision of 6,375 dwellings

over the period of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1- Strategic Policies. Sites that will contribute to the achievement of this target will be identified in the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2- Site Specific Allocations Local Development Document (LDD).

Policy BE1: Built Environment

The Council will require all new development to improve and maintain the quality of the built environment in order to create successful and sustainable neighbourhoods, where people enjoy living and working and that serve the long-term needs of all residents. All new developments should:

Page 7

1. Achieve a high quality of design in all new buildings, alterations, extensions and the public realm which enhances the local distinctiveness of the area, contributes to community cohesion and a sense of place;

2. Be designed to be appropriate to the identity and context of Hillingdon's buildings, townscapes, landscapes and views, and make a positive contribution to the local area in terms of layout, form, scale and materials and seek to protect the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential properties;

3. Be designed to include "Lifetime Homes" principles so that they can be readily adapted to meet the needs of those with disabilities and the elderly, 10% of these should be wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable to wheelchair accessibility encouraging places of work and leisure, streets, neighbourhoods, parks and open spaces to be designed to meet the needs of the community at all stages of people's lives;

4. In the case of 10 dwellings or over, achieve a satisfactory assessment rating in terms of the latest Building for Life standards (as amended or replaced from time to time);

5. Improve areas of poorer environmental quality, including within the areas of relative disadvantage of Hayes, Yiewsley and West Drayton. All regeneration schemes should ensure that they are appropriate to their historic context, make use of heritage assets and reinforce their significance;

6. Incorporate a clear network of routes that are easy to understand, inclusive, safe, secure and connect positively with interchanges, public transport, community facilities and services;

7. Improve the quality of the public realm and provide for public and private spaces that are attractive, safe, functional, diverse, sustainable, accessible to all, respect the local character and landscape, integrate with the development, enhance and protect biodiversity through the inclusion of living walls, roofs and areas for wildlife, encourage physical activity and where appropriate introduce public art;

8. Create safe and secure environments that reduce crime and fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and risks from fire and arson having regard to Secure by Design standards and address resilience to terrorism in major development proposals;

9. Not result in the inappropriate development of gardens and green spaces that erode the character and biodiversity of suburban areas and increase the risk of flooding through the loss of permeable areas;

10. Maximise the opportunities for all new homes to contribute to tackling and adapting to climate change and reducing emissions of local air quality pollutants. The Council will require all new development to achieve reductions in carbon dioxide emission in line with the London Plan targets through energy efficient design and effective use of low and zero carbon technologies.

Where the required reduction from on-site renewable energy is not feasible within major developments, contributions off-site will be sought. The Council will seek to merge a suite of sustainable design goals, such as the use of SUDS, water efficiency, lifetime homes, and energy efficiency into a requirement measured against the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM. These will be set out within the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2- Development Management Policies Local Development Document (LDD). All developments should be designed to make the most efficient use of natural resources whilst safeguarding historic assets, their settings and local amenity and include sustainable design and construction techniques to increase the re-use and recycling of construction, demolition and excavation waste and reduce the amount disposed to landfill;

11. In the case of tall buildings, not adversely affect their surroundings including the local character, cause harm to the significance of heritage assets or impact on important views. Appropriate locations for tall buildings will be defined on a Character Study and may include parts of Uxbridge and Hayes subject to considering the Obstacle Limitation Surfaces for Heathrow Airport. Outside of Uxbridge and Hayes town centres, tall buildings will not be supported. The height of all buildings should be based upon an understanding of the local character and be appropriate to the positive qualities of the surrounding townscape. Support will be given for proposals that are consistent with local strategies, guidelines, supplementary planning documents and Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2- Development Management Policies.

The proposal will contribute toward this housing supply. It is located in an accessible location within an existing settlement. Satisfactory parking provisions (two car parking spaces per unit) have been provided through a safe layout. The landscape character of the locality and the way the development is integrated into the landscape have been considered in detail. The proposal has been designed to assimilate easily into the character of the area. Much of the existing boundary planting is to be retained and will be enhanced with additional landscaping following development. A rear garden has been provided to create a spacious development. On balance, it is considered that the development is sensitively sited in such a way so as to preserve and enhance the character of the area.

The proposed development results in a scale, size and density of development in this part of the locality which mirrors the prevailing character. Accordingly, the visual impact of the scheme is limited and the impact upon local townscape character is positive.

The development has been designed so that it is both safe and secure. Importantly, the scheme will meet both “Secured by Design” and “Lifetime Homes” standards, whilst the layout also provides for good natural surveillance. The proposed development will be at a density compatible with other new developments in the wider locality.

The siting and massing of the proposed development repeats the traditions of the locality.

The saved UDP provides more detailed guidance. Three policies are character based, they are:

BE13

Development will not be permitted if the layout and appearance fail to harmonise with the existing street scene or other features of the area which the local planning authority considers it desirable to retain or enhance.

BE15

Proposals for alterations and extensions to existing buildings will be permitted where they harmonise with the scale, form, architectural composition and proportions of the original building.

BE19

The local planning authority will seek to ensure that new development within residential areas complements or improves the amenity and character of the area.

The proposal perpetuates the character of the locality and will contribute towards that character. The separation to the rear is such that adequate daylight and sunlight can penetrate into and between buildings and the amenities of existing houses are safeguarded.

Matters of highway safety are addressed by Policy AM7 which states:

AM7

The local planning authority will consider whether the traffic generated by proposed developments is acceptable in terms of the capacity and functions of existing and committed principal roads only, and will wholly discount any potential which local distributor and access roads may have for carrying through traffic.

The local planning authority will not grant permission for developments whose traffic generation is likely to:

(i) ***unacceptably increase demand along roads or through junctions which are already used to capacity, especially where such roads or junctions form part of the strategic london road network; or***

(ii) ***prejudice the free flow of traffic or conditions of general highway or pedestrian safety; or***

(ii) ***diminish materially the environmental benefits brought about by new or improved roads; or***

(iv) ***infiltrate streets classed as local roads in the borough road hierarchy unless satisfactory traffic calming measures can be installed. traffic calming schemes should, where appropriate, include environmental improvements such as hard and soft landscaping, and should be completed before the development is first used or occupied.***

The design of the parking layout shows that all cars can now enter and leave the site in forward gear.

The relevant London Plan policies state:

POLICY 3.5 QUALITY AND DESIGN OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Strategic

A Housing developments should be of the highest quality internally, externally and in relation to their context and to the wider gardens where this can be locally justified environment, taking account of strategic policies in this Plan to protect and enhance London's residential environment and attractiveness as a place to live. Boroughs may in their LDFs introduce a presumption against development on back gardens or other private residential.

Planning decisions and LDF preparation

B The design of all new housing developments should enhance the quality of local places, taking into account physical context; local character; density; tenure and land use mix; and relationships with, and provision of, public, communal and open spaces, taking particular account of the needs of children and older people

C LDFs should incorporate minimum space standards that generally conform with Table 3.3. The Mayor will, and boroughs should, seek to ensure that new development reflects these standards. The design of all new dwellings should also take account of factors relating to 'arrival' at the building and the 'home as a place of retreat', have adequately sized rooms and convenient and efficient room layouts, meet the changing needs of Londoners over their lifetimes, address climate change adaptation and mitigation and social inclusion objectives and should be conceived and developed through an effective design process

D Development proposals which compromise the delivery of elements of this policy may be permitted if they are demonstrably of exemplary design and contribute to achievement of other objectives of this Plan.

E The Mayor will provide guidance on implementation of this policy that is relevant to all tenures.

Policy 7.1 states:

Building London's neighbourhoods and communities

Strategic

A In their neighbourhoods, people should have a good quality environment in an active and supportive local community with the best possible access to services, infrastructure and public transport to wider London. Their neighbourhoods should also provide a character that is easy to understand and relate to.

Planning decisions

B Development should be designed so that the layout, tenure, and mix of uses interface with surrounding land and improve people's access to social and community infrastructure (including green spaces), the Blue Ribbon Network, local shops, employment opportunities, commercial services and public transport.

C Development should enable people to live healthy, active lives; should maximise the opportunity for community diversity, inclusion and cohesion; and should contribute to people's sense of place, safety and security. Places of work and leisure, streets, neighbourhoods, parks and open spaces should be designed to meet the needs of the community at all stages of people's lives, and should meet the principles of lifetime neighbourhoods.

D The design of new buildings and the spaces they create should help reinforce or enhance the character, legibility, permeability and accessibility of the neighbourhood.

E The policies in this chapter provide the context within which the targets set out in other chapters of this Plan should be met.

LDF preparation

F Boroughs should prepare plans to ensure infrastructure and services will be delivered to meet the needs of existing and new development. Cross-borough and/or subregional working is encouraged, where appropriate.

G Boroughs should work with their local communities to set goals for their neighbourhoods and strategies for achieving them.

The proposal provides housing that meets minimum standards and responds to the changing character of the locality. It is in a position convenient to local shops, employment opportunities, commercial services and public transport. The size of units and generous gardens will allow existing and future residents to live healthy, active lives meeting the needs of the community at all stages of people's lives, and should meet the principles of lifetime neighbourhoods. The elevations show how development of this site can be addressed in a sensitive way and continue the existing architectural themes throughout the scheme.

Policy 3.8 is noted in the context of lifetime homes. It states:

POLICY 3.8 HOUSING CHOICE

Strategic

A Londoners should have a genuine choice of homes that they can afford and which meet their requirements for different sizes and types of dwellings in the highest quality environments.

LDF preparation and planning decisions

B Taking account of housing requirements identified at regional, sub-regional and local levels, boroughs should work with the Mayor and local communities to identify the range of needs likely to arise within their areas and ensure that:

- **a new developments offer a range of housing choices, in terms of the mix of housing sizes and types, taking account of the housing requirements of different groups and the changing roles of different sectors, including the private rented sector, in meeting these**
- **b provision of affordable family housing is addressed as a strategic priority in LDF policies**
- **c all new housing is built to 'The Lifetime Homes' standard~~s~~**
- **d ten per cent of new housing is designed to be wheelchair accessible, or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users**
- **e account is taken of the changing age structure of London's population and, in particular, the varied needs of older Londoners, including for supported and affordable provision**
- **f account is taken of the needs of particular communities with large families**
- **g other supported housing needs are identified authoritatively and co-ordinated action is taken to address them in LDF and other relevant plans and strategies**
- **h strategic and local requirements for student housing meeting a demonstrable need are addressed by working closely with stakeholders in higher and further education and without compromising capacity for conventional homes.**
- **i the accommodation requirements of gypsies and travellers (including travelling show people) are identified and addressed in line with national policy, in coordination with neighbouring boroughs and districts as appropriate.**

Local character; Strategic

A Development should have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings. It should improve an area's visual or physical connection with natural features. In areas of poor or ill-defined character, development should build on the positive elements that can contribute to establishing an enhanced character for the future function of the area.

Planning decisions

B Buildings, streets and open spaces should provide a high quality design response that:

a has regard to the pattern and grain of the existing spaces and streets in orientation, scale, proportion and mass
b contributes to a positive relationship between the urban structure and natural landscape features, including the underlying landform and topography of an area
c is human in scale, ensuring buildings create a positive relationship with street level activity and people feel comfortable with their surroundings
d allows existing buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character of a place to influence the future character of the area
e is informed by the surrounding historic environment.

LDF preparation

C Boroughs should consider the different characters of their areas to identify landscapes, buildings and places, including on the Blue Ribbon Network, where that character should be sustained, protected and enhanced through managed change. Characterisation studies can help in this process.

The proposed design reflects the character of the wider locality in having the scale of the adjacent houses and regard to the pattern and grain of the existing spaces and streets. The building is remote from its boundaries thus protecting occupiers and neighbours privacy. Through its position on the site it respects the existing natural landscape features and site topography.

Policy 7.6 concerns detailed architecture. It states:

Strategic

A Architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider cityscape. It should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context.
Planning decisions

B Buildings and structures should:
a be of the highest architectural quality
b be of a proportion, composition, scale and orientation that enhances, activates and appropriately defines the public realm
c comprise details and materials that complement, not necessarily replicate, the local architectural character
d not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential buildings, in relation to privacy, overshadowing, wind and microclimate.
This is particularly important for tall buildings
e incorporate best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation
f provide high quality indoor and outdoor spaces and integrate well with the surrounding streets and open spaces
g be adaptable to different activities and land uses, particularly at ground level
h meet the principles of inclusive design
i optimise the potential of sites.

As noted above, the siting of the building ensures no overlooking or loss of light. In terms of design, the existing dwellings that surround the site have a mix and variety of heights and design. The design and layout of the access is not incongruous.

As regards landscaping, there is scope for further boundary planting. The proposal would result in a building with a large garden providing an amenity for future residents. The size of the building enables it to sit comfortably on the site and respond positively to the physical features and scale of existing boundary planting. The design and layout enables sufficient sunlight and daylight to penetrate into and between buildings, and ensures that adjoining land and properties are protected. The LPA 25 degree test is satisfied.

The proposal has been designed to re-use this brown field site to enhance it by providing a building with strong sustainable credentials and a character appropriate for the locality. Through this design approach to both building and landscape regard is had to the requirements of the Development Plan. The character assessment shows the existing relationship of properties in the area. The impact of the proposal on the character of the locality is positive, furthering the existing design trends and traditions. The proposed building has been designed to incorporate modern space and amenity standards and will secure sustainable qualities including energy use. The design of the proposal includes off-road parking within landscaped settings. The internal accommodation meets contemporary standards whilst the surrounding amenity space similarly meets modern needs.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CIL CONTRIBUTIONS

The London Borough of Hillingdon adopted its CIL Charging Schedule on 10 July 2014.

LIFETIME HOMES

The units have been designed to accord with the Council's Lifetime Homes Standards contained within Chapter 6 of the London Borough of Hillingdon Accessible Hillingdon SPD. The sixteen criteria relating to the achieving of a lifetime home have been met as follows:-

1. Car parking spaces within the communal car parking area are capable to being widened to 3.3 metres so as to provide for disabled access to cars.
2. The car parking spaces are accessible to the front door
3. Level access will be provided at the thresholds of the main entrance doors with a gentle slope up from the landscape/paved areas.
4. The accessible threshold to the main entrance will be covered and lit.
5. Wide communal stairs and a lift are provided.
6. Doors to the main entrance hall of the units have been designed with a width to allow wheelchair access.
7. Wheelchair turning areas are planned for in the ground floor living rooms.
8. There is a living/family room provided at the entrance level.
9. All flats have provision for a bed on the entrance level.
10. An accessible WC incorporating provision of a shower has been provided at the entrance level.
11. All internal walls will be in stud work construction to facilitate future adaptations without structural alterations.
12. N/A
13. Provision is made for the en suite bathrooms to be easily accessible to each bedroom
14. Each bathroom is large enough to achieve side access to the WC and bath.
15. Low window sills are incorporated to the ground floor room.
16. Socket outlets, controls, light switches etc will be positioned at a convenient height for wheelchair users.

ACCESS

The site is located very close, some 8 minute walk to Northwood station which services the Metropolitan Line from Watford through to Baker Street in London where access to the wider London Underground network is very easy. Bus routes 331, H11, 8, 282 are available from Green Lane. There is a well maintained network of roads serving the site. Church Road joins the A4125, the high street, which intersects to Rickmansworth Road to the west and Pinner Road to the east.

The area is served by an equally maintained network of footpaths and pedestrian access is easy around the site and to the nearby High Street and Northwood Underground Station which are at short walking distance.

CONCLUSIONS

We believe that the site has an opportunity, consistent with Government advice, to provide new flats in keeping with the form of the surrounding area. This application positively responds to the context and addresses the concerns of the previous refusal notice. In developing the site in a high quality manner, we can introduce significant benefits to the locality through a development, appropriately designed and perpetuating the form of the locality.

In light of the above and given the compliance with both National Policy and the adopted plan, we would seek your favourable recommendation and consideration.