

ELM COURT | 55 CHOLMELEY PARK
LONDON | N6 5EJ
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT



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1. Introduction

This statement is prepared on behalf of Red Cannon Developments Ltd. for the construction of a basement and mansard extension within the footprint of Elm Court, Cholmeley Park, Highgate, London, N6 5EJ, and the removal of existing pipework. The aim of this proposal is to accommodate 4 additional residences, with associated external amenity space, landscaping and cycle storage.

Minor external alterations have taken place in the site over the years (windows, garden walls and gates), detailed further in the *Planning Statement* that accompanies this submission.

Below you will find a full description of the existing site and of the proposal, in reference to the use, scope, scale, amenity, landscaping, appearance, access and sustainability of the proposed development. The description of the proposal is suggested to be read in conjunction with the submitted architectural drawings.

2. Existing Site

The site is located on the east of Cholmeley Park within Highgate Conservation Area, Highgate Neighborhood Plan Area, Flood Zone 1, within Public Transport Access Level (PTAL) 4 and is not statutory listed.

It was built in buff brick in the mid-20th century and comprises utilitarian/pared-back detailing. The building has a T-shaped footprint, with each wing approx. 15 m wide and a substantial double-tiered hipped roof. The context of the site is fully described in the *Heritage Impact Assessment*. The block comprises four identical storeys and currently accommodates eight large, broadly similar flats of approx. 79 sq.m. each, with two flats per floor as shown in Table 1 below.

Floor No	Flat No	House Mix	G.I.A. (sq.m.)
Ground	1	2bed 4p.	79,2
	2	2bed 4p.	78,6
First	3	1bed 2p.	79,2
	4	2bed 4p.	78,6
Second	5	2bed 4p.	79,2
	6	2bed 4p.	78,6
Third	7	2bed 4p.	79,2
	8	1bed 2p.	78,6
Total	8 Flats	2 x 2bed4p, 2 x 1bed2p.	631,2

Table 1. Existing House Mix.

Access to the building is via Cholmeley Park, with the entrance door centrally located on the front elevation, emphasizing its symmetry. The main lobby comprises a staircase to the left, no lift, and two flat entrances directly opposite, one on each side of the wing. Flats are also accessed via a secondary lobby and staircase at the rear of the site, providing convenient access to the garages, but without direct connection to the main front lobby.

While the front and rear elevations are largely symmetrical, cohesive, and carefully designed, the side elevations - although nearly identical to each other - exhibit reduced design coherence, with the window arrangement simply repeated vertically. The visual quality of the side elevations is further compromised by dark-colored pipes and gutters dominating the elevations.

Similarly, the roof form, with a notable height difference between the front/main and the rear wing (approx. 1.7 m), appears dysfunctional, awkward and bulky, providing limited architectural or historic value.

Another key feature of the site is the steep slope of the ground (approx. 1.6 m difference from front to rear), which facilitates the high-quality proposed development of the rear basement.

3. Proposal Description

The development aims to deliver four additional residential units (Use Class C3) of varying sizes and layouts to accommodate a range of household types. This proposed use is consistent with the character of the surrounding area, which is predominantly composed of large residential properties and flat blocks. The flats comply with policy requirements for space standards, including access, room dimensions, storage, and amenity provision, contributing to the London Plan's objective of providing high-quality housing.

The proposed unit mix is summarized in Table 2 and has been designed to respond to local demand for two- and three-bedroom units. Further details on the regulated house mix can be found in the *Planning Statement* that has been submitted as part of this application.

Floor No	Flat No	House Mix	G.I.A. (sq.m.)
Garden	G.F. A	1bed2p.	54,7
	G.F. B	3bed6p.	125
Ground	1	2bed 4p.	79,2
	2	2bed 4p.	78,6
First	3	1bed 2p.	79,2
	4	2bed 4p.	78,6
Second	5	2bed 4p.	79,2
	6	2bed 4p.	78,6
Third	7	2bed 4p.	79,2
	8	1bed 2p.	78,6
Penthouse	9	2bed 4p.	77,5
	10	2bed 4p.	80,6
Total	12 Flats	1 x 3bed6p, 8 x 2bed4p, 3 x 1bed2p.	969

Table 2. Proposed House Mix.

Internal Description

In general, all flats are well-proportioned, dual-aspect to maximize natural light and ventilation, and well-accessed, with the potential to be converted into lifetime homes.

To this end, in addition to the existing staircase, each flat is proposed to be served by a wheelchair lift (cabin dimensions 1.4 × 1.1 m), providing step-free access from the entrance gate. The new lift is proposed to be located centrally within the front entrance lobby, replacing the wall that currently separates the front and rear lobbies. This arrangement also benefits the existing flats, although their interior and party walls are to remain unattached.

The proposed basement is designed to accommodate two new flats: Garden Flat A (1 bed2 p, 54.7 sq.m.) and Garden Flat B (3 bed6p, 125 sq.m.), each located on either side of the staircore/lift area providing the entrances.

Due to the steep slope of the site, the basement effectively functions as a rear garden floor, with generous eye-level windows and patio doors that provide substantial natural light. The living room and bedroom of Garden Flat A face a new 7 sq.m. rear patio, while additional daylight is introduced to the living area via a south-facing window and lightwell. The layout includes a well-sized kitchen/dining area and bathroom, optimizing the use of space and supporting a high quality of living.

Garden Flat B comprises an open-plan living, dining and kitchen area facing a new 13.5 sq.m. north-facing patio with direct access to the communal gardens, supplemented by additional windows facing the rear gardens. The flat also includes three north-facing bedrooms, two bathrooms, generous storage / utility rooms, as well as a gym and a sauna, resulting in a spacious and highly functional apartment.

The top floor proposes two 2bed4p flats within the volume of the new mansard roof: Flat 9 (77.5 sq.m.) and Flat 10 (80.6 sq.m.). The flats are largely identical, reflecting the symmetry of the floors below, with the only difference being the additional utility room in Flat 10 at the center of the front elevation. Both flats comprise two generously sized bedrooms with recessed dormer terraces to the rear gardens, two bathrooms, ample storage, and an open-plan living, dining, and kitchen area with a recessed dormer terrace to the front. The layouts are well-considered, with most rooms benefiting from direct natural light. All terraces offer views of the front and rear trees, surrounding vegetation, and the city roofscape, contributing to a high standard of residential amenity.

External Description

The general principle of the proposal is its smooth, coherent, and respectful integration with the existing building, so that it reads as a “natural” continuation rather than a contemporary contrast. To this end, a simple yet elegant design of high quality has been adopted, maximizing internal functionality while preserving -and where possible enhancing- the character of the building.

Regarding the front and most prominent elevation, alterations visible to passers-by have been kept to a minimum and are limited to the top. The existing dysfunctional and awkward roof is replaced with a mansard roof, a type commonly found in the area (for further analysis, see *Planning Statement*, submitted as part of the full application). The positioning of openings, as well as the style of fenestration and balustrades, are kept modest to reflect the functionality and symmetry of the elevation, while enhancing occupant comfort and contributing to the activation of the public realm.

It is also worth noting that the existing roof is old and of poor quality, with missing tiles and significant deterioration. The development provides an opportunity to provide a new roof of substantial quality which enhances the appearance of the existing building.

The rear elevation is treated similarly and is deliberately designed to read as a secondary feature in relation to the front, hence the unusual yet functional footprint of the end terraces (bedroom 2 in plan). The roof terraces provide pleasant views over and from the rear gardens, while contributing to surveillance of the play area.

The basement has been designed so that the new lightwells do not interfere with the movement of pedestrians, cars, or cyclists, with new cycle parking to the rear proposed. Communal access is now less intrusive, following the removal of some shrubs, which are being replaced across the site with low-maintenance bushes and landscaped gardens (see landscaping below). The new openings provide essential daylight while maintaining privacy from the communal gardens, which are set back and secured with protective planting and glass balustrades.

The side elevations are also treated gently, responding to the simplified architectural language of the existing ones. All bulky pipework is removed, resulting in a less visually “noisy” elevation. The new basement openings are discreetly integrated and on the mansard roof they are inserted to provide essential eye-level daylight without giving rise to overlooking concerns.

4. Materials

A description of the proposed external materials and finishes, detailing the name, type, and colour, is provided below:

The mansard roof is clad in natural blue-grey slate, selected for its subdued tone, durability, and compatibility with the surrounding roofscape.

The proposed fenestration comprises white slimline aluminium frames, with divisions articulated on each elevation to align with the existing fenestration pattern and maintain visual continuity.

The terrace handrails will be dark aluminium balustrades, inspired by the original balustrade of the front balcony, without directly replicating it.

The terrace slabs are proposed in dark grey rendered finish for ease of maintenance.

The garden-level patios and lightwells will be surrounded by frameless glass balustrades, ensuring discretion, maximum daylight, and visual focus on the proposed shrubs.

Replacement gutters are proposed to match the appearance and colour of the existing dark metal gutters.

The patio tiles are proposed in light grey matte porcelain, combining durability, elegance and a link between contemporary and traditional styles.



Figure 1. Proposed Materials: Blue-grey slate, aluminium balustrade, frameless glass balustrade, patio tiles, slimline aluminium frames.

5. Size & Scale

Although the surrounding area is predominantly characterized by large residential properties and flat blocks, a number of buildings on the street have been extended and/or altered (i.e. Parklands and Furnival House). Moreover, several taller buildings complete the urban topography of the area. For supplementary information on this subject please refer to the *Heritage Impact Assessment* p. 14-17, submitted within the full suite of documents.



Map 1. Existing Rooftop View of the Area.

Elm Court is originally higher than the typical residential property, however the new mansard roof is approx. 2m. lower than the existing roof, contributing positively to the streetscape with a more natural roof height progression and reflecting similar forms of roofscape within the conservation area.



Figure 2. Relation of Existing and Proposed Roof - no scale

Overall, the new flats do not exceed the footprint of the existing development. All lightwells, which extend beyond the footprint to the rear and side and are largely invisible in plain sight.

6. Amenity & Overlooking

For further information on Amenity and Overlooking, please refer to the *Planning Statement* p.13-15 submitted within the full suite of documents. In essence, “*where openings face neighboring properties, separation distances are consistent with, or exceed, those typically found within the surrounding area*”.

All proposed flats provide high-quality external amenity space that meets or exceeds the minimum area required by the Housing Standards, as shown at table 3 below.

Floor No	Flat No	House Mix	G.I.A. (sq.m.)	Amenity Type	Amenity sq.m.
Garden	G.F. A	1bed2p.	54,7	Patio	7
	G.F. B	3bed6p.	125	Patio	13,5
Penthouse	9	2bed 4p.	77,5	Terrace	7,2
	10	2bed 4p.	80,6	Terrace	7,2

Table 3. Proposed External Amenity Space.

7. Landscaping

For detailed analysis over the proposed approach to both hard and soft landscaping, the application is supported by a *Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment*. In essence, the Assessment “*confirms that the proposed development would not result in harm to any trees of townscape or amenity value. The assessment also identifies appropriate tree protection measures to be implemented during construction to safeguard retained trees*”.

In relation to the landscaping and the proposed patios and lightwells extending beyond the original footprint, it is noteworthy that they do not encroach by more than 25 m² onto the existing site habitat, as shown in the plan below – meaning the proposal is exempt from statutory BNG requirements. Furthermore, the proposed additional planting of shrubs and gardens covers approximately 8 m², and these areas are now easily maintained and user-friendly.

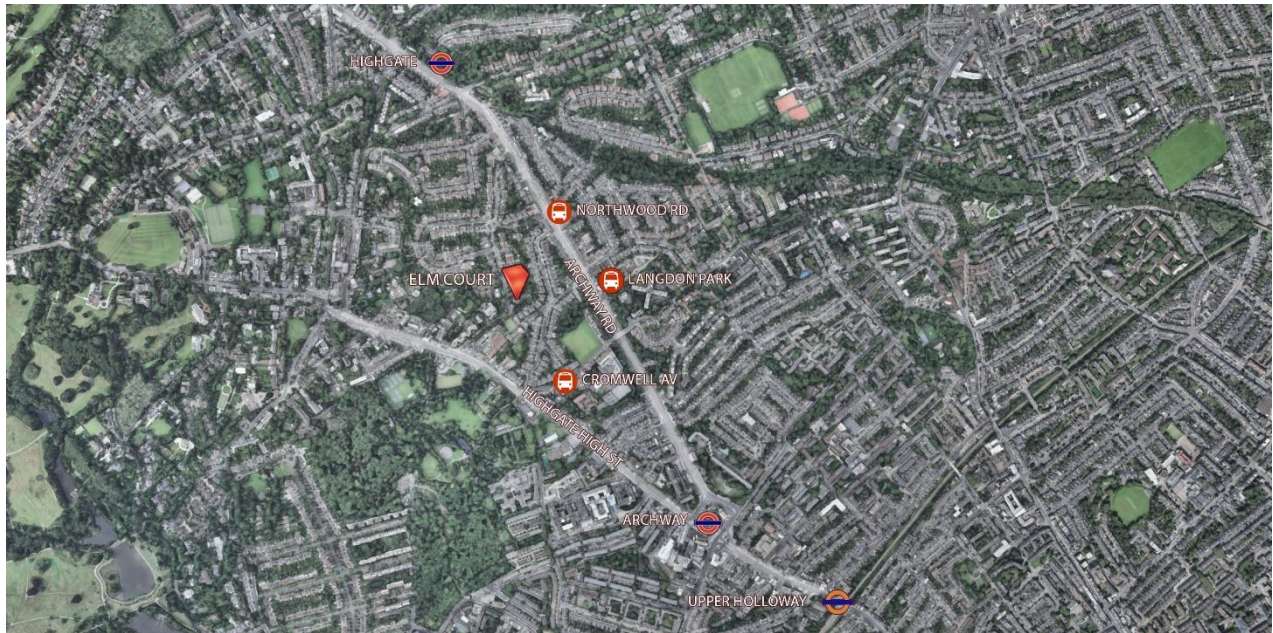


Figure 3. Proposed Planting Gain and Loss - no scale.

8. Transport & Access

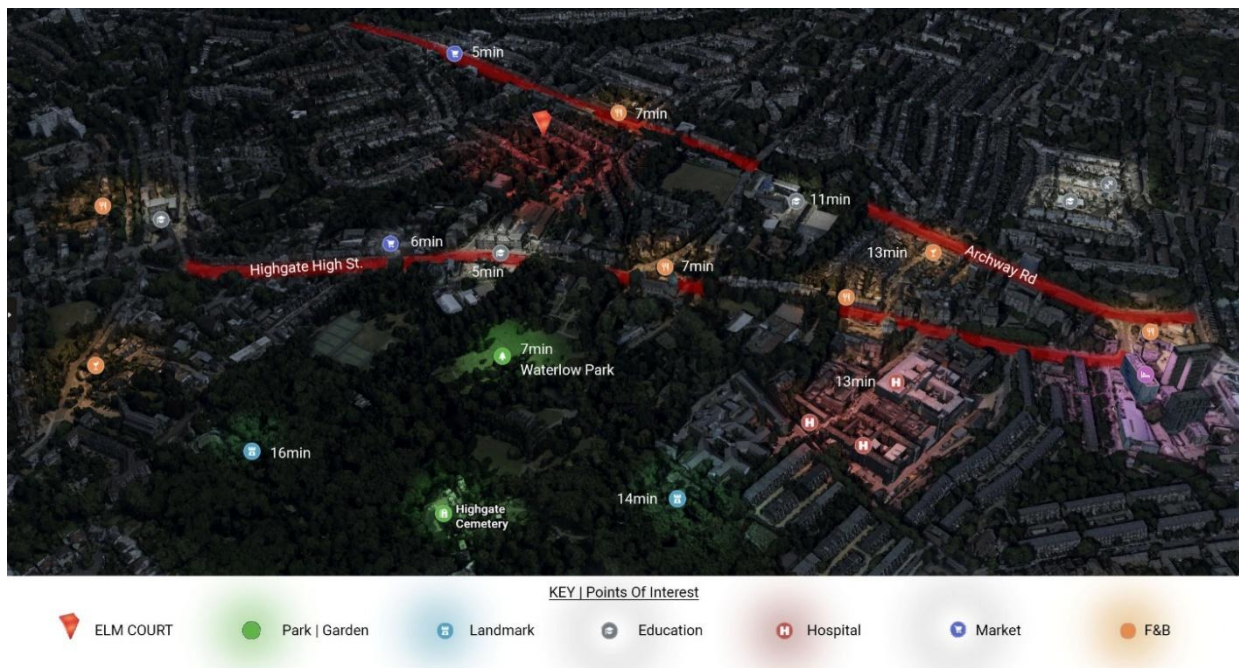
In accordance with the London Plan, the proposal promotes the use of sustainable modes of transport and encourages cycling by providing high-quality, secure, and weather-protected cycle parking, without obstructing lightwells or basement windows - supporting thereby the objectives of local policies (please refer to the according chapter of the *Planning Statement*). In recognition of the site's steep topography, the cycle parking will also provide electric cycle chargers.

The site currently provides car parking to the rear, which is sufficient for the existing occupants. No additional parking spaces are proposed, as it is located in an area with good public transport access and is designed as a car-free development. In essence, "*The site benefits from a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 4 and is located approximately 800 meters from Highgate Underground Station and approximately 1 kilometer from Archway Underground Station*". Apart from underground stations, the site benefits from Overground and Mainline Rail (Upper Holloway), as well as bus stops within 1-5 minutes walking distance (Northwood Rd/Archway Rd, Cromwell Avenue (N6), Langdon Park Rd), as indicated on the map below.



Map 2. Transport Map.

Moreover, Highgate is a busy district, offering a wide range of diverse amenities within 5-15 minutes walking distance, as illustrated on the map below. These amenities form a significant part of the ordinary work, leisure and recreational activities of a typical contemporary urban resident, for which cars or even public transport may be required only rarely or in emergencies, except for users with disabilities.



Map 3. Land Use Map of the Area.

"The site is therefore reasonably well connected by public transport, and the proposed development is consistent with this level of accessibility".

9. Basement Development, Flood Risk & Drainage

The site is within Flood Zone 1 and, although located in a Critical Drainage Area, is not at high risk of flooding from any source. A site-specific *Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy* Report, submitted with the full suite of documents, confirms low flood risk on and off site, due to its distinctive topography. The proposed basement development incorporates on-site attenuation and sustainable drainage measures and complies with the objectives of relevant policies.

10. Heritage Assessment

Elm Court is not a listed building and is not identified as a positive contributor to the significance of the Highgate Conservation Area. The submitted Heritage Impact Assessment identifies the surrounding townscape as varied in roof form and building scale, with mansard roofs present in the area as part of its established character, albeit not as a dominant typology.

The proposed mansard roof is designed as a coherent and subordinate addition that aligns with the building's symmetry and fenestration rhythm. Importantly, the proposals reduce the overall ridge height compared with the existing bulky two-tier hipped roof, resulting in a more visually resolved roof profile.

The basement accommodation has limited external manifestation, with modest lightwells and openings designed to reflect the host building and minimise visual impact. Views of the proposals would be experienced in context as part of a layered townscape and established character, including other buildings with mansard roof forms. This is demonstrated in the submitted Planning Statement, which shows long, medium- and short-range views when approaching the site and confirms that, despite the site's elevated position, the proposed roof form would read as part of the wider roofscape of Cholmeley Park, rather than as an isolated, overly prominent or domineering addition.

Overall, the Heritage Impact Assessment concludes that the proposals preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, resulting in a neutral impact on its significance and no heritage harm. The public benefits of the scheme, including the delivery of four additional homes (including a family-sized unit), carry significant weight in the planning balance.

11. Sustainability

The application is supported by the *Energy Report* prepared by Environmental Economics Ltd, which demonstrates that the combination of an enhanced building fabric, together with the proposed Exhaust Air Heat Pumps and Waste Water Heat Recovery systems, reduces space and water heating energy demand and contributes to a significant reduction in carbon emissions. All plant will be located internally, ensuring that there are no visual, noise or amenity impacts. The development has therefore been designed in accordance and complies with all relevant local policies and demonstrates an efficient and sustainable design.

12. Consultation

In order to *“improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application”* through constructive engagement with the local planning authority, a pre-application enquiry (ref: PRE/2024/0399) was submitted in relation to the proposed development.

As set out in further detail within the Planning Statement, the pre-application advice confirmed the acceptability of residential intensification on the site in principle, and raised no concerns in relation to the basement proposals, internal layouts or neighbour amenity. Concerns were expressed regarding the proposed mansard extension, primarily in relation to perceived prominence and visibility within the conservation area.

The submitted scheme is accompanied by a detailed Heritage Impact Assessment and further townscape evidence which demonstrates that the surrounding area includes a variety of roof forms, including mansards, and that the proposed roof would be experienced in context. The proposals also reduce the overall ridge height compared with the existing roof form. On this basis, the design is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, notwithstanding the earlier pre-application comments.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with all relevant policy requirements.

13. Policy Context

The proposals for this development comply with The London Plan (2021), the Haringey Local Plan (including the Strategic Policies and Development Management DPDs), Highgate Neighbourhood Plan and all relevant policies referenced in the Planning Statement and in all supporting statements submitted as part of the application.

14. Conclusion

The proposal “*Construction of a basement and mansard extension to create 4 additional flats, with associated external amenity space, landscaping, cycle storage and the removal of existing pipework*” is designed in order to benefit from the advantages of the site while addressing and mitigating its constraints. At the same time, it delivers four more much-needed residential units that respect the site, the historic character of the area, contemporary housing needs, sustainability objectives, relevant policies, and the guidance provided by the local authority. Thereby, it ensures a high standard of life quality.

Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for the proposals.