160-161 Drury Lane
Residential Assessment

Revision -

Ben Adams Architects

Contents

Revision	Date	Description	Editor	Approved By
-	18.05.2023	Planning Issue	CL	FP

Project Lead	Ciarán Linane
Project Director	Francesca Pont
File Location	X:Projects\22001-199/22034 Drury Lane-MRP/Supplementary Reports/230515 Residential Study - Camden Council
Client Contact	Angus Monteith, McAleer & Rushe Contracts UK Ltd.

Proposed 160-161 Drury Lane

1.0
Executive Summary

Introduction

McAleer & Rushe are seeking full planning permission for the refurbishment and extension of 160-161 Drury Lane, an outdated 1980s office building in the heart of Covent Garden.

The scheme aims to provide attractive workspace within the area whilst revitalising the active frontage of the building along Drury Lane and Parker Street.

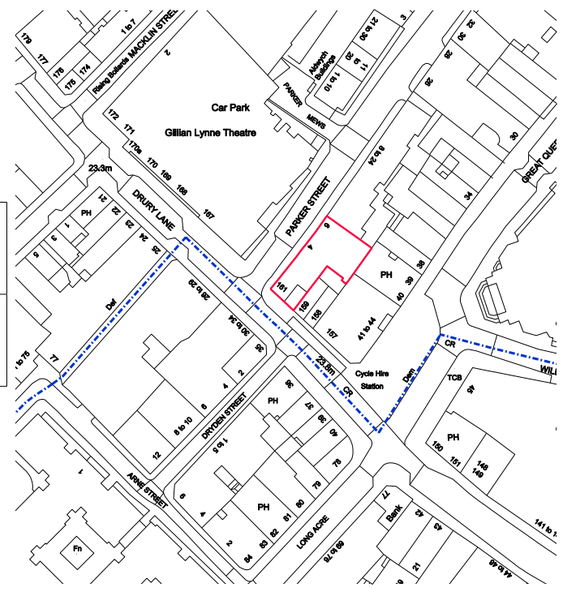
The proposed development will create an additional 270 sqm Gross Internal Area (GIA) and therefore, in line with Camden Local Plan Policy H2, LB of Camden would look for an assessment into how 50% (135 sqm) could be allocated to provide residential accommodation as part of the proposal.

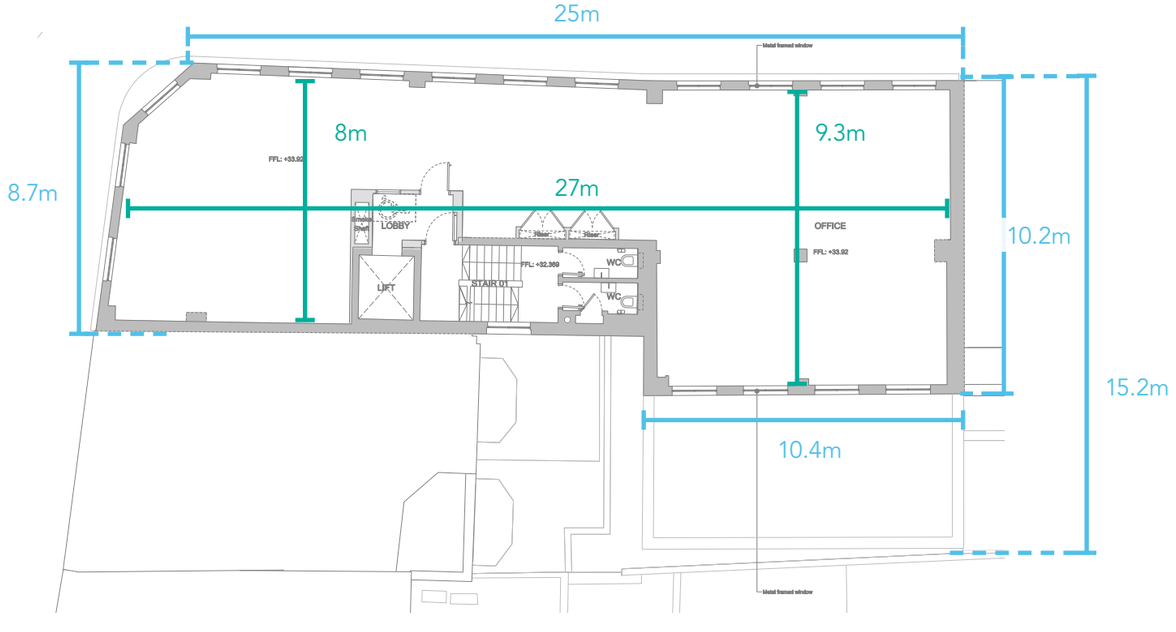
Where is it demonstrated that this cannot be practically achieved, LB of Camden will accept alternative solutions such as off-site provision or remuneration in lieu of provision.

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the general arrangement plans of the current proposal and appraises two design options for how 135m² GIA could be allocated for residential accommodation.

Floor	Area	Exist. (sqm)	Prop. (sqm)	Change (sqm)	Req. (sqm)
All	GIA	1,221	1,491	+270	+135





Proposed Third Floor Plan

2.0
The Site

Introduction

The site has a small footprint. The maximum dimensions of the site are 25m x 15.2m.

When the proposed layout is reviewed, and the building is assessed at 1:10 occupancy (1 person per 10 sqm), the proposed occupancy of the largest floor will be 24 people. A typical floor has a proposed occupancy of up to 19 people @1:10.

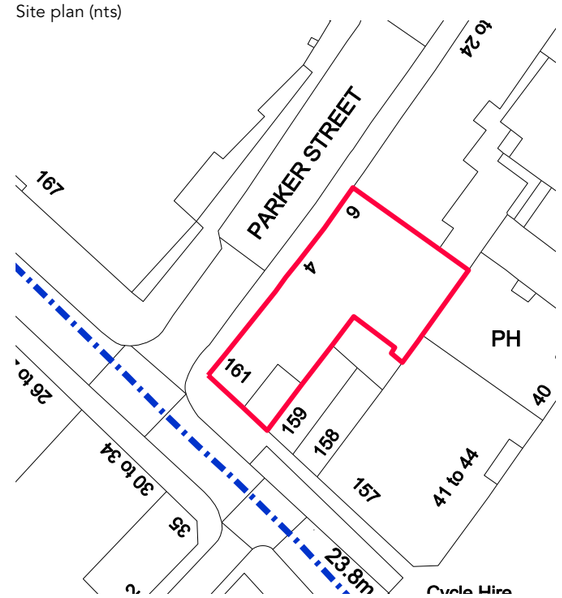
This demonstrates that the building is small and any residential use would have an significant impact on the usable floor space and number of people working in this building.

Floor	Office NIA (sqm)	Occupancy (1:10)
Basement	0	N/A
Ground	56	6
First	240	24
Second	192	19
Third	192	19
Fourth	188	19
Fifth	169	17
TOTAL	**1,037**	**104**

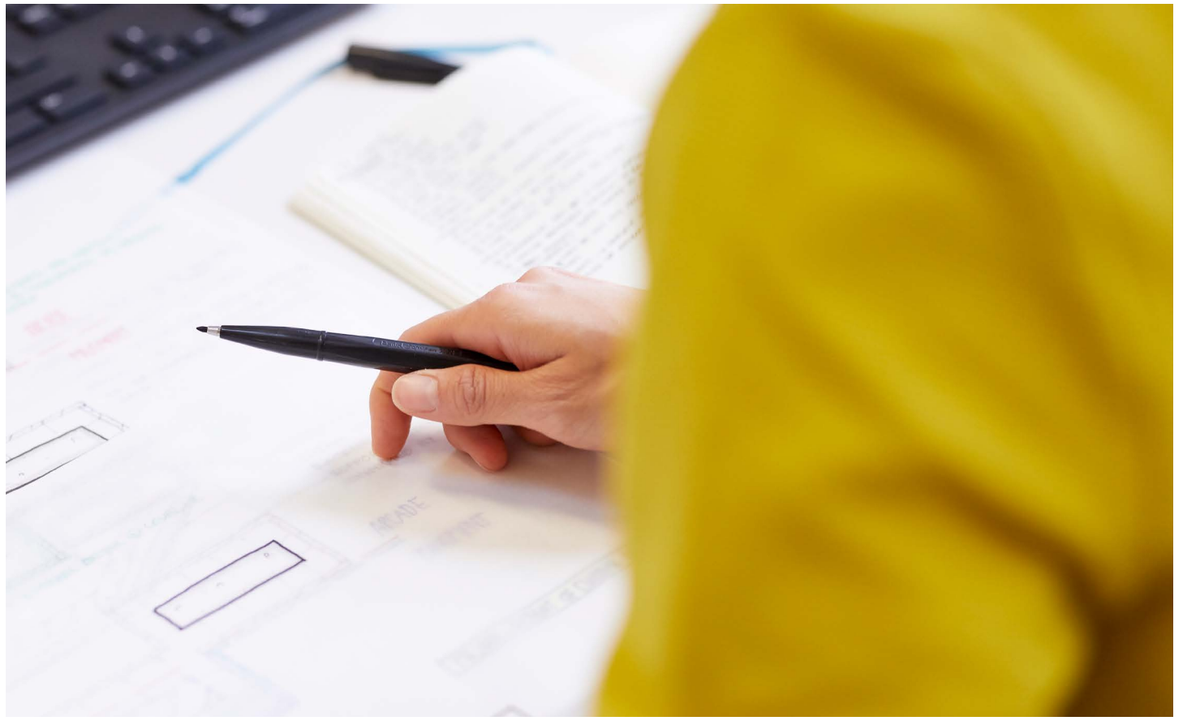
Internal dimension
External dimension

N

Site plan (nts)



3.0
Residential Design Options



Key Design Considerations

A set of design considerations have been discussed and coordinated with the other consultants appointed on the project. The most onerous considerations are in relation to fire safety, and they dictate a separate core (stairs and lift) will be required.

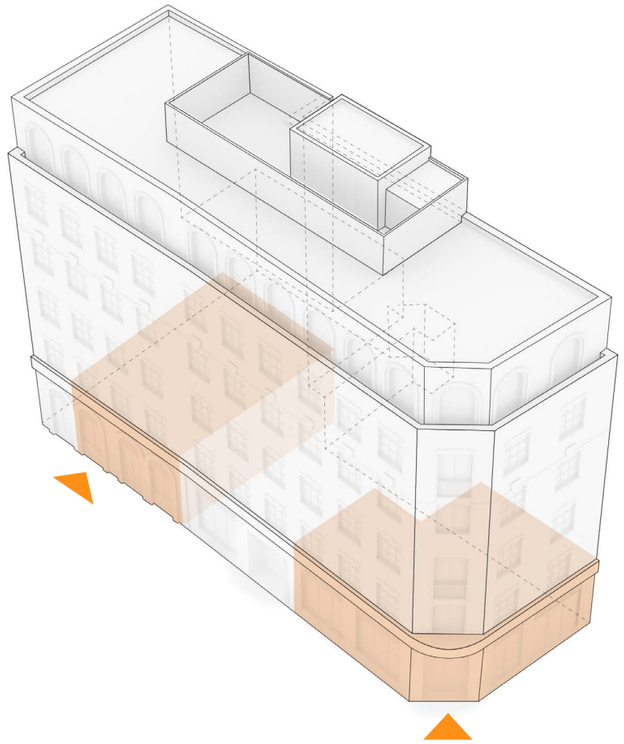
The below incorporates the main points to be reviewed:

- Residential units will have to be separated from the rest of the building with 60 minutes fire resistance compartment walls and floors, with no openings or penetrations;
- Separate fire alarm system;
- Separate core;
- Separate means of escape;
- The travel distances within each apartment is limited to 9m from the furthest point to the flat exit door, or 9m within an internal protected entrance hall;
- For open plan apartments whereby bedrooms become inner rooms, a suppression system will be required with each residential unit;
- Acoustic separation on walls and floors
- Access to external amenity space
- Double aspect apartments preferred by LB Camden.

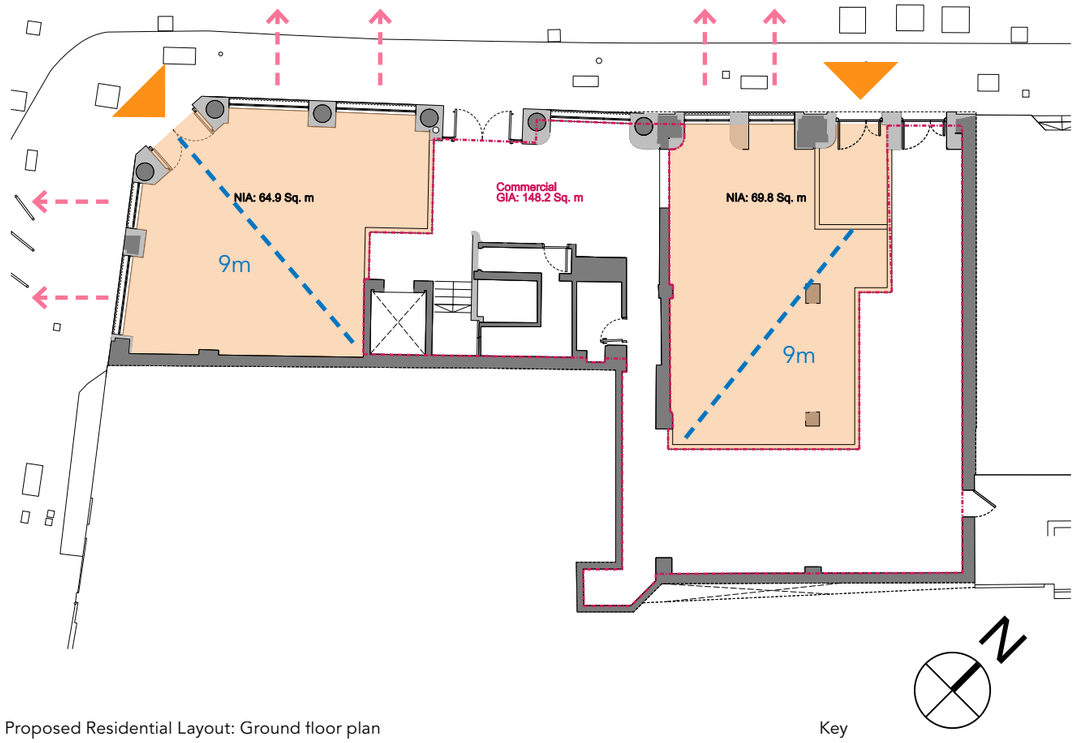
Two design options have been prepared. One shows residential accommodation on the ground floor and one on the third floor.

The ground floor has been selected as a possible location as this provides the most efficient use of the available area.

The third floor has been selected as a possible location as this could provide good access to daylight and external space.



Proposed Residential Layout: Ground floor axo



Proposed Residential Layout: Ground floor plan

Key

- Residential accommodation
- Residential street entrance
- Single aspect
- Office

Ground floor apartments
Residential = 135m²

Residential Unit 1 = 65m²
Residential Unit 2 = 70m²

Ground floor apartments

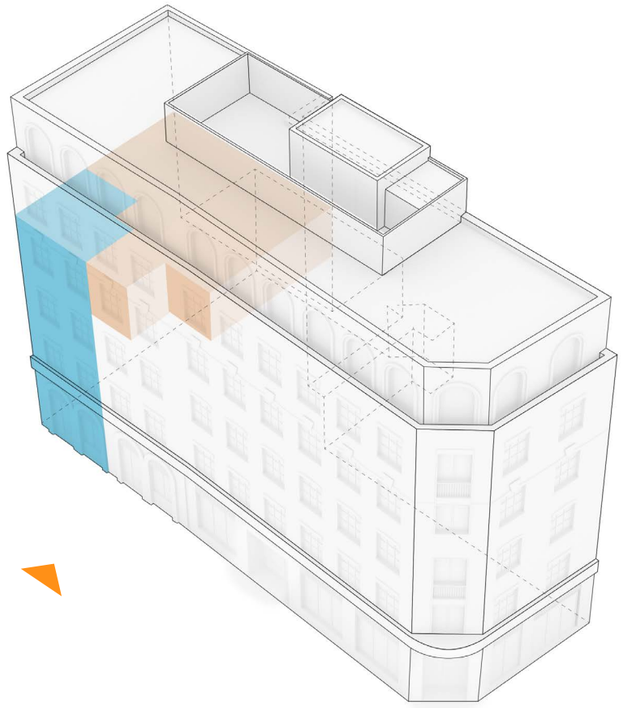
Residential accommodation situated on the ground floor would deliver the largest quantity of housing as there would be no requirement for a stair or lift. Accommodation located on this level would make the best use of the small amount of GIA available (135sqm).

Despite delivering the most amount of housing, the quality of this housing would be of concern due to:

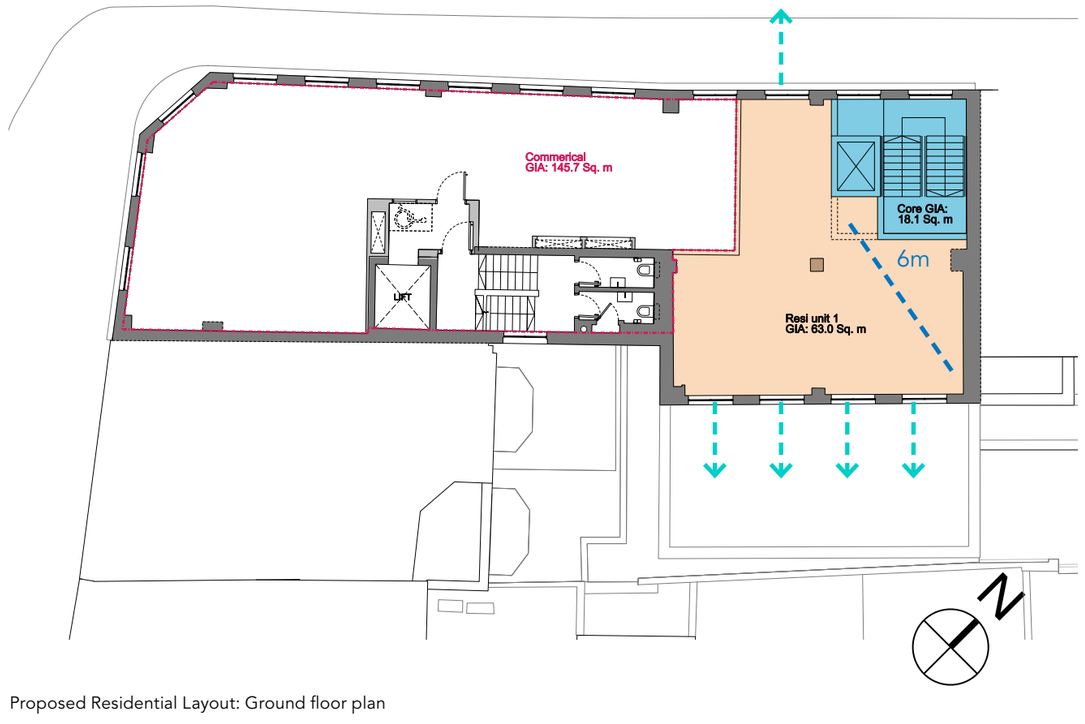
- location on the ground floor
- ventilation issues regarding opening windows (e.g pollution, noise, security)
- security and safety of residents due to location on or very near to Drury Lane
- no access to external amenity space
- less daylight due to ground floor location

A full assessment of the positive and negatives is adjacent.

- Greater available GIA with no core required - 2 residential units possible
- Loss of active business frontage along Drury Lane & Parker Street
- Ventilation issues for windows
- Single aspect units
- Security issues for open windows
- Ground floor housing would not be very private.
- Loss of NIA for office on upper floors as vertical mechanical ventilation likely to be required
- No access to external amenity space



Proposed Residential Layout: Third floor axo



Proposed Residential Layout: Ground floor plan

Option 2
Residential = 135m²

Core = 18m² per floor (72m²)
Residential Unit 1 = (63m²)

Third floor apartments

Residential accommodation situated on the third floor would deliver high quality residential space. It would be dual aspect, sufficiently private and offer the opportunity for an external terrace.

However this 3rd floor location delivers one single dwelling (63sqm/small 2 bed apartment) and 50% of the residential area would need to be dedicated to the core (lift and stair) over 4 floors. This layout does not offer a sensible efficiency in this central London location and is not an efficient use of the building.

The impact on the reduction in office space would be significant between ground and third floor with 18 sqm of office space being lost per floor. The existing office space is not very large with the largest floor offering space for 24 staff. Therefore the loss of desk space is relatively significant for this small building.

A full assessment of the positive and negatives is adjacent:

Key

- Residential accommodation
- Residential core
- Residential street entrance
- Double aspect
- Office

- \+ Dual aspect unit with good daylight due to 3rd floor location
- \+ Residential unit not being at street level retains majority of active commercial frontage
- \+ Opportunity for residential terrace
- × Loss of active business frontage along Parker Street
- × 50% of residential GIA allocated within the core
- × Maximum of 1 residential unit
- × Reduces office floor plate over four floors at 18sqm/floor (72sqm)

Proposed 160-161 Drury Lane, as seen from Drury Lane

4.0
Conclusion

McAleer & Rushe have explored the allocation of residential accommodation as part of the proposed scheme for 160-161 Drury Lane within this report.

Both of the options explored have positive and negative impacts on any proposed housing on this site.

From a review of the options assessed, providing residential units would not make best use of the building or area available.

Ground floor apartments, although offering the best use of the available GIA, would be single aspect (in part), would not have access to amenity space and would cause security concerns. In addition, the townscape impact of the ground floor option would be significant to Drury Lane.

If residential accommodation was located on the 3rd floor, only 50% of the GIA available would be meaningful residential use (accommodation, not core). This would be an inappropriate way to allocate space for housing.

Having apartments at 3rd floor level would have a detrimental affect on the office use within the building. The office use is the main use of the site and as such, it is important that this workspace is high quality. The workspace needs to maximise the utilisation of this relatively small floor plate and not reduce the amount of office accommodation on the lower floors from the existing amount. Smaller floor plates would become significantly less attractive to tenants and impact the viability of the scheme significantly.

Overall, the provision of on-site housing on this site would harm the function and quantum of commercial business uses within the Covent Garden / Seven Dials area and would result in a less than optimum use of the site. Office floorspace is another priority land use in Camden and the provision of 1,491 sqm of office floorspace in the Central Activities Zone should be wholly supported.

Whilst McAleer and Rushe do not own any sites within LB Camden, an off-site PIL contribution is offered in line with policy, and would allow for far more suitable, and superior, residential units especially from a noise, amenity, outlook and safety perspective.