

3.THE EXISTING BUILDING

The following pages document the existing condition of the building and the site, highlighting the poor quality of construction and the lack of insulation, causing issues with damp/cracking across most primary structural walls.



Issues with leaks from existing roof and connections with walls where they meet outside.



Tiling missing and signs of issues with underfloor heating services.



Sliding glazing doors and windows currently jammed due to movement and failed systems.



Garage construction poor with major walls showing cracks.



Roof to garage in very poor condition with leaks due to roofing system failure.



Corridor with main party wall with neighbouring site in very poor condition with signs of large cracks.



Missing and/or failed DPC/DPM to all main external walls.



Issues with damp on all external walls and some interior rooms.



Waste from bathrooms in poor condition with unconventional location for noisy cistern in adjacent bedroom.



Failure of glazing systems throughout, including evidence of vegetation growing through window framing.



Area of rooflights along corridor in very poor condition with need to replace entirely (see Planning History).



Roof access and structure to stair in poor condition.



Access to roof from stair currently unsafe due to no handrail.



Glazing to rooflights showing signs of cracks and failure to system with evidence of poor maintenance/repairs.

In order to fully understand and appreciate the condition of the existing building, the applicant appointed Structural Engineers Elliot Wood and Chartered Surveyors Botley Byrne to carry out investigations.

The analysis which was undertaken has helped inform those elements of the building which can be restored, reconstructed and replaced. It explores ways in which the walls, floors and roof structure can be restored while allowing new build ups to be introduced, in order to upgrade the fabric's energy performance. To properly address and solve this fabric degradation for its future longevity, sustainability,¹ and to guarantee warm and dry conditions for its occupiers, the structure would need partial rebuilding and/or upgrading.

To address the performance issues of the building effectively, some reconstruction of parts of the walls will be required for two primary reasons. The initial concern pertains to structural issues and detailing, which have resulted in significant water ingress. Secondly, the need to increase insulation values to meet current standards, through increased insulation, new windows, rooflights, and doors with either double or triple glazed units and re-detailing the roof and wall junctions to avoid issues such as cold bridges evident in the current perimeter I-beam detail.

At a time when emphasis is placed on reducing carbon footprint, re-use and adaptation and energy efficiency in the built environment, it is understandable the clients ambitions for the project are to exceed contemporary sustainable requirements and to achieve best in class for modern construction. In order to do this a series of steps will need to be taken, including:

ROOF

The felt, timber decking over joists and insulation

will need replacing. From a heritage perspective the intention is to reinstate the original eaves 'I' beam detail (See image right) that has been adapted to increase thermal performance, which is incongruent to the original design. With regards to thermal linings, a detail will be developed to ensure current standards are met and would likely result in an increase to the height of the finished roof level.

WALLS

With the roof structure and perimeter i-beams being retained, the walls can be kept in place and restored from the inside, retaining the external brick to ensure the character of the house is kept intact.

With regards to insulating the fabric of the building to meet regulations, the solution has been developed would be to insulate internally with a new build-up that achieves the required U-values. Insulating internally means that in some areas there may be a reduction in area in rooms where there is joinery. This would require further work to dismantle and restore cabinetry and cupboards while trying to reduce the impact on the internal dimensions.

SLAB

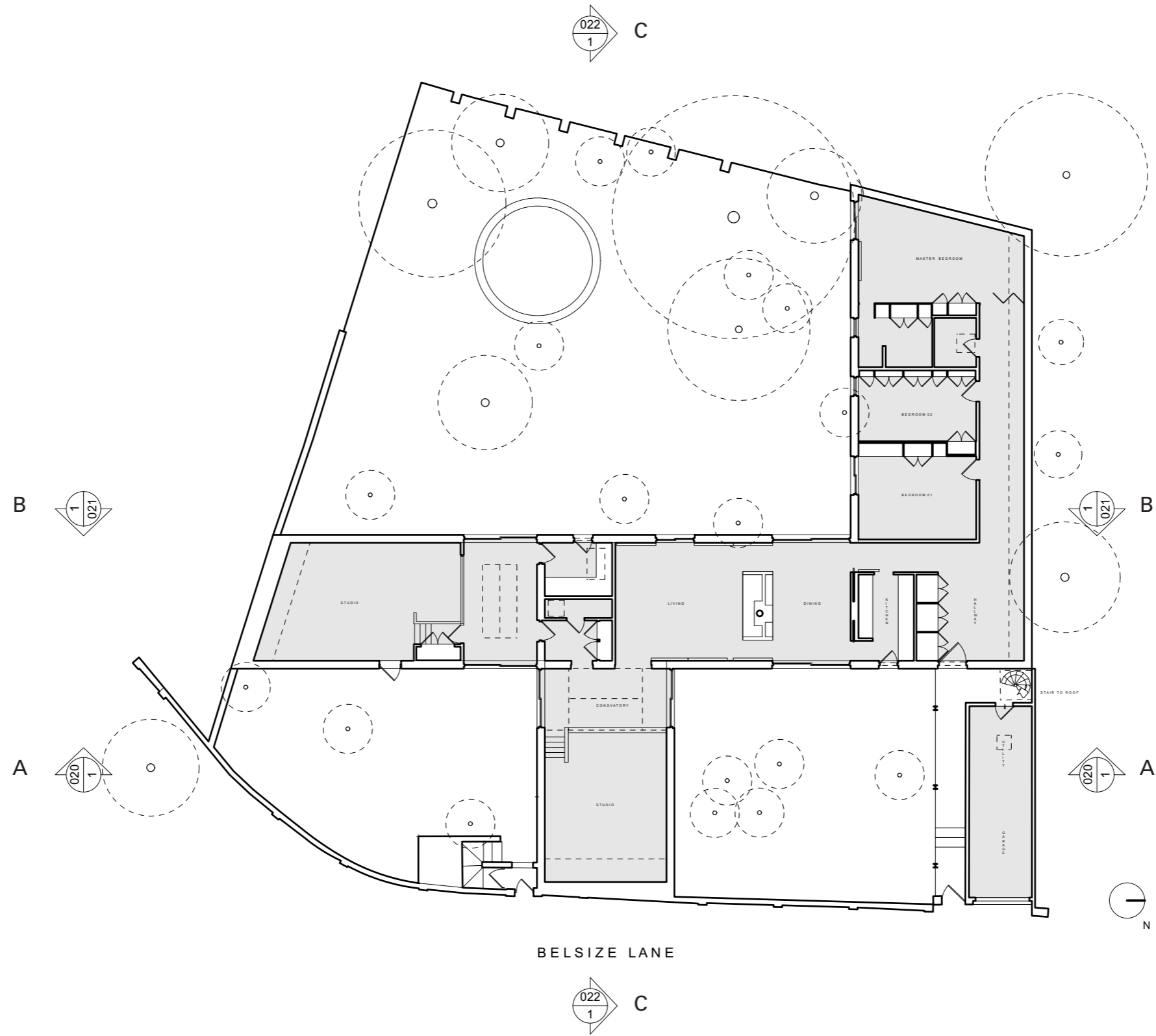
The report carried out to explore the quality of the existing construction suggests that the investigations found inadequate dpm and insulation, damp ingress, and failure of underfloor heating (50 year old pipework cast directly into slab and leaking). Needs replacement/renewal for all these reasons. There is currently enough build up and depth of foundation to be able to remove and replace without changing levels.

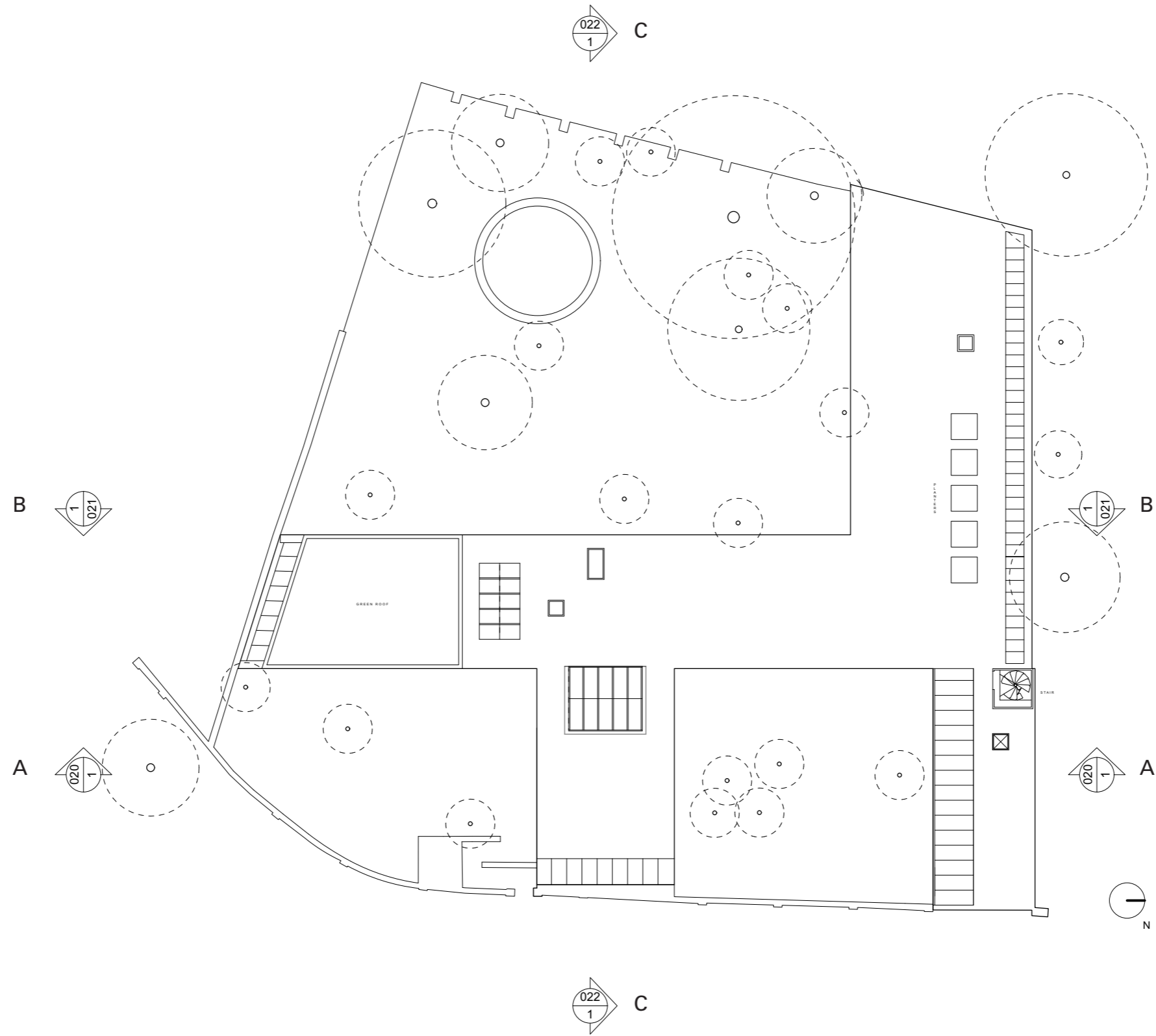
FOUNDATIONS

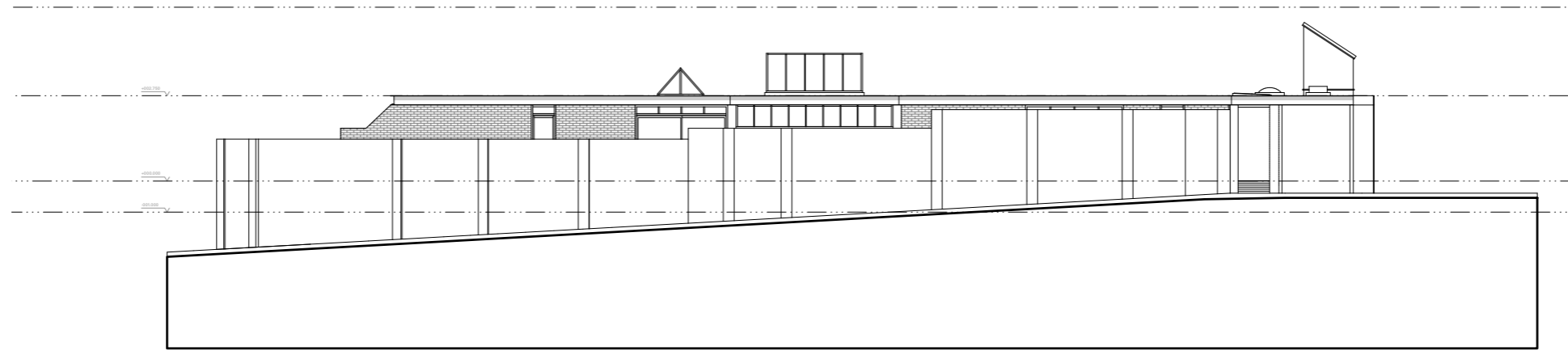
The strip foundations have been investigated and the report suggests that they are in good condition and could likely be retained.



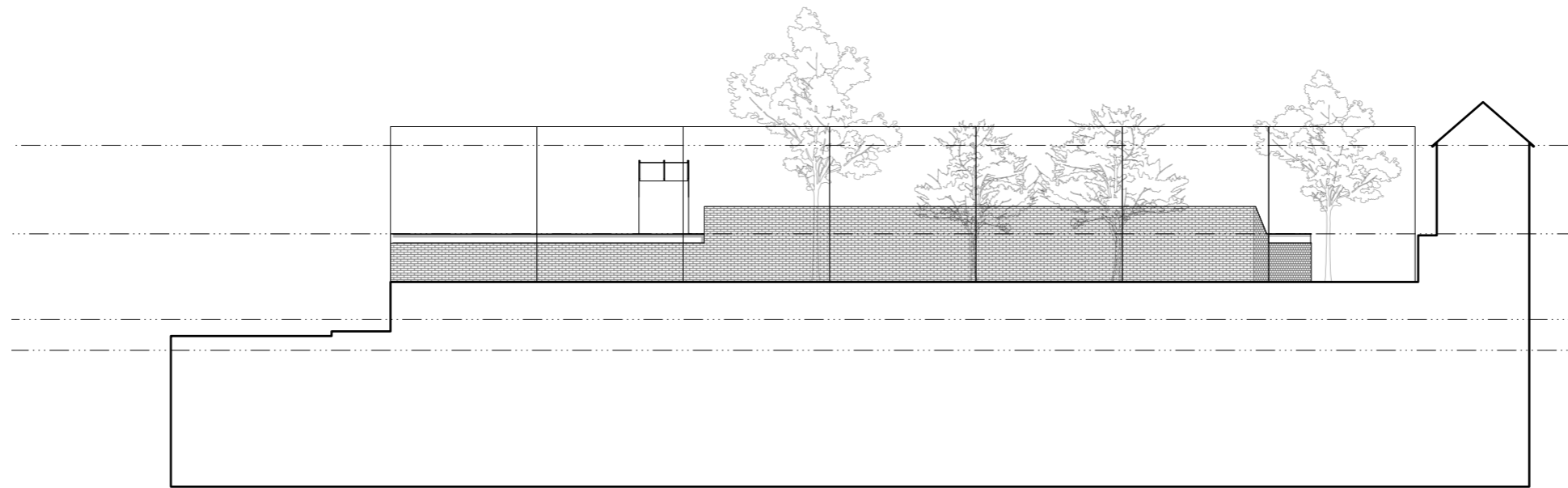
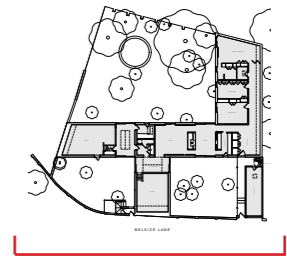
View showing original intention for roof detail and expressed steel.



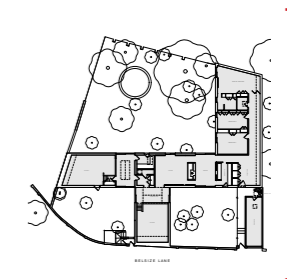


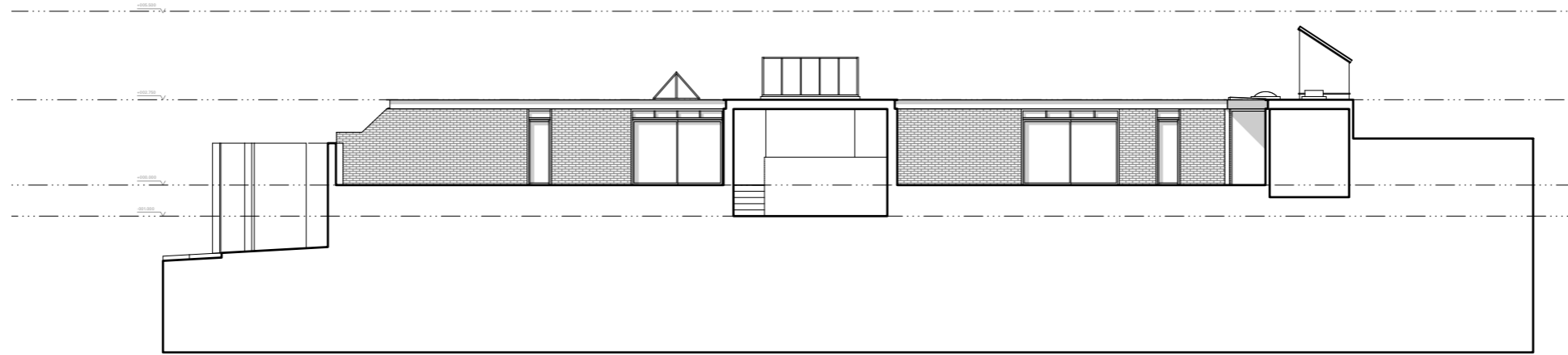


Elevation from Street

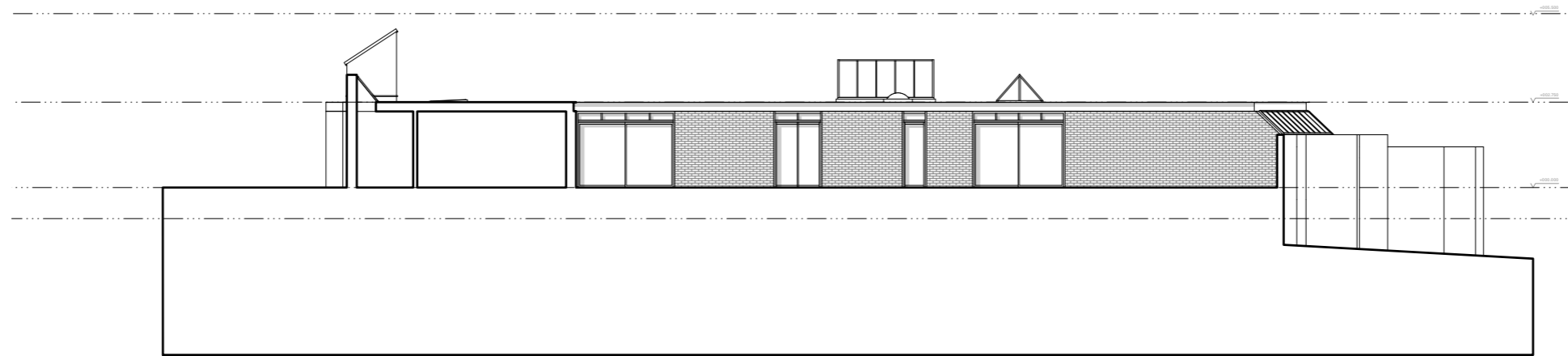
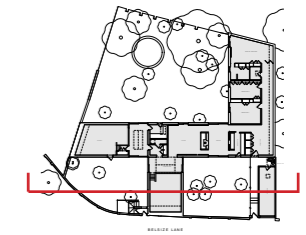


Elevation from School

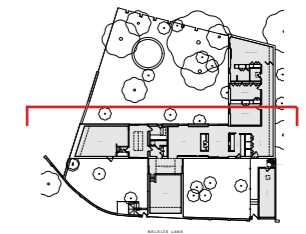


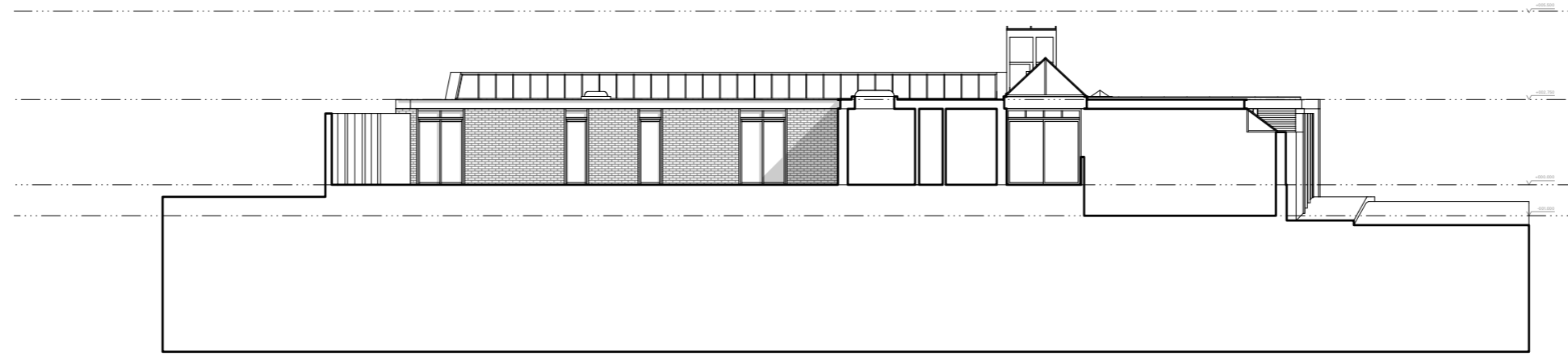


Section AA

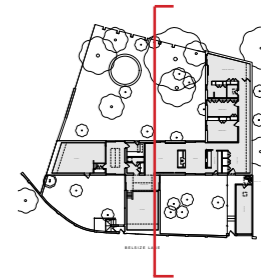


Section BB





Section CC



4. PLANNING AND HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS

SITE DESIGNATIONS

The site falls within the Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area ('FNCA') originally designated in 1984 and then later expanded in 1988, 1991 and 2001; with the latter expansion capturing properties along Ornan Road, to the north east of the site.

Properties to the south of the site (within 'Village Close' located off Belsize Lane) are excluded from the FNCA; the site therefore forms part of the boundary line of the FNCA.

To the south of the site (on the opposite side of Belsize Lane) is the Belsize Park Conservation Area.

Within the Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan:

- Belsize Lane is considered to form one of the 'more informal rural lanes' when considering layout of the CA;
- Buildings 2-26 (even), 32, 1, 9-17 (odd) and 17a on Belsize Lane are considered to be "buildings which make a positive contribution";
- Belsize Lane is noted as comprising a mixture of residential blocks and houses, mainly three to five storeys and "a mix of styles".

Prior to being listed at grade II in October 2023, 34 Belsize Lane was identified as a locally listed building on Camden's Local List (January 2015). The local list entry states:

- Significance: Architectural and Townscape Significance
- Asset Type: Building or Group of Buildings
- Description: Architect Georgie Wolton's own house dating to 1975-6 with 1983 addition. Spacious one story house hidden from the street behind old garden wall and enclosing mature vegetation which

gives the impression of a garden site. Built of timber and brick with the main living area has glazed walls to an enclosed garden on both sides; bedroom wing at one end and studios linked by a conservatory at the other;. Is in modernist tradition of integrating modern houses into historic settings sensitively, without challenging existing historic character. Contributes to the wealth of high quality post war architect designed houses in Camden.

Whilst the CAA (December 2022) identifies the site as a locally listed building (as set out above), in October 2023 the site was considered worthy of formal listing and was added to the registered list of listed buildings, having been categorised as Grade II listed. A copy of the listing is provided on the following page.



Fitzjohns Netherhall Conservation Area (RED) & Belsize Park Conservation Area (Green).

34 Belsize Lane was listed at grade II on 25/10/23 (see listing description in the Appendix).

Historic England's list entry provides the following summary of the house's significance:

Architectural interest:

- As a meticulously conceived studio house which creatively integrates into its sensitive urban setting;
- For its ranging, axial plan, articulating the garden spaces around the volume of building as well as the living and working spaces within it;
- For its interior, characterised by a subtle handling of spatial proportion and natural light, with full-height sliding doors and window shutters controlling the flow of space and views through the site;
- For its bespoke joinery, and straightforward palette of materials and fittings which contribute to the elegant, understated quality of the building.

Historic interest:

- As the work of Georgie Wolton, a little-known but talented woman architect working in independent practice in the post-war period; the building, designed for herself, captures many of the ideas which influenced her practice as well as her skill as a designer.



Photograph of 34 Belsize Lane
Credit: RIBA Pix

The Development Plan for the proposals comprises the London Plan (March 2021), NPPF (updated December 2023), plus the Camden Local Plan (July 2017).

At a local level, the three key planning policies from Camden’s adopted Local Plan that are of relevance to the site which the emerging proposals will consider and address, are as follows:

- Policy G1 ‘Delivery and Location of Growth’: supporting development that makes the best use of its site, taking into account quality of design, its surroundings and sustainability etc.
- Policy D1 ‘Design’: seeks high quality design; respect of the local character; preservation or enhancement of historic environment and heritage assets; sustainable design and construction; use of sustainable and durable construction materials; use of materials which complement the local character; integration with the surrounding streets; incorporation of high quality landscape; and provides a high standard of housing.
- Policy D2 ‘Heritage’: to preserve and where appropriate, enhance Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas; will not permit the loss or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and listed buildings (unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm / loss is outweighed by substantial public benefits); resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of that conservation area; resist the total or substantial demolition of a listed building; resist alterations / extensions to a listed building which would cause

harm to the special architectural and historic interest; and resist development which would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting.

A full assessment of planning policies from the Development Plan for the site is provided within the Planning Statement prepared by DP9 Ltd, plus Heritage Statement prepared by Jon Lowe Heritage which accompany this application.

The planning history for the site comprises the following:

- Erection of one single storey dwelling house. Approved in March 1975. Application Ref: 19451.
- The formation of a single storey side extension to provide an additional bedroom shower room and conservatory. Approved in October 1981. Application Ref: 32849.
- Clerestory window and flat roof construction over existing mono-pitched roof light with new insulation to roof. Approved in October 2021. Application Ref: 2021/3342/P.

In the Design and Access Statement submitted alongside the application approved in October 2021, it is noted that “the proposed construction is to deal with the issues listed below and to enable the applicant to remain in residence while the work takes place” which in turn “avoids opening the house exposing the internal finishes, and the occupants, to the elements” and it also “avoids any internal work and the dust, debris and disruption that would cause”.

This suggests that the works were limited – to some extent – in order to allow Georgie Wolton to remain in residence with further, more substantial and necessary works only able to be undertaken if Georgie Wolton hadn’t remained on-site.

The ‘issues’ listed in the DAS were as follows:

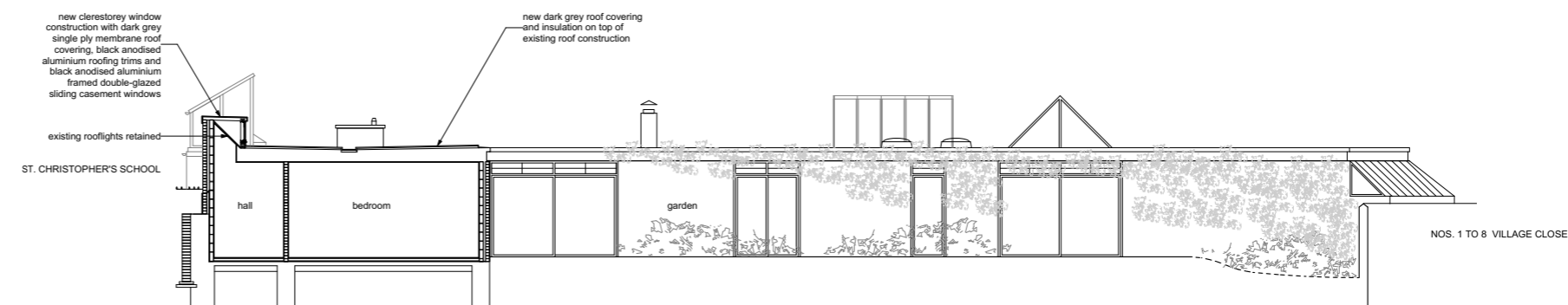
- Heat loss: as a result of the existing rooflight construction being original and dating from the late 1970’s;
- Rainwater leaks: aside from the use of polythene sheeting which was later installed to form some protection, the “existing rooflight has a low

kerb / cill detail which, during heavy rainfall, has allowed rainwater to enter the house”;

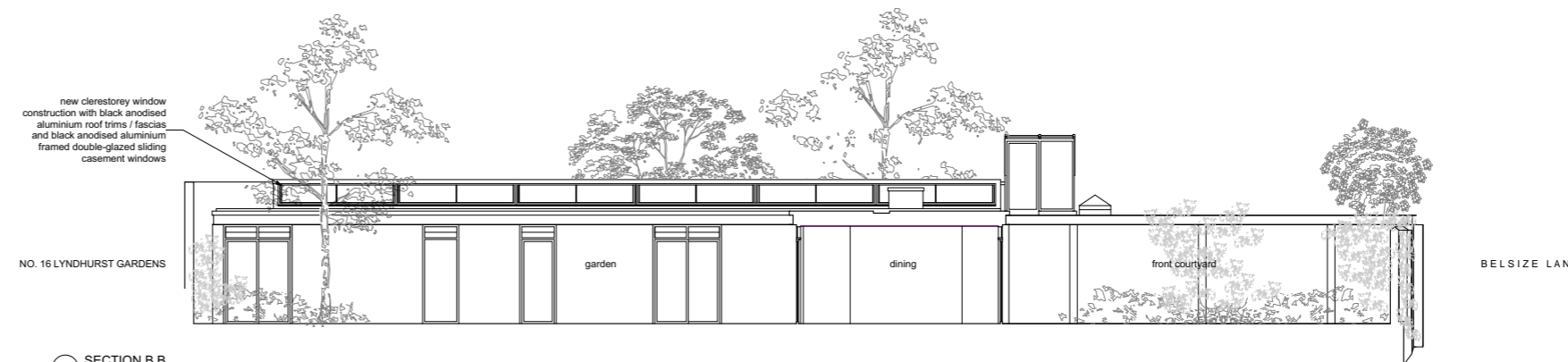
- Leaves and bird droppings: Bird droppings and leaf-fall onto the mono-pitched rooflights requires constant maintenance. The new flat roof construction will remove this maintenance issue.

The application also proposed new double-glazed casement sliding windows which would have black anodised aluminium frames and with frames that would be aligned with the glazing bars of the existing rooflight.

Extracts of the approved application drawings are provided below.



1 SECTION A.A



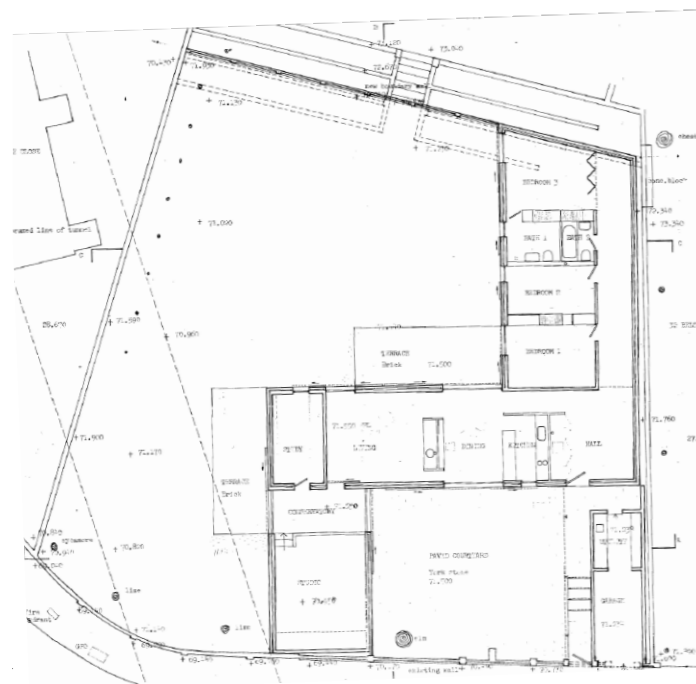
2 SECTION B.B

Drawings of Consented Scheme Application ref: 2021/3342/P

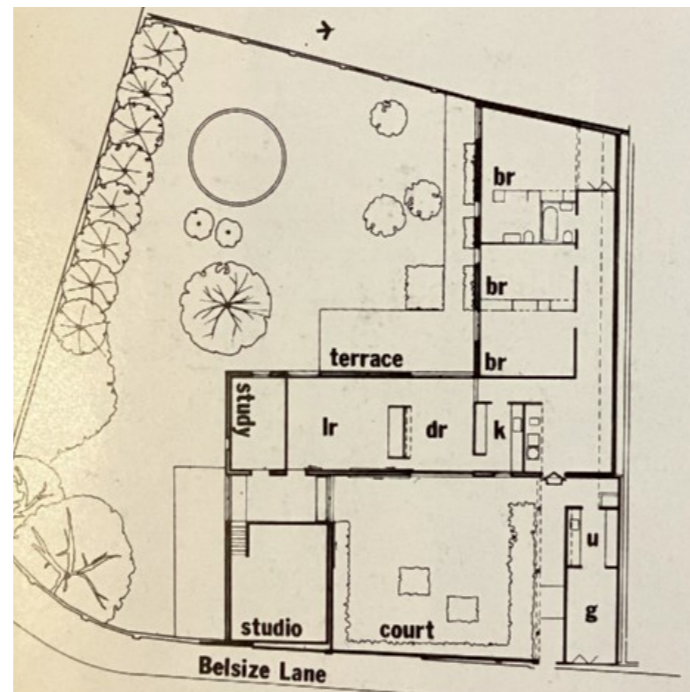
Over the years Georgie Wolton had planned a series of interventions that allowed the house to grow as her needs changed.

As well as the extension to create a studio, she had planned to create two glass garden rooms connected to the linking space between her new studio and the original house (Planning Application approved by Camden Council in 1981). Extracts of these are shown below, with full copies provided in the accompanying Heritage Statement.

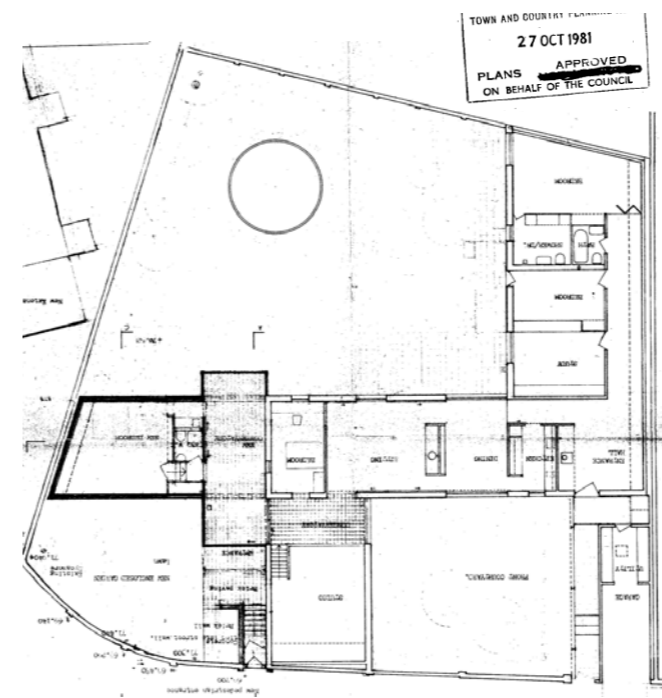
These elements would create small glazed interior spaces that projected into both the courtyard at front and the garden at the rear, helping to make new connections with the garden.



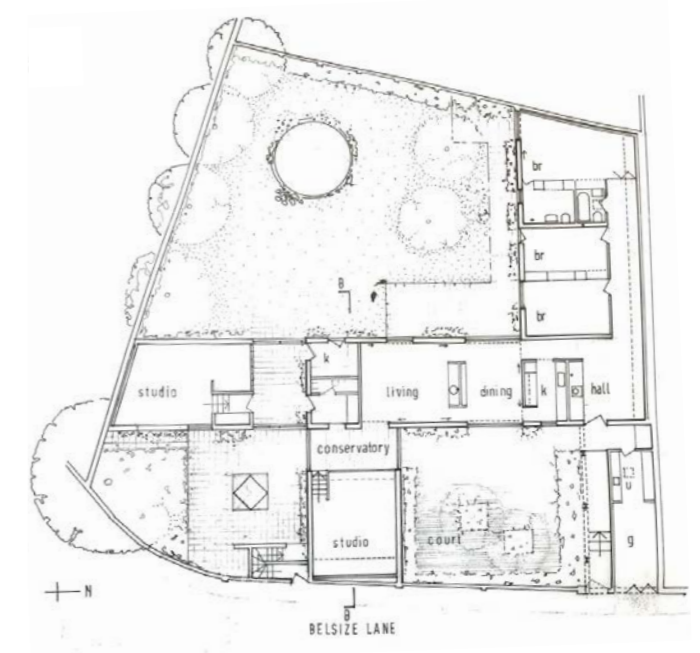
Original approved plan 11/03/1975.



Drawings as built (Architectural review, 1977)



Approved extension plan 27/08/1981.

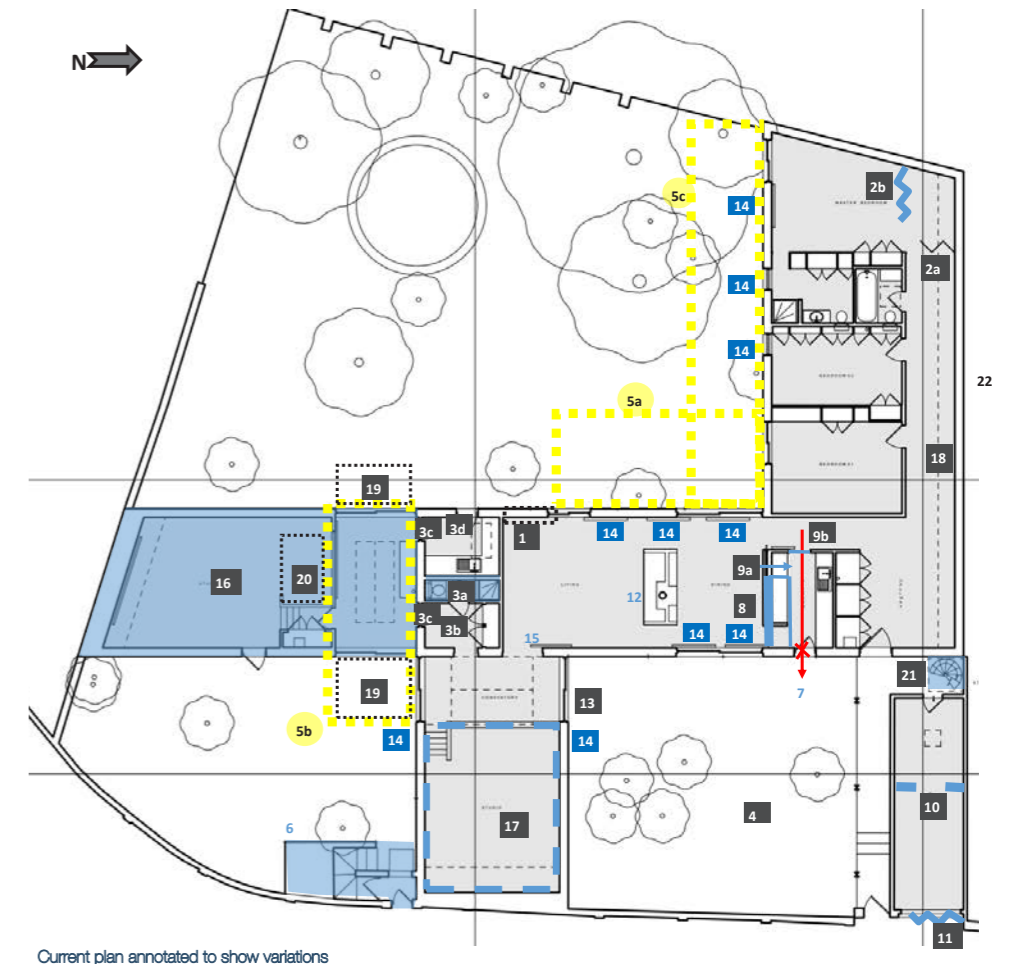


As built from Georgie Wolton's collection.

As noted earlier in this report (and set out within the accompanying Heritage Statement), variations to the original plans for 34 Belsize have been discovered, the details of which are provided below:

- 1) Living room window originally intended to be abut the cross wall.
- 2) Concertina screen installed in this position in 1981 (2a), position originally intended to align with corridor (2b).
- 3) Former Study, compromised by subdivision to form WC (3a), linkage to extension (3b) after 1981. Works included forming two new internal doorways within a former external wall (3c), and a single external door in place of a window to the garden (3d). Note: This space was allocated as a bedroom in the 1981 permission with shared bathroom (20) to an additional bedroom within the extension used as a Studio.
- 4) Courtyard was intended and originally built as a fully brick paved area with occasional planting. There has been an increase in soft landscaping and reduction of hard land landscaping.
- 5) Prior to 1981 there were two brick terraces on the garden side; one on west side of living room (5a) and the other (5b) on the south side of the former study. Brick paved terraces are shown to have extended along the southern front of the bedroom wing (5c) on the 1981 plan.
- 6) Introduced breach in boundary wall and steps to provide separate access to studio extension
- 7) Door access to garden not originally intended
- 8) Kitchen intended to be open to living room—division provided by units only

- 9) Access to kitchen was intended to be on north side (9a) with no doorway from hall (9b). It appears the approved design was not executed in favour of the existing arrangement.
- 10) Garage had been divided so that the rear part provided a galley utility room
- 11) Garage doors originally built as concertina doors.
- 12) Fireplace altered
- 13) Conservatory designed to have single window, not doors
- 14) Sliding shutters originally conceived to be external
- 15) Doorway between living room and conservatory designed to be smaller and was intended to be set directly opposite equally proportioned window
- 16) Later extension; designed as a bedroom with ensuite; built and used as a studio without ensuite.
- 17) Floor raised
- 18) Roof light intended to be whole width of corridor.
- 19) 1981 conservatory originally designed/approved to project forward of the build line at both ends (built form varied this)
- 20) Intended location for bedroom ensuite (never built)
- 21) Roof access provided by addition of spiral stairs post 1980s.
- 22) Rear boundary formerly lined and screened by mature trees



In terms of landscaping, the design of these spaces has also evolved over time as detailed and illustrated, below.

Pre-1976

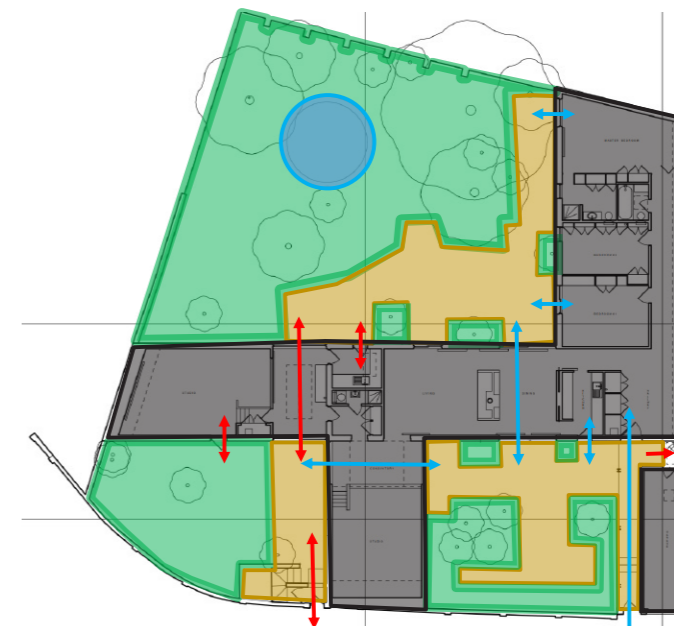
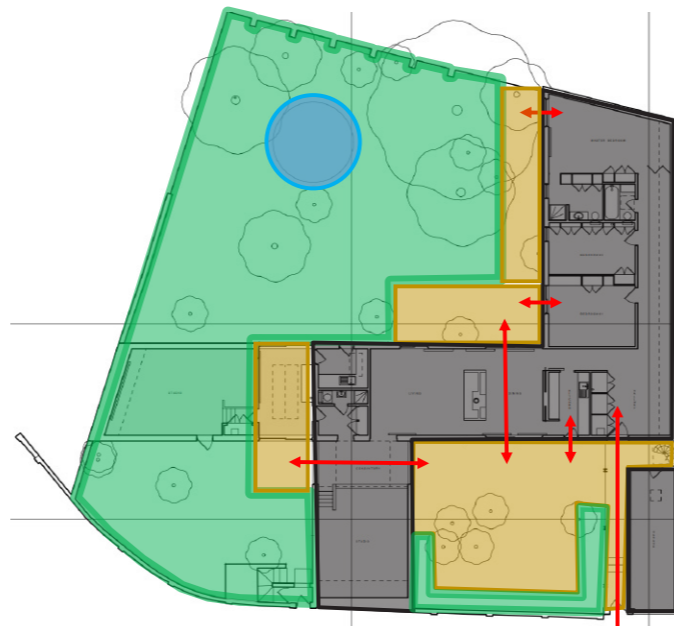
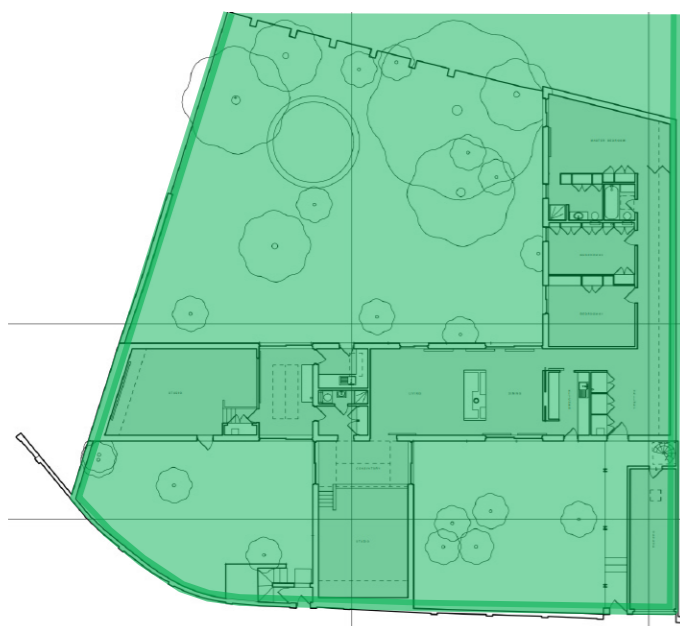
- Plot formed the lower part of the garden to 16 Lyndhurst Gardens.
- Western extent of present site delineated by brick retaining wall.
- Land to the north was open, occupied by a tennis court (later replaced by playground).

1976

- Two external spaces; an informal garden and a courtyard.
- Courtyard relatively formal, paved in brick with minimal planting.
- Courtyard character defined by impenetrable Victorian boundary wall (offering security), semi impenetrable new house (controlled permeability by means of large openable doors), and cloister like permeability offered by entrance pergola frame.
- The garden was evidently natural in style with retention of elements of planting from the Victorian garden.
- House positioned against north boundary to maximise garden area and afford plan configuration with southerly aspect.
- Movement between external spaces and into external spaces via glazed doors (red arrows).
- Paved terrace on south side of the former study since removed.
- Pond added.

Post 1981 to Present

- Studio extension (added at southern end of building) divided garden into two and created a third external space.
- Second through passage/conservatory added and south end of original house, linking the separated gardens.
- New garden access provided (red arrows) along side established access points (blue arrows).
- Secondary independent access introduced from Belsize Lane increased permeability between site and context.
- Roof access introduced and roof used for herb/vegetable beds.
- Extent, formality and orthogonal nature of paved terraces reduced.

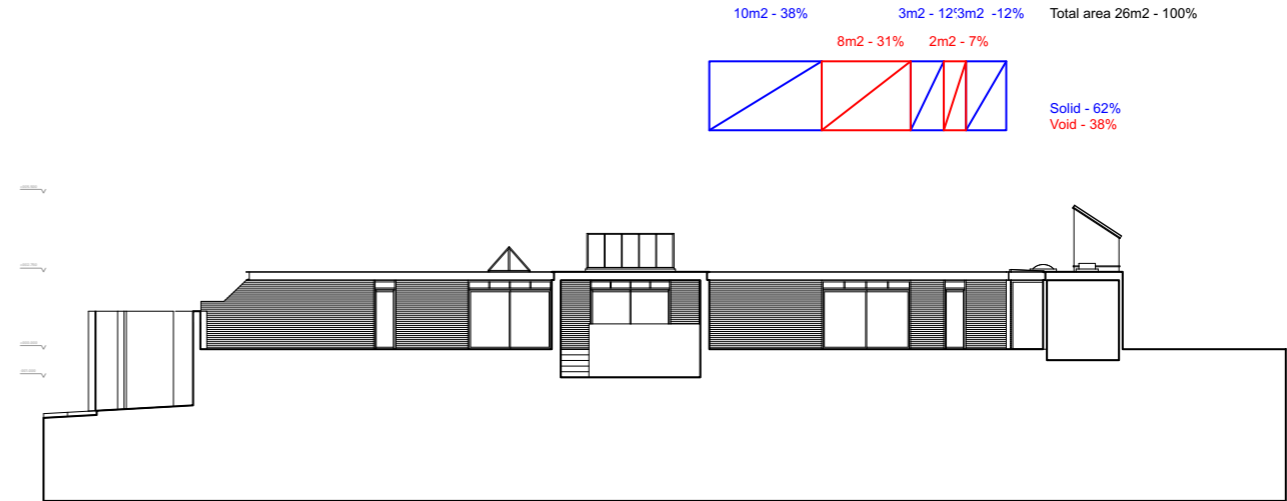


A review of the existing building has been carried out in order to ascertain the logic behind the moves that Georgie Wolton made in the design of the original house. Through this understanding a clear strategy has been established for a new addition at first floor that looks to reflect the original intentions.

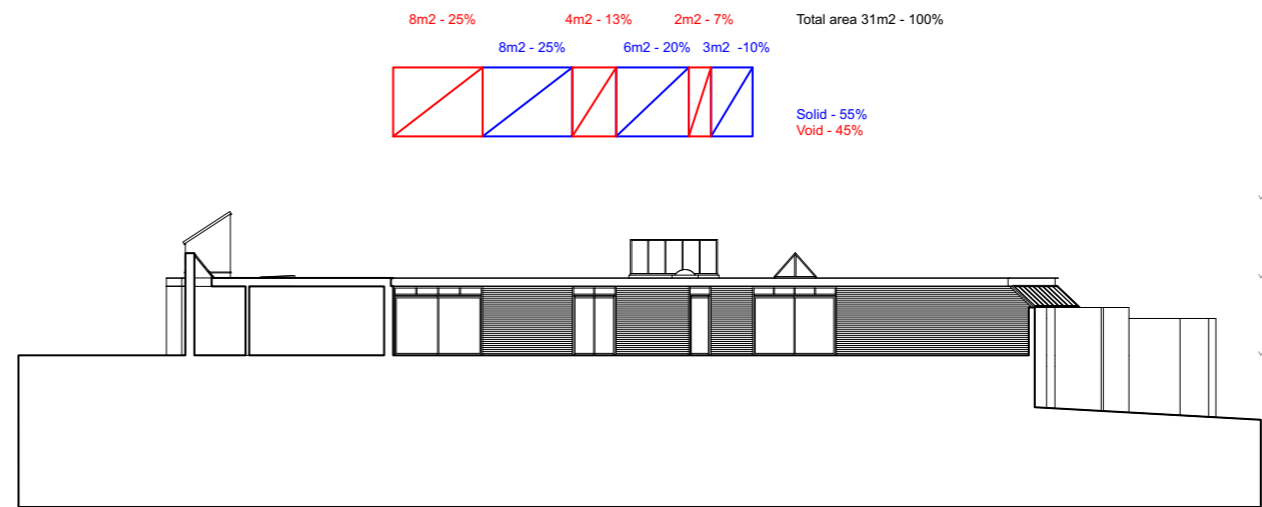
Overall the proportions of the house look to address the requirements of the interior spaces rather than a clear logic for the facade. This study highlights that there are no distinct rules set for the architectural expression, yet there are relationships between the rooms and the sizes of the openings.

For example, larger openings respond to primary spaces such as the living areas and linking spaces, followed by bedrooms and then ancillary spaces or secondary bedrooms. The positions of openings within walls have been set out to benefit the plan, while the sizes try to reflect a sequence of single pane, double panes and two doubles at a ratio of 1:2:4.

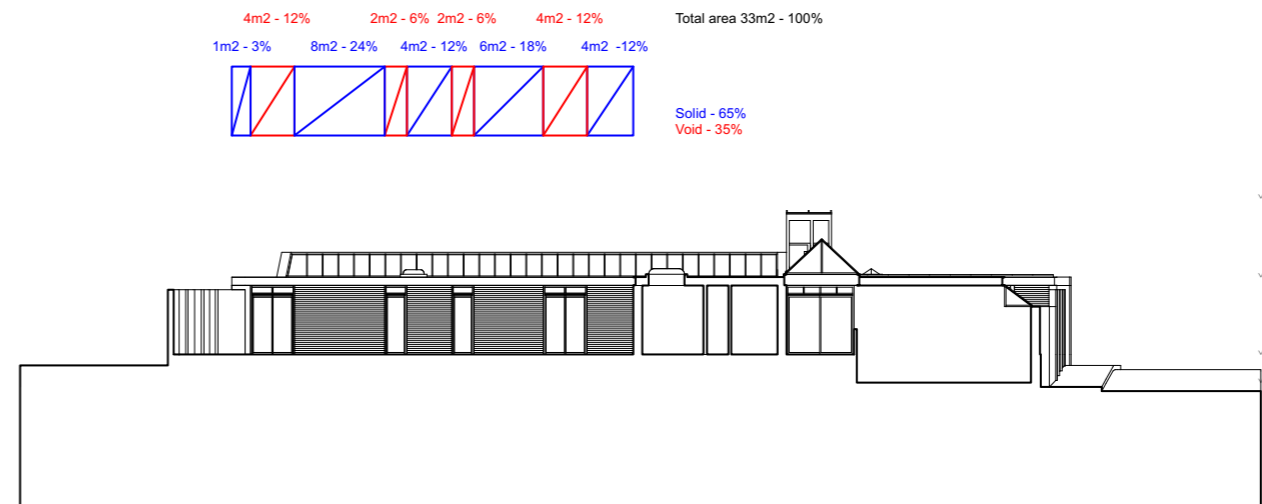
While there is not a clear defining characteristic to the position of openings that is constant throughout the building, there are opportunities to reflect the intention of hierarchy between the size of openings and the rooms, as well as looking to pick up on existing lines.



i - Existing Section AA - East Elevation



ii - Existing Section BB - West Elevation



iii - Existing Section CC - South Elevation

5. PRE-APPLICATION SUMMARY

Prior to the submission of the application, the applicant and their design team undertook formal pre-application discussions since November 2023 with Officers at Camden Council, Historic England and the 20th Century Society.

A summary of the proposals that were presented and discussed at those meetings, along with a description of the evolution of the scheme in response to the feedback received is set out in the following pages of this report.

Summary of Pre-Application Monday 11th December

Attendees

- Matthew Dempsey (Planning Officer), Camden
- Jessica McDonnell-Buwalda (Conservation Officer), Camden
- Thomasin Davis, Historic England
- Nina Dierks, Historic England

The first pre-application meeting took place on-site with the aforementioned Officers, following which both Camden and Historic England Officers provided their thoughts and recommendations on the proposals. These have been categorised under the following sub-headings, below:

1. GARAGE

Officers were resistant to the widening of the garage and associated works arising with this which included the re-positioning of the corridor.

2. LINK

In terms of the proposed corridor ('gallery link'), Camden Officers did not raise any concerns with this.

3. FIRST FLOOR

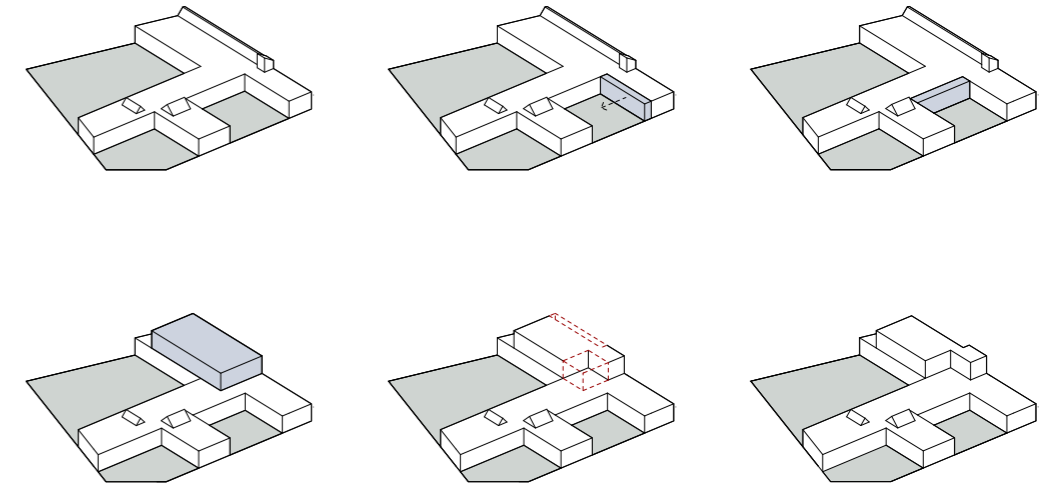
Camden Officers recognised the rationale for the first floor extension but were concerned about the first floor extension and queried whether the proposal could be designed to be more subservient to the original building. Officers noted that ongoing design development and the proposed use of materials would be important in their consideration of the appropriateness of a first floor extension and encouraged the applicant team to consider this further.

4. INTERNAL CHANGES

Officers advised that all opportunities to preserve, retain and restore the existing building should be the priority, with any proposed future demolition works or internal alterations to be fully justified.

5. TREE STUDY

Officers requested further information be provided regarding the existing trees.



Massing Diagrams



Proposed Section CC



Model image taken from street

Following the feedback provided from Officers at the first pre-application meeting, the applicant and the design team have reviewed the original proposals to consider how they could evolve to address the points raised. Responses to each of the key topics are provided below:

1. GARAGE

Recognising Officers concerns, the widening of the existing garage and realignment of the existing corridor to the front of the house were removed from the proposals and instead these will remain as is. However, in order to improve the existing appearance, it is proposed that the existing (damaged) shutter will be replaced with a new retractable door and allow for the reinstatement of a functioning garage.

2. LINK

Despite Officers not raising any concerns with the link as originally proposed, this was developed further by the design team to respond more closely to the existing covered area leading from the gate to the front

door. This will be achieved by matching the design of the steel columns to provide a canopy that aligns with the edge of the existing link space.

3. FIRST FLOOR

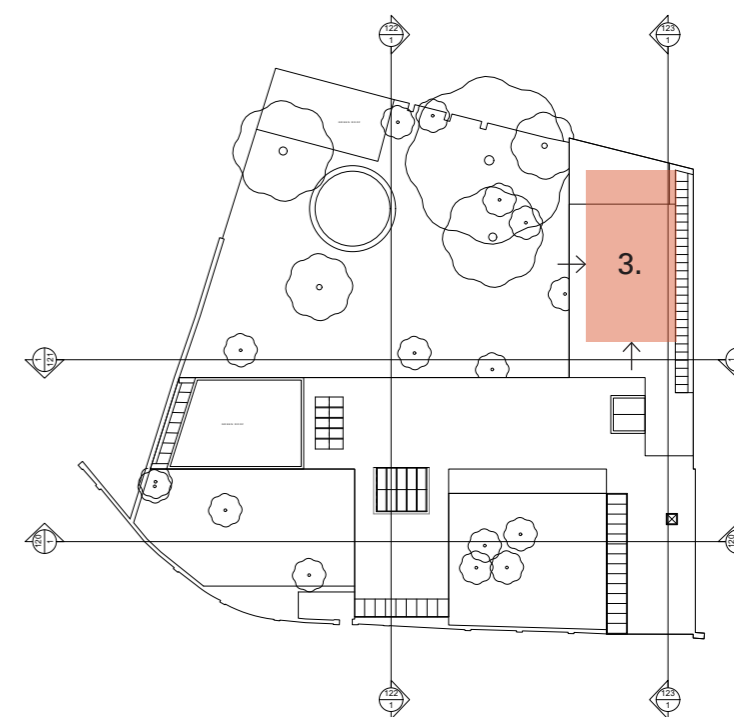
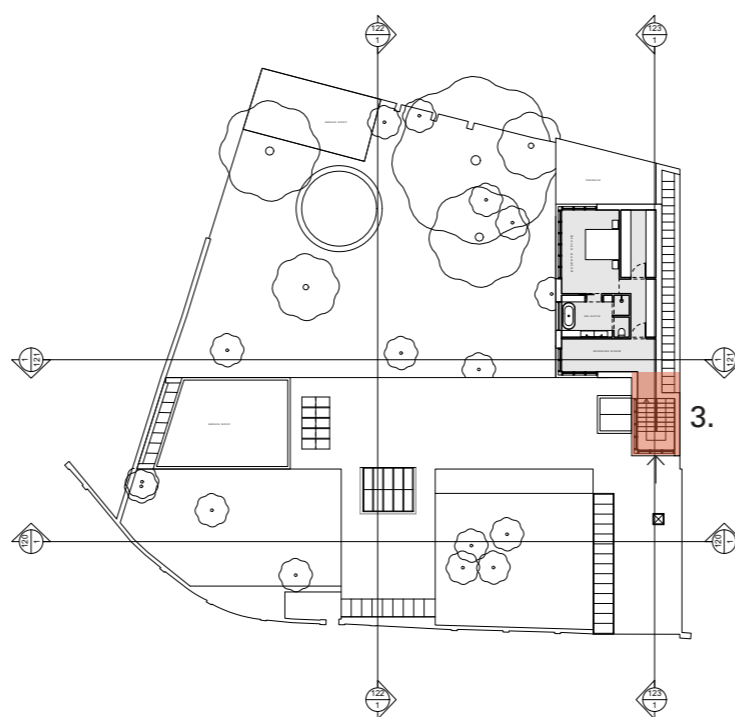
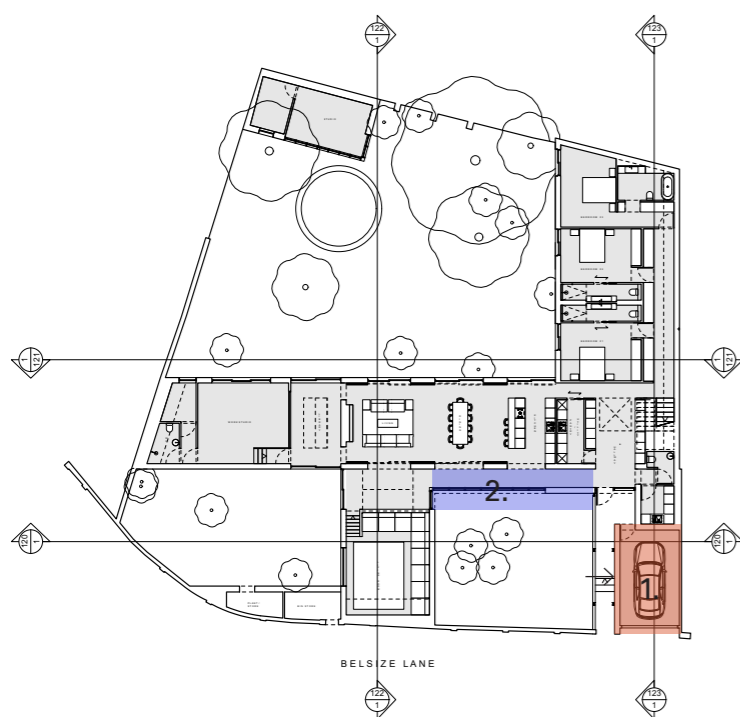
A series of developed ideas for a more lightweight and subservient first floor addition was explored that helps to pick up on the existing proportions of windows and openings whilst also stepping back considerably both from the edge of the building and the street. Removal of the proposed massing that enclosed the new proposed staircase, able to be removed as a result of positioning stair internally along corridor flanking the bedrooms. As well as proportions and positioning, the materiality and overall architectural character for the extension was developed.

4. INTERNAL CHANGES

As part of the original proposal, the applicant sought a number of changes to the internal layout of the house in order to improve the quality of the rooms and the organisation of the house. In light of Officers

feedback, these amendments have been revised and reduced in order to preserve more of the historic and original architectural value of the existing building. 1By introducing a first floor, less changes to the ground floor are possible, such as retaining the bedrooms with a very small change to make the shared bathroom usable.

In addition, the proposals retain joinery and restore its condition, introducing like-for-like repair and replacement where necessary. This preserves the character of the building and spaces. With regards to construction and restoration of the house, a further exploration of the condition and the build-ability issues has been investigated. The proposals sought to retain the original outer leaf of the brick walls to the house - where no structural interventions are required - and rebuild internally to increase the performance and address issues with cold bridging. Further evidence and justification for these changes are provided on pages 53 - 55 of this document.



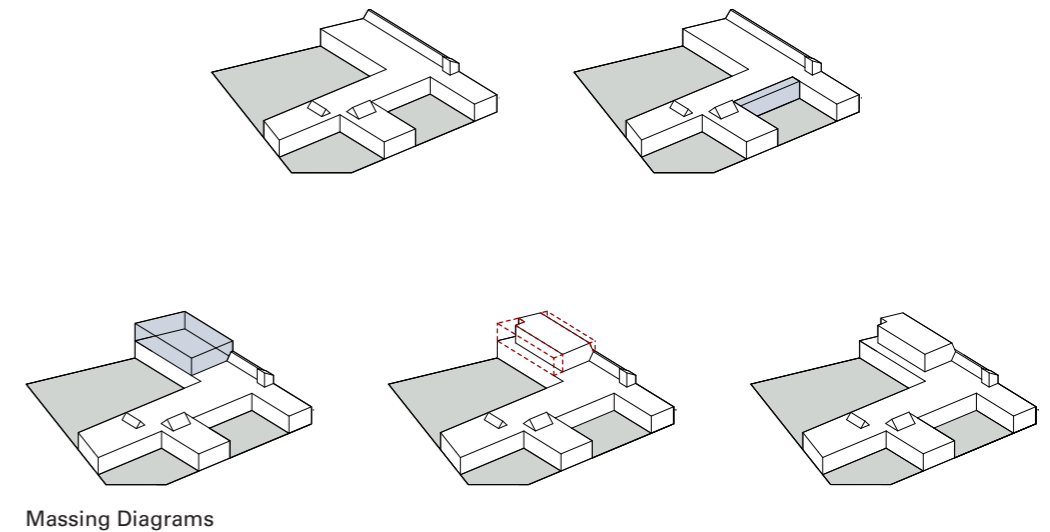
In January 2024, the applicant and their design team met with Officers at Camden Council to discuss revisions to the proposals following feedback from pre-application meeting #1 in November 2023. A summary of the feedback received is as follows:
Summary of Pre-Application 02

A summary of the proposals that were presented and discussed at those meetings, along with a description of the evolution of the scheme in response to the feedback received is set out in the following pages of this report.

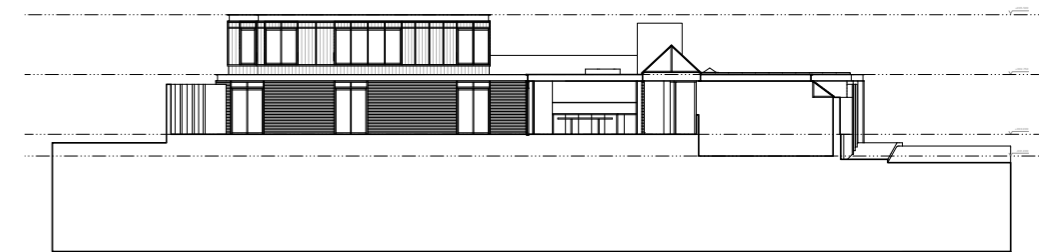
Attendees:

- Matthew Dempsey (Planning Officer), Camden
- Jessica McDonnell-Buwalda (Conservation Officer), Camden

Discussions mainly covered the first floor extension however we covered other aspects of the design such as the garage, proposed link, internal alterations and the relationship to the school. When discussing the first floor we addressed materiality, it's height and massing.



Massing Diagrams



Proposed Section CC



Proposed rear garden view

GARAGE:

Officers welcomed the decision to no longer seek the widening of the garage.

PROPOSED LINK:

While some colleagues expressed reservations about the proposed link, there was little concern from the planning officer (1)

PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR ADDITION:

The reduction in scale and massing was received positively, but concerns and reservations still remained over the appropriateness of a first floor extension and their understanding that the existing building was intended to be single storey.

MATERIALITY: Concerns were raised as to whether brick or aluminium were suitable or appropriate options for the first floor addition. We were encouraged to explore the use of a biodiverse roof or planting and establishing a management and maintenance plan.

HEIGHT: It was suggested that by lowering the building height, reducing the internal floor-to-ceiling height would make the extension look more subservient.

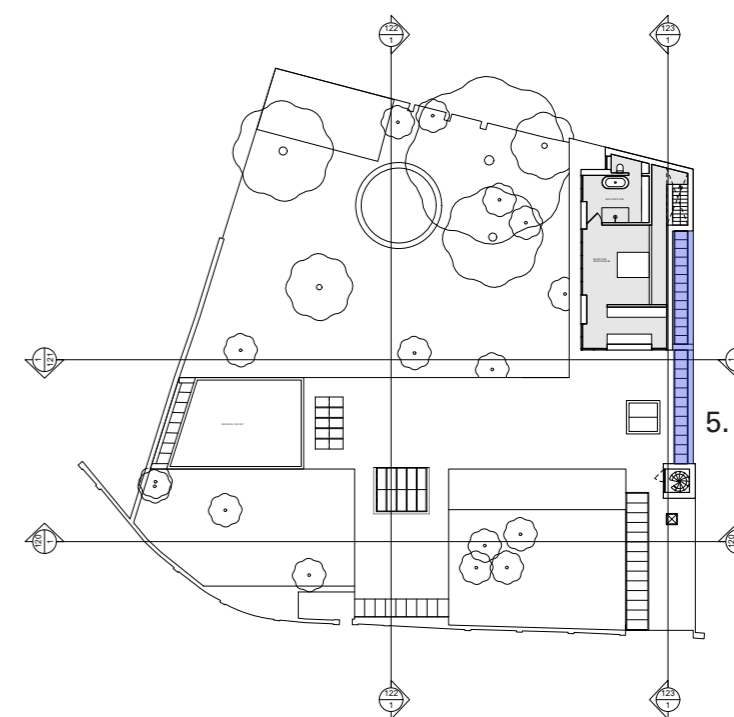
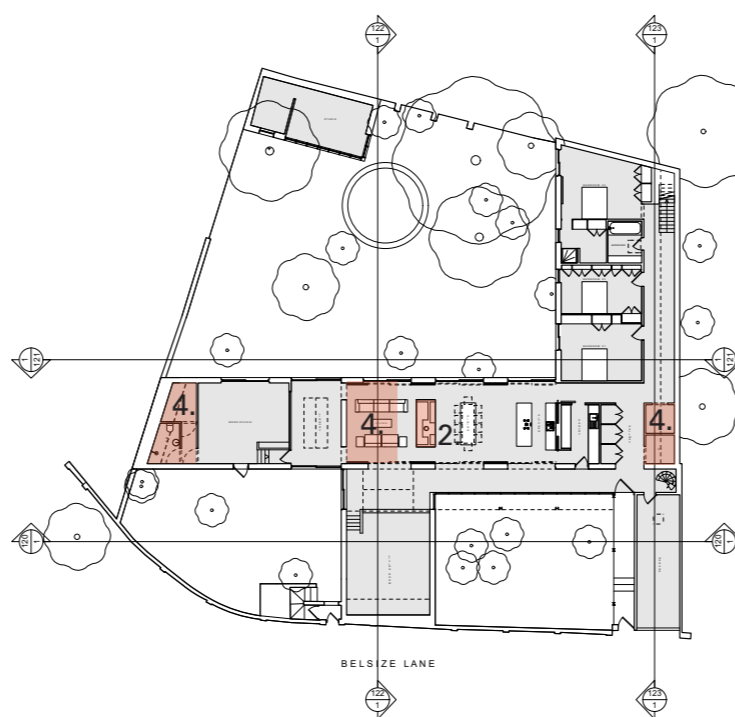
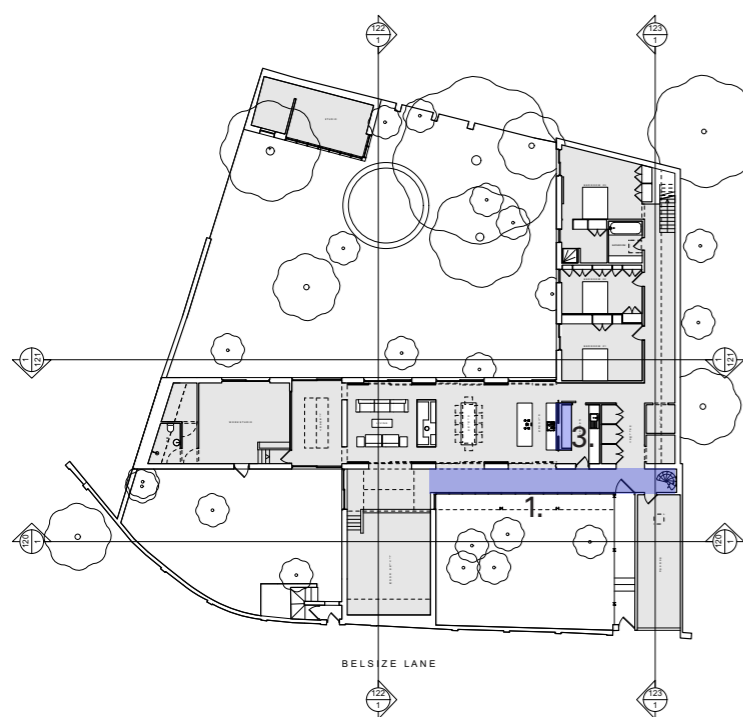
MASSING: There was concern about the massing and questions were raised as to whether the proposal needed to be as large. It was suggested that setting the extension further back from the building's edge would be beneficial.

INTERNAL ALTERATIONS:

Relocating the fireplace was deemed unacceptable (2), while removing the upper part of the kitchen wall was deemed acceptable (3). The importance of preserving the internal layout of the Grade II listed building and minimising internal alterations was stressed (4). Amendments since the pre-application include removal of shower room to studio and WC/Utility to entrance hallway. Additionally, we have since brought back the GF WC and Kitchenette and have reinstated the fireplace into its original position.

SCHOOL:

Officers preferred the clearstorey to run the entire length of the boundary with the school (5). They emphasised the need to consult with the school about the proposals, especially the proposed height increase to the wall. It was suggested to explore the idea of a mural to lessen the impact. A letter of support from the school would aid the officers' consideration.



The pre-application discussions that took place with Camden and Historic England during the period November 2023 to March 2024 (inclusive) and the subsequent feedback that has been provided have helped inform and shape the proposals which planning permission and listed building consent is being sought for. A summary of the key changes that have arisen as a result of the feedback include:

- Retention of the existing width of the garage.
- Retention of the alignment and width of the existing corridor along bedroom wing.
- Not proposing WC or utility in entrance hallway.
- Retention of kitchenette and WC.
- Retention of fireplace in existing position.
- Not proposing a shower room in studio.
- Set back and reduction in scale of the first floor extension and repositioning of the stair volume away from the street.
- Reconsideration of the proposed materiality of the first floor extension, drawing upon inspiration from Georgie Wolton's other schemes e.g. the Fieldhouse.

In March, once the amendments were made, we had a pre-application discussion with the 20th Century Society. They stated that they are pleased that a new owner has come forward who is committed to the restoration of the house in order to make it their permanent home. They are also encouraged by the nature and extent of the proposed refurbishment and restoration works and expressed their support for the first floor extension and other internal alterations.

Details of the proposed scheme are provided in the following section of this Design and Access Statement.