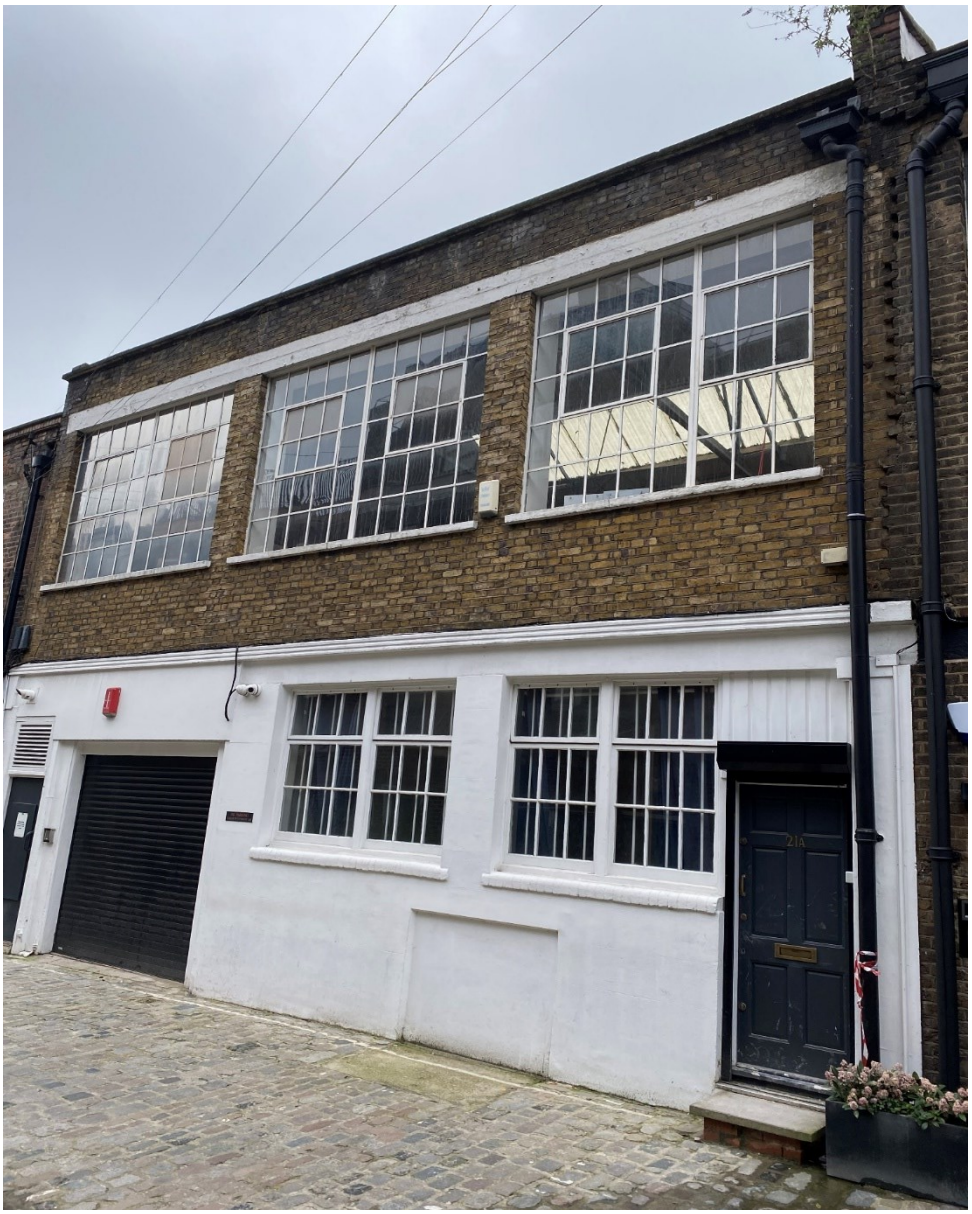
Design and Access Statement

For Proposed Roof Terrace at:

21a Brownlow Mews

London

WC1N 2LA



**Executive Summary**

The following document explains and illustrates the proposed minor alterations to the existing flat roof at 21a Brownlow mews.

It illustrates that the roof is currently historically unplanned and has evolved over a number of years, and that the proposal aims to rationalise this sprawl to a dedicated and screened plant area, offering better elevational aesthetic as well as safe access for maintenance, along with a small amount of external amenity space for building users during working hours.

The proposal is not contentious and embraces design aesthetic and proportions of immediately adjacent property. Despite this, the applicant remains flexible and is amenable to any preference the Planning Authority suggests.

The works required to renew the roof covering may commence during the process of this Planning Application as there are currently some significant leaking and drainage issues to remedy as a more emergency undertaking, but the alterations to layout, use and none water tightening issues will not be commenced until such time as the Application is undergone.

1. Introduction

This design and access statement accompanies the planning application for the proposed addition of a roof terrace at 21a Brownlow Mews. The purpose of this statement is to provide a comprehensive overview of the design rationale and access considerations associated with the proposed development.

## 2. Site Context

The property at 21a Brownlow Mews is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The proposed roof terrace will be situated to the rear of the property on the existing flat roof. The building is not listed.

The property is a commercial office and comprises approximately 4,000sqft over ground and first floors. Its design and aesthetic value has evolved over a number of years, displaying extensive building chronology to present day.

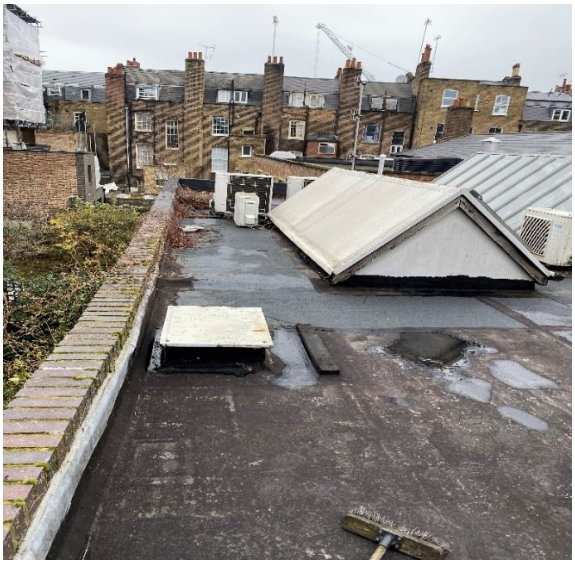
Currently an overdue Periodic refurbishment is being undertaken, to restore inherent period features, improve some areas, and to enhance the property to make it suitable for modern working practices, as well as compliant to modern standards.
The process is expected to improve the property from an EPC rating of D to B, to align with contemporary energy efficiency standards and improve building performance.

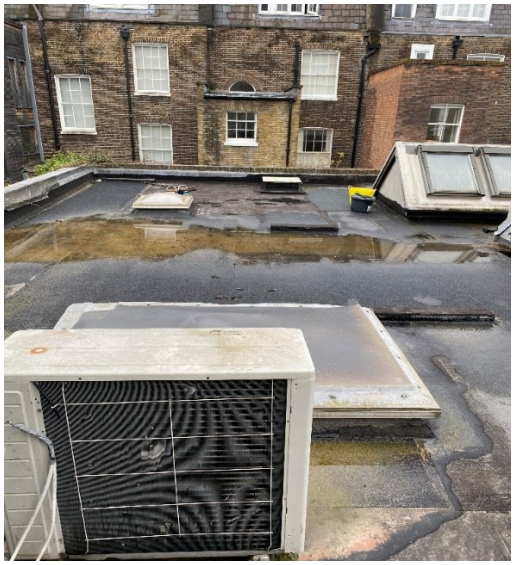
This application seeks to rearrange the rear flat roof area, to rationalise plant that had previously randomly sprawled, into a centralised area, to provide safe access to the plant and roof to appease CDM requirements, and finally, in so doing, to provide a small amount of occasional amenity space for office users. This is achieved by the insertion of a discreet dormer roof alteration to one end to enable safe external access.

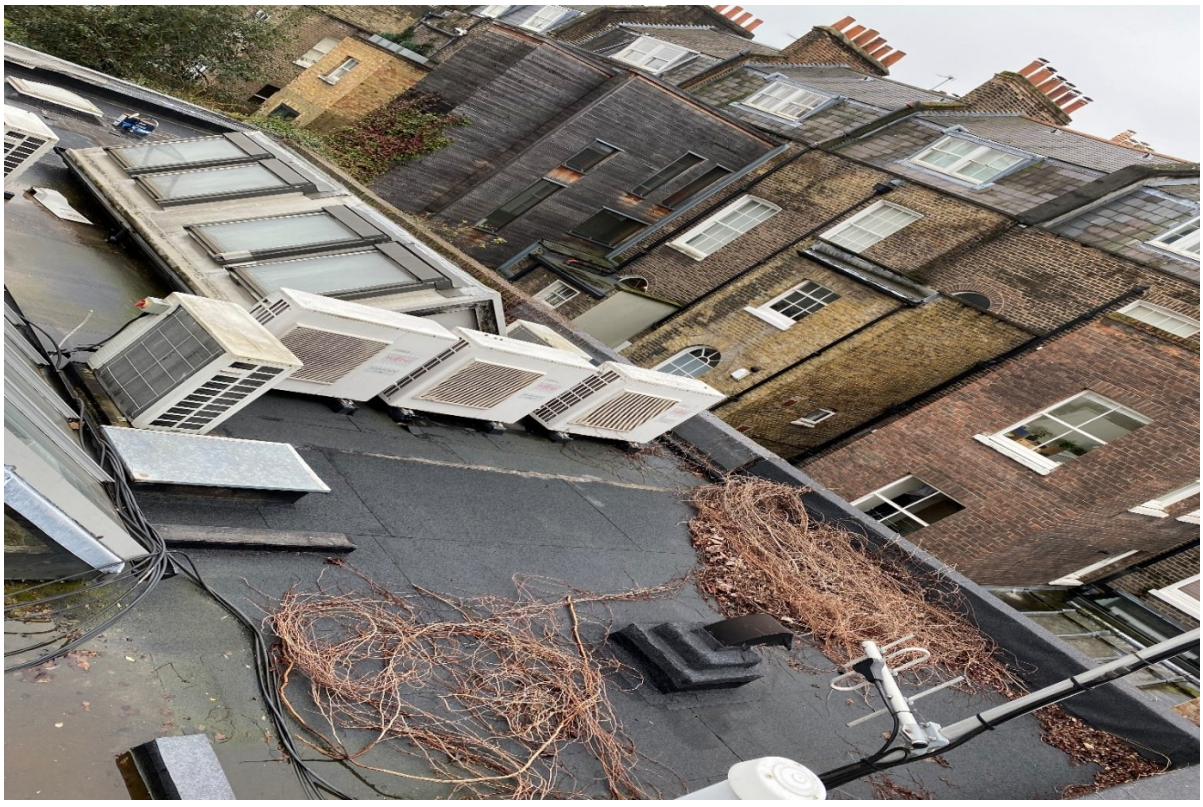
## 3. Design Rationale

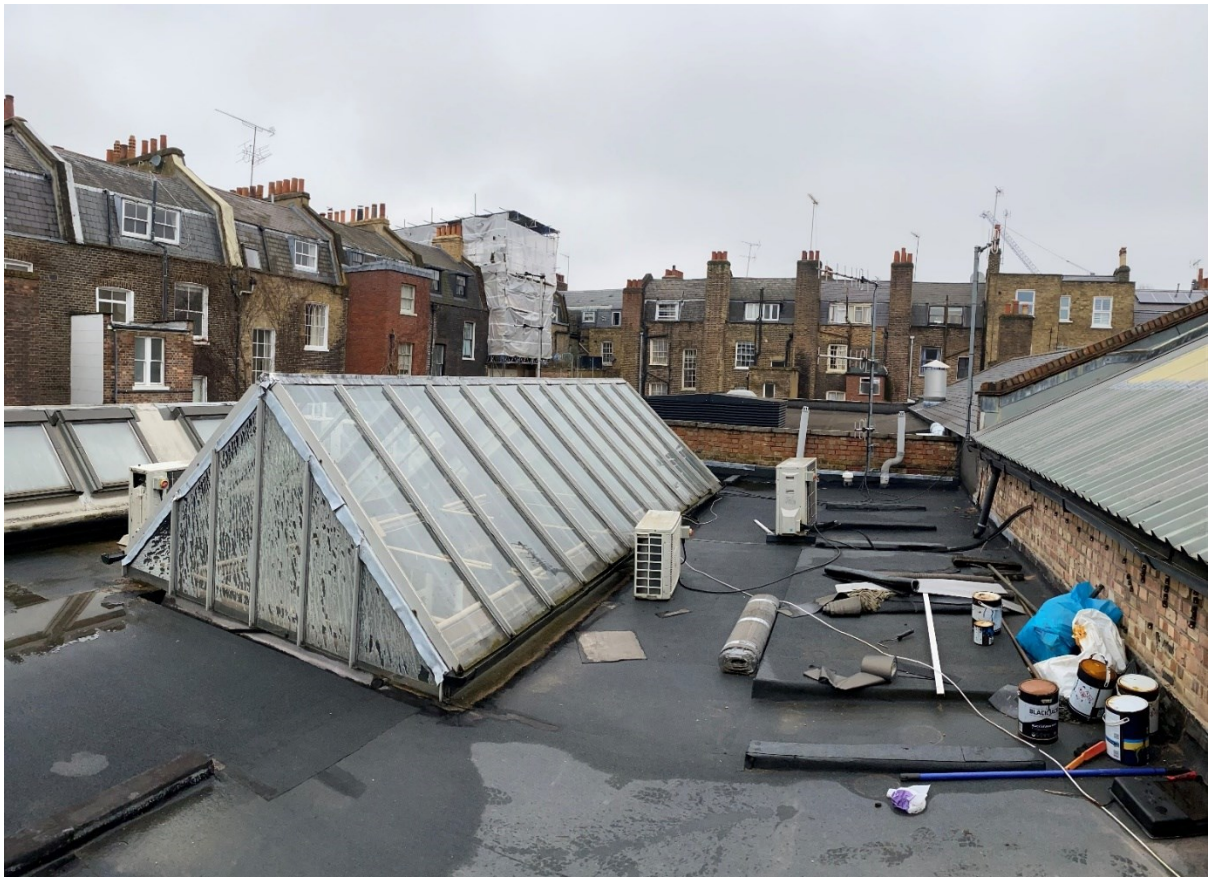
The current existing external appearance is as follows:

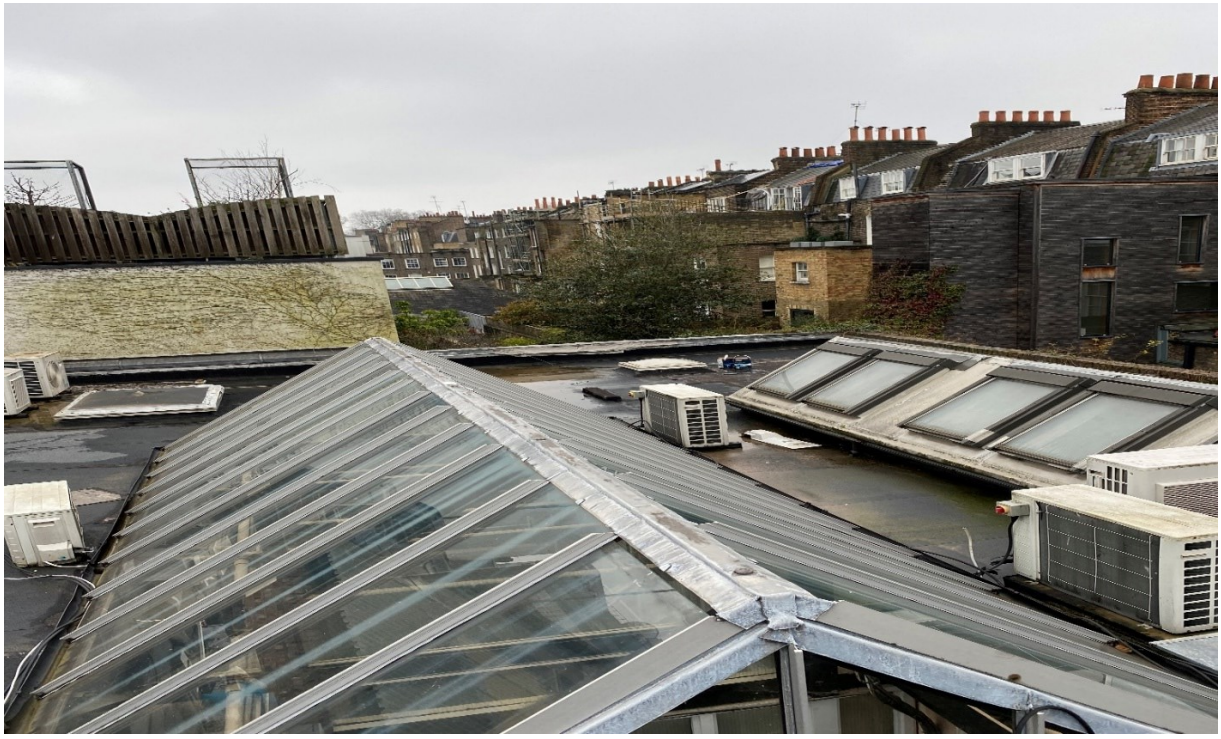
- Currently an untidy black felted flat roof.
- Various AC units and storage of maintenance materials have sprawled out of the roof over a number of years, subject to necessity.
- The roof and parapet show signs of various ad-hoc repairs and are unsightly as a result.
- AC units are placed around the roof and are condenser units. See following photographs.

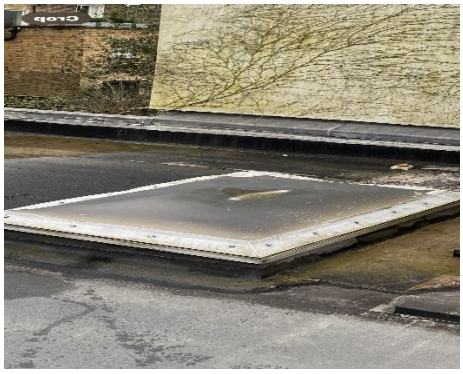


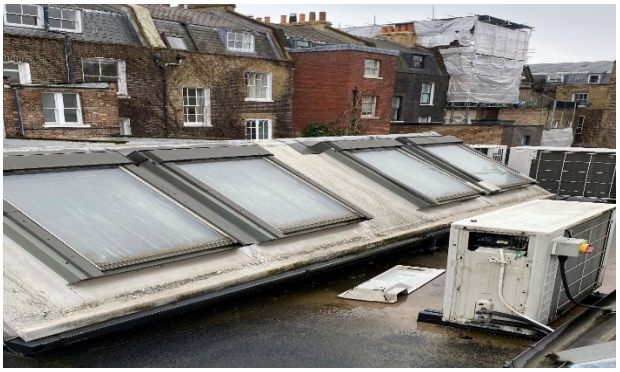


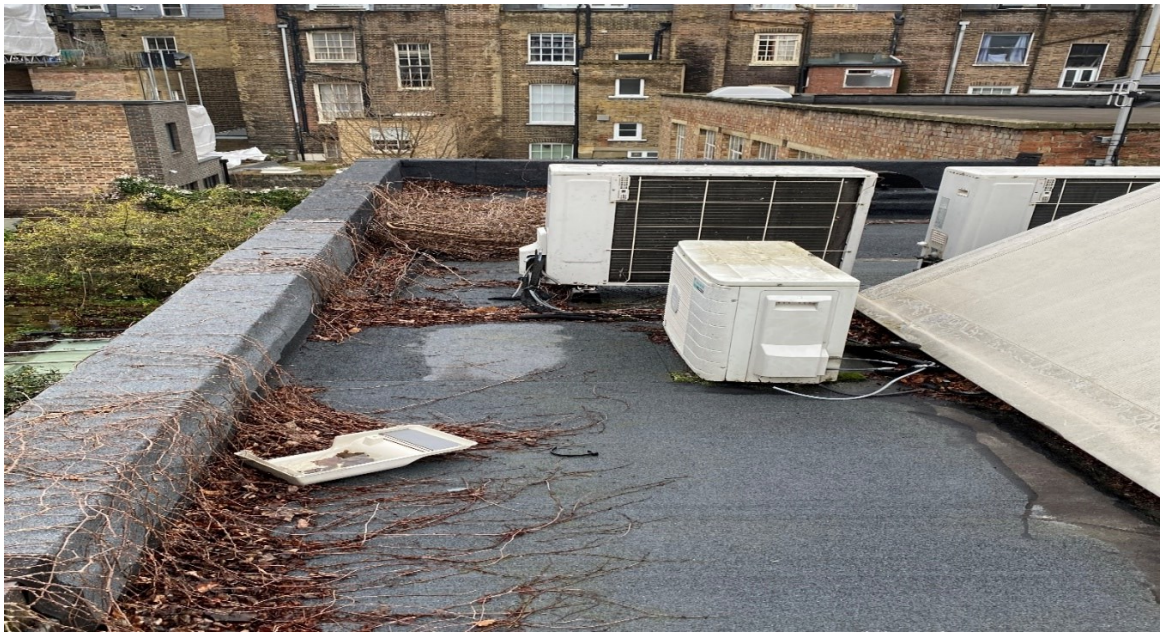


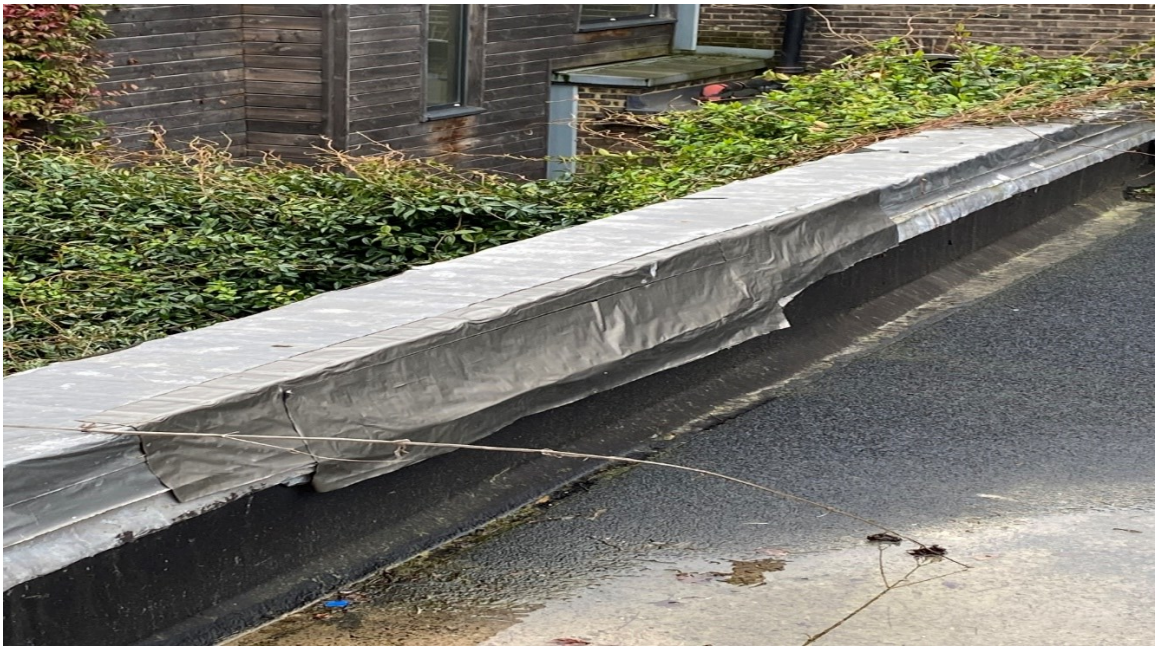












The new design of the roof area has been carefully considered to complement the existing architecture and enhance the living experience for residents.

Key design principles include:

- It is proposed to relay a new, single ply roof membrane over the flat roof, and to fit new coping profiles to the area of failure on the south flank. This will dramatically improve the current aesthetic, which is deteriorated and dated. The coping profile proposed, will closely match those used on the adjacent building to blend in and be inconspicuous.

- The alteration to the rear elevation, that provides access onto the roof, will be constructed using materials sympathetic to the surrounding structures, utilising natural render, glazing and steel cladding. The access to the plant area will be formed using composite timber effect decking.

- Minimal visual impact: The proposed terrace will utilise materials and finishes that harmonise with the existing building style to ensure a cohesive aesthetic. It will be substantially screened by the existing roof lights.

- Safety: Safety features such as railings and non-slip surfaces will be incorporated to ensure the well-being of building users. The proposal seeks to satisfy Construction & Design Management Regulations 2015, by providing safe access for maintenance of AC and by visually consolidating the AC condensers into a single area, screened sympathetically.

- Privacy: Screening elements will be strategically placed to provide privacy for occupants and neighbouring properties. This will be in the form of a simple galvanised handrail to ensure safe access for users, along with a green living screen in galvanised troughs, utilising such biophilia as Photinia and Laurel to provide medium sized evergreen screening. As the building was once used as stables, it is felt that the use of troughs is simple, understated and a gentle salute to the building's heritage. It is also expected that the green screening will assist in sound attenuation on the flat roof area.

- The majority of this installation will be hidden behind the existing large, glazed atrium, which is part of the reasoning for the layout chosen, as it is existing and of an attractive aesthetic value. The void the atrium forms, between itself and the pitched roof to the building, provides a small flat roof area. It is proposed that this area is used to place some occasional seating. Modern working practices have largely developed in recent years, with a much greater emphasis on human well-being. The provision of a small amount of external seating space is celebrated as beneficial to the building users and would have little or no impact on adjacent neighbours. The applicant would be happy to limit hours of access to this roof area to office working hours, to ensure privacy and limit noise for neighbours.

- Sustainability: Where feasible, sustainable materials and greenery will be integrated into the design to promote environmental responsibility. The proposed development will enable the following sustainable improvements:

    - a significant layer of new PIR insulation will be added into the new roof covering construction to improve overall heat insulation and reduce energy usage.

    - In areas of alteration, the works will use insulation and double glazing to meet current Building Regulations.

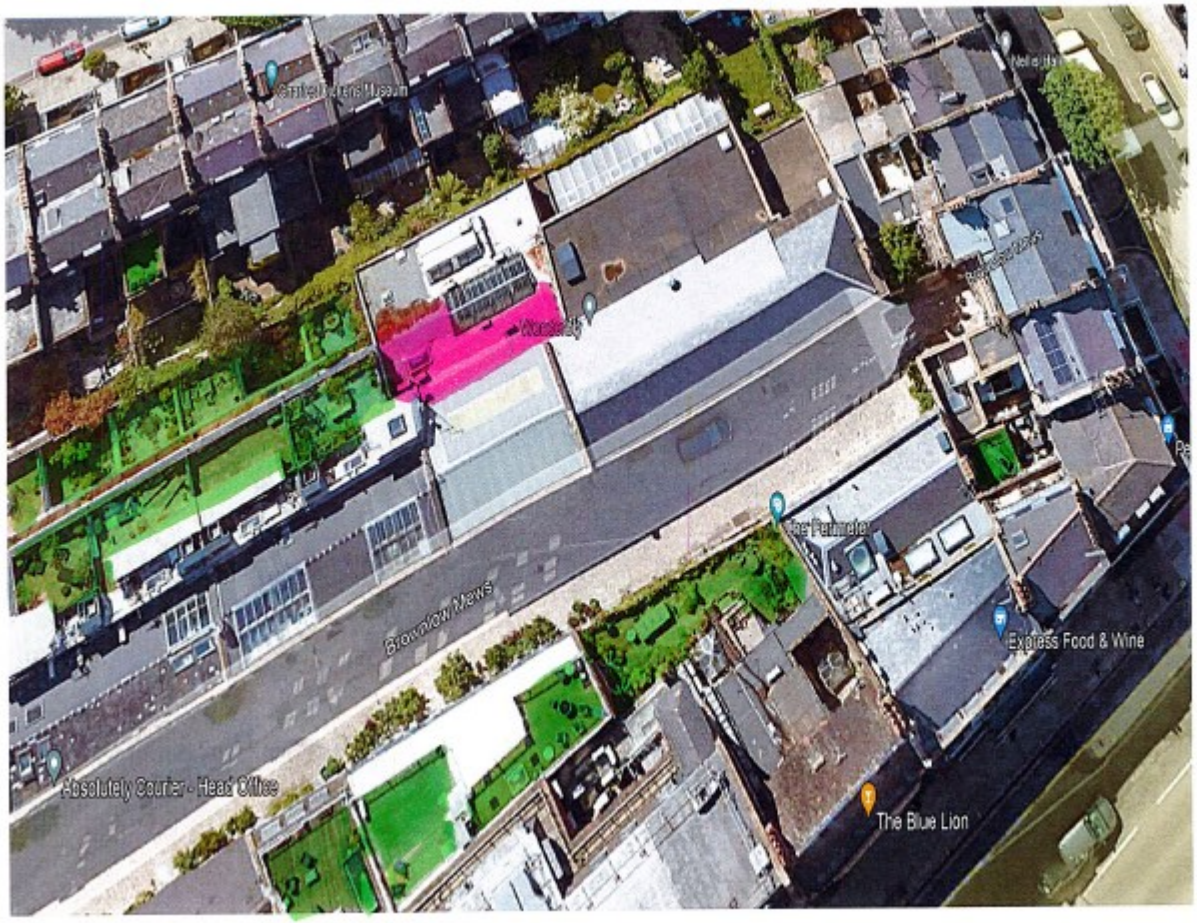
    - The flat roof will be a light grey, which will have a much-reduced albedo impact to the surrounding area, making the roof cooler in summer.

    - The process is expected to improve the property from an EPC rating of D to B, to align with contemporary energy efficiency standards.

    - The existing profiled roof lights in the main roof that leak are replaced for double glazed units, to provide better light and improved insulative qualities. They will automatically open in hot weather, to improve the passive solar ventilation of the main office area.

- Scale: The proposal is of small scale, with the existing aesthetic being fully respected, and the new proposed finishes and structure fitting well within the existing footprint and elevational profiles. It is intended to be a discreet improvement to improve the safe maintenance of the building and enhance well-being for occupiers.

- there is a significant precedence of existing green spaces/ balconies / roof terraces in the near vicinity to the site – the below sketch illustrates this.




PROPOSED ROOF ACCESS

EXISTING ROOF TERRACES

## 4. Access Considerations

Access to the roof terrace will be provided via an internal staircase, up and through the existing industrial roof pitch at the rea, which will be adapted to provide safe access onto the roof, for both people and materials for maintenance where required.

The access will enter onto the roof, to enable AC condensers to be safely maintained. The AC units will be rationalised to an area at the East of the flat roof, pulling all units away from any existing residential neighbours to reduce the effects of noise as much as possible.

The following access considerations have been addressed:

- Compliance with Building Regulations: The proposed access route meets all relevant building regulations to ensure safe and convenient access for all users.

- The proposal seeks to satisfy Construction & Design Management Regulations 2015, by providing safe access for maintenance of AC and by visually consolidating the AC condensers into a single area, screened sympathetically.

- Equality and Inclusion: The design of the access route prioritizes inclusivity, with provisions for individuals with mobility impairments or other disabilities.

- Maintenance: Adequate provisions for ongoing maintenance of the access route have been incorporated into the design to ensure long-term usability.

## 5. Community Impact

The proposed roof terrace will offer building users an outdoor amenity space for relaxation and working, thereby enhancing the quality of life within the community. Measures to mitigate any potential negative impacts on neighbouring properties, such as noise or overlooking, have been implemented as part of the design which seeks to improve the aspect form neighbouring properties, removing unsightly plant and historical sprawl. The majority of these changes will be hidden from view for adjacent neighbours, by the existing atriums and rooflights which this application does not seek to alter.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed roof terrace at Brownlow Mews has been carefully designed to complement the existing built environment, provide a valuable amenity for residents, and enhance the overall quality of the community. We believe that the development aligns with the objectives of Camden Planning Authority and respectfully request approval for the proposed scheme.

It should be emphasised, that any proposed materials are able to be revised to meet the planning Authority's preference, and the proposal intention is to provide benefits as discreetly as possible as summarised:

1. Rationalisation of plant to a single area.

2. Improvement in elevations view, with introduction of green screen, using living evergreen planting in troughs.

3. Improvement in plant access to meet requirements of CDM.

4. Provision of small seating area for building occupants during working day hours.

## 7. Appendices

This statement to be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and statements of fact in the Planning Application Form.