



12 STEPHEN MEWS, W1T 1AH
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

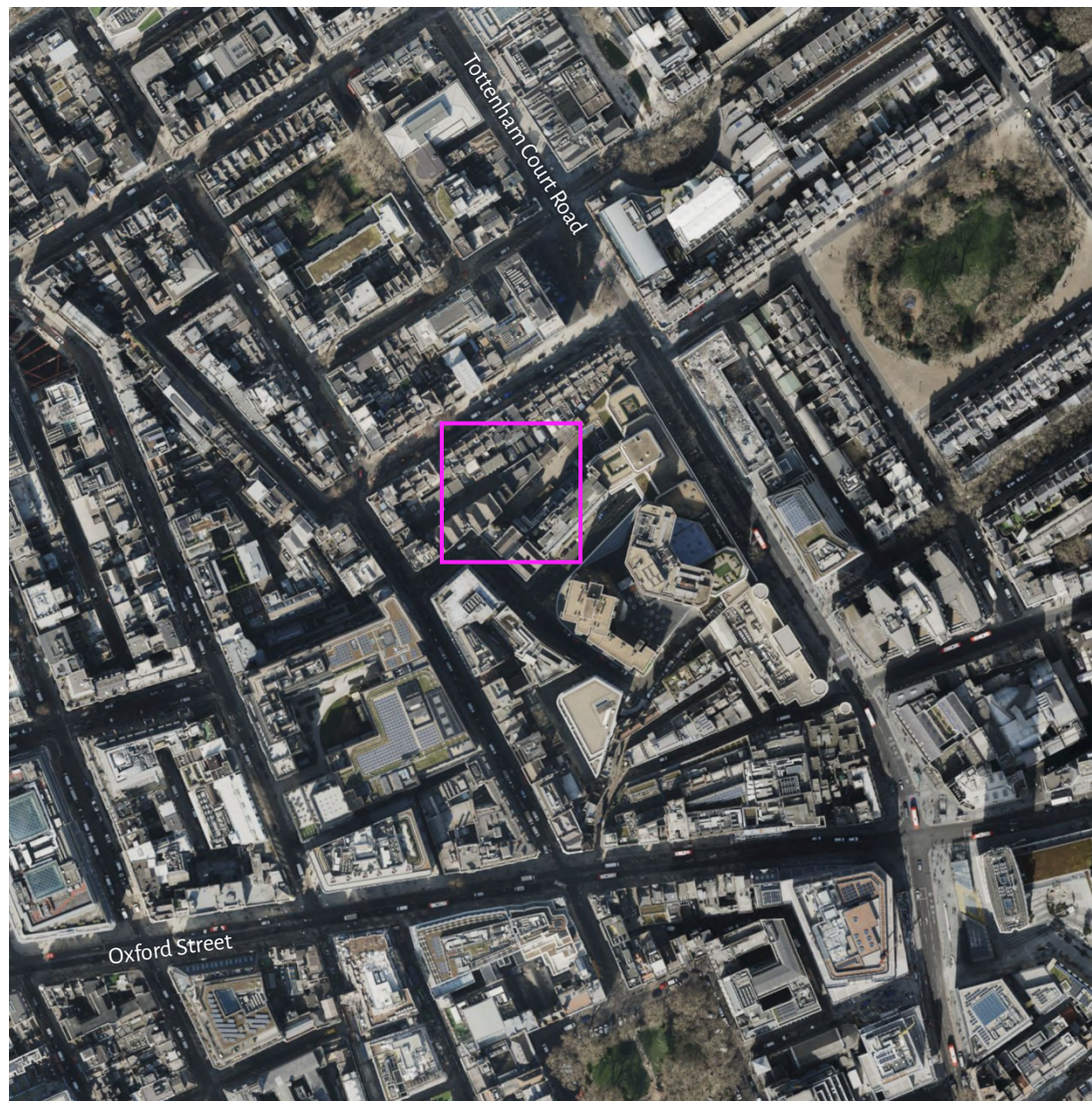
This design & access statement is written in support for full planning application and conservation area consent to refurbish the existing post war building at 12 Stephen Mews and add a single storey extension to replace the existing condenser unit housing on the roof.

The proposals included in this document have been developed through careful assessment of the client's current and future needs, the requirements of the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, as well as minimising the environmental impact of the proposals.

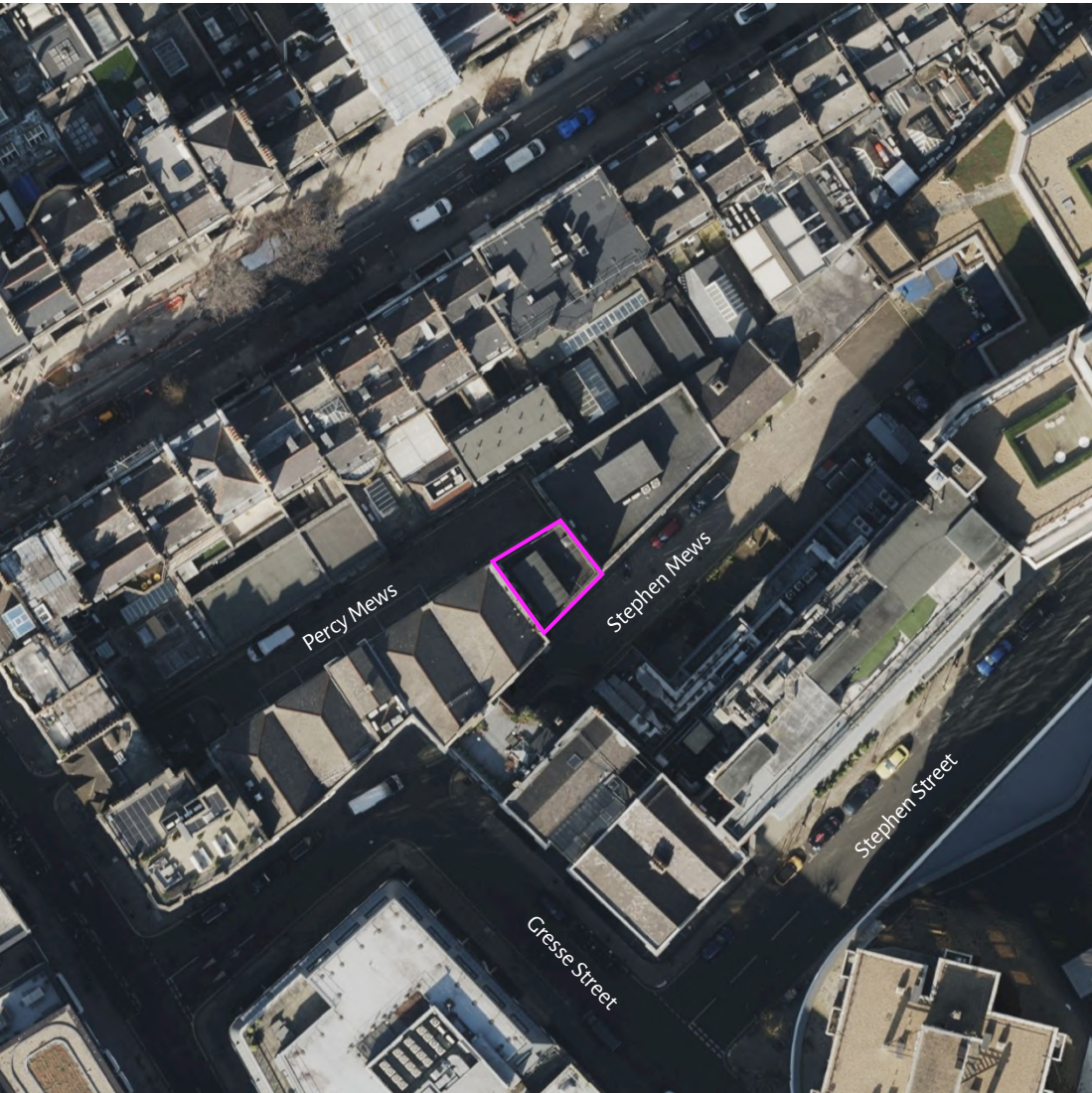
We have worked with the applicant to rationalise and distil their brief, balancing this with the context and form of the existing building.

The principal objective being to create a modern and efficient reconfiguration of the existing building, whilst enhancing the character of its surrounding area.

Pre-Application advice was sought on the 18th April 2024, with Camden Borough Council responding on the 1st June 2024. This advice has been taken on board, having made various adjustments to the design, presented below.
(Pre-App Ref: 2024/1536/PRE).



Aerial photo of the site and surrounding area.



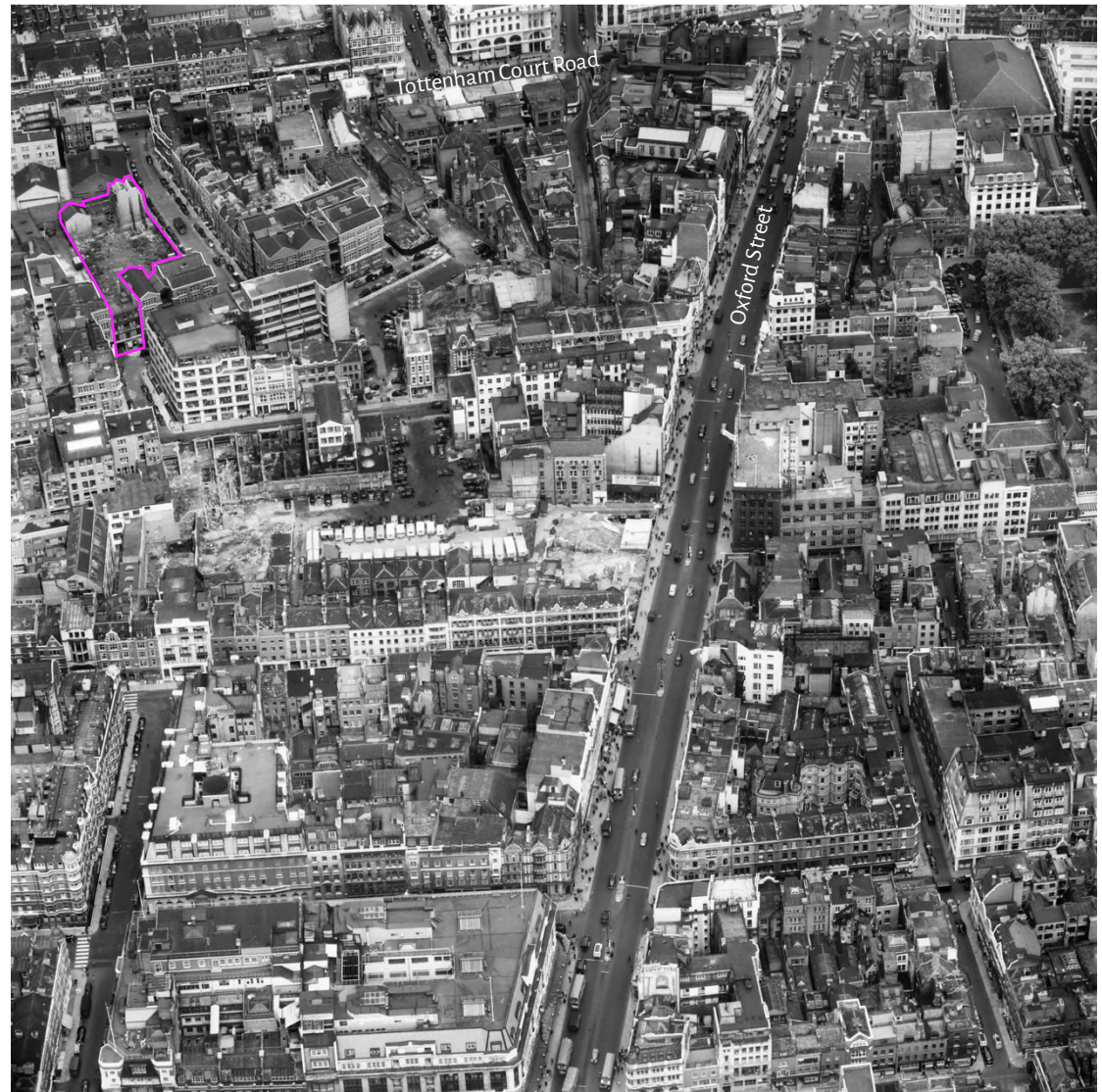
Aerial photo of the site and immediate surrounding area.

SITE HISTORY

Stephen Mews and its surrounding area experienced high levels of damage during World War II, when a large bomb is recorded falling onto the neighbouring Gresse Street. The majority of Stephen Mews was destroyed and cleared for reconstruction.

12 Stephen Mews is typical of the post-war reconstruction that took place. Erected amidst the aftermath of the Blitz, this unassuming late 1950's / early 1960's warehouse is a pragmatic, utilitarian response to the post war needs of London; a concrete frame building with brick infill panels combined with single glazed metal framed windows.

Constructed as a small warehouse, more recently, 12 Stephen Mews has served as an office space accommodating a number of different tenants across the different floors, reflecting the evolving commercial landscape of central London. Over time, the building has undergone a roof extension to accommodate cooling plant, and some modest facade alterations, marked by the addition of signs and the installation of utility pipes and wires.



Aerial Photograph from 1953, showing Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road. Stephen Mews bordered in pink.

Source: Historic England Archives

CHARLOTTE STREET CONSERVATION AREA

In the context of the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, noted for its substantial number of historically significant buildings dating back to the Georgian era, 12 Stephen Mews is a modest building sitting on the very edge of the conservation area.

Unlike the Georgian townhouses and Victorian terraces that form the streets of the Charlotte Street conservation area, 12 Stephen Mews lacks the architectural distinction and heritage significance that characterise its surroundings. Its work a day façade does not make a significant contribution to the area's historical narrative or architectural merit. Whilst the building is one of many examples of a particular era in London's development, its presence does not enhance the character that the Charlotte Street Conservation Area is known for.

The proposed alterations to the building present an opportunity to refurbish the existing building to preserve its fabric but also, through the proposed single storey extension, to elevate its significance within the collection of buildings that make up Stephen Mews.



Aerial Photograph from 1946 of the Stephen Mews bomb site and surrounding areas.
Charlotte Street Conservation Area highlighted in red, modern-day Stephen Mews in blue, 12 Stephen Mews in pink.
Source: Historic England Archives

PARLIAMENT HILL OAK TREE TO THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER VIEWING CORRIDOR

Sitting within the 'Parliament Hill Oak Tree to the Palace of Westminster Viewing Corridor', 12 Stephen Mews is surrounded by taller structures along Stephen Mews and on the adjacent Percy Mews. Even with a proposed roof extension, the building's modest height ensures it remains concealed from view within this visual corridor. While its presence contributes to the fabric of the neighbourhood it is not visible on the skyline views from Parliament Hill towards the Palace of Westminster.



Aerial Photograph, showing Parliament Hill Viewpoint in Hampstead Heath (pink dot) and its path towards the Palace of Westminster (bordered in pink). Stephen Mews indicated with a red dot.

Source: Apple Maps



Panoramic Photograph of the protected Site Corridor, Palace of Westminster highlighted in pink. Stephen Mews approximate location indicated with red arrow.

Source: Google Arts and Culture

EXTERNAL SITE PHOTOS



Existing Front Elevation, from Stephen Mews



Existing Rear Elevation, from Percy Mews



Existing Rooftop Entrance/ Hatch



Existing Rooftop 'Shed'

SURROUNDING CONTEXT



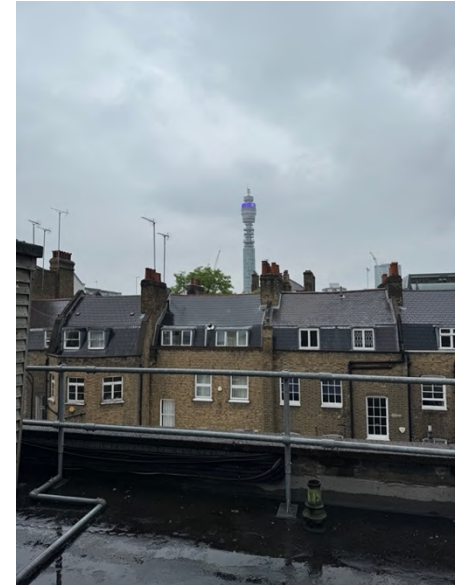
Looking south along Gresse Street from the Stephen Mews entrance.



Looking west along Gresse Street from the Stephen Mews entrance, towards Rathbone Place.



Looking east along Stephen Mews, from the entrance of Stephen Mews.



Looking north towards the landmark BT tower, from the roof of 12 Stephen Mews.

INTERNAL SITE PHOTOS



Existing Ground Floor Interior



Existing WC – Ground Floor



Existing First Floor Interior



Existing Kitchenette – First Floor



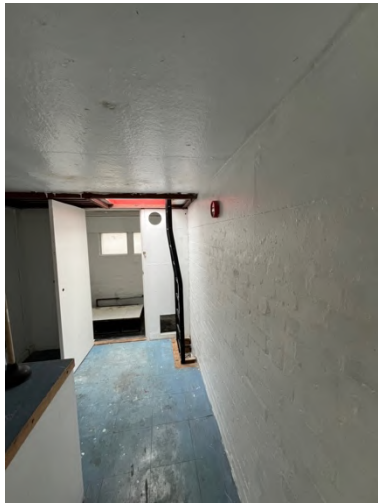
Existing Third Floor Interior



Existing Third Floor Interior



Existing Storage Room – Third Floor

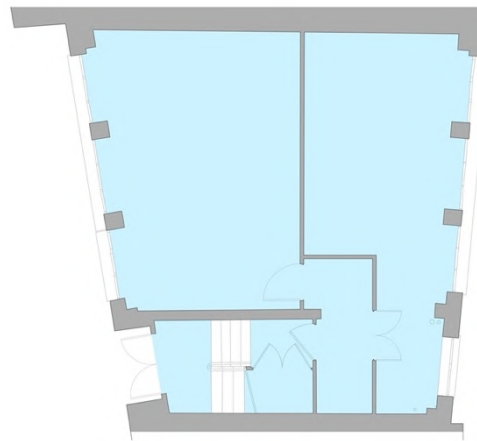
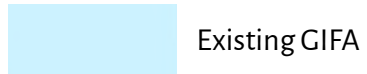


Existing access to Rooftop

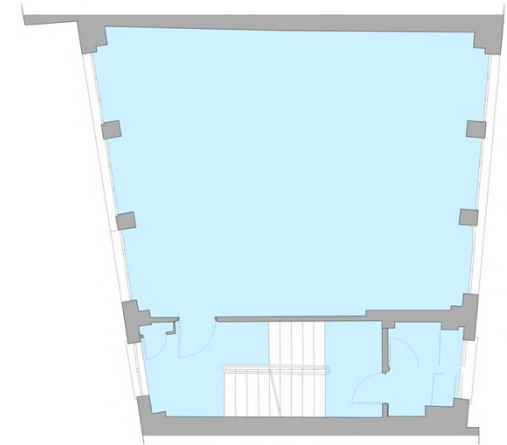
USE / AREA - Existing

The existing building has the following internal floor areas (GIFA) with all areas of the building designated as office use;

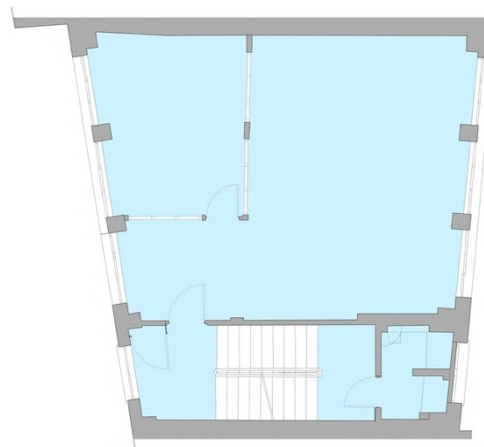
Ground Floor	63.9 m ²
First Floor	63.5 m ²
Second Floor	60.4 m ²
Third Floor	62.6 m ²
	250.4 m ²



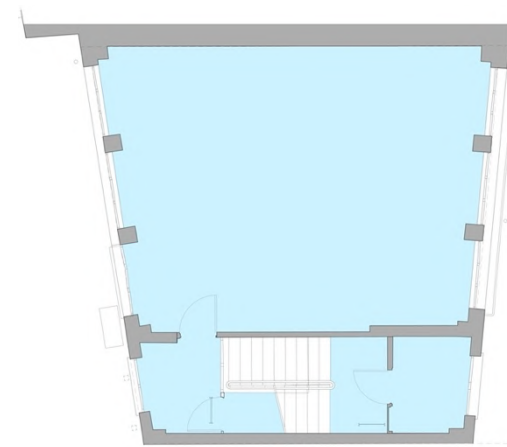
Existing Ground Floor



Existing First Floor



Existing Second Floor



Existing Third Floor

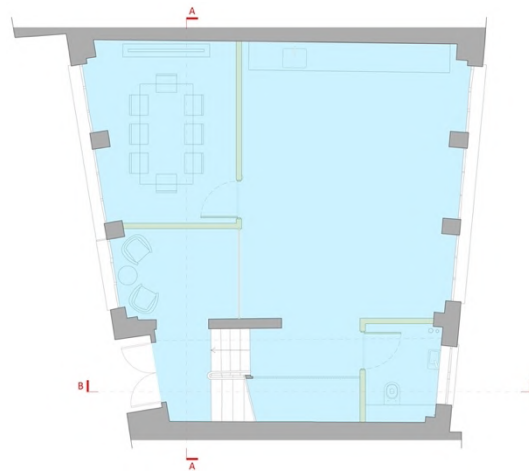


USE / AREA - Proposed

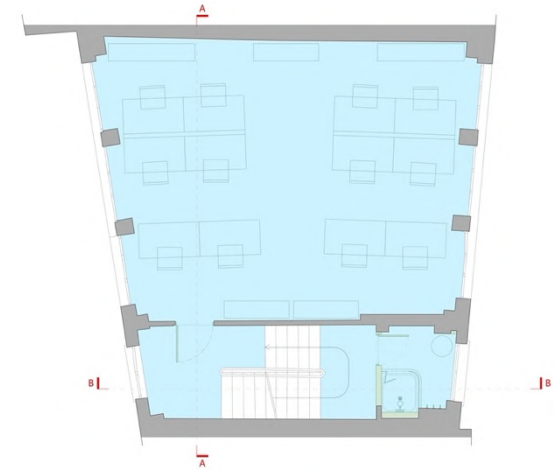
The proposed building has the following internal floor areas (GIFA) with all areas of the building designated as office use;

Ground Floor	65.2m ²
First Floor	63.4m ²
Second Floor	60.8m ²
Third Floor	61.6m ²
Roof Level	32.4m ²
Total	282.0m²

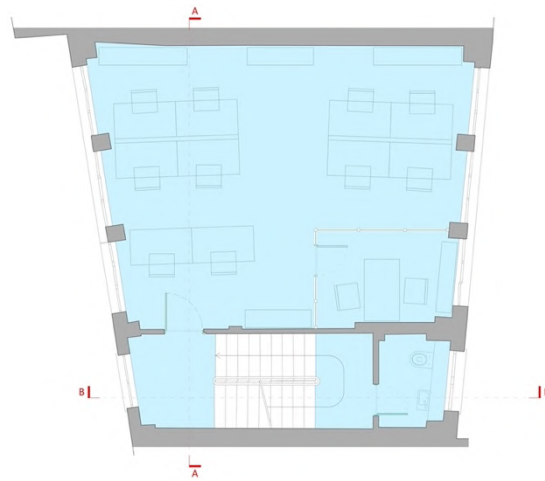
 Proposed GIFA



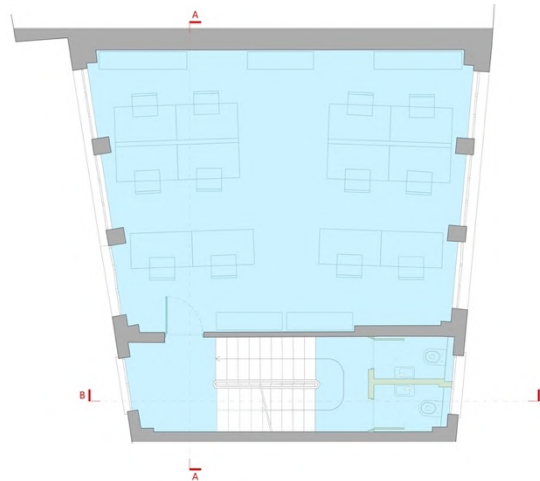
Proposed Ground Floor



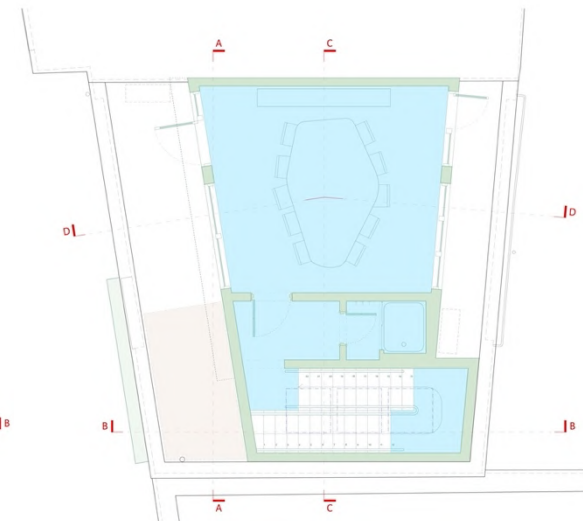
Proposed First Floor



Proposed Second Floor



Proposed Third Floor



Proposed Roof Level



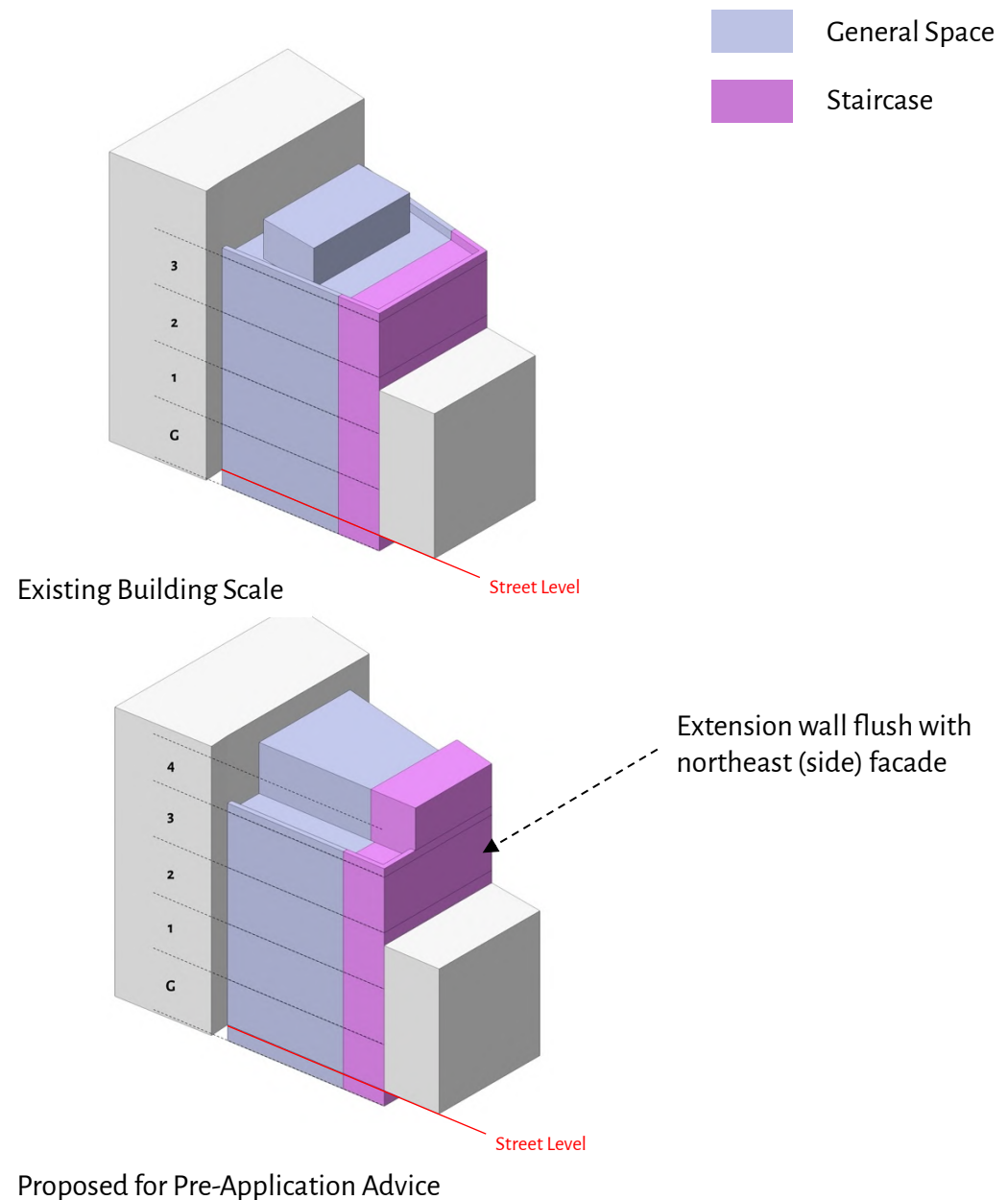
SCALE & MASSING - Proposed Extension

As noted by the pre application report, the proposed extension has been designed to be as subservient to the existing taller adjacent building, 32 to 33 Gresse Street, as well as the mews in general, stepping back by two metres on the front façade and by one metre on the rear façade.

The proposed layout continues the existing staircase, which is to the far northeast side elevation of the building, to provide access to the proposed roof top extension.

As part of the pre-application advice letter provided by Camden planning department, a desire to create a two-meter set back on this side elevation too - please see quote below;

“The scale however seemingly does not sit comfortably and with the staircase being flush with the northeast (side) elevation, the extension dominates this prominent location. The relationship between the extension and the host building looks contrived and incongruous, the extension should be set in at least as much as the southern (front) elevation here to ensure it is read as sympathetic and subservient addition and therefore alterations to the design of the rooftop extension and the staircase should be sought.”

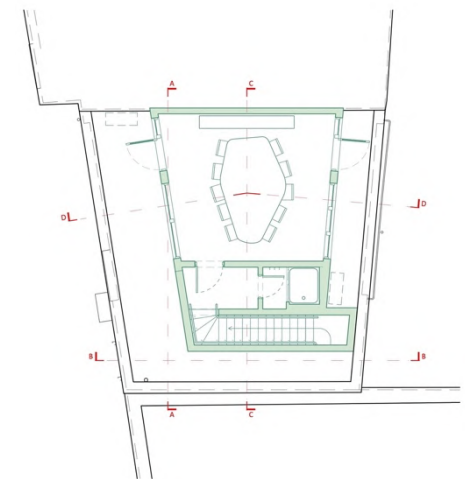
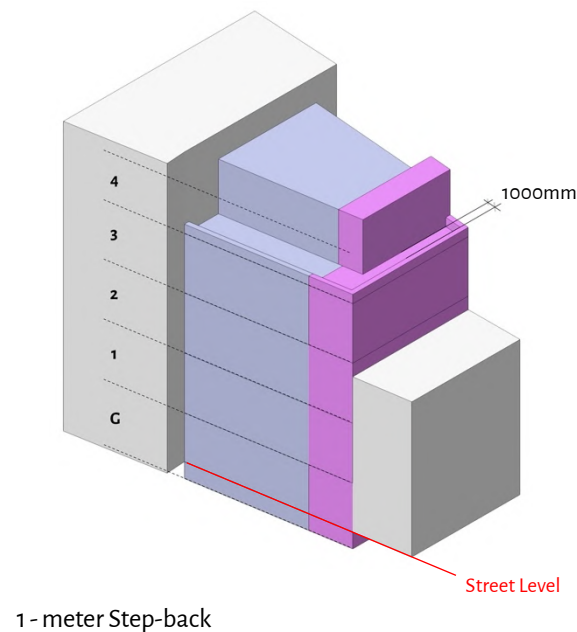
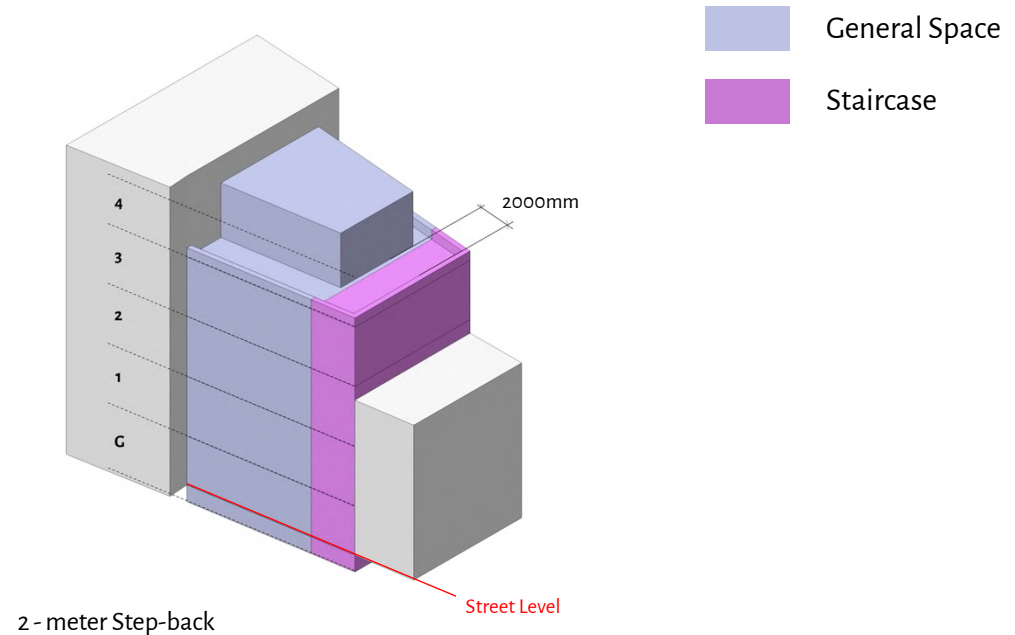


SCALE & MASSING - Proposed Extension

“... the extension should be set in at least as much as the southern (front) elevation...”

However, when considering the relationships between the plan, section, and elevation, it can be seen that setting back the side elevation of the proposed extension severs the link between the staircase and the proposed floor, preventing access to the proposed floor.

We explored a one meter set to see if this offered any way forward. This configuration does allow a single flight to rise from the existing third floor, to the proposed fourth floor. However, in order for the flight of stairs to fit within the width available and remain behind the two-meter set back to the elevation along Stephen Mews the stair would be formed from a flight of 16 risers without space for an intermediate landing. Consultation with Approved Document K of the building regulations shows that the maximum number of steps in a single flight for office use is twelve. Therefore, this configuration is not compliant with the building regulations.

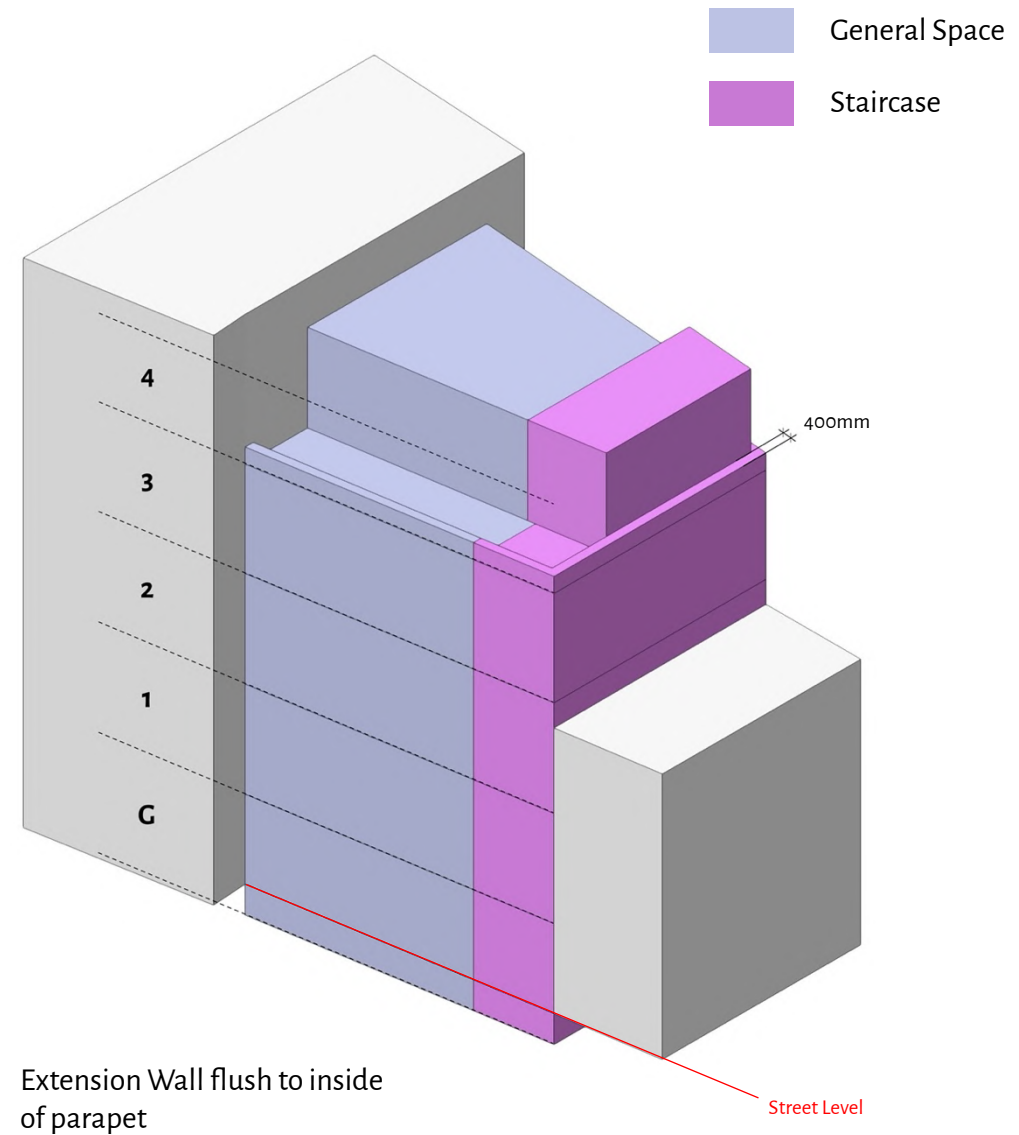


Plan showing 16 risers as a result of 1-meter step-back.

SCALE & MASSING - Proposed Extension

Acknowledging Camden planning department's request for a set back to the proposed side elevation, through consultation with a building regulations-approved inspector, specialist fire consultant and structural engineer we have established that a stair that is compliant with the current building regulations and fire safety standards can be accommodated alongside a 0.4m set back to the side elevation.

This will allow the side elevation of the proposed single storey extension to raise from behind the existing parapet, which is a little over 0.5m tall, ensuring that this side elevation remains subservient to the existing side elevation and is clearly legible as a separate addition to the existing building.



APPEARANCE

The proposed changes to the existing Stephen Mews elevation are very limited comprising principally of renovating the brick work and metal framed windows, creation of a more legible principal entrance to the building at Mews level and the addition of a single storey extension that is set back two meters from the Stephen Mews façade line and one meter from the rear elevation, ensuring that it is in the main screened from view by the existing roof parapet.

We have adjusted the appearance of the proposed single storey extension in response to the feedback received as part of the pre application engagement with Camden Planning Department. Below we have illustrated the design development of the Stephen Mews elevation.

The proposed elevation face Stephen Mews now takes on board the advice received as part of the pre application process, these changes are summarised on the following page.



Existing Stephen Mews elevation



Pre application Stephen Mews elevation



Proposed Stephen Mews elevation

APPEARANCE

Glazing

The advice received from Camden Planning Department is repeated below:

“... whilst the council does support some full height glazing this should not be used all over and efforts be made to add in different scales of glazing for both design and overheating issues.”

In response to this advice the quantity full height glazing in both the Stephen Mews elevation and rear elevation has been reduced by X %, so that now there are only two areas of full height glazing allowing natural day light into the proposed staff break out space. We have also introduced a brise soleil above this full height glazing to provide solar shading and articulate the elevation. The glazing to the stair and lobby has been removed from the elevation and replaced with three roof lights above the stair, eliminating the presence of glass from this area of the elevation and allowing natural ventilation to be introduced to the stair, aiding summertime cooling.

To the rear elevation the full height glazing has been replaced with a horizontal band of windows.

MATERIALS

The structural materials proposed for 12 Stephen Mews are both environmentally sustainable and lightweight to adhere to the structural engineer's requirements. We propose sustainable timber for the walls and roof structure of the single storey extension, with the roof structure formed from two timber sections separated by galvanised 'v' shaped profiles forming efficient 'posi-joists'. It is proposed that these will be visible internally, expressing the structure of the proposed addition.



Picture of ceiling with exposed 'Posi-joists'.

We proposed, in our pre application submission, that the façade of the proposed single storey extension would be formed from glazed openings with an insulated render. We believe, from the feedback received from Camden Planning

Department (see extract below) that the reference to a timber structure was misinterpreted as a proposal to externally clad the proposed extension with timber.

"The use of timber in this location is not supported; the site and area is industrial in nature and therefore a nod to this should be included in the materiality and fenestration. Whilst the council does not request a certain material something like a corten steel could work well here."

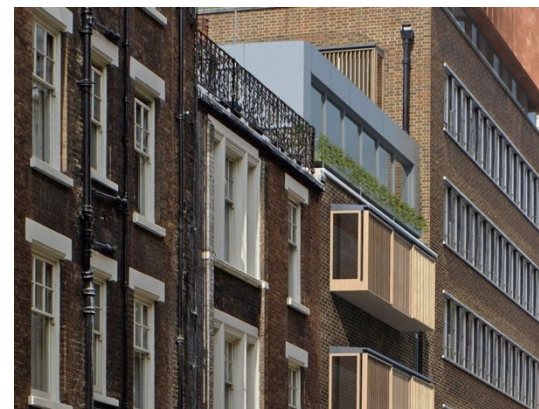
There was no intention to propose timber cladding to the single storey extension or any other part of the building.

In response to the pre application advice we have tested the opportunity to use Corten steel cladding, however the structural engineer has advised, after considering the reduced glazing area, a maximum weight for the cladding of 20kg per sq.m, or an equivalent of X kg per linear meter of façade.

We have identified a supplier of composite Corten cladding where a sheet of Corten sheet is bonded onto an aluminium honeycomb backing – this product weighs 19kg per sq.m but unfortunately following consultation with the manufacture we have established that this product is not compliant with the revised Building Regulations 2022.

After testing all the facade material options against the structural and building regulation requirements, a through coloured* insulated render is proposed. The colour of the through colour render can be selected in collaboration with Camden Planning department and can closely match Corten steel or can be a colour that is equally distinctive from the taupe hues of the surrounding concrete and clay brick of Stephen Mews as illustrated in the elevation images included in this design and access statement.

*Though colour render is the same pigment throughout so will not fade or discolour over time and does not require decoration maintenance.



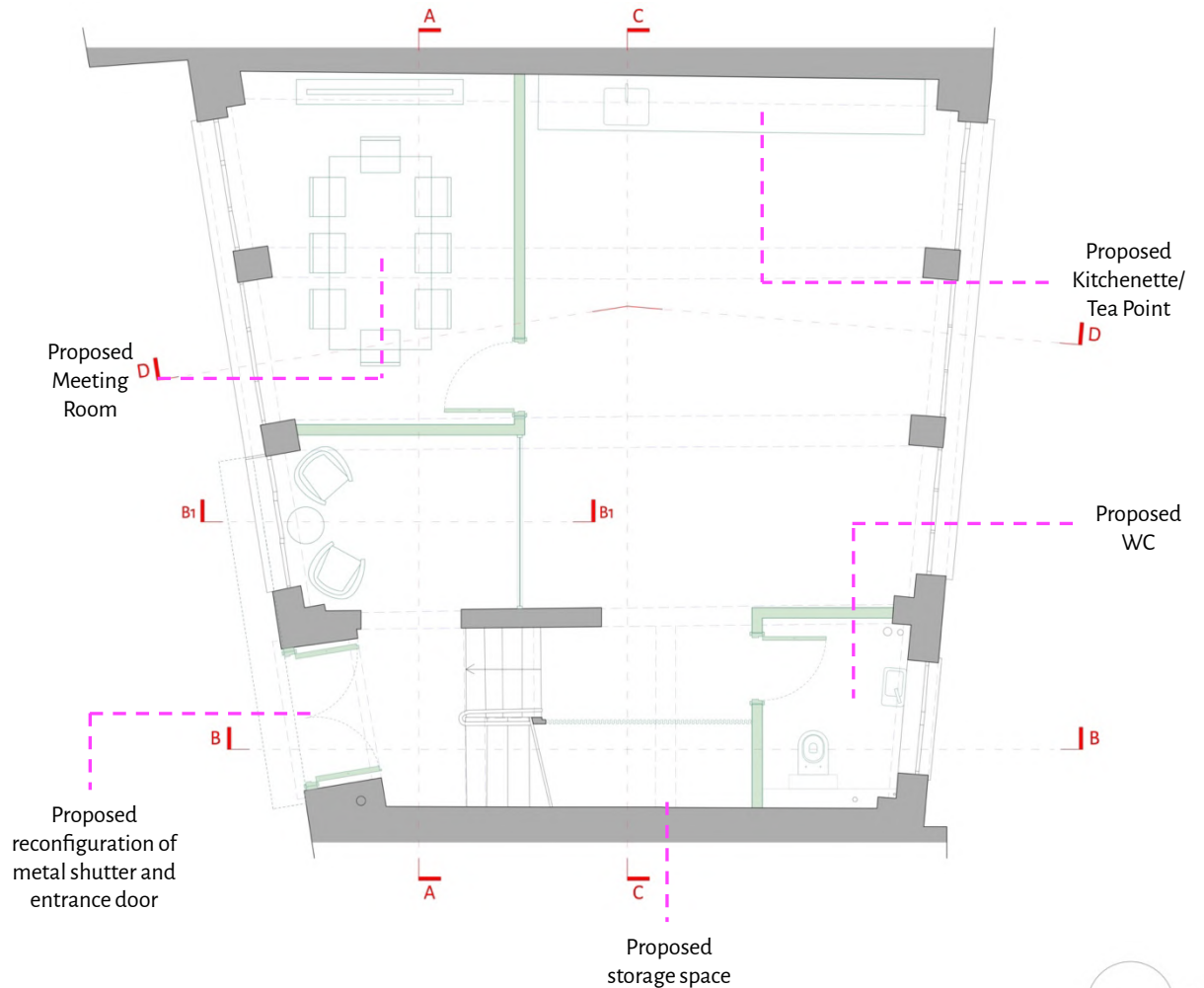
Picture of precedent extension in Holborn.

PROPOSED LAYOUT – Ground Floor

The layout of 12 Stephen Mews will be altered in order to transform this space into a contemporary office space, able to accommodate 30+ people. Any alterations made will make more efficient use of the internal space.

The main interior alterations to the ground floor include:

- Existing interior walls to be removed and all redundant fixtures/ services to be removed.
- New walls and partitions to be installed following proposed layout (see attached)
- New floor, ceiling and wall finishes throughout.
- New doors installed throughout.
- New toilet and tea point to be fitted in to the ground floor.
- Ground Floor to be retained as its current office space use.
- Removal of existing metal shutter and repositioning of the entrance door.

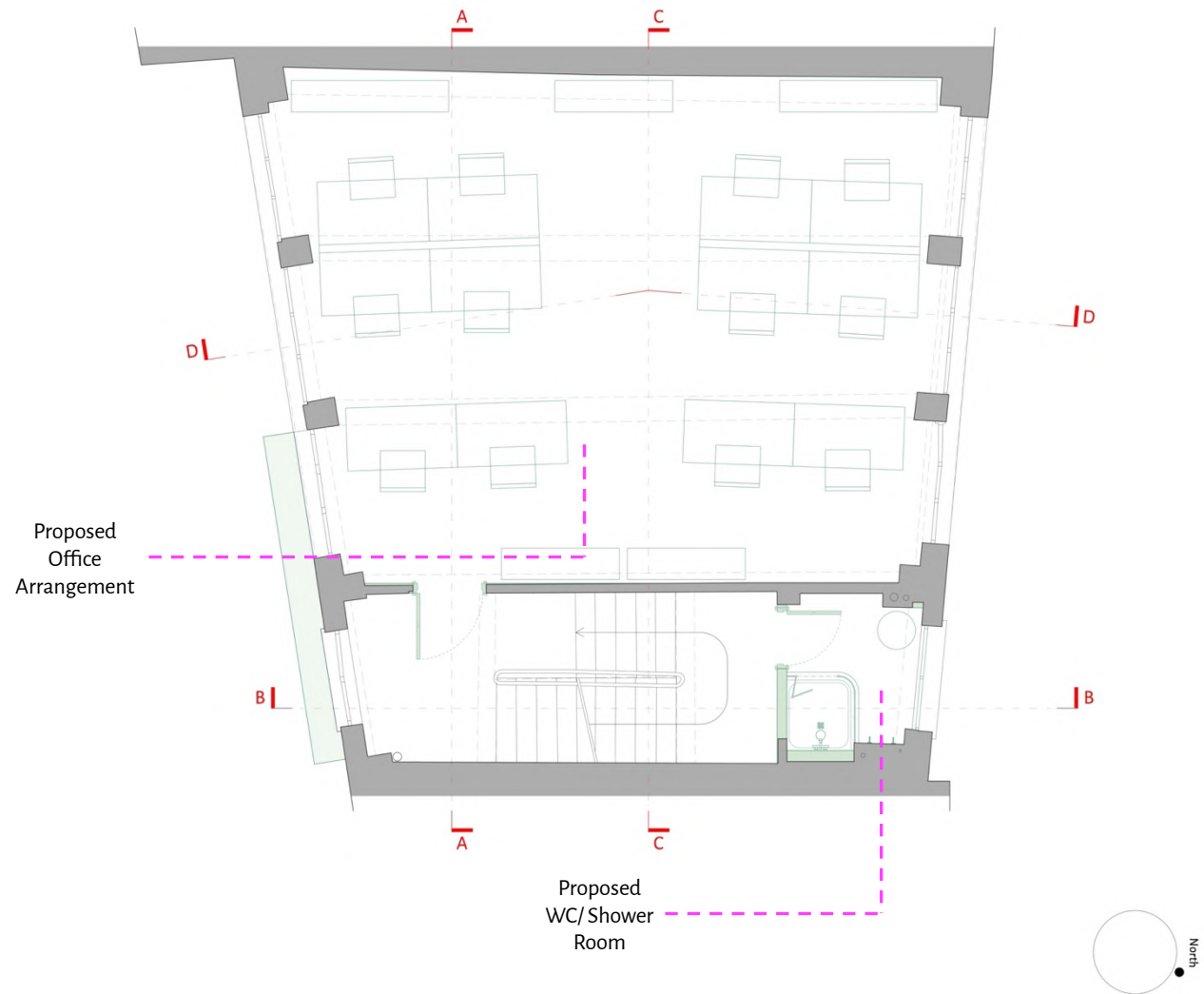


Proposed Ground Floor

PROPOSED LAYOUT – First Floor

The main interior alterations to the first floor include:

- Existing interior walls to be removed and all redundant fixtures/ services to be removed.
- New walls and partitions to be installed following proposed configuration.
- New floor, ceiling and wall finishes throughout.
- New doors installed throughout.
- New WC with shower to be installed on first floor landing.
- First Floor to be retained as its current office space use.

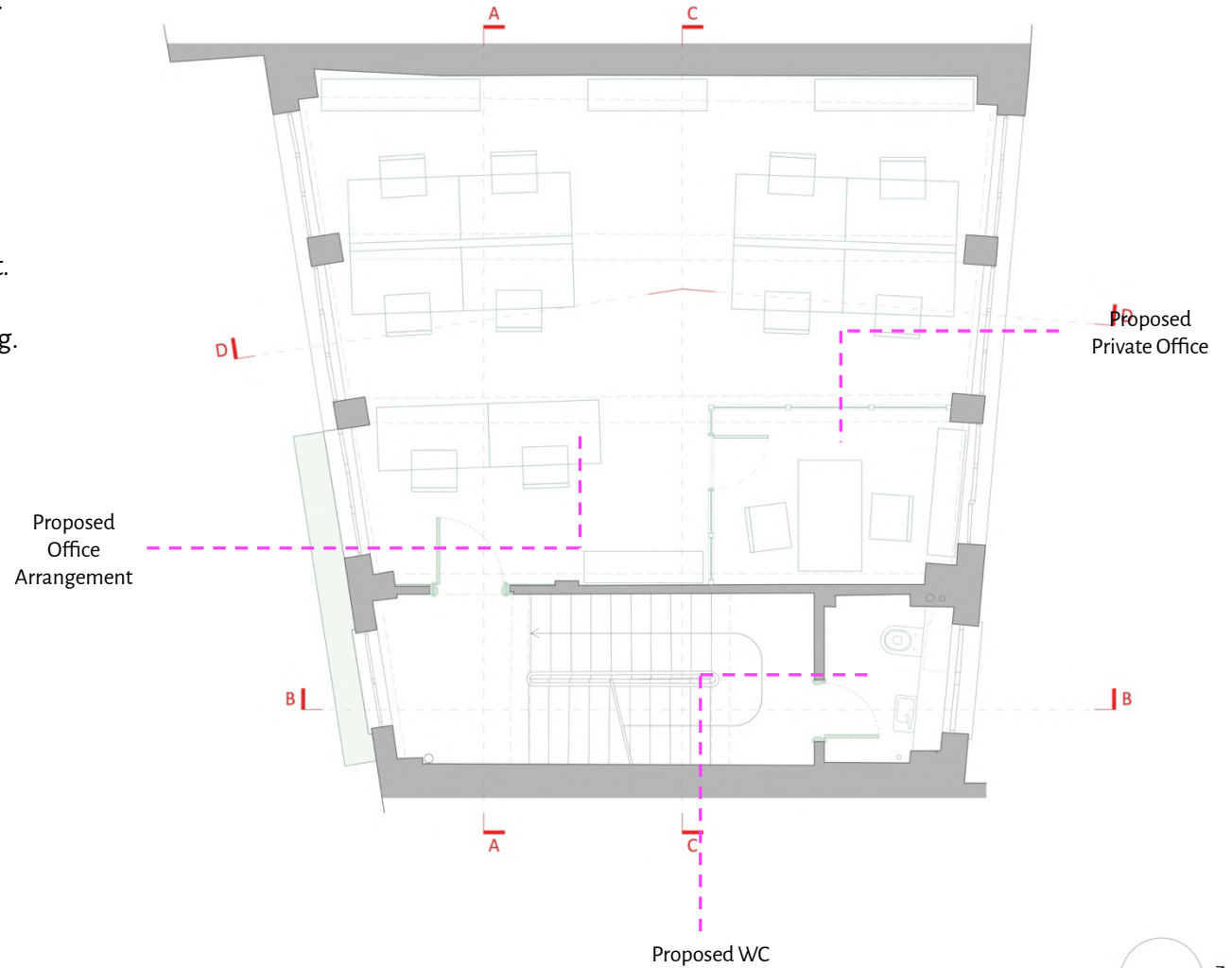


Proposed First Floor

PROPOSED LAYOUT – Second Floor

The main interior alterations to the second floor include:

- Existing interior walls to be removed and all redundant fixtures/ services to be removed.
- New walls and partitions to be installed following proposed configuration.
- New floor, ceiling and wall finishes throughout.
- New doors installed throughout.
- New WC to be installed on second floor landing.
- Second Floor to be retained as its current office space use.

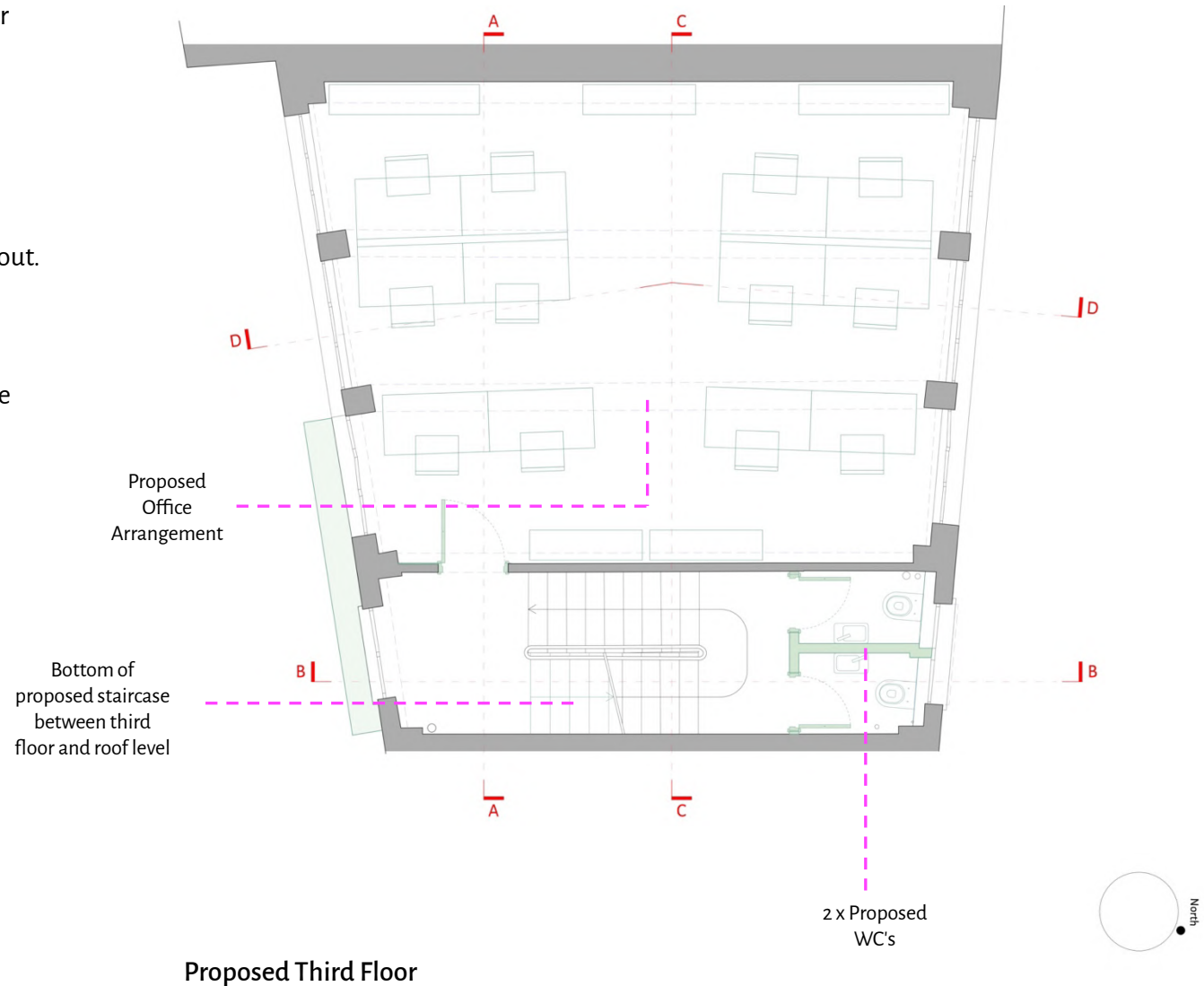


Proposed Second Floor

PROPOSED LAYOUT – Third Floor

The main interior alterations to the third floor include:

- Existing interior walls to be removed and all redundant fixtures/ services to be removed.
- New walls and partitions to be installed following proposed configuration.
- New floor, ceiling and wall finishes throughout.
- New doors installed throughout.
- Two new WC's to be installed on third floor landing.
- Third Floor to be retained as its current office space use.

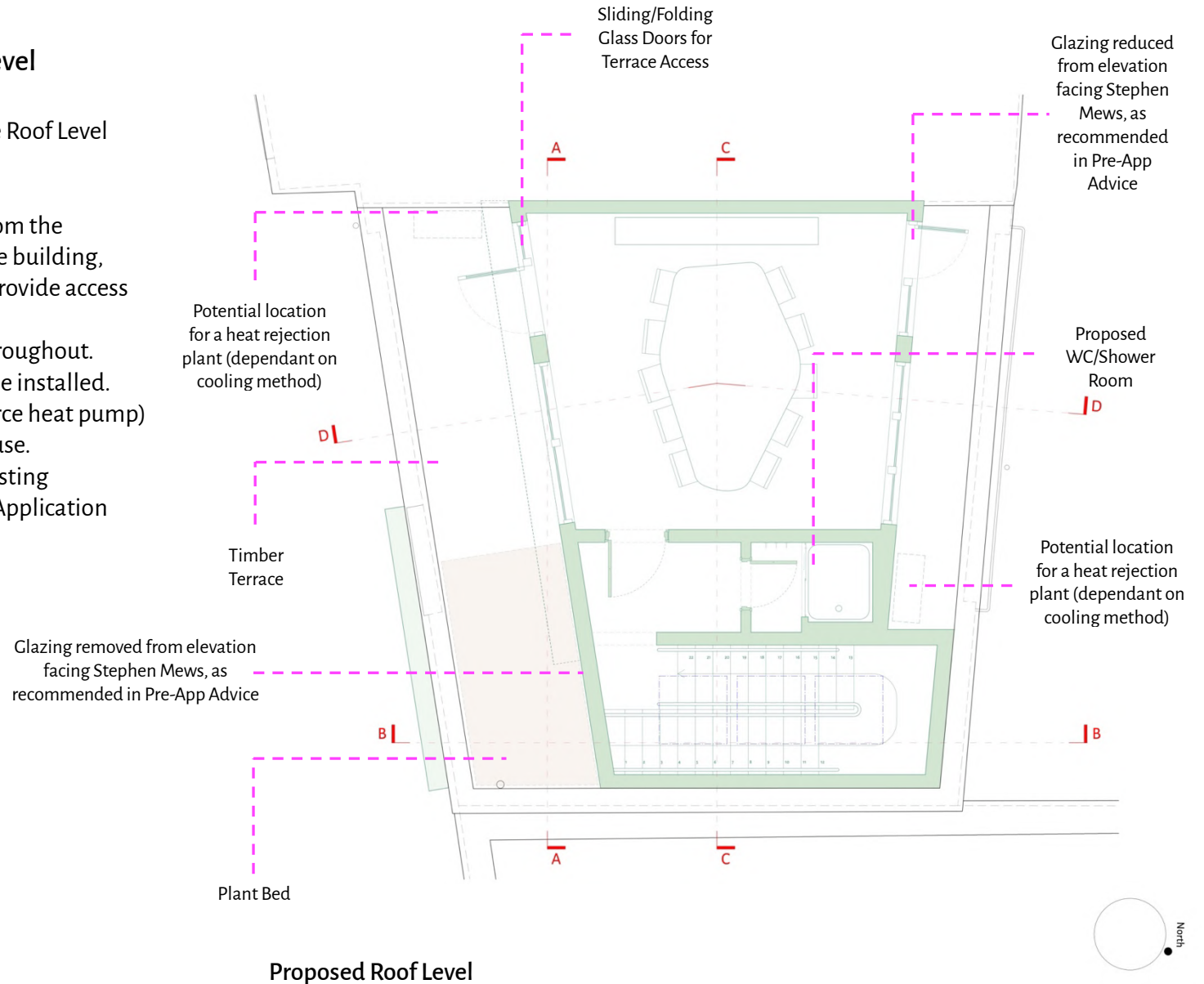


Proposed Third Floor

PROPOSED LAYOUT – Roof Level

The main interior alterations to the Roof Level include:

- Lightweight structure, set back from the parapets at the front and rear of the building, forming a shallow terrace area to provide access for cleaning the proposed glazing.
- Floor, ceiling, and wall finishes throughout.
- Shower room/changing room to be installed.
- Plant enclosure for ASHP (air source heat pump)
- Fourth Floor to form office space use.
- This extension will replace the existing condenser unit housing. (Granted Application 2013/6192/P)



PROPOSED LAYOUT – Exterior

The main interior alterations to the Roof Level include:

- Remove all redundant fixtures such as wiring, alarms, window grates and signage.
- London Stock Brick and concrete cills to be cleaned and repaired where required – concrete cills to be redecorated – to restore the original appearance of the building's elevation, enhancing the Charlotte Street Conservation Area
- Existing Crittall windows to be retained, refurbished, and redecorated. *(see below for internal secondary glazing and removal of metal security grilles that are visible from the Mews)*
- The existing entrance door is to be retained but brought forward from its semi recessed position to allow it to open into the building rather than out towards the very narrow pavement.
- Install a simple shallow projecting canopy above the existing entrance door, echoing the slender concrete cills of the existing windows.
- Form a lightweight single storey extension to the roof, set back from the front and rear parapets to preserve the character of the building and the Street (Mews) scape and Charlotte Street Conservation Area.



Proposed Front Elevation (Stephen Mews)



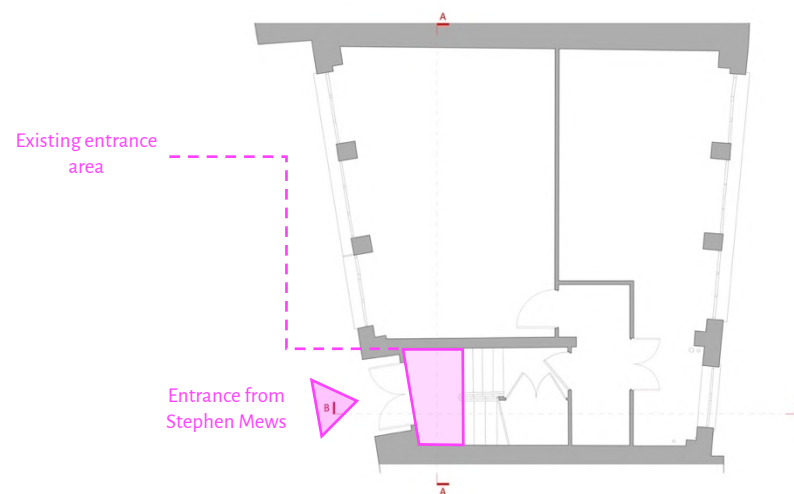
Proposed Rear Elevation

ACCESSIBILITY

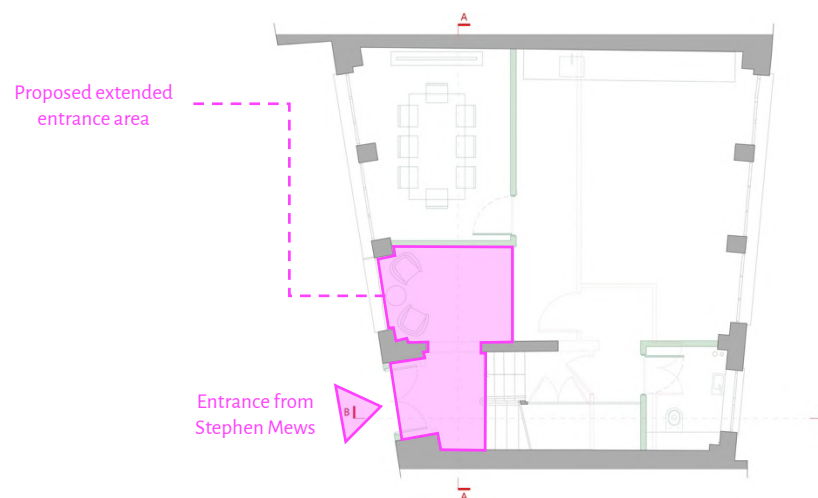
Access to 12 Stephen Mews is to remain unchanged. The entrance is located on Stephen Mews, which is accessible on foot and by car, with sufficient bicycle parking on neighbouring Rathbone Place as well as Stephen Street.

This existing entrance will remain the same, though as previously mentioned, the door will be moved closer to the façade line of the building, creating a larger entrance area internally. A portion of the internal space will be raised to be flush with the entrance level, creating a lobby area/ waiting room on street level.

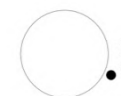
The building owner and occupier occupies several different offices within various nearby buildings, including on Percy Street, with accessible facilities provided within these buildings.



Existing Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



CONCLUSION

The principal objective of this proposal is to return 12 Stephen Mews back to use as an active office, providing employment within the Borough of Camden, and a new central office for a growing business that now owns the building and currently operates within the Borough of Camden. These proposals also enhance the existing building and the Charlotte Street Conservation area by restoring the existing buildings appearance. The careful consideration of the proposed replacement of the existing roof top structure with a modest single storey extension enhances the appearance of the building whilst preserving the character of Stephen Mews.

Policy DP24 requires all development to consider the character, setting, context, scale, and proportions of the existing and neighbouring buildings. Policy DP25 also states that the Council will grant planning permission for development in Camden's Conservation Areas that preserves and enhances the special character or appearance of the area.

The proposed extension and reconfiguration to 12 Stephen Mews provide an essential improvement to much needed office accommodation within the borough of Camden.

The footprint, height and form of the proposed extension have been carefully considered to ensure that the extension relates and is complimentary to the existing building and its surroundings, completing the composition and making a positive contribution to the building externally and internally.

The proposed materials have been carefully considered and selected to ensure that they are both sustainable and appropriate to the method of construction, and they complement the existing materials of 12 Stephen Mews and the adjacent buildings.

In summary this proposal will provide a better standard of working accommodation for the occupants and provide a positive visual contribution to Stephen Mews, the Charlotte Street Conservation area, and Fitzrovia. This proposal is considerate to the Charlotte Street Conservation Area, multiple policies within the Fitzrovia Action Plan, as well as delivering business, employment, skills, and training opportunities to Camden.