

NEW ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
COLLÈGE FRANÇAIS BILINGUE DE LONDRES

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT
REV 00, JULY 2024

87 Holmes Road
Kentish Town
London NW5 3AX



Bankhead
+ Partners

NOTE

This document acts as a reference point for the design strategy and project metrics and is to be read in conjunction with the drawing package and other supporting information.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Collège Français Bilingue de Londres (CFBL) commissioned Bankhead + Partners to prepare the design of a new Administration Building on site, against the boundary with Holmes Road and Cathcart Street.

The project is required to release the administration space within the main historic building for teaching and learning activities, while providing an on-site base for the administration staff.

Several formal pre-application advice reports and on-site meetings with planning and conservation officers have helped to shape the design. The resultant proposal is a rational, contemporary two-storey building with accommodation within a steeply pitched roof. The design does not compete with the original architecture, but is nuanced in form and expression to make reference to its setting without adverse impact.



fig. 01: School location and boundary line

PROPOSED ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

1.0 CFBL’S Need for Additional Space

The following is the Client's statement and brief for the proposed new development:

The need for expansion is to gain space and allow staff and pupils to work or study in a more comfortable environment.

As CFBL finds it paramount to give the students the best support possible, we developed additional services (psychologist, orthophonist, SENCO), and non-curricular activities that have constrained the non-teaching staff into smaller and unpractical spaces. Since these spaces could be better used for the wellbeing of our students and teaching staff, in order to keep the administration of our school as efficient as possible we are planning to regroup the non-teaching staff in an annexe building.

The new building will be used only by the administration team (approx. 10-15 people), which will be mainly relocated from the main building into this new building (approx 10 people). This will allow the school to improve facilities for teaching. This new building would not result in any increase in pupil numbers.



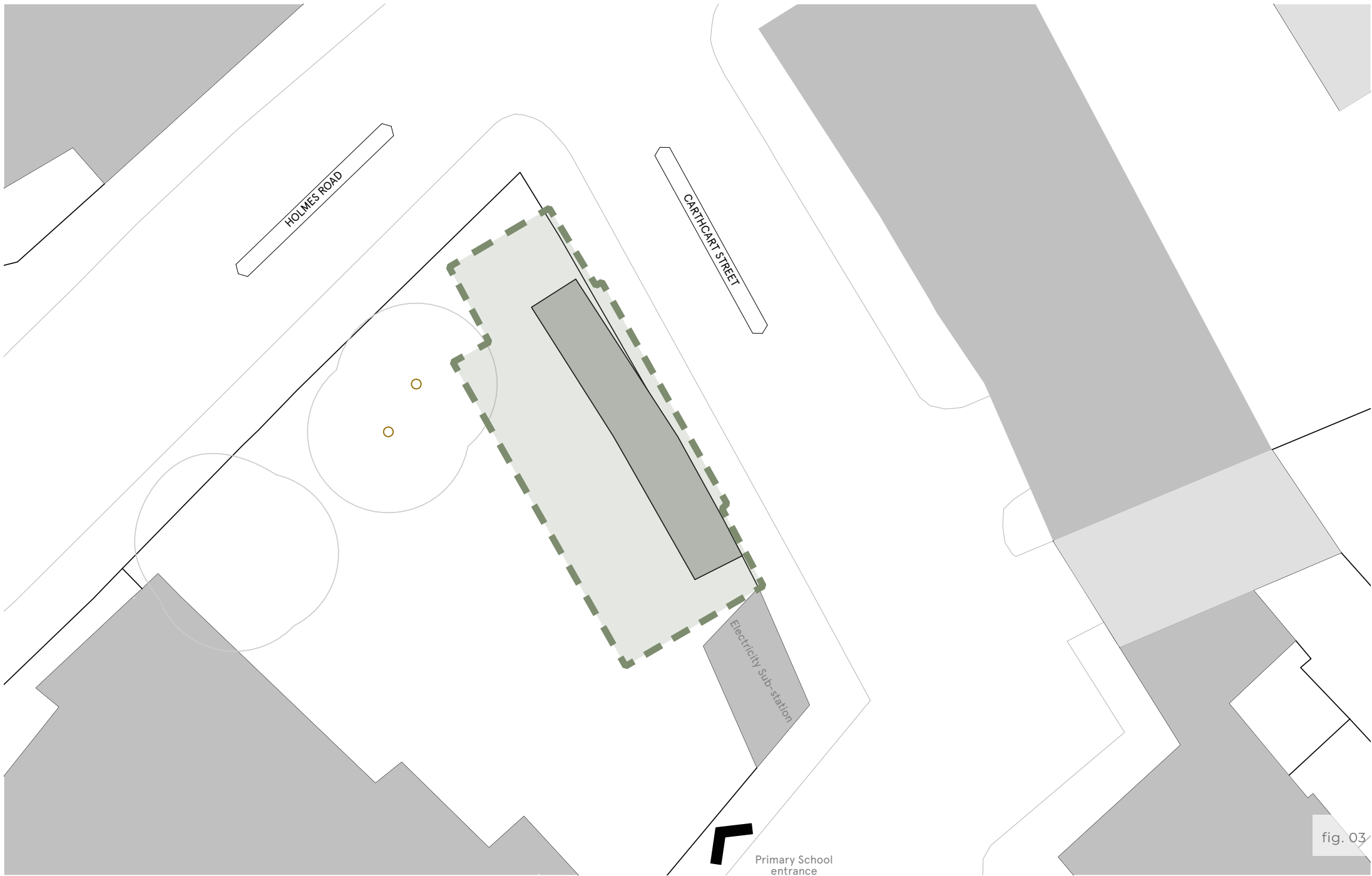
fig. 02: Evolving teaching activities & services hosted within CFBL.

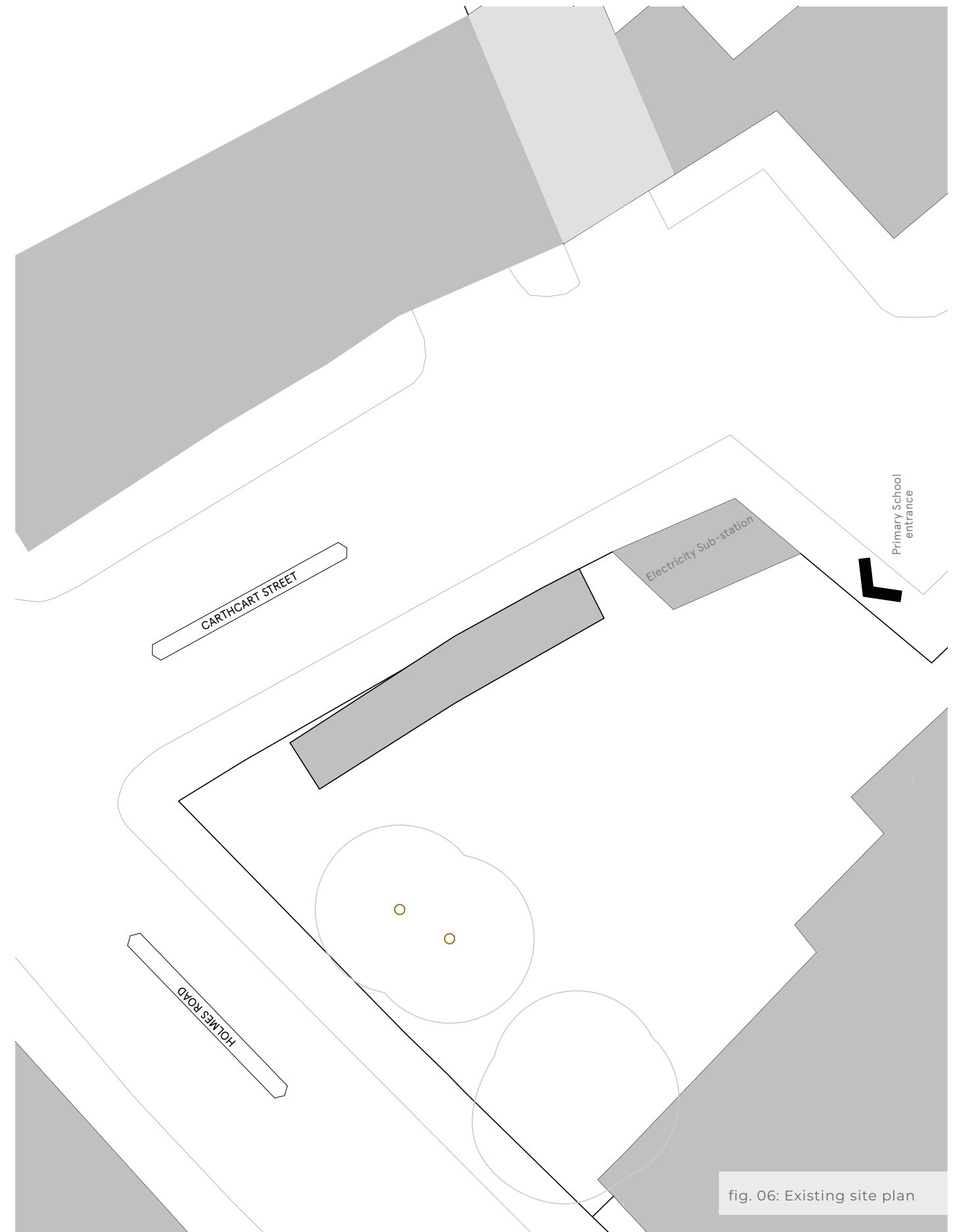
fig. 02

2.1 PROPOSAL: The Site

The proposal is located on the site of the single-storey outbuildings abutting the Cathcart Street boundary wall. This location was identified in the earlier 2017 pre-application (ref. 2016/6261/PRE), as being suitable for development and the design informed by the obtained Pre-Application advice (ref. 2023/2810/PRE). Currently, the outbuildings contain the Building Manager’s office along with material storage, which would be re-housed in the proposed new building. The outbuildings are not part of the original London Board School architecture and have little historic merit (as described in the *Heritage Statement by Robinson Escott P*).

fig. 03: This area of the site backs onto part of the Cathcart Street perimeter wall, and is occupied by existing single storey outbuildings, accommodating the site manager’s office and covered storage fronting onto the Primary school playground. The Southern end of the site is bounded by the existing electrical sub-station.





2.2 Amount and Use

The proposed Gross Internal Area totals 254.5m²:
Ground Floor 77.5m²
First Floor 103m²
the Attic Floor 74m²

As stated in CFBL's briefing note above, the proposed use of the new Administration Building is entirely for administration and support. The intention of creating this new space is to free up space within the main Listed Building for improved teaching and staff facilities, but not increasing student numbers above that previously approved.

The brief requires space to replace the Building Manager's office / workshop / storage and general open-plan office space, combined with a more private meeting area for two separate administrative cohorts. Other amenities are required including a unisex disabled WC and separate shower / changing room. The resultant arrangement proposed is the Building Manager's suite accessible at ground floor, one administrative group on the first floor and the other group in the attic storey. All levels are linked with stair and lift access.

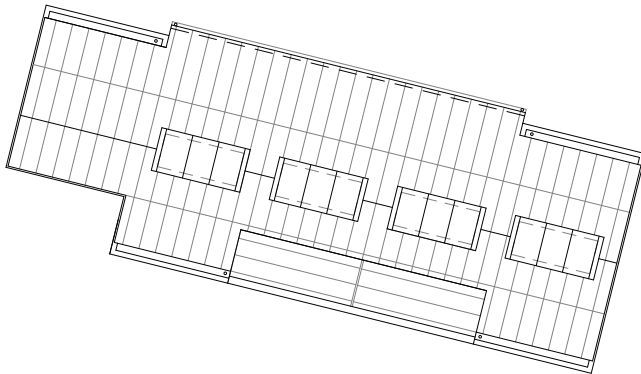
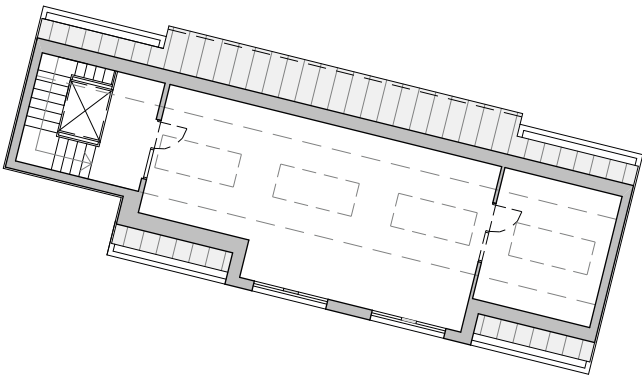
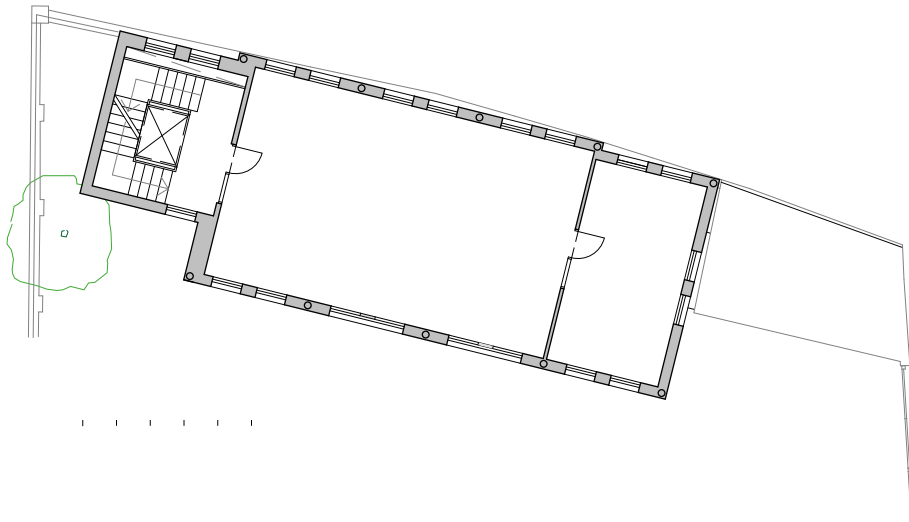
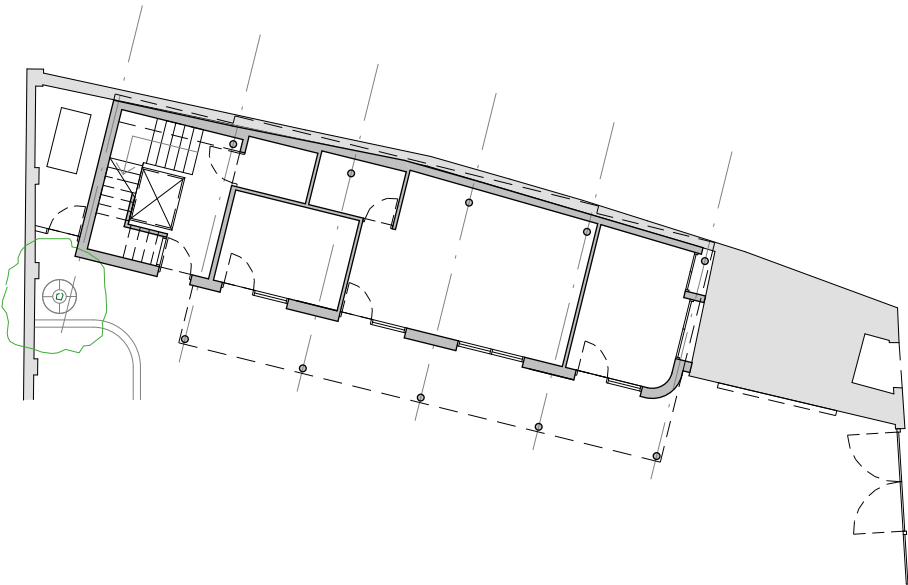


fig. 07: Proposed ground floor plan.
fig. 08: Proposed first floor plan.
fig. 09: Proposed second (attic) floor plan.
fig. 10: Proposed roof plan.

fig. 07

fig. 08

fig. 09

fig. 10

2.3 Scale and Size

The design intention is to create a low impact, small scaled building. The ground floor accommodation is set entirely behind the boundary wall along Cathcart Street, with a simple rectangular first floor volume articulated over and finished with a steeply pitched, gable-ended roofscape. Therefore the new building is seen from the public realm as essentially one new floor of accommodation with a steep pitched roof floating above the existing boundary.

It should be noted that the scale of the new seven-storey high student block immediately opposite on Cathcart Street, further diminishes the apparent scale of the proposal.



fig. 11: Cathcart Street aspect elevation as existing (left) and proposed (right)



fig. 11

The scale and size of the proposal is modelled in response to longer views along Holmes Road, by setting the flank wall away from the corner of Holmes Road / Cathcart Street, so as not to obstruct the line of birch trees and end gables of the main school building. It should be noted that the 2017 pre-application advice to reduce the impact of 'the highly visible long views', are to a large extent blocked by the new student accommodation as viewed from Holmes Road when approached from Kentish Town High Street.

It should also be noted that the proposed building's footprint steps back from the line of trees within the CFBL playground bounding Holmes Road, which for the majority of the year would screen long views of the proposal when looking East along Holmes Road.

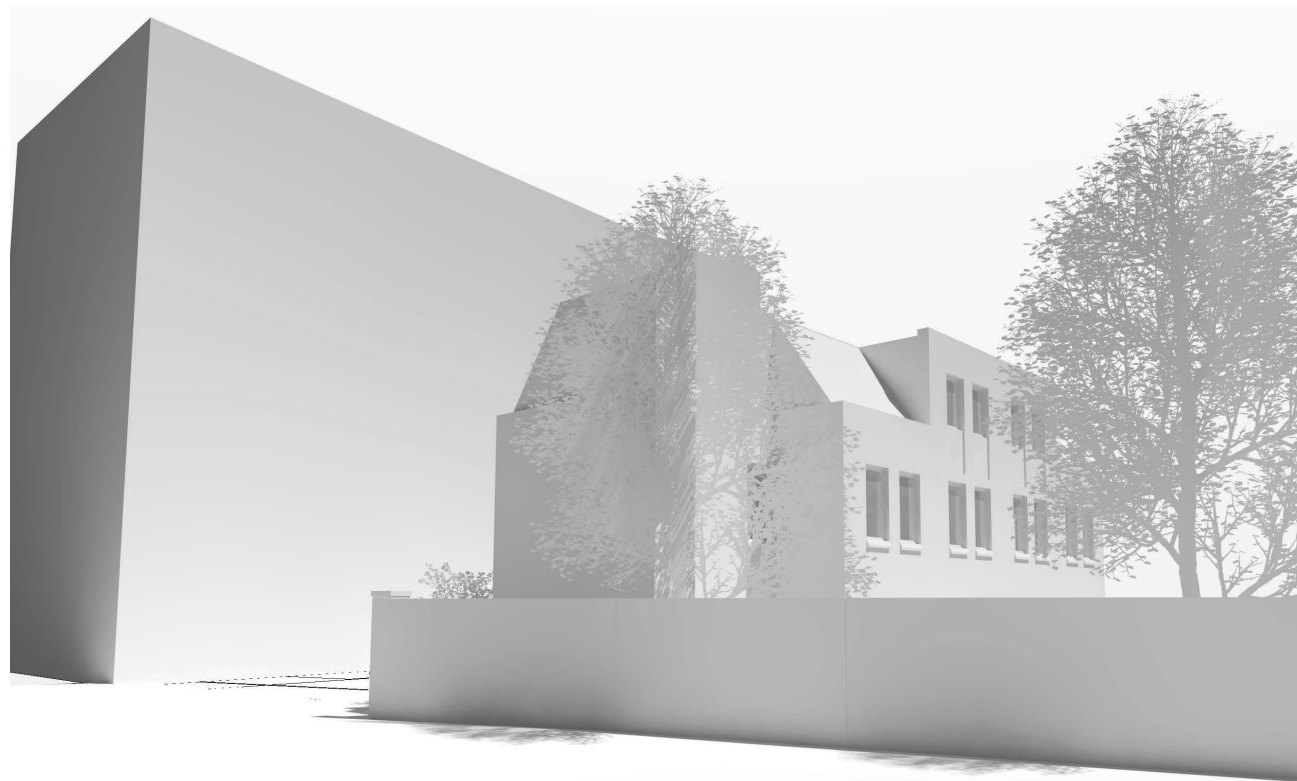


fig. 12: Proposed views along Holmes Road as existing (top) and proposed (bottom). Holmes Road aspect elevation screened by the matured trees, and against the backdrop of existing multi-level student accommodation block.

fig. 12

2.4 Layout

GROUND FLOOR

The proposed ground floor plan abuts the existing substation to the South East, and approximates to the footprint of the existing outbuilding along the Cathcart Street boundary wall.

A covered colonnade fronts the external outside playspace, providing level access to a lobby, lift and staircase to floors above. Direct access to the Building Manager’s office and separate workspaces and storage are also accessed directly from the colonnade.

FIRST FLOOR AND ATTIC LEVELS

These levels comprise the group open plan offices and meeting rooms, accessed from the lift and staircase.

Floor to floor levels at ground and first floors are relatively low at 2.9m each, with the attic floor set under a sloping soffit rising 1.5m above FFL.

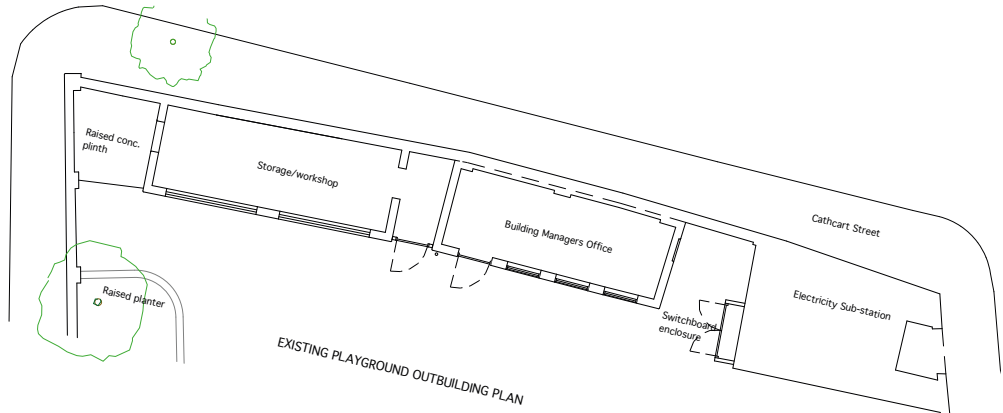


fig. 13

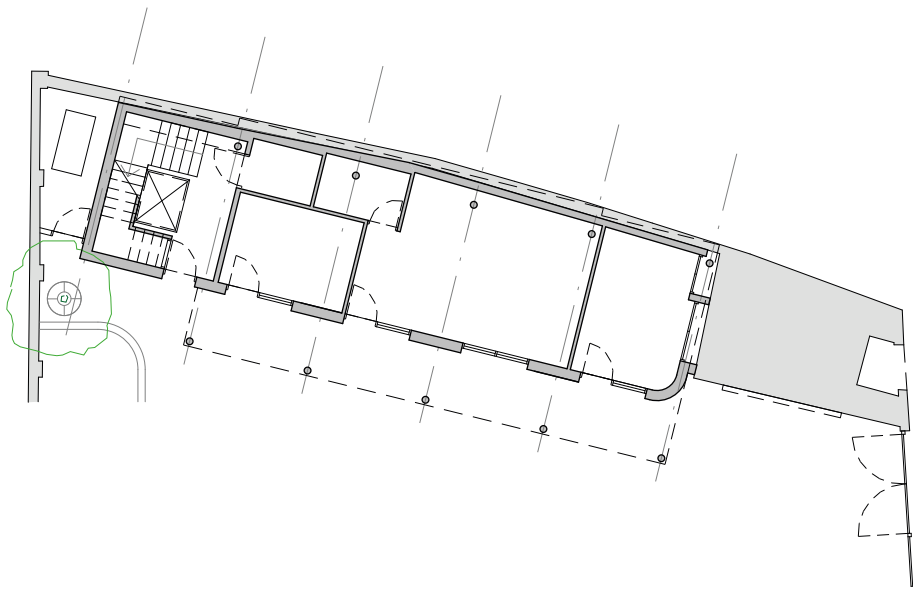


fig. 14

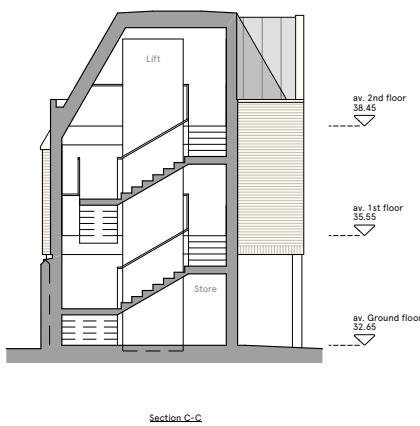
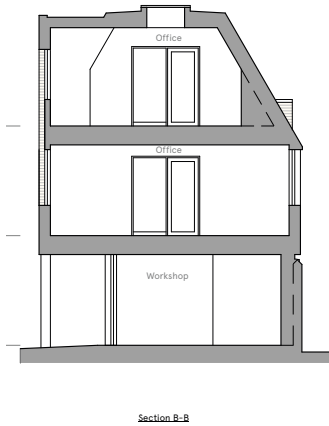
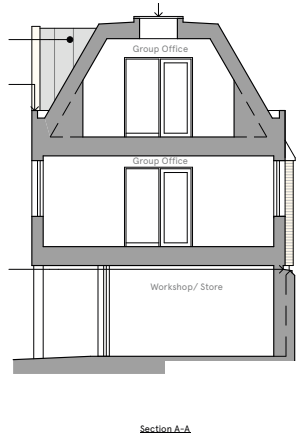


fig. 15

fig. 13: Existing ground floor plan
fig. 14: Proposed ground floor plan
fig. 15: Proposed sections

2.5 Setting, Appearance and Materials

SETTING

From various comments within the pre-application advice, the proposal should not adversely impact on the setting of the Listed Building. The resultant design has evolved into a low-key building, of rectangular footprint, without over-articulated façades and a simple, unfenestrated roof.

Local modelling of the form is proposed along the Cathcart Street frontage, creating two balanced end bays with the roof extending over the central bay to reduce the scale of this facade. Similarly the end gabled roof form to Holmes Road is indented locally, to allow the existing adjacent birch tree to be kept intact.

In response to pre-application advice and design development, the proposal is simple in form and outline, without overly figural shapes and roof lines. The resultant size and scale mediates between the adjacent seven-storey student block and the tall façades and silhouette of the main Listed Building.



fig. 16



fig. 17



fig. 18

Proposed Cathcart Street elevation as at:
fig. 16: 2016 Pre-Application (ref. 2016/6261/PRE)
fig. 17: 2023 Pre-Application (ref. 2023/2810/PRE)
fig. 18: Current application

APPEARANCE

The proposal is for the new building to ‘float’ over the boundary wall along Cathcart Street, with regular treatment of the fenestration and a balanced symmetry to the outward facing elevation.

The elevation facing inwards is treated with nuanced reference to the Listed Building. The colonnade provides an element of covered student space, and also makes reference to the original (as described in the Heritage Statement). Similarly, the vertical expression of the central bay windows make reference to the existing window proportions.

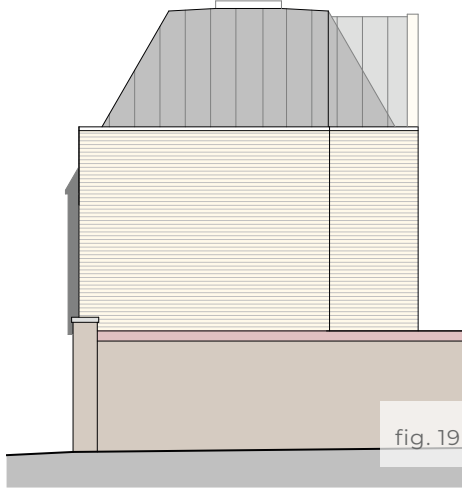
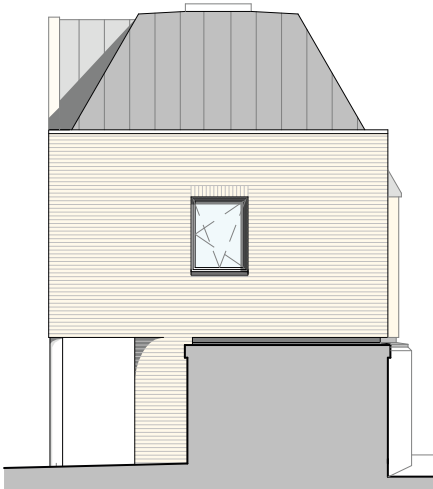


fig. 19: Proposed elevations facing the Playground (top left), Cathcart Street entry gate (top right), Cathcart Street/ student accommodation block (bottom left) and Holmes Road (bottom right).

MATERIALS

The proposal incorporates practical and appropriate materials, which make reference to the palette of both those used in the 2011 extension and also those in the main school building.

The ground floor external facings are light cream glazed bricks as being robust and durable, that also echo the original glazed bricks found in some of the circulation areas in the Listed Building. The upper storey is clad in pale grey / buff bricks, which create a traditional, robust aesthetic.

The pitched roof is proposed as a natural zinc standing seam cladding for durability and excellent weathering characteristics referencing the roof shape and finish of the 2011 library extension. It is also a lightweight, highly efficient cladding material.

Windows are proposed as powder-coated metal tilt and turn type units, together with similarly finished spandrel panels. Low pitched rooflights are finished in matching powder coated sections to blend with the zinc roofing.



fig. 20: Existing material context (bottom left).
Proposed envelope materials: light cream glazed brick, pale grey/buff brick and standing seam zinc (top left, centre & right).

Proposed playground aspect elevation (bottom right).

fig. 20

2.6 Sustainable Design

The building is arranged on a planning grid of 3.6m to allow for fast track, off-site construction and prefabrication techniques. The intention is to incorporate lightweight, sustainably produced materials for efficiency and speed of erection.

The sustainable targets set within the New London Plan and also LB of Camden's own policies with regards to CO2 reductions beyond part L of the 2013 Building Regulations, energy reduction from renewable sources, and water efficiency consumption targets. These will be achieved by the use of highly insulated cladding panels combined with airtight construction, the use of Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR) throughout the building in conjunction with an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) system for primary heating / cooling. It should be noted that the free-standing externally positioned ASHP is located in a secure fenced and gated area adjacent to the 2.4m high brick boundary walls. This location and ASHP specification meets with the noise impact requirements of LB Camden and the relevant British Standards criteria (refer to the Noise Impact Assessment Report dated 30/04/2024 by Clement Acoustics).

Windows are carefully sized to provide an efficient day-lit internal working environment, without incurring excessive direct solar heat gain.

Proposed drainage and internal plumbing systems will meet current SuDs requirements.

2.7 Access

Access to the building is unchanged from the access to the existing outbuildings to be replaced.

No direct vehicular access is required and deliveries and any necessary servicing will be accessed via the existing double gates off Cathcart Street, programmed for out of hours deliveries, as exists.

The small existing external pupil cycle storage space is proposed to be relocated in fixed vertical cycle storage racking on the external substation wall within the playground. The proposed building is DDA compliant, with level access, a compliant lift and general circulation together with Unisex WC to meet Part M2 of the Building Regulations.

3.0 Conclusion

The proposal has taken account of recommendations of previous pre-applications, which has contributed to the detailed design evolution. The result is a low-key contemporary building, fit for purpose and is a much needed and beneficial asset to the college environment. The proposal is low impact and respectful of its surroundings, being of an appropriate form, scale and expression.