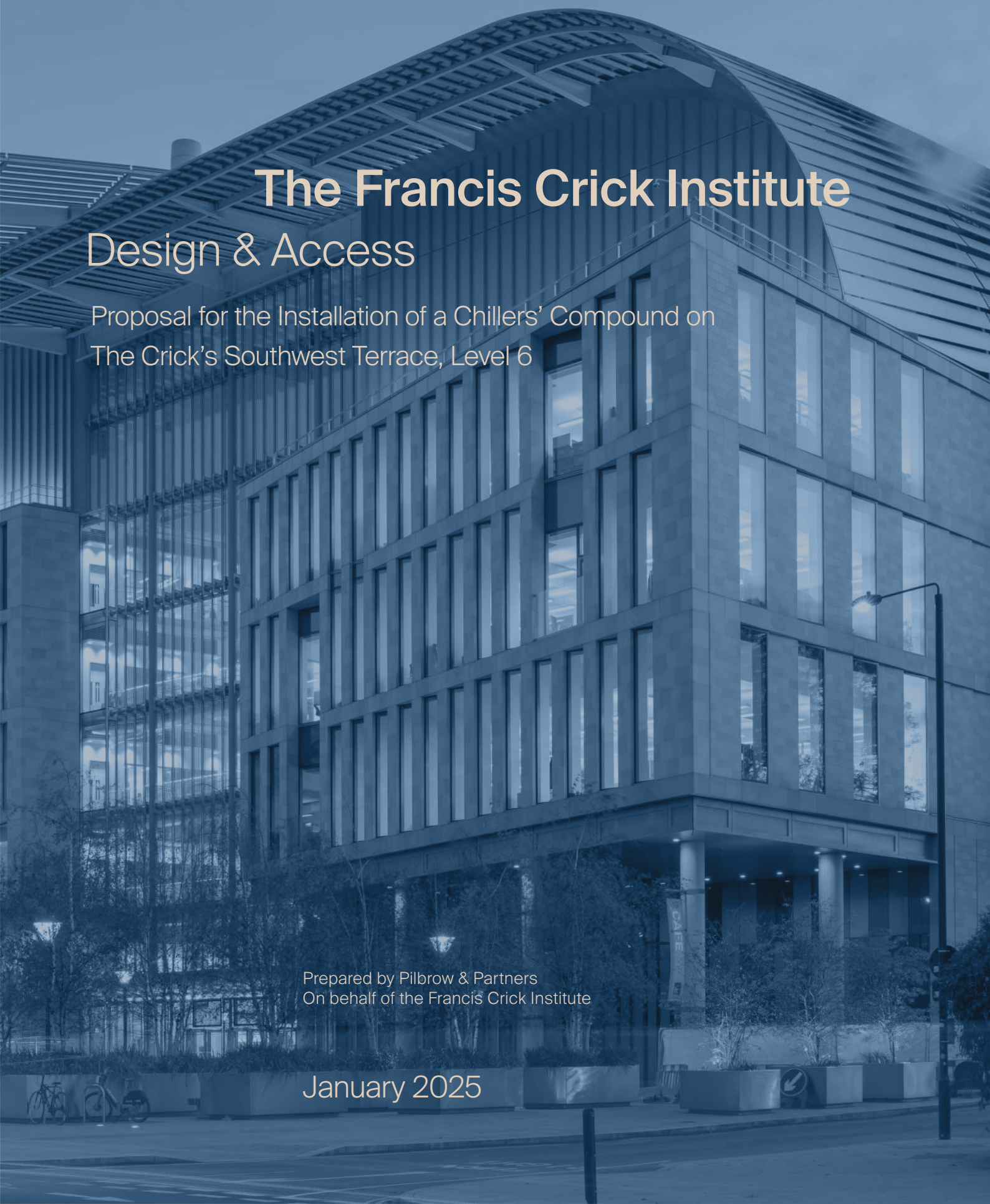
Pilbrow & Partners

The Francis Crick Institute

Design & Access

Proposal for the Installation of a Chillers' Compound on
The Crick's Southwest Terrace, Level 6

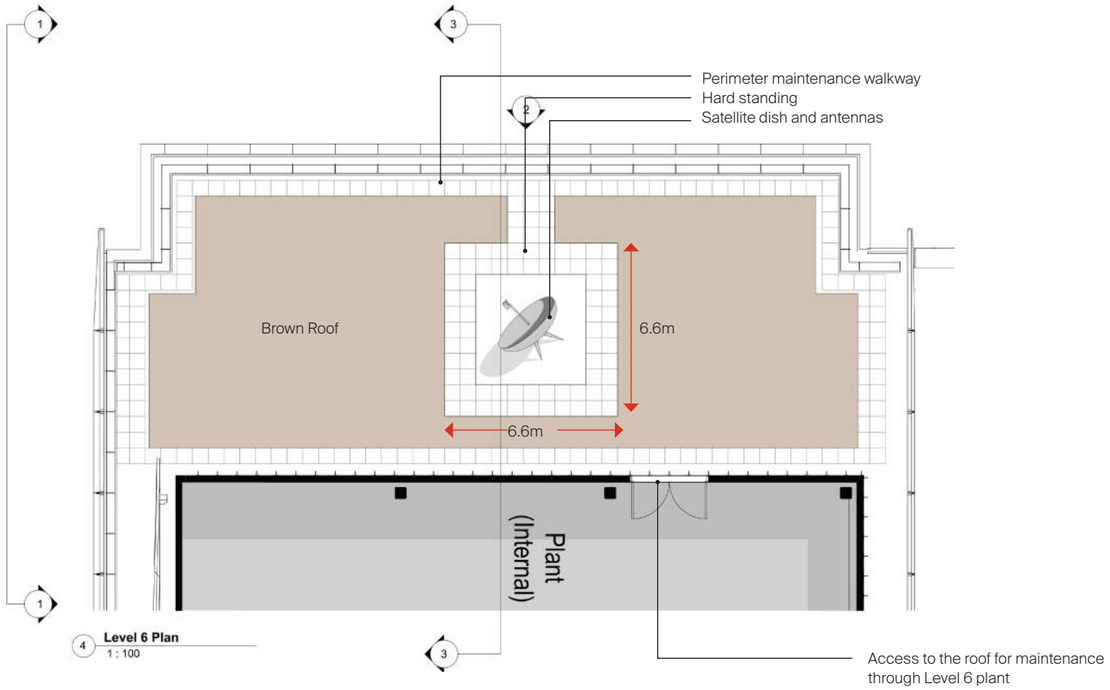


Prepared by Pilbrow & Partners
On behalf of the Francis Crick Institute

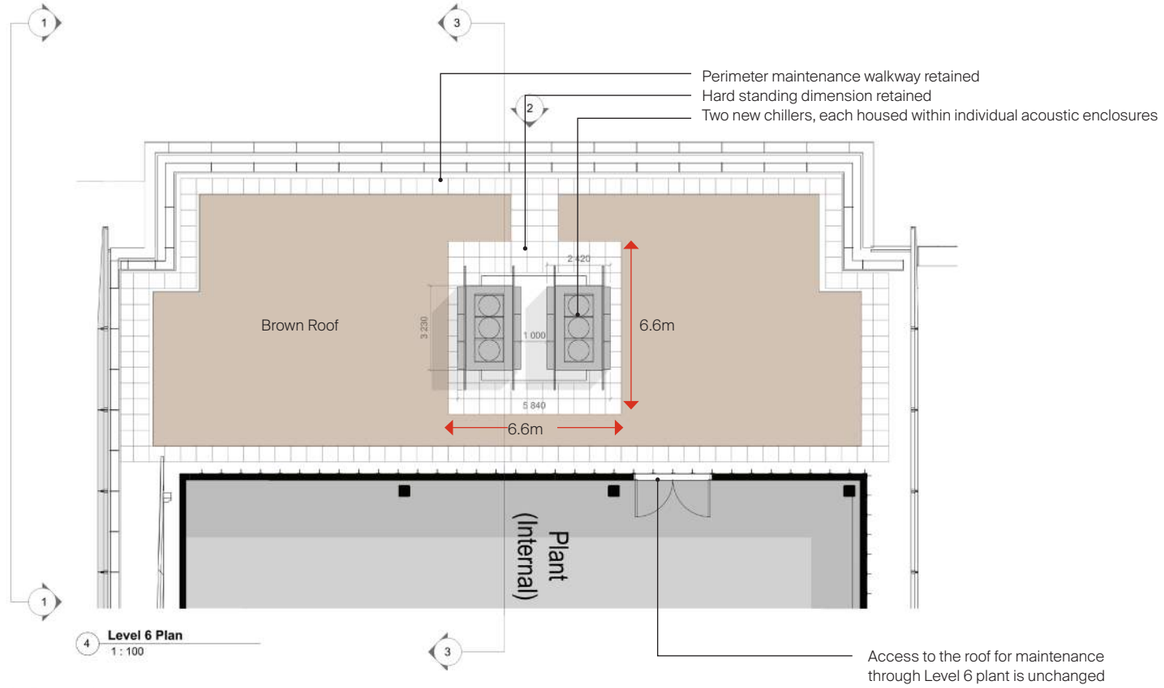
January 2025

Contents

View on the left: Ossulston Street, looking north



As Existing



As Proposed

Executive Summary

This Design and Access Statement, prepared by Pilbrow & Partners on behalf of The Francis Crick Institute, supports the planning application for the installation of a chiller compound on the Level 06 southwest terrace.

The proposal represents the collaborative efforts of a multidisciplinary team, including service engineers, ecologists, acoustician, heritage planners, and architects, ensuring that all key planning considerations are addressed holistically.

The Francis Crick Institute
The Francis Crick Building, commonly known as "the Crick," was granted planning permission in March 2011 and first occupied in 2016. Today, the institute is home to 1,500 staff, including 1,250 researchers supported by 250 staff members.

Designed to be adaptable and reconfigurable, the Crick can evolve to meet the changing demands of research and science. Since commencing operations, it has:

- Reconfigured numerous research bays on various levels.
- Focused specific research teams and bays on COVID-19 research and testing.
- Adapted areas to host a temporary COVID-19 vaccination centre.
- Reconfigured floorspace within the building (e.g., ongoing Level 08 works).
- Applied for various Advertisement Consents to support outreach and educational commitments (www.crick.ac.uk/whats-on).
- Reviewed amenity area provisions, considering COVID-related impacts and the loss of access to Purchase Street Open Space (Level 02SW and 05NE).
- Exceeded Section 106 outreach, public access, and education commitments.
- Maintained an ongoing commitment to addressing critical human challenges, including the development of a comprehensive Sustainability Strategy.

The Existing Freezer Farm
Refrigeration is an essential component of any scientific research facility. At the Crick, the designated freezer farm houses over 100 upright, freestanding scientific freezers operating at –80 degrees Celsius to securely store research samples.

Due to high demand, the freezer farm room is experiencing overheating issues. This places significant strain on the freezers and jeopardizes the safe storage of valuable research samples.

The Proposal
To address the overheating issue and ensure the reliable operation of the freezers, a more robust cooling solution is proposed. This involves the installation of two new chillers on the Level 06 southwest terrace, which will assist in rejecting the heat generated by the freezers.

To ensure compliance with acoustic level requirements, each chiller will be enclosed within an integral acoustic enclosure.

The Design & Access Statement
This document explains the proposal's context, the design rationale, and demonstrates—through the work of various consultants—that there is no impact on neighbouring amenities and negligible to no impact on townscape views.

Kind regards,

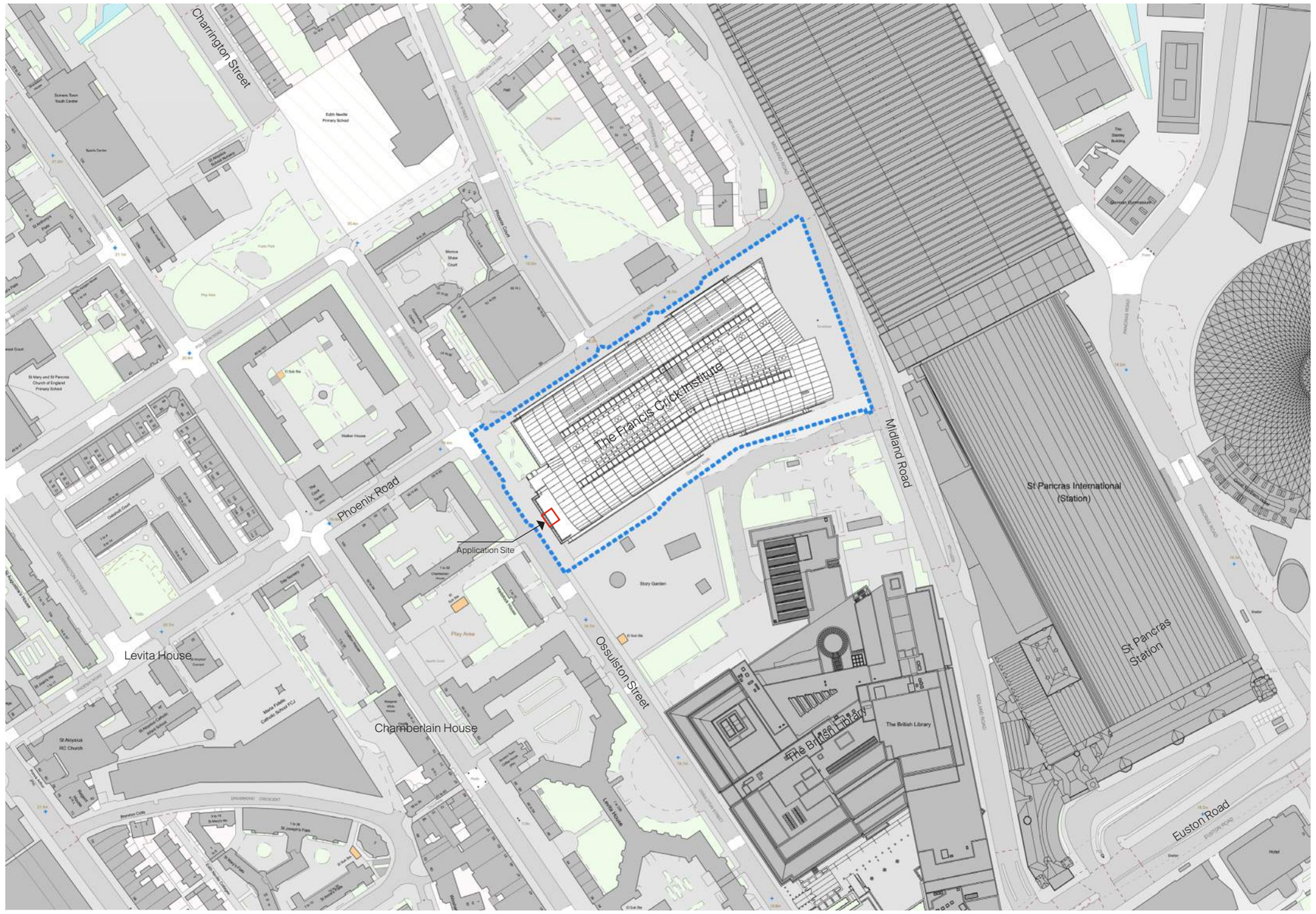
Tal Ben-Amar
Founding Partner
Pilbrow & Partners

1 Context
1.1 The Site and Surrounding Area

The Francis Crick Institute is located between St Pancras Station and Ossulston Street, bordered by Brill Place to the north and The British Library to the south.

The Southwest Terrace faces Ossulston Street, which defines the eastern boundary of Somers Town—a vibrant community known for its long history and strong identity.

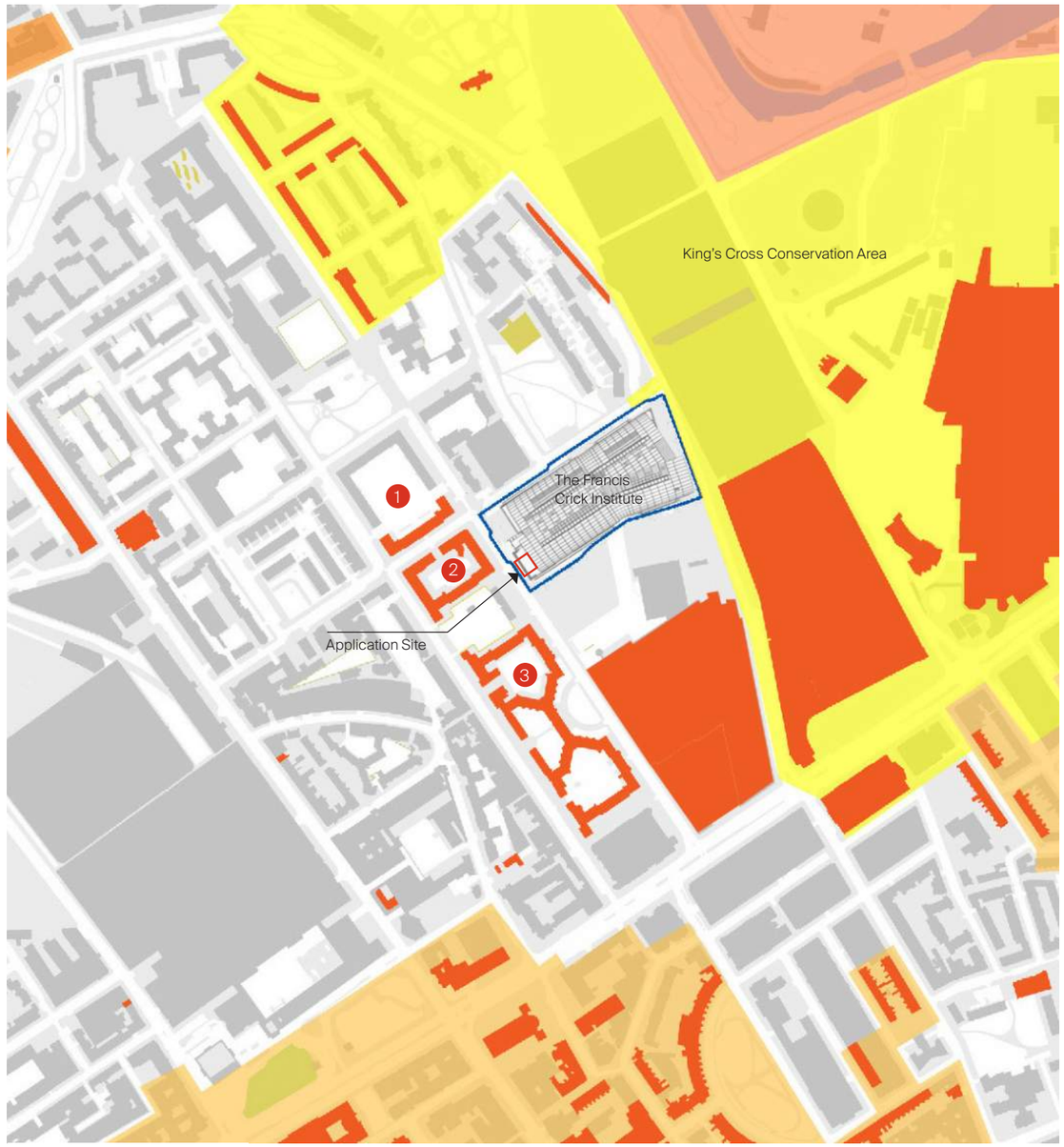
Ossulston Street is characterised by residential buildings ranging from 4 to 7 storeys in height, including the Grade II Listed Chamberlain and Levita Houses. Between these two structures stands Hadstock House, a 1960s building that is not listed



Site Location Plan

Ossulston Street, looking north, defines the eastern boundary of Somers Town, with The British Library and The Francis Crick Institute on the right, and the residential listed buildings on the left.

1 Context
1.2 Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings



Heritage Plan


1. The British Library, Grade I Listed


2. Walker House, Grade II Listed


3. Chamberlain House, Grade II Listed


4. Levita House, Grade II Listed

The Francis Crick Building itself is not within a conservation area but faces the King's Cross Conservation Area along its western frontage on Midland Road.

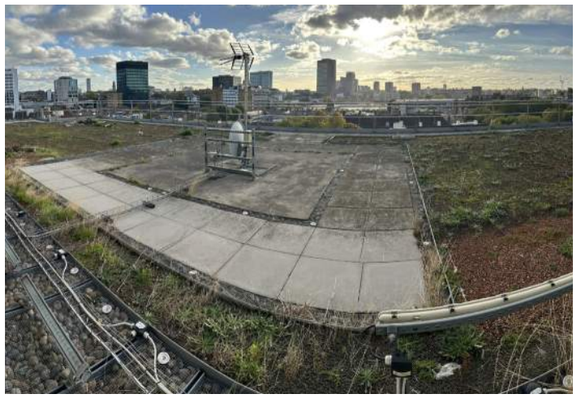
The application area, located at the southwest corner of the site, is not visible from the conservation area.

The following listed buildings are immediately adjacent to the site along Ossolstun Road:

- The British Library and piazza, Euston Road: designed by Sir Colin St John Wilson and completed in 1997. Grade I Listed.
- Walker House, Phoenix Road: Designed by G. Topham Forrest and completed in 1930. Grade II Listed.
- Chamberlain House, Ossulston Street (west side): Grade II Listed.
- Levita House, Chalton Street: Designed by G. Topham Forrest and completed in 1931. Grade II Listed.

1. The existing terrace viewed from the southwest corner, showing the hard standing located at the centre of the brown roof.

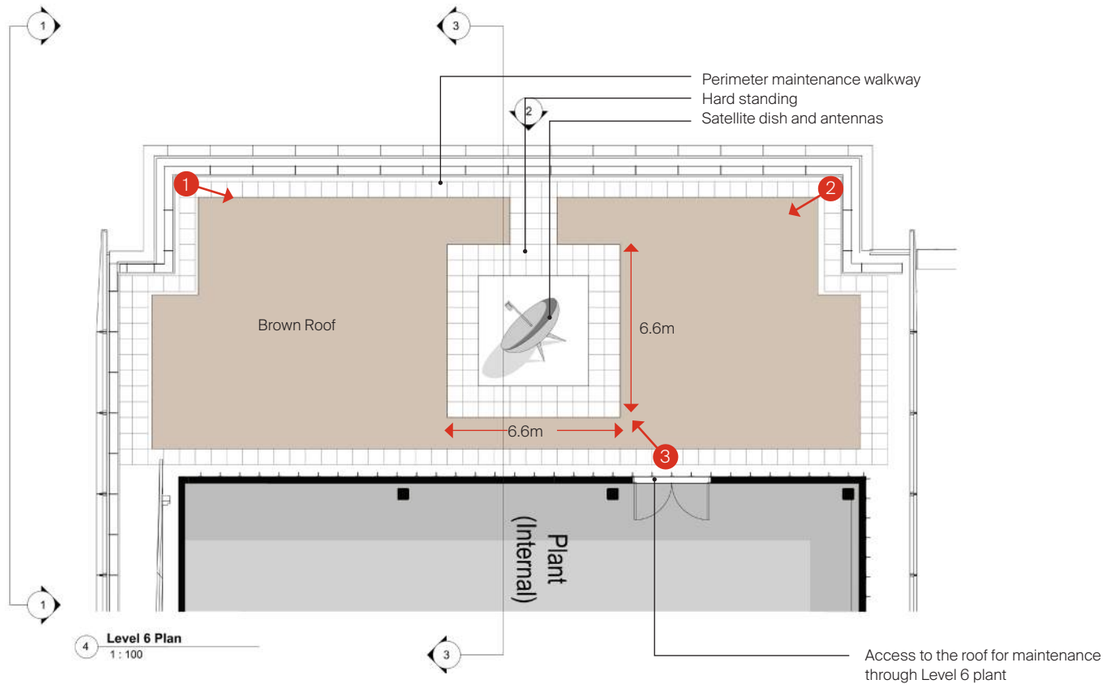
2. The existing terrace viewed from the Northwest corner, with a perimeter path providing maintenance access around the terrace.



3. The hard standing at the centre of the terrace

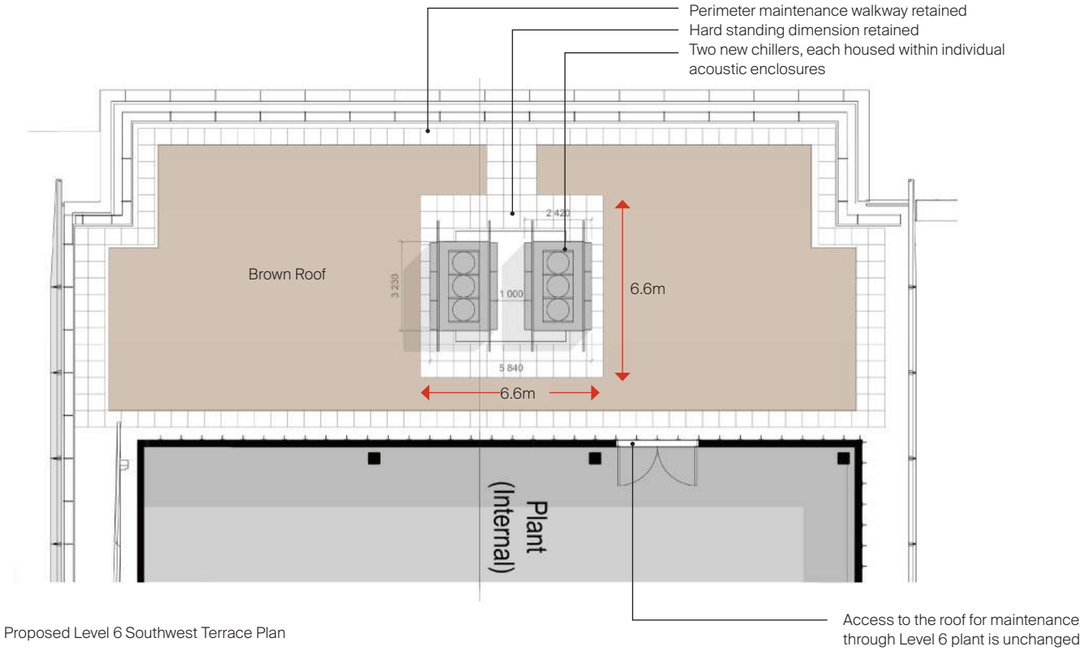
The Level 6 southwest terrace features a 6.6 x 6.6m hard standing at its centre, surrounded by a brown roof. A redundant communication satellite dish and antennas are currently located on the hard standing.

A path runs along the perimeter of the terrace, providing access for maintenance and to the hard standing. The terrace is accessible solely from the Level 6 plant space and is designated for maintenance use only.

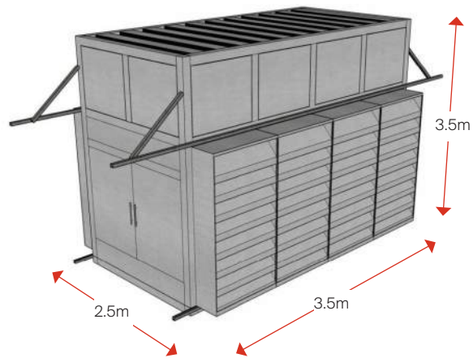


3 The Proposal
3.1 Design

Proposed West Elevation - The large vaulted roof of The Crick, which oversails the terrace, acts as a backdrop to the proposed chillers.



Proposed Level 6 Southwest Terrace Plan



Proposed chiller including acoustic attenuation enclosure

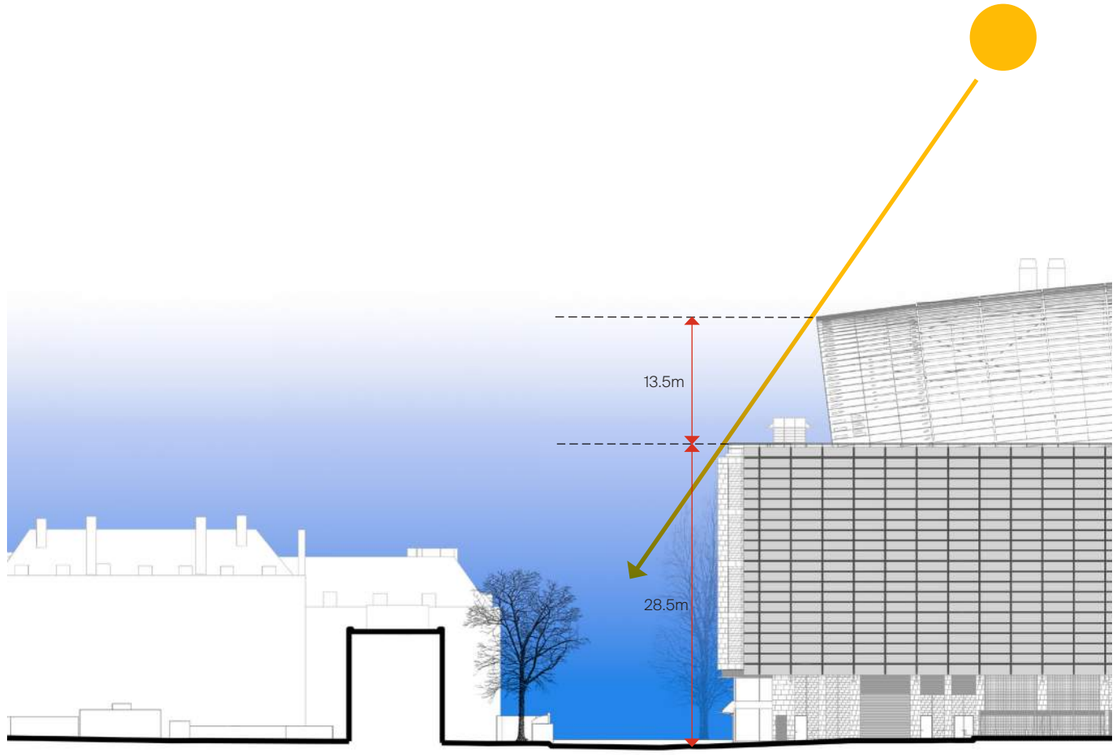
The proposed chiller farm will consist of two separate chillers, each housed within its own acoustic enclosure and spaced 1m apart. The chillers will be installed on the existing 6.6 x 6.6m hard standing, ensuring that the current brown roof area remains unaffected.

Each chiller enclosure will measure approximately 3.5m in length, 2.5m in width, and 3.5m in height. The enclosures will feature a powder-coated metal finish, matching the colour of The Crick's gabled wall.

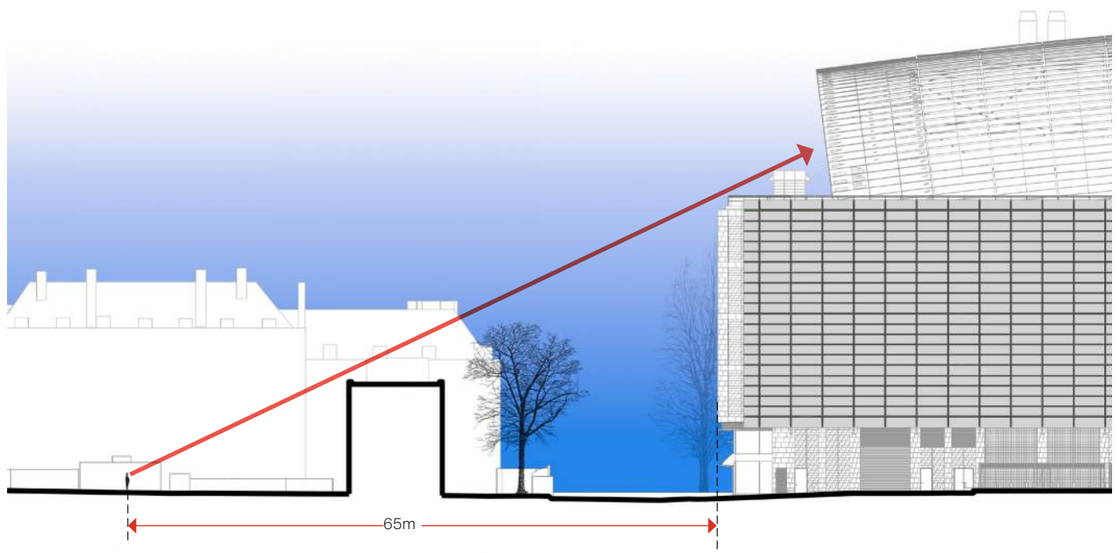
The large vaulted roof of The Crick, which oversails the terrace, acts as a backdrop to the proposed chillers. Their scale, finish, and location relative to the roof ensure that their visual impact is negligible.

Access to the terrace will remain unchanged and will continue to be for maintenance purposes only.

3 The Proposal
3.1 Neighbouring Amenity



Daylight & Sunlight - The proposed chillers, positioned at the centre of the Level 6 terrace, are well below the line connecting the vaulted roof and level 6 parapet



Visual Impact - The location and scale of the proposed chillers ensure they become visible from street level only at a distance of approximately 65m from the building.

Image 3. Plant noise emission at 16m above local ground

South chiller operating | Northern chiller operating

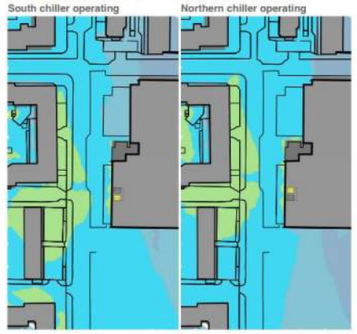


Table 3 Noise map colour key

Noise Level, L_{eq} dB(A)	Noise Map Colour
≤ 20	
20-25	
25-30	
30-35	Plant noise limit ≤ 35dB(A)
35-40	
40-45	
45-50	
≥ 50	

An extract from Suono's Noise Assessment Report confirms that the noise propagation from the proposed chillers is below the permitted emission levels.

Daylight & Sunlight
The Level 6 terrace is situated 28.5m above Ossulston Street level, with The Crick's vaulted roof extending 13.5m above the terrace. The line connecting the edge of the vaulted roof and the existing terrace parapet on its western side defines the daylight and sunlight available to neighbouring residential properties.

The proposed chillers, positioned at the centre of the Level 6 terrace, are well below this line and therefore have no impact on the provision of daylight and sunlight to neighbouring properties.

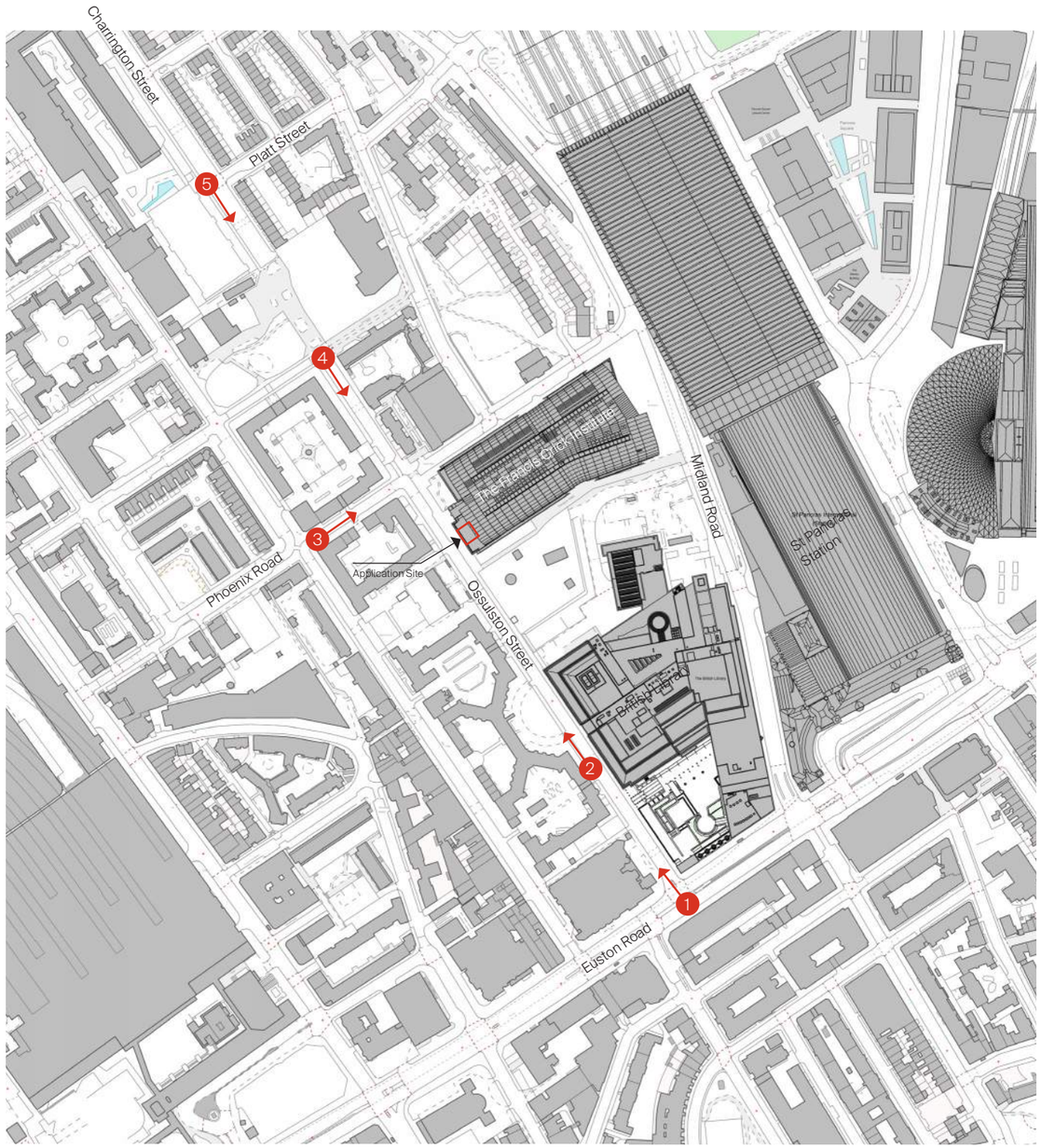
Visual Impact
The location and scale of the proposed chillers ensure they become visible from street level only at a distance of approximately 65m from the building. They will not be visible from the residential windows of the immediately adjacent properties along Ossulston Street.

Privacy
Access to the terrace will remain restricted to maintenance purposes only, ensuring there is no change to the privacy of neighbouring properties. Any maintenance activities will be carried out in compliance with *Camden's Code of Practice for Construction and Demolition.*

Acoustics
A noise survey was undertaken by Suono Acoustics to establish the typical minimum ambient noise levels at the residential properties surrounding the Francis Crick Institute. Based on the survey results and with reference to Camden's planning policy, plant noise limits were derived.

Noise propagation from the proposed plant has been modelled, with noise maps presented. The assessed noise emission is estimated to be 1 to 2 dB below the derived noise emission limits, ensuring compliance with local authority requirements.

4 Townscape Views



Views Location Plan


1. Junction of Ossulston Street and Euston Road looking North


2. Ossulston Street looking North


3. Phoenix Road looking East


4. Ossulston Street looking South


5. Junction of Charrington Street and Platt Street looking South

The impact of the proposal on the townscape has been assessed from five key viewpoints. These locations are consistent with those used in the original Francis Crick Institute application in 2010 (Ref: 2010/4721/P).

The viewpoints are as follows:

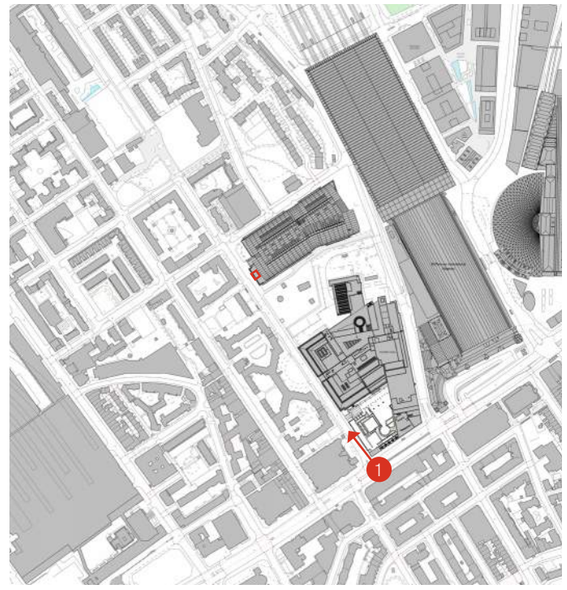
1. Junction of Ossulston Street and Euston Road, looking north
2. Ossulston Street, looking north
3. Phoenix Road, looking east
4. Ossulston Street, looking south
5. Junction of Charrington Street and Platt Street, looking south

The proposal is visible in four of these views and not visible from Phoenix Road (View 3). It is only marginally visible from the two northern viewpoints, where it is obscured by trees, even during winter months.

Given the proposal's relatively modest scale within the larger context of The Francis Crick Institute, its impact on the townscape is considered unharmful.

4 Townscape Views
4.1 View 01 Existing

As Existing

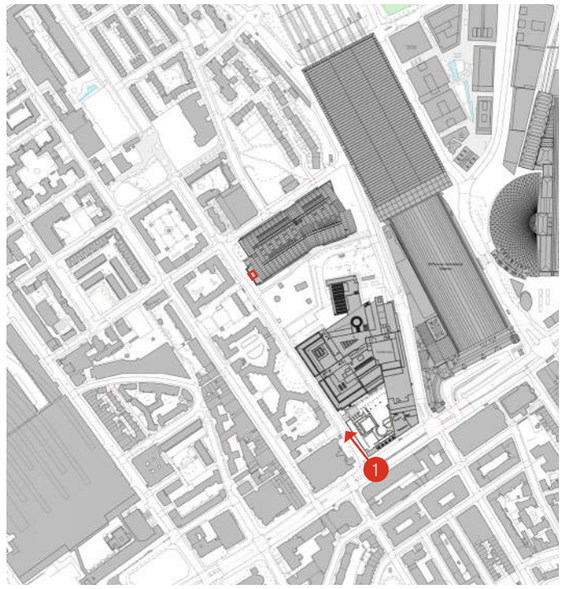


Views Location Plan

View 01 - Junction of Ossulston Street and Euston Road looking North

4 Townscape Views
4.1 View 01 Proposed

As Proposed



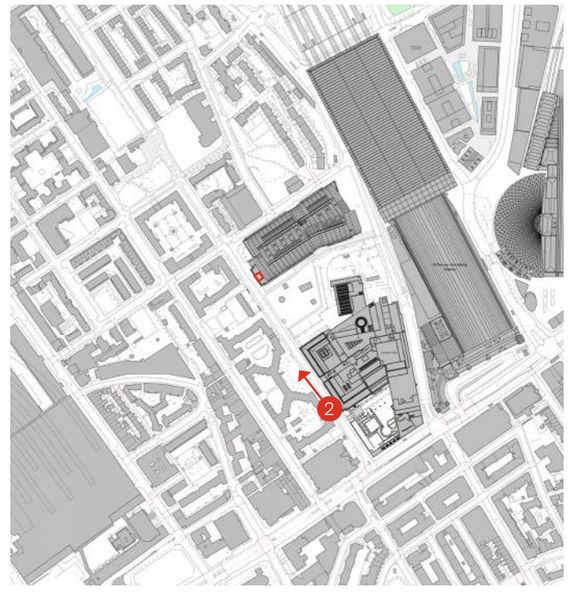
Views Location Plan

View 01 - Junction of Ossulston Street and Euston Road looking North

The proposed chillers are visible from Euston Road at the junction with Ossulston Street. However, their relatively small scale, in comparison with The British Library and The Francis Crick Institute building, makes their impact negligible.

Additionally, the proposed finish of the chiller enclosure, designed to match the Crick's curved roof finish, further reduces its visual impact.

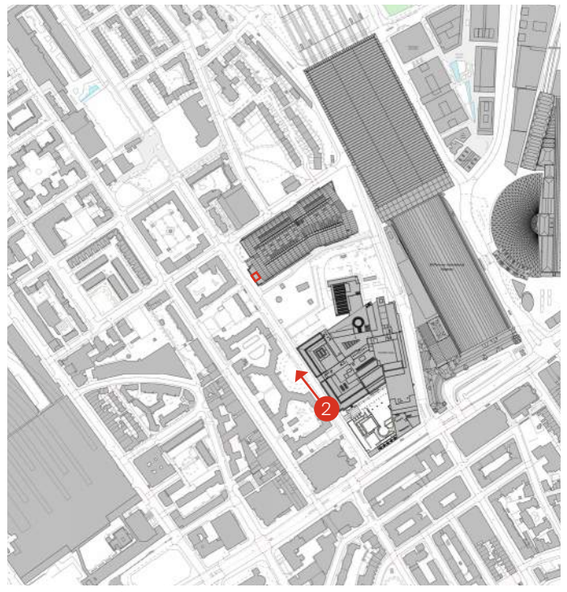
As Existing



Views Location Plan

View 02 - Ossulston Street, Looking North

As Proposed



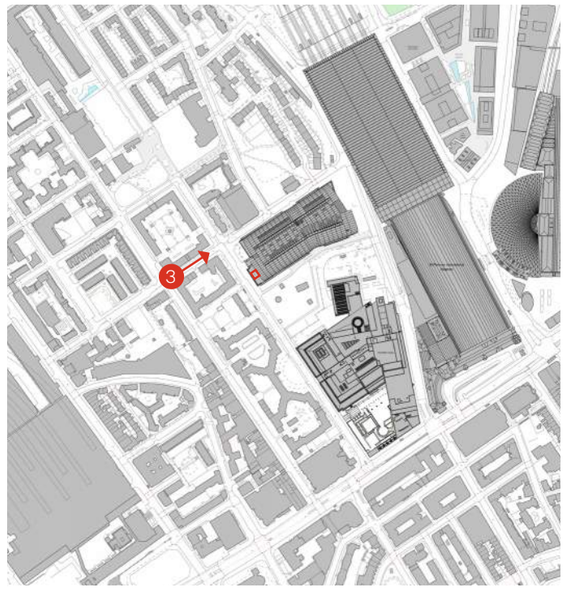
Views Location Plan

View 02 - Ossulston Street, Looking North

The proposed chillers become progressively less visible when moving north along Ossulston Street. The glass screen of the Crick's southwest wing effectively obscures the chillers as one approaches the building.

Additionally, the numerous trees along Ossulston Street further reduce the visibility of the chillers, enhancing their integration into the streetscape.

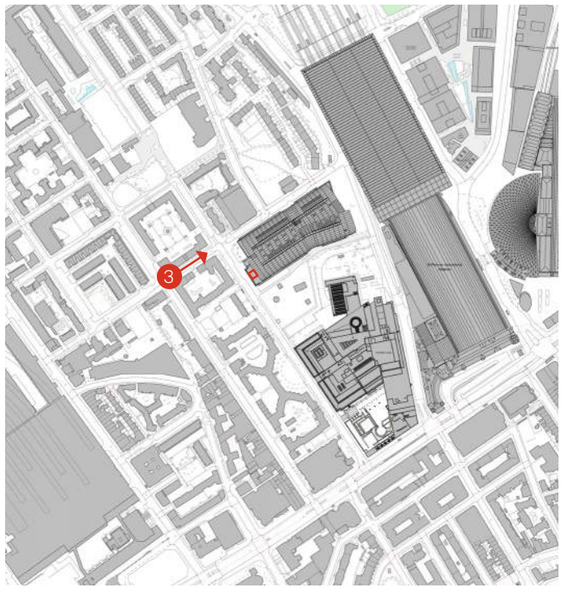
As Existing



Views Location Plan

View 03 - Phoenix Road, Looking East

As Proposed

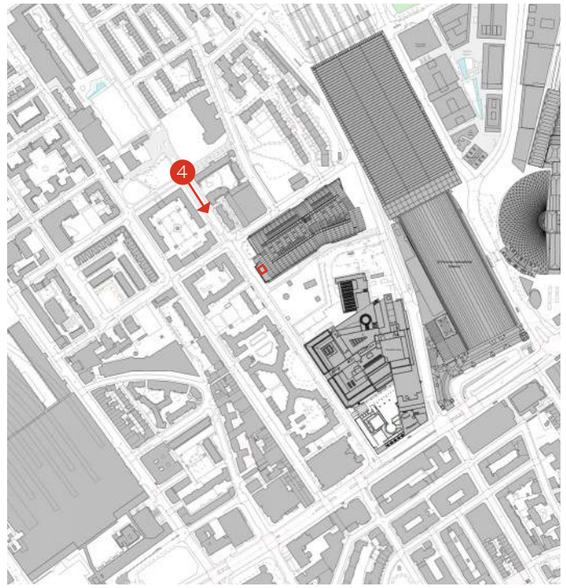


Views Location Plan

View 03 - Phoenix Road, Looking East

The proposed view depicts the proposal's outline in a red line. The proposal is entirely obscured by the Grade II Listed Chamberlain House and therefore has no visual impact on this view.

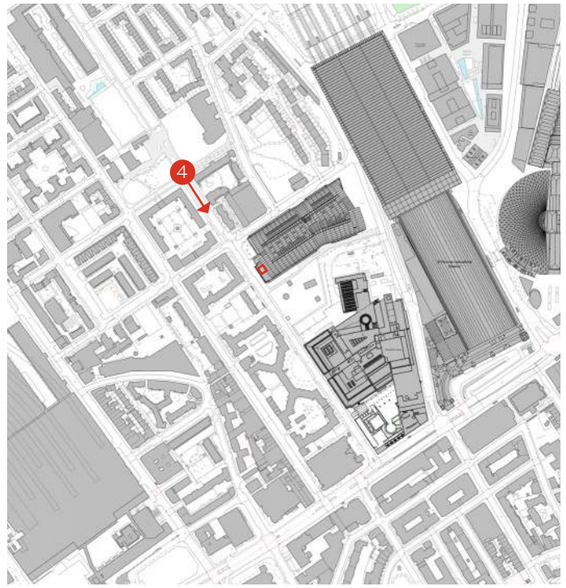
As Existing



Views Location Plan

View 04 - Ossulston Street, Looking South

As Proposed

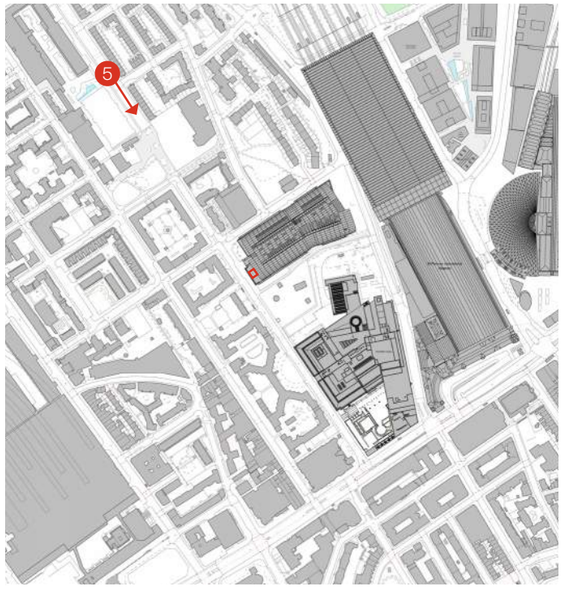


Views Location Plan

View 04 - Ossulston Street, Looking South

The proposed chillers are barely visible from the north side of Ossulston Street. Their location at the centre of the terrace, combined with the curved roof of The Crick building acting as a backdrop, significantly reduces their visibility from the north. Additionally, the trees along Ossulston Street, even during their winter phase, further obscure the proposal from view.

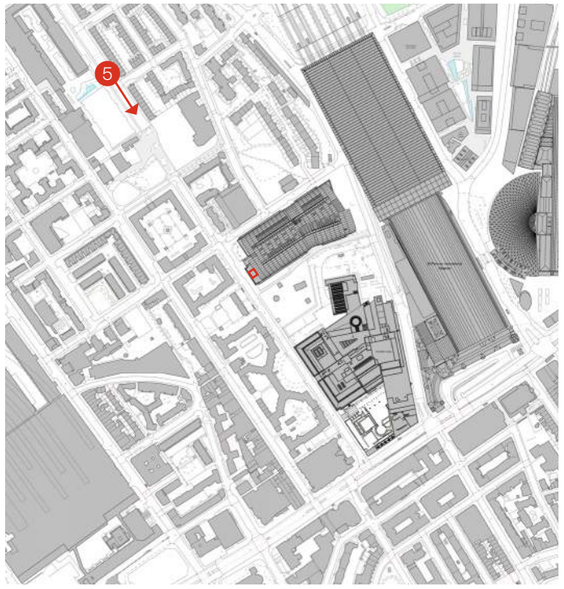
As Existing



Views Location Plan

View 05 - Junction of Charrington Street and Platt Street, Looking South

As Proposed



Views Location Plan

View 05 - Junction of Charrington Street and Platt Street, Looking South

The proposed view depicts the proposal's outline in a red line, as seen from Charrington Street looking south. The mature trees, even during their winter phase, entirely obscure the proposal, resulting in no visual impact on this view.

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