

187 Kentish Town Road

Townscape and Heritage Assessment



**PETER
STEWART
CONSULTANCY**

December 2013

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Townscape and Heritage Assessment has been prepared in support of the planning application for the conversion and extension of 187 Kentish Town Road as part of a residential led scheme. The report has been prepared by Peter Stewart Consultancy, a practice which provides independent expert advice on architecture, urban design and heritage.
- 1.2 The report sets out the national and local policy and guidance context relevant to the consideration of townscape, design and heritage matters. It goes on to consider the physical context of the application site ('the Site') and its surroundings, and the design proposals ('the Proposed Development') in the light of this context. It sets out an assessment of the quality of the design in terms of architecture, urban design and the impact of the proposed development on townscape, views and the significance of heritage assets.
- 1.3 The significance of identified heritage assets is assessed as relevant as part of the baseline study.
- 1.4 The report should be read in conjunction with the scheme design drawings, the architect's design and access statement and other supporting information with the planning application.

Selection of viewpoints

- 1.5 Six viewpoints have been chosen to illustrate the effect of the Proposed Development on townscape, views and heritage assets and these are illustrated in section 5. The view locations were agreed in consultation with the London Borough of Camden ('LB Camden').
- 1.6 The locations of viewpoints were considered by identifying a study area centred on the Site and limited to locations from which the Site can be seen, or from which development may be seen at the height proposed. Within this study area, candidate viewpoint locations were identified based on an examination of maps of conservation areas, maps and lists of listed buildings, and good prior knowledge of the area. A series of views modelled by the architects (as part of the scheme development) also informed the choice of the viewpoints for this assessment.
- 1.7 A final selection of viewpoints was made following a site visit and with the aim of providing a broad range of viewpoints from all points of the compass and within the following two types of viewing location in particular:
- 'typical' townscape locations from particular points of the compass from which the development will be visible, from which the effect on other points nearby can be deduced.
 - locations of particular sensitivity, including those viewpoints in which the Proposed Development may significantly affect the settings of listed buildings.
- 1.8 For each of the six identified viewpoints illustrated in section 5, there are images of the view as existing and as proposed. Three of the views as proposed are shown as a fully rendered CGI, showing the Proposed Development in a realistic manner. The other three views are shown the Proposed Development as a red wire line.
- 1.9 Allies and Morrison Architects prepared the CGI images used in section 5 of this report. These are adequate to assess the effect of the Proposed Development on its setting. They are not verifiable images as the viewpoint locations have not been surveyed.
- 1.10 The baseline photographs were taken with a high resolution SLR digital camera with a digital focal length of 24mm. The viewpoint locations and height of the camera lens were annotated on an OS Map. These viewpoint locations were then matched in a 3D model of the context (ZMapping).
- 1.11 A 3D model of the Proposed Development was created in CAD in accordance with the planning drawings and placed in the image. The materials, textures and lighting effects in the fully rendered images were applied to the images using 3D Studio Max. The final image calibration, and insertion of people and trees in the images, was implemented in Adobe Photoshop.

2 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

2.1 This section contains a brief overview of aspects of national, London-wide and local planning policies and guidance that are particularly relevant to the townscape impact of the Proposed Development and an assessment of the impact on any relevant heritage asset. For the purposes of this report, it is those policies concerned with design, townscape and heritage matters that are of the greatest relevance.

The National Planning Policy Framework – March 2012

- 2.2 The Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. The NPPF sets out planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 2.3 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which has three dimensions; economic, social and environmental. The NPPF states, at paragraph 14, that ‘At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking.’ In terms of what this means for decision-taking, it states that this means ‘approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay’ and granting permission where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date unless any adverse impacts ‘would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits’ or ‘specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.’
- 2.4 In respect of design and heritage issues, the policies are broadly consistent with previous policy and guidance. Among the core planning principles set out at paragraph 17 are that planning should ‘always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings’ and should ‘conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.’

Requiring good design

- 2.5 Section 7 of the NPPF deals with design. At paragraph 56, the NPPF states that ‘Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.’
- 2.6 Paragraph 60 states that ‘Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.’
- 2.7 Paragraph 61 states that ‘Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.’
- 2.8 Paragraph 63 states that ‘In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design more generally in the area.’
- 2.9 Paragraph 64 states that ‘Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.’

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 2.10 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It applies to the heritage-related consent regimes under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, plan-making and decision-taking.

2.11 Heritage assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as a ‘building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).’

2.12 The setting of a heritage asset is defined in Annex 2 as “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”

2.13 Para 133 states planning authorities should take account of the following in determining planning applications:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.14 Paragraph 135 states the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

The London Plan – Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London, July 2011

2.15 The London Plan is ‘*the overall strategic plan for London, setting out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of London over the next 20-25 years.*’ The policies most relevant to townscape, conservation and visual assessment are contained in Chapter Seven ‘*London’s Living Places and Spaces*’.

2.16 Policy 7.1, on ‘*Building London’s Neighbourhoods and Communities*’, states that ‘*The design of new buildings and the spaces they create should help reinforce or enhance the character, legibility, permeability and accessibility of the neighbourhood.*’ Policy 7.4 expands on the theme of local character and states that ‘*Development should have regard to the form, function, and structure of an area, place or street and the scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings.*’

2.17 Policy 7.6, on ‘*Architecture*’, states that ‘*Architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider cityscape. It should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context.*’ It goes on to set out a list of requirements of new buildings and structures including, inter alia, that they should be ‘*of the highest architectural quality*’; they should ‘*be of a proportion, composition, scale and orientation that enhances, activates and appropriately defines the public realm*’; they should include details and materials that ‘*complement, not necessarily replicate*’ local architectural character; they should not cause ‘*unacceptable harm to the amenity of surrounding land and buildings, particularly residential buildings*’ which is said to be particularly important for tall buildings; and they should ‘*optimise the potential of sites*’.

2.18 Policy 7.8 on ‘*Heritage Assets and Archaeology*’ states that ‘*Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural details.*’ Policy 7.10 on ‘*World Heritage Sites*’ states that ‘*Development should not cause adverse impacts on World Heritage Sites or their settings...*’

London Borough of Camden

Camden Core Strategy and Development Policies, 2010

2.19 The Core Strategy and Development Policies documents, which form part of the LDF, were adopted on 8 November 2010. The Core Strategy, along with other LDF documents, will replace the existing UDP.

2.20 The Core Strategy sets out the key elements of the Council's planning vision and strategy for Camden. **Policy CS14** seeks to promote high quality places and to conserve the heritage of Camden.

2.21 The Development Policies document sets out additional planning policies that the Council will use when making decisions on planning applications.

2.22 **Policy DP24 Securing high quality design**, seeks to ensure the highest possible standards so that all development including alterations and extensions to existing buildings, are of the highest standard of design. This includes the consideration of:

- character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- the character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;
- careful integrated of architectural detailing into a building;
- use of materials of an appropriately high quality; and
- ensuring visual interest at street level, with entrances and windows used to create active frontages and all buildings.

2.23 Promoting good design is not just about the aesthetic appearance of the environment, but also about enabling an improved quality of life, equality of opportunity and economic growth. Design should respond creatively to its site and its context. The Council acknowledge innovative design can greatly enhance the built environment and that within areas of distinctive character, development should reinforce those elements which create the character.

2.24 **Policy DP25** seeks to conserve the heritage of Camden. Development affecting conservation areas should take account of conservation area statements and will only be permitted if it preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area. The council will resist the demotion of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

2.25 A number of documents have been adopted or published by the London Borough of Camden, which may be considered as a material consideration to development control decisions. These include:

- **CPG1** adopted in September 2013. This document provides guidance on design and heritage matters. The Council are currently¹ consulting on alterations to the section on heritage to include guidance on non designated heritage assets and the Council's adopted Selection Criteria for locally listed buildings (see below).
- **Selection criteria for locally listed buildings** adopted on 14 November 2012. This includes four significance criteria: architectural; historic, townscape; and social. To be considered for inclusion on the local list a building must meet at least 2 of these criteria and one of these must be either architectural or historic.
- **The Kelly Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan** adopted on 23 March 2011. It identifies a number of key views and vistas but none are of the Site.
- **The Bartholomew Estate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan** adopted in 2000. It lists a number of views but none are of the Site.
- **The Inkerman Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan** adopted on 31 October 2001. This document does not identify any important views.
- **The Rochester Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan** adopted on 12 December 2001. It identifies one important view, that towards the Rochester Terrace Gardens from west end of Rochester Road.

¹ As of November 2013

3 THE SITE AND ITS SETTING

Location

- 3.1 The Site lies on the south-west corner of the T-junction between Kentish Town Road (A400) and Prince of Wales Road. Both are busy roads and this is the main junction on the west side of Kentish Town Road.
- 3.2 The Site is well served by public transport. The Kentish Town West London Overground Station lies just 300 m to the west on Prince of Wales Road, Kentish Town London Underground and Railway Station lies some 500 m to the north on Kentish Town Road and Camden Road London Overground Station is some 600m to the south-east. There are also a number of bus routes along Kentish Town Road and Prince of Wales Road.

The Site

- 3.3 The existing building on Site was in use as a pizza restaurant until recently. It was built as a single storey assembly hall as part of a much larger building for the North Western Polytechnic in 1926-9² and designed by the architects Riley and Glanfield. The principal part of the former polytechnic building to the west (which comprises the main body of the original development, 1 Prince of Wales Road, see below) runs along the south side of Prince of Wales Road and was converted into residential apartments in 1999.
- 3.4 With its prominent corner site and its original function as an assembly hall, one might have expected 187 Kentish Town Road to be the architectural high point of the original Polytechnic building. It fails to rise to the occasion, however, reading as secondary to the main building to its west, to which it is rather crudely joined on. In terms of its architecture, the building is unremarkable and not of any particular interest (this is considered in more detail in terms of its inclusion on the draft local list in paragraphs 3.25 to 3.38 below). It has undergone change since built, most recently the insertion of large windows

beneath the arched openings to the two main street facades, when it was converted into a restaurant use.

Historic development of the area

- 3.5 Kentish Town Road is an old road alignment, following the route of an early road into London from the north. It was for centuries the heart of the village of Kentish Town³. Today it has a distinctive urban character and comprises infill development from throughout the 19th and 20th century up until recent times, typical of high streets across London.
- 3.6 Prince of Wales Road was laid out in the 19th century. It is a wide and busy through road, a cross route which connected the older arterial roads of Kentish Town Road and Chalk Farm Road and provided access to the residential streets being planned when it was built. The railway arrived in the 1860s with Kentish Town West Station (originally named Kentish Town Station); and the eastern end of Prince of Wales Road had become an extension of the high street by the turn of the 20th century with the St Pancras Public Baths development.
- 3.7 There was originally a mid 19th century church to the south-west of the Site, facing Kelly Street⁴. To the rear of the church there was a tree lined route, which passed immediately south of the Site, running up to Kentish Town Road where there was a low wall, stone pier and gates and railings. This route, known as Church Avenue, retains part of the boundary feature to Kentish Town Road, immediately south of the Site.
- 3.8 The Polytechnic building, of which the building on Site formed part, was a major inter war intervention in the area. It replaced 19th century terraced houses, similar to those found opposite on Kentish Town Road today.

² The Polytechnic's successor, the University of North London, moved from the site in 1996. After this, the building on the Site was converted to a pizza restaurant.

³ London Encyclopaedia; 2010: B Weinreb, C Hibbert, J Keay & J Keay, page 454

⁴ This was demolished in 1955 due to bomb damage; replaced by a prefabricated structure in 1979; and, a new church building was provided as part of a residential scheme in 1991.

Immediate setting

- 3.9 The immediate setting of the Site comprises the two busy roads it faces, Kentish Town Road to the east and Prince of Wales Road to the north; the main body of the former polytechnic building to the west; and the gated route of Church Avenue, with the character of a service route today, to the south.

East

- 3.10 The principal route in the area is the A400, Kentish Town Road, to which the former polytechnic building presents its narrower eastern elevation. This is the local high street for Kentish Town, with shops and other commercial premises fronting the street on both sides. The centre of gravity of the shopping area lies north of the Site running up towards Kentish Town Station.
- 3.11 There is an altered 19th century terrace opposite the Site. The main body of the terrace is set back from the street behind later single storey shop unit extensions, with mostly poor quality modern shopfronts and fascias today.

North

- 3.12 Prince of Wales Road defines the northern boundary of the Site, and directly opposite, on the north side of the street, is the rear elevation of 189 Kentish Town Road (with its main frontage to Kentish Town Road). This is a late 19th century 4 storey building, with a corner turret with copper clad domed roof and commercial ground floor. This building retains some faience details but is prominent in the townscape today by virtue of its modern white painted render finish. Whilst altered it has a distinctive presence at the junction with the qualities of a local landmark.
- 3.13 Adjoining to the west of 189 Kentish Town Road is the former Gaumont Cinema, now converted to a community office use. It has a bold and memorable façade, also painted white, and is prominent in the local townscape.

West

- 3.14 The elevation of 1 Prince of Wales Road continues for some 70m along Prince of Wales Road and has a prominence in the townscape that one would expect to find along the main high street of Kentish Town Road. It is this part of the building that the Council have chosen to illustrate with a photograph in the draft local list.
- 3.15 The architecture of this larger part of the former Polytechnic building is symmetrical about its central entrance, emphasised with a gable feature above the eaves cornice. It is not inflected in any way in response to the presence of the assembly hall. The regular pattern of generous windows provides an ordered appearance to the elevation, and together with the deep eaves cornice and mansard roof commands more of a presence in local views. The high sill level of the ground floor windows (indicating its former institutional use) and single central entrance fail to generate an active street edge.

South

- 3.16 Church Avenue lies to the south along Kentish Town Road. This is shown as a tree lined route in the 19th century Ordnance Survey maps leading to the now demolished 19th century Congregation Church on Kelly Street. Whilst this route has the character of a service route today, the stone pier, low wall and gates and railings associated with the church remain along Kentish Town Road. The gap affords views of the south (rear) elevation of 187 Kentish Town Road from Kentish Town Road, as well as the rear elevation of 1 Prince of Wales Road, which continues the building line running west from the Site.
- 3.17 South of Church Avenue is a single storey former post office building (now a coffee shop) which appears to have been built at the same time as the 4 storey telephone exchange immediately to the rear, in the first half of the 20th century. The former, whilst of a pleasant appearance, is an oddity in relation to the prevailing height of development along this route.

The wider area

Kentish Town Road

- 3.18 The principal route and local high street in the wider area is Kentish Town Road. This continues to the north and south of the Site with a fairly continuous built edge along both sides of the street. There is a mix of 19th and 20th century buildings of a varied appearance and age. Buildings are typically 3 or 4 storeys high, most built to back of pavement, but some with single storey ground floor shops in front of a set back main building (as seen opposite the Site).
- 3.19 Kentish Town Road is a typical inner London high street with no remarkable qualities and little of particular visual interest. It has a mix of styles and quality of retail frontages. This stretch of the street has not been designated a conservation area, despite the four conservation areas nearby just beyond the development fronting the main roads.

Prince of Wales Road

- 3.20 West of 1 Prince of Wales Road there is a small chapel built in 1871, known as Hope Chapel, in stock brick; and then the flank of a modern terrace (designed by Allies and Morrison architects) which faces Kelly Street. Opposite, on the north side of the road is Una House, a large red brick block of early 20th century flats, four storeys high. West of here, and the most notable building in the area around the site is the ornate St Pancras Public Baths building, built in 1898-1900 and listed grade II. It is still in use as a public leisure facility.
- 3.21 Further west, on both sides of the street, there is a mix of 19th century terraced houses and villa developments of a smaller domestic-type grain that have more in common with the residential side streets; some of these have ground floor commercial uses. These lead up to Kentish Town West London Overground Station.

Hinterland

- 3.22 The hinterland of both of these main roads comprises residential side streets, mostly lined by Victorian terraced houses. There are a number of conservation areas (see below) with very limited intervisibility with the Site, and then only from peripheral locations, as part to the wider varied townscape along Kentish Town Road. The stucco terraced houses in Kelly Street, the nearest conservation area to the Site, are listed grade II. They are painted different pastel colours and provide a picturesque townscape.

Heritage assets

Designated heritage assets

Conservation areas

- 3.23 The Site is not in a conservation area and there are no listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site. There are four conservation areas not far from the site: Kelly Street Conservation Area to the south-west, Inkerman Conservation Area to the north-west, Bartholomew Estate Conservation Area to the east and Rochester Conservation Area to the south-east. Each is centred on an area of Victorian residential side streets comprising terraced houses. Each has an adopted Conservation Area Character Statement and a Management Appraisal. There are no views towards the Site identified in these documents.

Listed buildings

- 3.24 There are no statutory listed buildings on the Site but there are a number of listed buildings in the area around to the Site. These have been identified through the National Heritage List for England website, and the potential for their settings to be affected by the Proposed Development has been considered on the basis of a site visit. They include:

- St Pancras Public Baths and attached railings and walls Prince of Wales Road, listed grade II. These public baths, swimming baths & launderette, formerly with wash house and public hall were built in 1898-1900 to the designs of TW Aldwinckle. They are constructed of red brick with terracotta bands and dressings and have steeply pitched slate roofs in a free Tudor/Francois Premier style.
- Church of St Barnabas Kentish Town Road, listed grade II. This church was built in 1884-5 in stock brick with stone dressings and thin red brick bands, to the designs of by Ewan Christian in a 13th century Gothic style.
- Blustons Kentish Town Road is listed grade II. It was built in 1931 as a shop for Samuel and Jane Bluston. The 1931 shop front comprises a black Vitrolite fascia.
- Bollard at junction with Anglers Lane, listed grade II. Cast-iron Gothic style bollard from the mid to late 19th century.
- The K2 Telephone Kiosk outside Hope Chapel Prince Of Wales Road is listed grade II. It dates from 1927 and was designed by Giles Gilbert Scott.
- Nos.8-24 (even) Kelly Street and attached railings are listed grade II. This is a terrace of 9 stucco fronted mid 19th century houses.
- Nos.26-34 (even) Kelly Street and attached railings are listed grade II. This is a terrace of 5 stucco fronted mid 19th century houses with rusticated ground floors.
- Nos. 1-49 (odd) Kelly Street and attached railings are listed grade II. This is a terrace of 25 stucco fronted mid 19th century houses with rusticated ground floors.
- No.51 Kelly Street (including No.98 Castlehaven Road) is listed grade II. This is a pair of semi-detached houses finished in stucco with rusticated ground floors.

- Richard of Chichester Catholic Secondary School & gates & railings, Prince of Wales Road is listed grade II. It was built in 1849 and designed by Thomas Henry Wyatt and David Brandon (as an 'Aged Governesses Asylum').

Non designated heritage assets

- 3.25 The Council are in the process of compiling their first list of **locally listed buildings** and are currently consulting on a draft list. They are proposing the inclusion of the building on Site and the adjoining block to the west (1 Prince of Wales Road) on the local list for their architectural, historical and townscape significance. The draft local list description states:

“Purpose built accommodation for the former North Western Polytechnic in the 1920s, and opened by the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII). Despite their different architectural styles the two parts of the building have unifying features including plum coloured brick with red brick dressings and a prominent and continuous red brick string course. In addition the distinctive windows with glazing bars in a star pattern and the high level arched windows in No 187 also feature in the prominent main entrance to No 1. They remained in educational use until 1996 – latterly as home to the University of North London. No. 187 was a Assembly Hall and No.1 housed the classrooms and workshops etc. Important townscape contribution through the well mannered corner landmark created by no. 187 and as well as collectively contributing to the surrounding area as part of a group of buildings of important townscape value, including the listed Kentish Town Baths and the former cinema opposite. Socially important for their role in the development of 20th century tertiary education in London.”

- 3.26 187 Kentish Town Road is considered against each of the three significance criteria the Council identify for its inclusion on the local list below.

Architecture

- 3.27 187 Kentish Town Road is typical of the interwar period. A report on 187 Kentish Town Road (and 1 Prince of Wales Road) prepared by architect and historic environment specialist Dr. Mervyn Miller states the architecture demonstrates 'solid competence, rather than any particular architectural interest'⁵. It is his assessment that the building is an example of plain, unremarkable interwar institutional architecture.
- 3.28 Interestingly, the building is not mentioned in the relevant Pevsner guide (London 4: North, Cherry and Pevsner, Yale UP, 2002). Pevsner guides generally mention anything of significance in terms of architecture or townscape, and given the prominent location of the existing building, its omission suggests that the authors of that guide thought the building not worth noting.
- 3.29 The architectural style is institutional neo-Georgian and is conventional and typical of the period for institutional buildings of this kind, and has undergone alterations since built. The principal street elevations, to Kentish Town Road and Prince of Wales Road, are of roughly equal length, connected by the corner element splayed at 45 degrees at the junction. The front door is in the centre of this splayed corner (the former hall had a plan arranged on the diagonal, with its centreline aligned on the front door, and a first floor gallery at the rear). The southern elevation, of a similar length to the other two, faces onto Church Avenue and is treated as a rear elevation. To the west the building shares a party wall with 1 Prince of Wales Road.
- 3.30 All three main external elevations are in purple brick with red brick, red tile and stone dressings, the bricks matching those of the remainder of the former Polytechnic building. The two street elevations and the splayed corner have a large rounded headed window; that to the corner incorporating the main entrance in the lower element. Those to Prince of Wales Road and Kentish Town Road have been lowered post-1992 to provide large windows below the bold and distinctive string course detail (these alterations have not affected the Council's view that the building is worthy of inclusion on the local list). There

are other smaller two-light windows to all three main elevations (none to the splayed corner); as well as secondary doors to the far west of the Prince of Wales Road elevation and the southern elevation.

- 3.31 The brick parapet is raised at the chamfered corner and above the arched windows to the two street elevations (but to a lesser degree), and finished with a shallow stone pediment detail. Metal railings of a utilitarian design complete the parapet treatment between the areas of raised brickwork.
- 3.32 Of the two elements of this building, it is the larger former teaching and workshop block, 1 Prince of Wales Road, that is of more architectural interest. Whilst not of the same architectural style, both share common architectural features including large feature arched window openings and the continuous brick string course. They do not, however share the same level of considered composition or design quality.
- 3.33 1 Prince of Wales Road, which comprises the main part of the building, is executed to a more accomplished degree of architectural design than 187 Kentish Town Road, to which it makes few references in terms of its detailed design. The classically inspired design of 1 Prince of Wales Road has a more ordered and considered main façade, symmetrical about its central entrance, and a considerably greater street presence. It is this part of the building that is included in the photograph in Camden's draft local list.

Historic

- 3.34 The building on Site was built as part of a much bigger tertiary educational building, with 1 Prince of Wales Road to the west. Neither is in educational use today, nor have they been since 1996. The building on Site was most recently in use as a Pizza restaurant. 1 Prince of Wales Road has been successfully converted into residential use (and is still considered by the Council suitable for inclusion on the local list).
- 3.35 The former use of the building on Site is not apparent to those who view the building in the townscape today. It could easily have been built as a bank,

⁵ Para 25

cinema, post office or any number of other uses. Similarly, the former use of 1 Prince of Wales Road is no longer clear today.

Townscape

- 3.36 In townscape terms the building on Site fails to rise to the occasion, reading as a secondary element to 1 Prince of Wales Road, the larger block to the west. It does not mark the corner in the confident manner apparent on the opposite corner at 189 Kentish Town Road (despite the latter's very average design), which marks the northern corner of the junction with a domed roof.
- 3.37 Council officers have stated previously that 'in terms of urban design, the existing eastern part of the building is considered a weak corner treatment which does not relate well to the more impressive western classical portion of the building along Prince of Wales Road'⁶.

Summary of significance

- 3.38 Today 187 Kentish Town Road, which is no longer in its original use and has been altered, derives its significance as a locally listed building from:
- its development and use as part of a building for the North Western Polytechnic built in 1926-29.
 - the use of architectural detailing typical of the inter-war period including the bold string course and arched window openings, set in robust brick facades.

It is our assessment that 187 Kentish Town Road does not play a very significant role in the local townscape at this prominent corner site. 1 Prince of Wales Road, however, contributes to the group of buildings of important townscape value identified by the Council in the draft local list description,

including the former St Pancras Public Baths (grade II listed) and the former Cinema opposite.

Townscape conclusion

- 3.39 The area surrounding the Site is of a varied character and typical of north London. It has undergone much change since originally laid out. As is characteristic, this change has been primarily focused on sites along the main routes, not least the development of the existing building on Site. Beyond the main routes, there are streets of terraced house and villas which were laid out in the 19th century and here there has been much less change.
- 3.40 The Site is in a prominent corner location where a wide secondary road, Prince of Wales Road, meets a busy high street, Kentish Town Road, at a T-junction. Kentish Town Road has a typical high street character, with a mix of age and quality of built form. The existing building on Site is not of any great architectural or townscape quality or interest. The east end of Prince of Wales Road, close to the Site, is lined by a number of institutional and former institutional buildings, intermingled with blocks of flats; and the Site itself is intermediate between these two characteristic uses.
- 3.41 Considered in respect of townscape and the objectives of urban design, 187 Kentish Town Road is rather disappointing. It appears under scaled when compared with some of its neighbours, and contributes little activity to the street frontages. It has unusually blank elevations, particularly at ground floor, for a high street building on a corner. The siting of such a blank-box use at a prominent corner location is at odds with current best practise in urban design.
- 3.42 Whilst 187 Kentish Town Road occupies a prominent location it does not make much of this and does not perform a clear townscape role. There is an opportunity to provide a more distinctive and effective marker at this busy junction and to introduce a use that will provide more animated street elevations.

⁶ Para 6.2 of the Council officers' report to committee in 2007 for a previous proposal for the redevelopment of the Site

4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT

4.1 The Proposed Development has evolved through extensive pre-application discussions with the Council as well as in consultation with the local community. It comprises the conversion and extension of the retained building on Site to provide 9 residential apartments and a commercial unit.

Design approach

4.2 The main shell of the existing building on Site is retained, with alterations to the facades, and the building is extended upwards to provide an additional two floors of accommodation. The main entrance to the residential apartments is via an internal courtyard accessed from the western end of the Prince of Wales Road elevation. The commercial unit will be accessed from the existing main entrance in the splayed corner.

4.3 Alterations to the façade (already substantially altered in the 1990s) are confined to the minimum necessary to provide fenestration to allow for the reuse of the existing building shell. New openings are created in the three main external facades. These have been proportioned and positioned to provide a balanced appearance to each façade. All three existing large central arched window openings are raised in height, maintaining an arched form and replicating the surround detail. The new windows are set further back within the brick façade than the existing windows. The existing large square window openings to the two main street facades date from the 1990s and the arched windows are likely to have been changed when these new openings were made.

4.4 Whilst the team believe the 2 storey extension to be an appropriately scaled addition to 187 Kentish Town Road, and to deliver townscape benefits at this prominent junction, this option for a single storey extension at roof level has been prepared in response to officers' pre-application comments.

4.5 The roof extension, the principal new element, consists of a single floor of additional accommodation. This follows the shape of the plan form of the

building below, and is set in from all sides. It is of a distinct and roof like design, with framed openings set in a simple metal panel clad form. There is a single double width opening above the splayed corner, two to Prince of Wales Road and three each to Kentish Town Road and Church Avenue.

4.6 The detailed design of the elevations of the upward extension evolved following pre-application comments. The changes included the refinement of the window surround details to the roof extension, notably the simplification of that to the splayed corner at the junction and those to the southern elevation; and the further setting-in of the southern elevation of the roof extension.

4.7 There will be a landscaped roof terrace between the proposed extension and the existing mansard roof of 1 Prince of Wales Road. The lower brick parapet sections, with metal balustrades and later railings, are infilled with a stone balustrade and the pediments (above the arched windows) are raised slightly.

4.8 High quality materials and finishes are proposed. Alterations to the external facades of the retained building will be undertaken in materials and finishes (including detail and bonding of brick and tile work) to match existing. The new windows will be aluminium framed and will complement those at 1 Prince of Wales Road to the west.

4.9 The upward extension will be clad in a zinc or lead effect metal panel system to provide a distinctly roof-like appearance.

4.10 The spandrel panels and Juliet balconies to the new fenestration and the deep reveals to the dormer surrounds to the roof extension comprise metal panels finished with a simple contemporary pattern based on the 'X' glazing bar design seen in the existing two light windows.

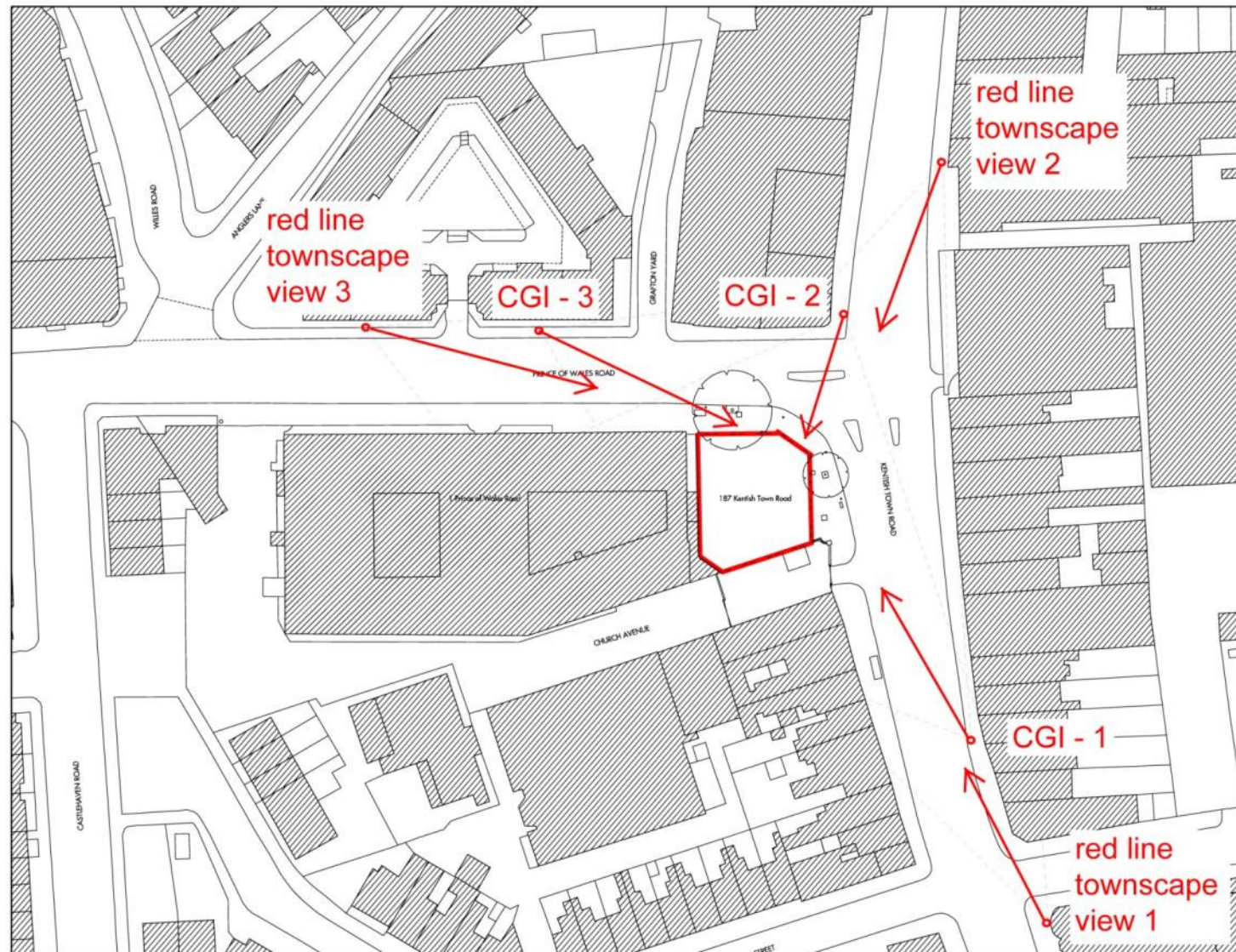
Assessment

4.11 The Proposed Development will enhance the appearance of 187 Kentish Town Road. The well considered alterations to the principal facades will

retain the prominence of the chamfered corner bay. The new and enlarged openings, necessary to allow for the better and more effective use of the building, improve the appearance of the elevations, resulting in a building more appropriate to this prominent location. The windows are positioned, proportioned and detailed to complement the characteristic original features of the elevations. Each street facade and the splayed corner will have a prominent central window with an arched top, and the new openings have been arranged in a skilled and ordered manner in the spirit of the original wider Polytechnic development.

- 4.12 The enhanced façade and outlook to Church Avenue will bring some vibrancy and sense of activity to this exposed flank elevation. It will enhance views northwards along Kentish Town Road and along Church Avenue, which has the appearance of a service route today.
- 4.13 The Proposed Development will enhance the urban hierarchy of this corner site. The rooftop element is an addition with a clear and appropriate character of its own, avowedly roof-like in its appearance, and both related in its arrangement and proportions to the principal lower part of the elevations. It will provide a fitting feature at this junction, without detracting from the building below, or its relationship with 1 Prince of Wales Road. It is lower than the mansard roof to 1 Prince of Wales Road. The well considered articulation of the framed dormer like openings will provide a grain and texture to the form that breaks down its apparent mass without appearing over fussy.
- 4.14 The Proposed Development will enhance the relationship of 187 Kentish Town Road with the larger block, 1 Prince of Wales Road, to the west. The enhanced fenestration pattern will complement that of the former teaching and workshop block and the roof extension will complement the mansard roof, providing a more balanced architectural composition overall. 1 Prince of Wales Road will, however, remain visually distinct.
- 4.15 High quality materials are proposed, that complement the building on Site and the adjoining block and its large mansard roof. The modern 'x' pattern, derived from the existing glazing bar pattern, will provide consistent architectural detail between the altered facade and the new roof extension element.

5 TOWNSCAPE VIEWS



Views

- 1 Kentish Town Road
- 2 Kentish Town Road / Prince of Wales Road
- 3 Prince of Wales Road
- RL1 Kentish Town Road - south
- RL2 Kentish Town Road - north
- RL3 Prince of Wales Road

Figure 2: Plan of viewpoint locations



View 1

Kentish Town Road

Existing view

- 5.1 This viewpoint is on the east footway of Kentish Town Road, south of the Site, looking north-west towards it. There are no designated heritage assets in this view.
- 5.2 The copper dome of 189 Kentish Town Road marks the north-west corner of the junction with Prince of Wales Road and draws the eye in this view. To the far left of the image is an altered end of terrace 19th century house. It is three storeys, painted white and has a modern ground floor retail frontage. 187 Kentish Town Road occupies the centre of the image but contributes little positive to the view, appearing lower than the principal built frontage along the Kentish Town Road. The blank southern flank elevation is particularly noticeable in this view. The roof top elements of 1 Prince of Wales Road are visible beyond the utilitarian railings around the parapet of 187 Kentish Town Road.
- 5.3 Immediately to the left of the Site are the gates to Church Avenue; and to the left of here is 177 Kentish Town Road, a former post office. The latter is the exception to the 3 and 4 storey height of the vast majority of development along Kentish Town Road.



View as proposed

- 5.4 The Proposed Development will sit well in this prominent location at a T junction along a busy A road. The roof extension will provide a fitting top, enhancing the proportions of 187 Kentish Town Road as well as its role as a marker of the junction. It will form a complementary feature to the copper dome of 189 Kentish Town road.
- 5.5 The detailed design of the new build element has a clearly roof like appearance, enhanced by the lead coloured cladding panels and the set back from the parapet of the retained building below. The three dormer elements continue the rhythm of the bays to the façade below, with the return elevation of a simpler design befitting the character of Church Avenue.
- 5.6 The well considered alterations to the façade of 187 will provide a more balanced and pleasing architectural composition, as well as enhance the contribution of this building to the local area. The active ground floor frontage is clearly evident in this view. The benefits of the proposed alterations to the facade are particularly noticeable in the flank elevation facing Church Avenue, with the window openings to the 1st and 2nd floors animating the elevation.
- 5.7 The Proposed Development will enhance this view.

View 2

Kentish Town Road / Prince of Wales Road

Existing view



- 5.8 This viewpoint is on the footway at the north-west corner of the junction footway of Kentish Town Road and Prince of Wales Road, looking south / south-west towards the Site. The spire of Church of St Barnabas is visible towards the left side of the image. This is listed grade II and lies within the Rochester Conservation Area (no other buildings in this conservation area are visible in this view).
- 5.9 The foreground is dominated by the highway including the clutter of traffic lights, signage, road markings and barriers at this busy junction. The boarded up vacant 187 Kentish Town Road is overwhelmed by the highway setting and lacks the elevational order and street presence, seen in the adjoining 1 Prince of Wales Road. There are two street trees, one to each street frontage of the Site.
- 5.10 Beyond in the middle ground there is a mix of altered 19th century terraces and paired villas, as well as apartment blocks and later development, visible along each side of the busy Kentish Town Road. This view is of limited townscape interest as indicated by the lack of a conservation area designation.



View as proposed

- 5.11 The Proposed Development will sit well at this busy T junction. The roof extension will provide a fitting top, enhancing the proportions of 187 Kentish Town Road as well as its role as a marker of the junction. The detailed design of the new build element has a clearly roof like appearance, enhanced by the lead coloured cladding panels and the set back from the parapet of the existing building. The strong rhythm of the dormer elements lends order to the building as a whole and provides an interesting silhouette. The double width opening of the splayed corner of the roof extension ensures that the splayed corner of the original building below will remain the focus of the view and the most prominent feature of the building; whilst ensuring the roof extension will significantly enhance the presence of this building at the junction.
- 5.12 The well considered alterations to the façade of 187 will provide a more balanced and pleasing architectural composition as well as enhance the contribution of this building to the local area. The active ground floor edges to both street frontages are clearly evident in this view. The Proposed Development will enhance this view.



View 3

Prince of Wales Road

Existing view

- 5.13 This viewpoint is on the north footway of Prince of Wales Road, west of the Site looking south-east towards it. There are no designated heritage assets in this view.
- 5.14 The foreground of this view is dominated by 1 Prince of Wales Road, now in residential use (the west wing of the former Polytechnic building). This element is substantially larger than 187 Kentish Town Road and has a clear sense of elevational order derived from the fenestration pattern, as well as a significantly greater street presence with the stone eaves cornice detail and generous mansard roof form. The street tree close to the junction is a notable feature.
- 5.15 To the far left of the image is the former Gaumont Cinema. Beyond the junction and terminating the view is an early 20th century commercial development and a much altered 19th century terrace with a mismatch of mostly modern retail frontages to the street. The latter provides a poor termination to the view along this road.



View as proposed

- 5.16 The Proposed Development will sit well at this T junction, and relate in a positive manner to 1 Prince of Wales Road. The roof extension will provide a fitting top, enhancing the proportions of 187 Kentish Town Road as well as its role as a marker of the junction. It will draw the eye in this view, providing a townscape element that is more suitable to this corner location than the present rather disappointing termination to the frontage.
- 5.17 The detailed design of the new build element has a clearly roof like appearance, enhanced by the lead coloured cladding panels and the set back from the parapet of the retained building below. The articulation of the roof form with the two projecting dormer features will frame the prominent central arched window and pediment detail to the main façade below.
- 5.18 The well considered alterations to the façade of 187 will provide a more balanced and pleasing architectural composition as well as enhance the contribution of this building to the local area. The active ground floor edge is clearly evident in this view. The Proposed Development will enhance this view.



Red line view 1

Kentish Town Road - south

Existing view

- 5.19 This viewpoint is close to viewpoint 1, but located some 30 m further to the south away from the Site, the south side of the junction with Bartholomew Road.
- 5.20 This view demonstrates that 187 is lower than the prevailing height of buildings along Kentish Town Road, despite its corner location. The Abbey Tavern in the foreground to the right provides a more effective marker at the junction with Bartholomew Road (a route of a lower order than Prince of Wales Road).



View as proposed

- 5.21 The Proposed Development will be seen as an appropriate addition in scale with its surroundings that will enhance the view, making 187 a more effective marker at this busy junction.



Red line view 2

Kentish Town Road - north

Existing view

- 5.22 This viewpoint is on the east footway of Kentish Town Road, some 30 m north-east of view 2. The dominance of the highway and associated clutter at this busy junction is clearly evident.



View as proposed

- 5.23 The Proposed Development will be seen as an appropriate addition in scale with its surroundings that will enhance the view making 187 a more effective marker at this busy junction and creating an enhanced sense of place.



Red line view 3

Prince of Wales Road

Existing view

- 5.24 This viewpoint is close to viewpoint 3, but located some 30 m further west away from the Site. The prominence of 1 Prince of Wales Road along this stretch of the Road, as a result of its considered architectural composition and grand central entrance, is clearly evident, as is the rather disappointing townscape contribution of 187 to the street corner.



View as proposed

- 5.25 The Proposed Development will be seen as an appropriate addition in scale with its surroundings that will enhance the view making 187 a more effective marker at this busy junction. It will not detract from the prominence of 1 Prince of Wales Road.

6 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Proposed Development is described and assessed in section 4 of this report and the existing and proposed views are assessed in Section 5. This section assesses the impact of the Proposed Development on:

- the local townscape, based on its architectural and urban design qualities;
- the heritage significance of 187 Kentish Town Road;
- its impact on views; and,
- the setting of heritage assets in the surrounding area.

6.2 The DAS sets out in detail how the design has been based on a clear appreciation and understanding of the Site and its context, and has evolved through on going discussions with the Council.

Architecture, urban design and townscape

6.3 The Proposed Development retains 187 Kentish Town Road on Site and alters and extends it. It responds to the urban hierarchy of this corner site. The new and enlarged openings are necessary to allow for the better and more effective use of the building. They are positioned, proportioned and detailed to complement the characteristic period features seen in the elevations today; and have been arranged in a skilled and ordered manner in the spirit of the original wider Polytechnic development.

6.4 The extension will be of a distinct design that will complement the interwar elevations below (as assessed section 4). It is set in from all sides, and will have a subservient roof-like character and appearance. The detailed design elements with the 'x' pattern will match with those proposed for the main building below and will lend coherence to the overall appearance of the Proposed Development. The additional height will enhance the building's role in the local townscape - it will become a new marker at the junction of these two busy roads.

6.5 The Proposed Development will be of a high quality of design, materials and finish. The works to the existing brick elevation will be undertaken to match existing.

6.6 The new use of the upper levels will reflect the residential character of much of the wider area including 1 Prince of Wales Road, as well as Una House opposite to the north, and the 19th century suburbs which extend in all directions behind the main street frontage buildings along both routes. The active use of the ground floor of the building at this prominent corner will be a positive addition to the high street.

187 Kentish Town Road

6.7 The building on Site is no longer used for the purpose for which it was designed. Its significance as a non designated heritage asset is not such to prevent extension or alterations to the elevations, especially those that would bring the building back into active use and strengthen its role in the local townscape. This is a robust building that can accommodate well considered change.

6.8 The alterations proposed are well considered and the level of intervention is proportionate to the significance of this non designated heritage asset. It will not harm those elements of its elevations that contribute to its significance, but rather enhance the building's presence at this junction and secure its long term use and upkeep. The alterations and extension maintain the overriding architectural character of the building whilst enhancing significantly its townscape role. Existing architectural detail and decoration is maintained where possible and has clearly influenced the detailed design of the scheme, and particularly the new fenestration proposed.

6.9 The Proposed Development will enhance the relationship of 187 Kentish Town Road with the larger block, 1 Prince of Wales Road, to the west. The enhanced fenestration pattern will complement that of the former teaching and workshop block, and the roof extension will complement the neighbouring mansard roof, providing a more balanced and visually pleasing architectural

composition overall. 1 Prince of Wales Road will, however, remain visually distinct.

- 6.10 A balanced assessment of the Proposed Development reveals that in line with para 135 of the NPPF the scale of alterations proposed is proportionate to, and based on a full appreciation of, the significance of this non designated heritage asset. There will be no harm to or loss of the significance of the heritage asset.

Views

- 6.11 Six views have been assessed in section 5 of this report. These demonstrate that the impact of the Proposed Development is limited to the area close to the Site.
- 6.12 The alterations and extension will enhance the presence of 187 Kentish Town Road at the T junction, which will act as a more effective local marker in this location, complementary to the copper domed tower on the opposite corner to the north. The robust brick elevations of the existing building, with the distinctive splayed corner and period architectural detail, will remain the dominant features on Site in these views. An arched window remains the principal feature of each street elevation. The extension will appear as a secondary, roof like structure, of a high quality of design.
- 6.13 The tall proportions of the framed openings of the single storey roof extension are of an elegant appearance and will relate in an appropriate manner to the retained building below, increasing its presence at the junction.
- 6.14 The Proposed Development will enhance all the views in which it will be visible.

Setting of heritage assets

- 6.15 There is limited intervisibility between the Site and the **conservation areas** in the surrounding area, as identified in section 3. Where visible, in limited views from the edges of these conservation areas, the Proposed Development will be seen as a sympathetic addition of a high quality of design to a building forming part of a high street of varied character and of unremarkable townscape quality. There will be no impact on elements of setting that contribute to the significance of any conservation area.
- 6.16 The Proposed Development, by virtue of its scale, position and high quality of design and use of materials will not impact on those elements of setting that contribute to the significance of any **listed building**. It will be visible from outside the grade II listed former St Pancras Public Baths (within the Inkerman Conservation Area) but will be viewed as an appropriate addition, within a varied urban street frontage, which enhances the presence of the building on Site in the local townscape.

Conclusions

- 6.17 The Proposed Development will enhance the townscape role of 187 Kentish Town Road as a marker at this busy junction with Prince of Wales Road. The new use will introduce more animated elevations that will provide a better backdrop to the surrounding streets.
- 6.18 This development is based on a full understanding of the significance of 187 Kentish Town Road, and the townscape and urban design character of its context. It will make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, and there will be no harm or loss of the significance of this non-designated heritage asset.

- 6.19 In its architectural treatment, the well considered new build element and sensitive alterations to the existing building deploy a crisp modern architectural language that has evolved through respect to the host building and its original architectural detail.
- 6.20 The Proposed Development is in line with NPPF design and heritage policies and guidance; London Plan policies 7.1, 7.6 and 7.8; and local policies CS14, DP24, DP25 and guidance.

**PETER
STEWART
CONSULTANCY**

70 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6EJ
December 2013