

# 2. Site context

## 2.1 The site

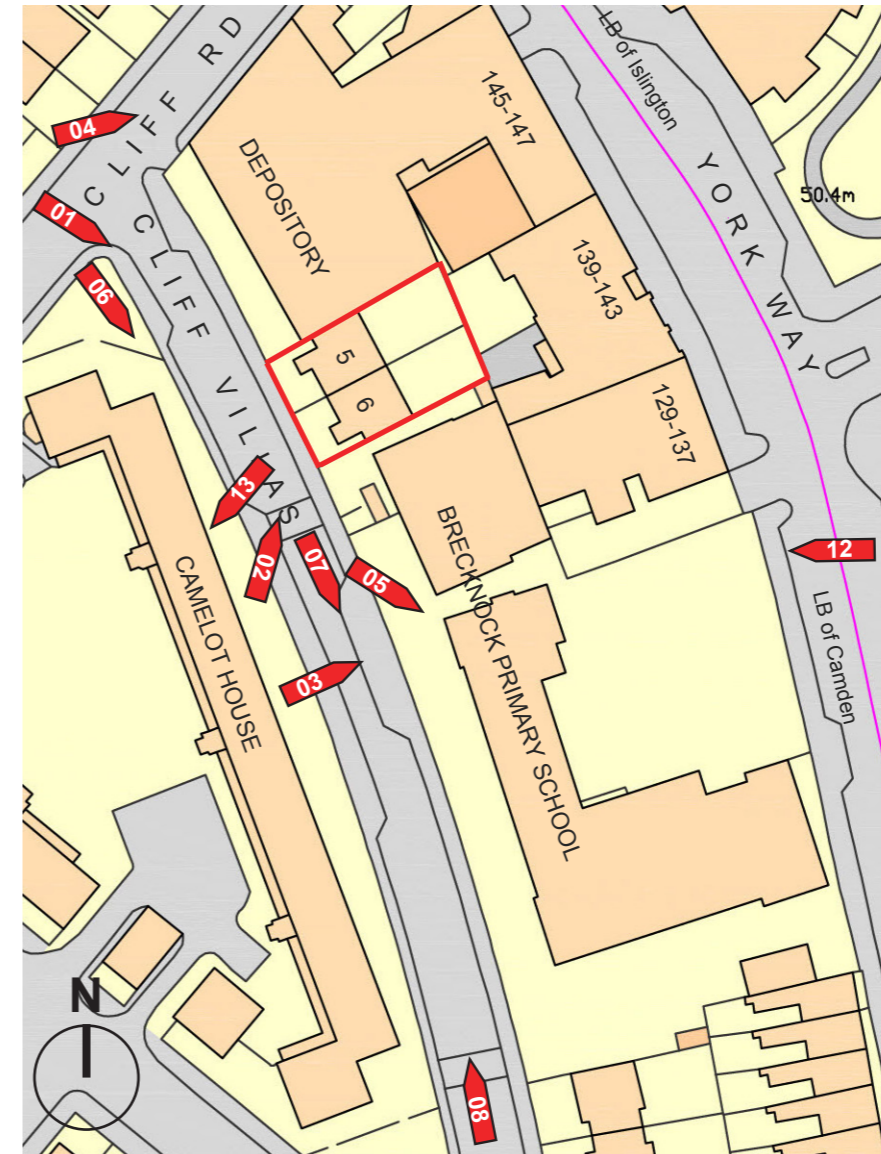
Cliff Villas is a quiet predominantly residential street in a densely populated part of the borough. It is in an urban area of central London.

5-6 Cliff Villas is a site of 404sqm (0.04 Ha). The site is partially occupied by two villas (see image 02) dating from approximately the mid-nineteenth century with rear gardens 11-12m deep (14) and containing one mature lime tree, which is the subject of a TPO ref C 786. The street frontage measures 15m and faces W-SW.

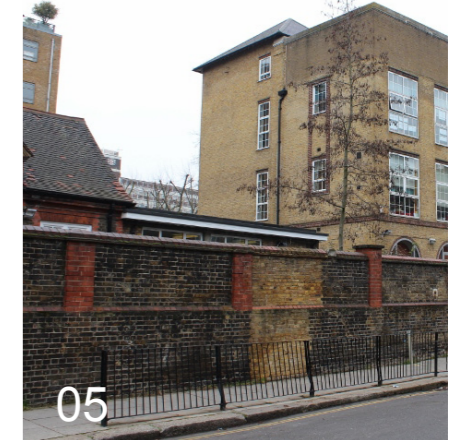
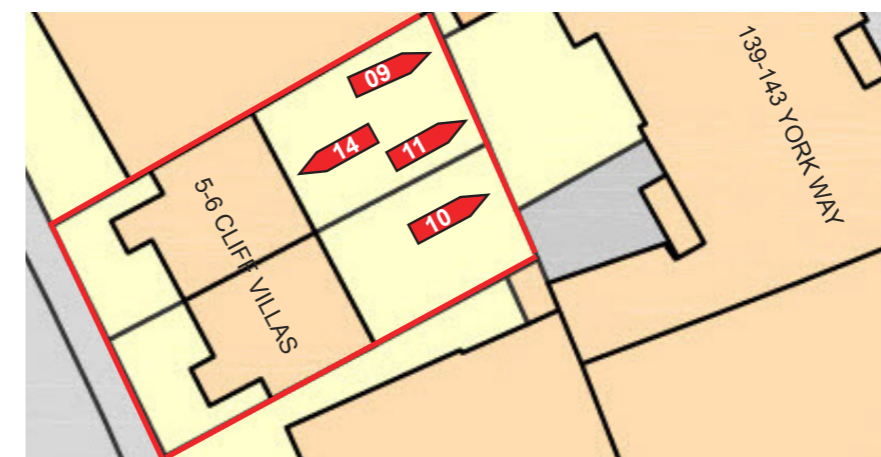
Each house has a full width semi-basement level, upper ground and two full storeys above and has been divided into four flats with small rooms and low levels of daylight following its previous history which included some bedsit-type accommodation with shared bathrooms and kitchens. In each building there is some redundant space to the side of the stairwell which is unusable and has been sealed off. The buildings are in a poor state of repair, and the cost to upgrade to present-day standards would be significant and not commercially sustainable.

The properties have two recent consents (to extend the rear, ref 2007/6199/P (not implemented) and an internal conversion of two bedsit-type flats to a single one bed flat, ref 2009/1378/P). An application to remove the lime tree was refused, ref 2008/3738/T.

In June 2008 pre-application advice was sought by the applicant from London Borough of Camden planning on a proposal for the demolition of the existing building and replacement with a six-storey building to provide nine new flats. A report, dated 8 September 2008, was produced following a meeting with the planning officer and this advice has been used to inform the design of the current application. The officer's report and the proposal drawings are submitted with this application.



Above: plan showing photographic views Below: enlarged site plan





## 2.2 Neighbouring properties and character

The site has three adjoining properties. On the north side is the ABC Selfstore warehouse building (known as the Depository) which is a massive six-storey brick structure dating from the 1930s (assumed). It is detailed in a stripped-down classical warehouse idiom and somewhat dwarfs the site (01,04). This corner building has frontages onto Cliff Villas, Cliff Road and York Way. The flank wall facing the site is entirely blank (02).

To the east and south-east, fronting York Way, are two predominantly residential blocks of six storeys (09,10) with commercial ground floors. These blocks have main rear walls with habitable windows 9m from the rear boundary of the site.

To the south lies Brecknock Primary School, and immediately adjacent to the boundary are the Edwardian school ancillary buildings and waste storage areas, all single storey, though some parts have tall windows and typical pitched roofs (03). The gable end wall of the building facing the boundary appears to be the school kitchen with large ductwork obscuring the windows on the inside. Adjoining is the late-Victorian four (high) storey school building with playground on the roof (05,08).

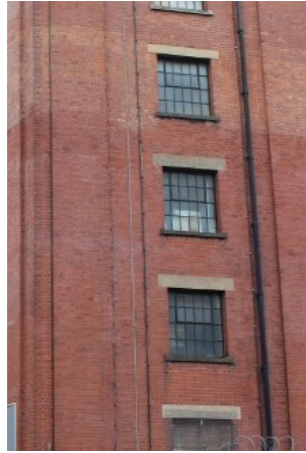
The full length of the opposite side of 5-6 Cliff Villas is occupied by Camelot House (13), a 1930s public housing scheme, owned by the London Borough of Camden. It is consistently four full storeys plus occupied roof level with dormer windows and massive chimneys. The distance across Cliff Villas between the opposing building lines is approximately 21.5m.

There are several characteristic materials and elements found locally in Cliff Villas which have been used to influence the design. These are shown overleaf as “materials in context”.





## 2.3 Materials in context



Large glazed openings: at the Depository and school building



High boundary walls: outside the school and Depository



London stocks and terracotta details: in Cliff Villas



## 2.4 Demolition

5 and 6 Cliff Villas have been owned by the applicant for more than forty years. They were originally acquired having been sub-divided into small self-contained units with two remaining bedsits in No. 5.

The building fabric has deteriorated significantly over the years and is beset by chronic damp and associated pest control problems in the semi-basement despite repeated investment in these issues in the last 10 years.

The flats are in a poor state of repair, incur low rental values and high energy bills. They fall below Camden's minimum floor space standards and amenity requirements as the original buildings do not lend themselves easily to flat conversions. This is for a number of reasons:

- deep external walls and large chimney breasts give poor room proportions - small and narrow
- semi-basement areas have very poor daylight penetration and outlook
- small windows to the rear elevation reduce daylight levels
- rooms adjacent to the flank walls are on the opposite side of the circulation route and are therefore unable to be incorporated into the flat areas rendering them unusable
- there is no level access to the flats from street level or to the rear garden
- bathrooms are very constrained and some are not on level access within the flats
- kitchen facilities are minimal due to space restrictions and there is inadequate storage

The existing buildings are not fit for purpose and their structure and layout does not make them easy to alter. It is not feasible to re-use them as they cannot meet current residential standards without substantial funding and energy. This is

not a sustainable approach. The proposal is to re-develop the site to create high quality apartments that meet current policy and regulations and are accessible to all.

## 2.5 Construction waste disposal

During demolition and construction a Site Waste Management Plan will be implemented that is compliant with the Code for Sustainable Homes. It will include procedures for monitoring site waste and target setting to reduce waste generated on site.

The contractor will target 85% of construction waste, arising from the demolition of the existing properties, to be sent to a recycling facility for segregation and further processing wherever technically and commercially practicable. This will minimise the impact of inert waste on the environment by diverting waste from landfill sites.

Collection for the site will be from a central point and the waste will be segregated on-site as far as possible. Appropriate materials will be salvaged to enable their re-use off-site.

Any materials that can be re-used whole on-site following demolition, including those that can be incorporated into the new landscaping designs, will be identified and set aside.



Existing rear elevation showing poor outlook from basement



Poor condition of fabric; small window openings



Poor condition of rear steps; no level thresholds