

No. 7 St Pancras Way
Camden, London NW1 0PB

Heritage appraisal



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Consultancy for the
Historic Built Environment

KMHHeritage

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This heritage statement has been prepared by KM Heritage in connection with the proposed alterations to no. 7 St Pancras Way, London, NW1 0PB (the site). The proposals are briefly set out at section 4.0. The existing buildings on the site were originally built as stables and have in the recent past been used as a scrap metal yard. While the rear block is now vacant, the block fronting St Pancras Way is in business use with one live/work unit.

Purpose

- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to set out the history and significance of the site and to consider the proposals for the alterations of its existing buildings against this significance and the relevant policy context.

Note on Research, Analysis and Sources

- 1.3 It should be noted that in common with many historic buildings, it is not possible to provide a truly comprehensive analysis of the site's historic development. The research and analysis set out in this report is as thorough as possible given the type and number of archival resources and time available. Research has been carried out using a number of online sources and at the London Metropolitan Archives and at the Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre.
- 1.4 This desk-based and archival research has been combined with a visual assessment and appraisal of the site. Further sources and evidence that add to our knowledge and understanding of the buildings and their history may become available at a future date.

Structure

- 1.5 The report is divided into six main sections. The first (section 2) describes the building and its immediate context. This is followed by a section setting out their historic development and describing the significance and special interest of the site. A description of the proposals is set out at section 4 and the relevant historic environment policy considerations at section 5. The impact of the proposals on the significance and special interest of

the buildings is considered in section 6. Section 6 also provides as assessment of the development of the proposed scheme for the site in light of pre-application discussion with the London Borough of Camden.

Author

- 1.7 The lead consultant and editor of this report is Kevin Murphy B.Arch MUBC RIBA IHBC. He was an Inspector of Historic Buildings in the London Region of English Heritage and dealt with a range of major projects involving listed buildings and conservation areas in London. Prior to this, he had been a conservation officer with the London Borough of Southwark, and was Head of Conservation and Design at Hackney Council between 1997 and 1999. He trained and worked as an architect, and has a specialist qualification in urban and building conservation.
- 1.8 Research for and drafting of this report was undertaken by Kate Graham MA, PG DipCons(AA). Kate has been a deputy Historic Buildings and Areas Team Leader in the London Region of English Heritage, as well as working in English Heritage's policy team. Most recently, Kate was Conservation & Design Manager at the London Borough of Islington. She has also worked at the Architectural Heritage Fund. Kate has extensive experience in dealing with proposals that affect the historic environment and also has a background in research, in policy analysis and in understanding historic buildings and places. She has trained as a historian and has a specialist qualification in building conservation.

2 Site location and description

- 2.1 The following section provides a description of the site's location and of the existing buildings on the site.

Site location

- 2.2 No. 7 St Pancras Way is located near the southern end of that street, in the northwestern corner of the King's Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area (figure 1). The nearest listed structure is a grade II letter box approximately 100 metres to the north (outside the conservation area). No. 7 St. Pancras Way has no visual connection with the registered landscape and listed structures of St Pancras Churchyard to the southeast.
- 2.3 To the north of no. 7 St. Pancras Way is no. 9 St Pancras Way, a large three-storey, three bay building that the Conservation Area Statement for the King's Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area dates as being from the 1860s, and assumes was a dwelling 'probably intended for a Midlands Railway manager'. This building is now a hostel known as St Mungo's. To the south of the site is a recently completed four storey residential building, that has a further two storeys set back from the street at the upper level. To the west is the campus of the Royal Veterinary College. The college building nearest the site was built in 1924, has three storeys with a tall pitched roof, and has two very different aspects. To Royal College Street it has an arched central entrance with sandstone surround, a two-storey hexagonal bay with horizontal bands of windows with sandstone surrounds, above a painted crest. To the rear, a very large recent extension (infilling the central part of the 'L' shape of the 1924 building) immediately abuts the site boundary with no. 7 St. Pancras Way, and the building approaches to within approximately 3-4 metres of the rear block at no. 7 St. Pancras Way.
- 2.4 Opposite the site on St. Pancras Way is the campus of St Pancras Hospital, within the conservation area, and comprised of a varied and disparate collection of buildings. Immediately to the north of the St Mungo's Hostel, construction of a building for student housing rising to nine storeys is underway. This new building is situated just outside the conservation area boundary.

Description

- 2.5 The site comprises of two separate blocks that were originally built as stables during the second half of the mid 19th century (see section 3 below). One block addresses the street (Block A), running parallel to the pavement edge with a second block running parallel to the site's rear boundary line (Block B). The blocks run roughly on a north-south alignment. There is a narrow, triangular shaped courtyard resulting from the slightly offset footprints of the two buildings. The courtyard retains its historic sett finish (figure 1 and 2). The centre of the site and courtyard are accessed via the street through a gateway at the northern end of the site. Block B is only visible in glimpsed views from St Pancras Way when passing the site.



Figure 1: Site location and context. The Royal Veterinary College is located to the west, the St Pancras Hospital to the east and the recently completed apartment block to the south. The mid-Victorian domestic property now known as St Mungo's is located to the north.



Figure 2: The two blocks on the site framing the central courtyard. The recently completed apartment block is visible to the south.

- 2.6 Both blocks are constructed in red brick with blue brick dressings to the curved headed windows. The windows have stone cills and lintels. Block A rises to two storeys, while Block B is a single storey. Both blocks have a corbelled brick cornice at eaves level (figures 3 and 4). Block A has the painted sign of 'South Stables' at its northernmost end. This has now badly faded.



Figure 3: West elevation of Block A showing modern window replacement and blocking of windows.



Figure 4: The window openings of the east elevation of Block B have been altered with 20th century grilles and bars. St Mungo's and its large rear extension is visible to the north.

- 2.7 A number of alterations have been made to the buildings including the introduction of new windows to Block A, new openings to both blocks and the construction of a WC block to

the south end of Block B. Both blocks are roofed in corrugated asbestos. Neither roof can be seen fully from within the courtyard. Block B has two small roof ventilators to either end of the roof on the ridge line. Internally, Block A has very little of historic interest remaining due to a fire that devastated the historic interior. Block B is of greater interest and retains a timber trussed roof carried on 4m high cast iron columns. While some evidence of the original stall partitioning remains, the original fixtures and fittings of the stables have been removed.

- 2.8 Both buildings are in a poor state of repair and Block B is currently vacant. Both blocks have also been altered substantially from their original historic form, many of which have been poorly and insensitively executed. Recent modern development around the site give it an enclosed and overlooked feel and has served to isolate the site and its buildings from its original or historic context and townscape.

Designations – The King’s Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area

- 2.9 As set out above, the site forms an element of the King’s Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area, designated by the London Borough of Camden in 1986 and extended in 1991 and 1994. The Conservation Area Statement for the conservation area was approved at Executive Committee in December 2003 and published in June 2004.
- 2.10 The King’s Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area encompasses a large area that incorporates the best elements of the mid- and later Victorian architecture of the stations and hotels of King’s Cross and St Pancras and their immediate hinterland. The area includes industrial buildings and landscapes that developed following the construction of the major railway termini, other ancillary buildings and structures and buildings that pre-date the major Victorian infrastructure works such as Old St Pancras church and Georgian housing and institutions.
- 2.11 No. 7 St Pancras Way forms part of a sub-area of the conservation area known as the St Pancras Gardens Sub-Area. The Conservation Area Statement states at paragraph 4.2.21 that:

‘At no. 7 St Pancras Way are two former Midland Railway stable buildings from the 1860s, the residue of a large stables complex that formerly extended 200m northwards. The frontage block

two storeys with blind round arched windows at ground floor and stone lintels at first floor. It bears a sign reading 'South Stalls'[sic] on the St Pancras Way elevation. The entrance way and courtyard are paved in granite setts. The rear block is similar but a single storey only, with roof ventilators and very tall cast iron pillars internally.'

- 2.12 Paragraph 4.2.22 goes on to state that no. 7 St Pancras Way, along with the former house at no. 9, is a rare vestige of the Midland Railway's major goods yard, granary and ale stores complex at Agar Grove.
- 2.13 The Statement identifies no. 7 St Pancras Way as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area at paragraph 5.4.3. The published map in the Conservation Area Statement identifying buildings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area's character and appearance at page 7 shows only Block A as making a positive contribution. Block B has no such identification. This is perhaps because the building can barely be seen from the public realm and therefore has a lesser visual relationship with the surrounding conservation area.

Consideration for listing

- 2.14 In 2002, English Heritage considered no. 7 St Pancras for listing. It ultimately made the recommendation not to list the buildings on the site due to the lack of sufficient special architectural or historic interest. English Heritage's report on the buildings stated that:

'We are asked to look at a pair of stable buildings, dating from c.1870 and possibly associated with the Midland Railway. A painted sign on the outside describes them as 'South Stables'. The easternmost range is a much altered, having been burnt out at some time, and is manifestly not listable. The smaller western range is better preserved and possesses a fairly interesting trussed roof, carried on slender cast iron columns. The stable comprises a six-bay, queen-post roof structure with lateral cross-bracing. It is not innovative for its period, but the combination of cast iron columns and a wooden upper structure points to this being a transitional roof design. The lower sections of the stable have been largely removed and a modern door has been punched through the east-facing wall; modern bars have been inserted across the window openings as well. The site retains its cobbled

surface, however, between the two ranges. The stable possesses some historical interest as a reminder of the utter reliance of horses for industrial haulage, but the compromised nature of the buildings, and the fact that the roof is not particularly unusual, lead to a verdict of not listable.'

- 2.15 The buildings forming the site are therefore unlisted due to the degree of alteration and the lack of special innovation in their construction. Through their materials, original use, scale and their possible association with the former Midland Railway, the buildings on the site do however make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the King's Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area.
- 2.16 There are no other listed buildings in close proximity to the site.

3 Historic development and significance

- 3.1 The following section sets out the historic development of the buildings on the site at no. 7 St Pancras Way and also provides a statement of their significance.

Historic development

- 3.2 As set out above, the buildings at no. 7 St Pancras Way were built as stables during the latter half of the 19th century as part of a larger stable complex to the north of the site. The stables were built for the Midland Railway Company which dominated the area to the north and east of the site, including Agar Town, with a series of goods yards, rail lines and associated warehousing. This activity was focussed particularly on the north side of the Regent's Canal. Stanford's map of London of 1862 identifies a number of stable buildings in and around the area of the goods yards but shows that the buildings at no. 7 St Pancras Way had not yet been built.
- 3.3 Prior to the coming of the railway to the local area in the middle of the 19th century, the area around St Pancras Way was relatively undeveloped. Greenwood's map of London of 1827 shows the area dominated by the Regent's Canal, the St Pancras Workhouse and the Veterinary College. The site is occupied by what appears to be a small terrace of houses known as Elephant Row (figure 5). A small stream runs behind the houses to the west. Only small-scale sporadic development can be seen along St Pancras Way.
- 3.4 With the construction of King's Cross and St Pancras stations and associated goods yards and ancillary structures, the landscape of the area changed dramatically. While still a residential area in places, the area became characterised by a dense Victorian, industrial and institutional townscape. This is the context in which the buildings at no. 7 St Pancras Way were constructed.
- 3.5 The earliest mapping evidence depicting the buildings on the site dates to 1873 and therefore the site was developed in its current form at least by this time. The Ordnance Survey map extracts at figure 6 shows both the buildings on the site and the larger complex of stables to the north. It is evident that the larger stable

complex was a significant operation complete with forge and several blocks for stabling.

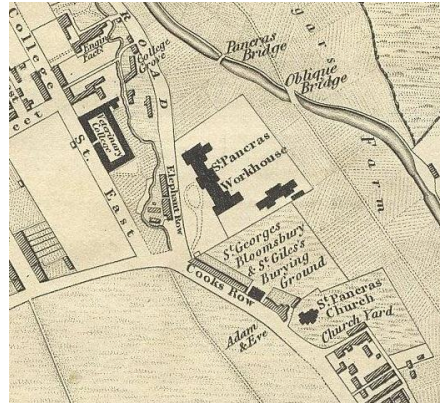


Figure 5: Greenwood's map of 1827 of St Pancras Way, then known as King's Road.

- 3.6 Census information from 1871 suggest that the buildings may have been partly in residential use from their construction and occupation. Census records are not entirely conclusive as the street has been renamed and possibly renumbered. Records refer to 'The Stables' as an address but this could of course refer to the larger stable complex to the north. However, the fact that Block A is over two storeys may suggest that there were small residential quarters provided on site.
- 3.7 The evidence provided by the buildings such as the painted sign, their general form and scale, the traces of stalls and the roof ventilators to Block B suggest that they were built as an adjunct facility to the larger stables complex to the north. The OS extract at figure 6 shows that there was originally a drinking trough to the south of the site which also underlines the use of the buildings as stables. This has since been removed. In their external appearance the stables' building envelopes are largely as built with the exception of the roofs which would presumably have had a slate covering. Internally, Block A has been destroyed by fire and rebuilt and Block B has been largely stripped out and altered.
- 3.8 Charles Goad's Insurance Plan of London (1891) provides the greatest level of detail about the site's context at the end of the 19th century (figure 7). The plan extract doesn't specifically identify the site but it does portray the larger stable complex to the north which is annotated with 'Midland Railway Company's Stables'.

- 3.9 The buildings continued in use as stables into the early 20th century. Post Office Directories for London record that the buildings were still in the ownership of the L.M. & S. Railway (Midland Division) into the 1950s. The Ordnance Survey map for 1954 shows little change to the historic plan form of the buildings apart from the small extension to the south of Block B which was evidently originally built in the later 19th century (figure 8). Block B also may have been subdivided into two separate units at this time, if not originally built as a subdivided space, as indicated on the map extract. The larger stable complex to the north is annotated with ‘Stable Yard’ suggesting the buildings were still in use as such although the apparent subdivision of the longer ranges may suggest that they had been converted to smaller units, possibly for warehouse use.



Figure 6: OS map extract from 1873 showing the site (above) and the longer range of stables to the north (below).

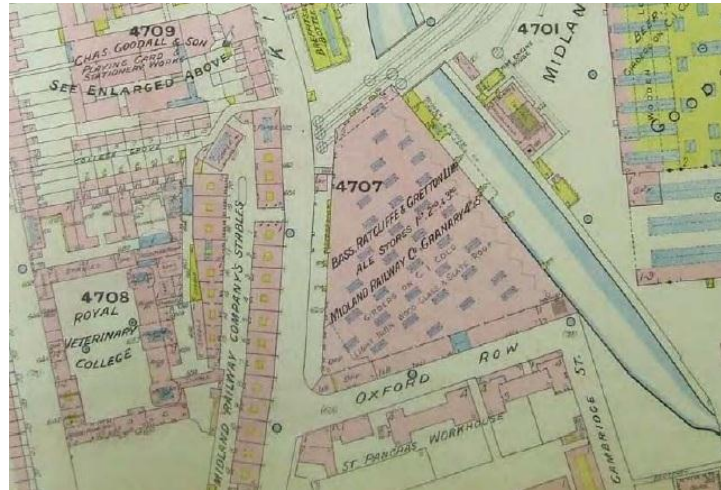


Figure 7: Extract from Charles Goad's Insurance Plan of London showing the area immediately to the north of the site.

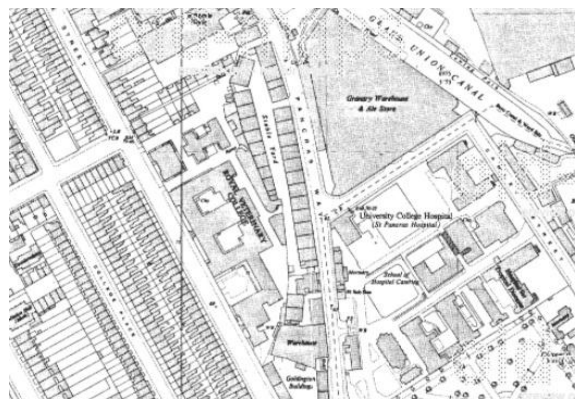


Figure 8: OS map extract from 1954.

- 3.10 In 1960, the property is listed in directories as being in the property of British Railways (London Midland Region) (Road Motor Engineer's Department), suggesting that the building had some sort of depot use. In 1963, 7/9 St Pancras Way were occupied by FH Barrett (Packing Supplies) Ltd and British Railways. In 1971, WJ Arbuckle, a scrap metal merchant took over the premises and occupied the site until relatively recently. By 1971, the larger stables complex had been redeveloped to provide a GPO engineering depot (figure 7). The site at no. 7 St Pancras Way was largely unaltered although the map appears to show a small structure adjoining Block B and projecting into the central courtyard.

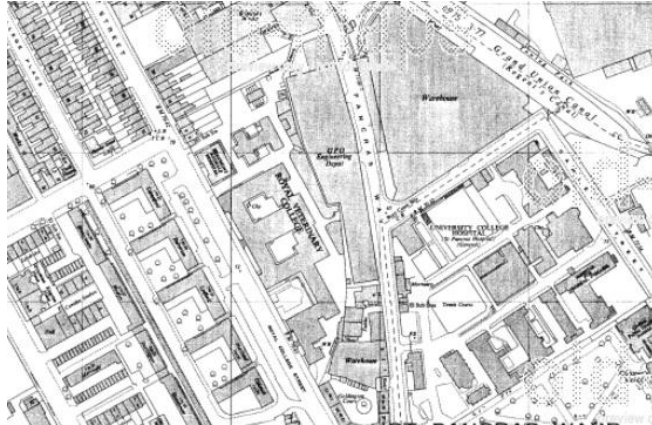


Figure 7: OS map extract from 1971.

- 3.11 A number of planning applications were made during the 1990s to increase access to the site in line with this use. The double width door opening to the south of the street elevation of Block A was added at this time (c. 1992).
- 3.12 In 2005, an application was made to redevelop the site alongside nos. 1-5 St Pancras Way. This scheme allowed for the demolition of Block A in order to provide residential units and office space across the entire site. Block B was to be refurbished. The scheme was subsequently withdrawn.
- 3.13 In 2007, a further scheme for the partial demolition of the buildings ‘affecting all roofs, the southern flank walls and internal walls to both buildings and partial demolition to other elevations’ (2007/2517/C) and their redevelopment (2007/2514/P) was refused for a number of varied reasons. Two of these related to the loss of the buildings and the courtyard contrary to national and local policy and the unacceptability of the proposed scheme in the context of the King’s Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area.
- 3.14 In 2009, a scheme for the change of use from Scrap Metal Yard to business use with one live/work unit (the current use of Block A) was permitted. This scheme proposed the refurbishment and reuse of both blocks on the site but has in fact only been part implemented with only Block A refurbished for office use. It is evident that little stabilisation of the building’s fabric external envelope took place as just four years later, the building is in a poor state of repair.

Significance

- 3.15 The King's Cross St Pancras Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Unlisted buildings within the conservation area that contribute to its heritage significance, such as no. 7 St Pancras Way, are 'non-designated heritage assets'.
- 3.16 Significance is defined in the NPPF as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic.' *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (English Heritage, April 2008) describes a number of heritage values that may be present in a significant place. These are evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal value. The significance of a building or place is derived from the sum of these values.
- 3.17 Evidential value relates to a building's ability to provide information about how a building worked and operated within the immediate context, particularly where there is evidence of equipment, technologies or innovation. Although it is clear that the buildings on the site were constructed as stables, there is little evidence of this use in the buildings. There are no stall fixtures and fittings, water troughs or other equipment that can provide unequivocal and comprehensive evidence of how the buildings operated and functioned or where they stand in the development of the railway stable typology. There is nothing particularly innovative or advanced about the simple form and structure of the buildings and they therefore do not provide evidence of advances in stable architecture or any new technologies. Stables on a larger scale often had cobbled ramps, hoists, lifts or troughs that provide clear evidence of a building's use or interest.
- 3.18 The demolition of the larger stable complex in the later 20th century also eradicated the evidential value of the main focus of stabling activity along St Pancras Way and removed much of the site's historic context and associations. Clearly, as an adjunct to the main complex, no. 7 St Pancras Way had a direct operational relationship with the former. Had the larger complex been retained, the evidential value of the site would clearly have been amplified. This is obviously not the case and therefore, given the degree of alteration and disassociation of the site from

elements of its context, no. 7 St Pancras Way is therefore of little evidential value.

- 3.19 Despite this, the site does have clear historical value for its association with the Midland Railway Company which dominated and transformed the physical character of the local area from the middle of the 19th century. The previous use of the buildings on the site forms part of the local history and is redolent of a time when industry was reliant on the horse, as much as the railway, for transportation of goods and the provision of services.
- 3.20 The buildings and courtyard themselves have inherent and intrinsic historic value in their form, which is largely unchanged despite later alterations, and fabric. The historic context of the site has been eroded with the demolition of warehouse buildings to the south of the site and the larger stables to the north. While historic buildings exist locally and along and around St Pancras Way, these either pre-dated the stable buildings in foundation or do not have the same industrial use as the site. The site is clearly a rare survival in this context and for that the buildings do hold value and significance. However, virtually none of the building's original historic context survives and it is something of an anomaly in the existing townscape.
- 3.21 Aesthetically, the buildings are clearly designed and detailed to be functional, sturdy buildings that were fit for purpose and function. Some care and attention has been made in construction with attractive brick corbelling and curved window heads. The buildings are modest and relatively small-scale in comparison with other stable buildings in London and elsewhere. Also in comparison to other stables, the buildings are not a particularly standard stable type. These often had a very different fenestration pattern, elevational treatment and were normally of a larger scale. Obviously, if the blocks were built as an extension to the main complex with clear site constraints they were only ever going to be a small-scale operation.
- 3.22 While not of any special architectural interest, the buildings do have a degree of aesthetic value in their grouping and physical relationship, particularly when seen from the private courtyard within the site. Although views are now dominated by larger-scale buildings on three of the site's boundary edges, there remains a sense of the site's original appearance and function with the form and materiality of the buildings and the courtyard

creating an aesthetically cohesive group. The buildings also have a industrial aesthetic, built as functional stables and on and to a small-scale Victorian warehouse pattern and design. The buildings have robust materials and a simple palette of brick, glass and metal, typical of buildings of this type, date and purpose.

- 3.23 Communal value usually relates to value that is attributed to a building or a place by a specific group or community of people or where a building or place may have special significance on a social level or be a focus within a local neighbourhood. While the building is a direct reminder of the presence of a major local employer, this presence has since been diminished. Although there be some interest in the building due to its association with the local rail infrastructure from specialist groups, the site's communal value is low.
- 3.24 The buildings on the site are of some historical and architectural interest and value which is consistent with their status as non-designated heritage assets that make a positive contribution to the wider conservation area. The buildings have been acknowledged by English Heritage as having insufficient interest to warrant listing. The Kings Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area itself is a designated heritage asset and potentially of regional importance given its associations with two of the major railway termini in London and therefore as a major gateway to London. While historically associated with the railway, the former stables have no physical and direct relationship with the conservation area's railway architecture. However, their presence does provide a reminder of past historic uses along St Pancras Way and beyond and they do enhance the overall character and appearance of the wider conservation area. They therefore clearly make an acknowledged positive contribution to the character and appearance of the wider King's Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area.
- 3.25 The site's architectural and historic value has been and is continuing to be diminished by its current condition and obvious lack of investment. Parts of the building's original fabric has already been lost and brickwork is coming loose and falling from the building. Steps now need to be taken to repair and provide a sustainable use for the building's on the site to prevent further loss and further diminishment of their already limited aesthetic and historic value. The proposed scheme set out in section 4 below does offer a sensitive approach to ensuring the buildings

are repaired and enhanced and provides them for an appropriate and sustainable new use for the future.

4 Outline of the proposed scheme

4.1 The following section provides an outline of the proposed scheme. It should be read in conjunction with the Design & Access Statement prepared by Wells Mackereth Architects in support of the proposals.

4.2 The basis of the proposed scheme is the repair, refurbish and extend both buildings on the site to reprovide B1 use for the applicant's offices in Block A and a two bedroom flat to the south and to create a single family home, again for the applicant, in Block B. Specific elements of the proposals which have an impact on the existing condition and character and appearance of the buildings are set out below.

4.3 The proposals for Block A include:

- Full restoration of the existing brickwork, stone cills and lintels and reinstatement of the cornice to the street façade;
- Replacement of the existing asbestos roof with black patinated steel panels pitched to the existing roof slope;
- Provision of a new dormer to the western roof slope with a profiled cast glass window to provide additional light to a proposed new mezzanine level within the building;
- The provision of newly formed concealed guttering and internal rainwater pipes;
- Replacement of existing windows with more complementary metal framed windows with glazing bars; and,
- The provision of three flush roof lights to the front roof slope and two to the rear.

4.4 The proposals for Block B include:

- General repair and refurbishment of the building;
- Extension of the building upwards by a single storey using the same palette of materials as to Block A with cast glass and patinated steel panels;
- Reconfiguration of the interior to Block B to create appropriate accommodation for residential use;

- Dropping the cills to the arched windows to full length and setting the new building back from the historic building line. This will create a colonnade and mark a degree of separation between the historic building and the new structure within and above;
 - Demolition of the derelict WC to the south of the block to provide a courtyard garden;
 - Restoration of the south gable end and provision of new doors to provide access to the courtyard; and,
 - Reuse of some of the existing internal structure, including the 4m cast iron columns to maintain a sense of the volume and internal character of the historic building.
- 4.5 A further new addition to the site is proposed in the form of a small single-storey linking block, providing and managing access to the two existing buildings on the site. This will take the form of a lightweight, glazed building which will allow the relationship between the two historic blocks across the small courtyard to continue to be legible.
- 4.6 The proposed scheme has evolved significantly since September 2012 as a result of detailed pre-application discussions with the London Borough of Camden (LBC). The initial design proposed a dormer window to Block A on the street facing roof slope and simple glazed extension to Block A. In order to address concerns raised by LBC, the front facing dormer to Block A was moved to the rear roof slope, thus removing its impact on the building from street views, and the length of the proposed roof extension to Block B was reduced in order to reduce its impact on the glimpsed views from the street.
- 4.7 The scheme in relation to Block B was then amended further in February 2012 to address additional comments in relation to the design and the perceived need to respond better to the existing architectural form of the historic building and to simplify the proposed palette of materials. Originally, the proposed roof extension ran the full length of the building. Then, following comments made by the Council, it was cut back to address concerns relating to the degree of visibility from the street. It now runs the full length of Block B along the existing footprint of the historic building with agreement from the local planning authority. The revised form of the extension to Block B now has a glazed façade running the length of the building with a patinated steel pitched roof above added in response to comments from the Council. A void has been cut from the rear facing roof

slope in order to provide sufficient light into the living areas below.

- 4.8 The proposed scheme will provide a much needed sustainable use to a partially vacant site which is physically deteriorating on a daily basis and is consequently in a poor state of repair. The design approach will represent a change to the existing buildings but it is intended that this change is an entirely positive one. The form and industrial aesthetic of the existing buildings has influenced the proposed design which is intended to be both sympathetic to the former stables and at the same time be contextual but contemporary additions to this small historic complex. The proposals will see the repair and refurbishment of the buildings, respecting their historic fabric and patina, and the robust physical character of the buildings will continue to be the main focus of the site. The proposed use of metal and glass in the new extensions to the buildings at once identifies the new elements as contemporary additions, allows the red brick of the historic buildings to continue to be the focus of the site and responds to the prevailing materials used in buildings of this type.

5 Policy context

- 5.1 This section briefly sets out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment and to the proposed scheme as set out above. The relevant statutory provision for the historic environment is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and sets out the government's approach to dealing with the historic environment. Section 12 of the NPPF deals specifically with this area of policy. Policies relevant in this particular case are as follows.
- 5.3 Paragraph 128 states that applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. 'The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.' A history of the site and its context and a statement of significance are presented in this report at sections 3.0.
- 5.4 At paragraph 129, local authorities are asked to identify the particular significance of a site and use this assessment to when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 5.5 Paragraph 131 states that in determining planning applications, local authorities should take account of:
- 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.

- 5.6 Paragraph 132 sets out that ‘when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.’ Paragraph 133 goes on to say substantial harm or total loss of significance may be acceptable in very exceptional circumstances which are set out in the policy.
- 5.7 Paragraph 134 deals with cases where a proposal causes less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals.
- 5.8 Paragraph 135 relates to the effects of applications on non-designated heritage assets such as locally listed buildings or buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area. It states that ‘the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 5.9 Paragraph 137 states that ‘local authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.’

London Borough of Camden Local Development Framework (2010)

- 5.10 There are a number of policies within the London Borough of Camden’s (LB Camden) Core Strategy and Development Policies that seek to preserve and enhance the borough’s historic environment, and protect elements and features of special

interest. They guard against inappropriate and insensitive alteration, adaptation and development. The relevant policy from the Core Strategy in relation to the historic environment (CS14) sets out Camden's overarching strategy and focuses on the need to preserve or enhance heritage assets and their setting and to requirement for new development to be of the highest quality and to respect local context and character.

- 5.11 DP25 of LB Camden's Development Policies Document provides further guidance on the council's approach to the historic environment. The main points of this policy in this instance are as follows.

In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will:

- (a) take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within conservation areas;
- (b) only permit development within conservation areas that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area; and,
- (c) prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area where this harms the character and appearance of the conservation area.

6 Impact of the proposals

- 6.1 The following section sets out the impact of the proposed scheme on the significance of the site and against the relevant policy context.
- 6.2 As positive contributors to the King's Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area, the buildings on the site at no. 7 St Pancras Way make a clear contribution to the character and appearance of the historic townscape of St Pancras Way and to the wider conservation area itself. The site has aesthetic and historical value and interest which attributes some limited significance to the buildings.
- 6.3 The general thrust of national and local policy is that in judging proposals that affect the historic environment consideration should be given to preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas and to determining the degree of harm caused by any aspect of a proposed scheme. Where the level of harm caused is substantial either to the conservation area as a whole or to an element within it then proposals are unlikely to be acceptable except where certain circumstances apply. Where the level of harm caused is less than substantial, negligible or non-existent then proposals should be acceptable subject to the likely wider benefits of the scheme.
- 6.4 As set out in section 4, the aim of the proposed scheme is to provide a home and offices for the applicant while sensitively restoring and extending the existing buildings on the site. The proposed extensions are inspired by the form and industrial aesthetics of the existing buildings and are intended to be a contemporary but contextual addition to the site and be part of its evolution and development. The external envelopes of the buildings will be retained and enhanced through refurbishment and repair and their character and appearance in this regard will not be affected.
- 6.5 Outwardly to the street, the proposals will see very little change in the site's external appearance except in terms of the refurbishment and repair of the Block A which will have a more traditional appearance reinstated. In the context of the site, street and the wider conservation area, this is a very significant enhancement given the building's current appearance and state of repair. The dormer extension to Block A will not be visible from the street and can only be seen from within the central courtyard.

The proposed roof extension to Block B will be just visible in glimpsed views from the street. Such views will be so limited and are of little consequence in terms of the wider conservation area that the impact of the proposals will be minimal and would certainly not cause harm to the wider conservation area or to the understanding of the site and its historic and aesthetic value.

- 6.4 In this respect, and as seen from public areas, this work is a considerable benefit to the conservation area and the site itself. Other aspects of the proposals relate to the courtyard space and to Block B. Here the character and appearance of the site will change given that the principle of extension and alteration to Block B's courtyard elevation, as accepted by the local planning authority, does mean that the site will evolve into a place with different uses and architectural expression to that for which and how the building was originally constructed.
- 6.5 The intention of the design is to ensure that the historic buildings are respected and sensitively extended in order to express this architectural evolution of the buildings. The external envelopes are retained and their relationship across the courtyard is preserved and enhanced. The cobbled surface is also retained meaning that the existing materiality of the site is protected and enhanced.
- 6.6 The proposed materials of the extension to Block B, glass and patinated steel are in line with the existing industrial aesthetics of the building and while this building will increase in height, the new glazed façade to the courtyard will not dominate or be overbearing as the robust Victorian character and materials of the existing buildings will continue to be the principle features in views from and within the courtyard.
- 6.7 The proposed scheme has itself evolved over six months of pre-application discussions with the local authority. The roof form of the proposed extension to Block B has formed part of these discussions following comments raised by the local planning authority and now comprises of a single storey with pitched roof to relate to the roof's existing form. As it now stands, the proposed extension to Block B represents a definite change on the site but one which works with the building's existing character and form and respects its historic character and sensitivities. Through sensitive, high quality design, the proposed extension will enhance the outward appearance of

Block B while retaining the historic appearance and character of the original building.

- 6.8 The proposals respond to the site in a proportionate way: they respond to the site and its buildings in a manner commensurate with their significance without excessively harming that significance or excessively protecting significance beyond the point where it is reasonable or justified. The proposed scheme preserves and enhances the existing external envelopes of the buildings thus ensuring that their existing aesthetic value is retained. The scheme then builds upon that by introducing new elements to the site that are intended to respect and enhance the existing buildings but be contemporary additions rather than using a pastiche style to extend the buildings. This will introduce additional aesthetic value to the site through the conversion of the buildings and a high quality architectural approach where the successful juxtaposition of new and old design will be of interest and of paramount importance to the applicant.
- 6.9 The building's historic associations with the wider conservation area will not be harmed by the proposals as the buildings will continue to perform their role in the historic townscape as they have always done and the association with the past industrial landscape and the Midland Railway will continue. Where some harm could be perceived is in the alterations to the internal space of Block B which will be reconfigured as part of the proposals. While this will impact on the existing structure of the building, the intention of the design is to incorporate elements of the structure into the new building and to recreate some of the volumes and industrial character of the existing internal areas. While this does represent a physical change to Block B, there is no wider impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. In this case, the emphasis needs to be on the contribution made by the site's external appearance to the character and appearance of the conservation area rather than the less tangible aspects of its historic use and local associations.
- 6.10 The proposed scheme does not cause harm to the wider King's Cross/St Pancras Conservation Area. It represents a change to the intrinsic character of the site but these changes are focussed around an internal private courtyard. The existing significance of the site is retained and enhanced and the new additions to the buildings will add considerable architectural interest. If harm is caused, this is less than substantial and is outweighed by the major benefits of the scheme which are to refurbish the buildings and dramatically improve their appearance, character and

condition. This will represent a major improvement to the streetscene along St Pancras Way and therefore the wider conservation area. The proposed scheme will also provide a much needed sustainable new use and sufficient investment into the building to ensure that they continue to be preserved and enhanced into the future.

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