

New Horizon Youth Centre

**Design & Access Statement**

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revisions to front garden, pages 11&12

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## New Horizon Youth Centre



Photograph of existing interior

### **New Horizon Youth Centre**

The New Horizon Youth Centre aims to enable young people to gain skills and knowledge to improve their life chances and to help them move from adolescence into adulthood.

The centre works with some very disadvantaged young people, many of whom have poor self esteem, low confidence, a history of rejection, harm and abuse and often profoundly negative experiences of organisations, structures and the helping professions generally.

Based in the Kings Cross, Somers Town area of London, the centre sees up to 3000 young people a year and is open seven days a week.

A range of services are offered including:

- Advice and support into accommodation.
- Educational and training programmes.
- Job search and placements.
- Drugs advice and assessments
- Street outreach work
- Tenancy support services.
- In addition practical services such as food, laundry, showers and second-hand clothes store are all provided.

Many of the coping mechanisms young people use serve to further isolate and demonise them, these include drug and alcohol abuse, sexual vulnerability, self harming or chaotic risky lifestyles which often results in more serious mental health problems.

New Horizon does a great deal to turn the negative experiences around by offering a supportive environment whilst channelling young people towards meaningful lifestyles and occupations.

### **Premises**

The youth centre moved into its current premises in Levita House in 1994.

Since having been finished in 1935, the premises have seen a number of alterations to suit the various tenants. Originally laid out as individual shops, the premises were subsequently transformed into social services facilities. When the youth centre moved in, some modifications – mainly the removal of internal partitions in the main area – followed.

The situation today is characterised by the lack of individual rooms, circulation areas that are complex and difficult to supervise and lack of storage facilities.

### **Aims of the project**

The project aims to provide the centre with spaces that suit their needs and improve their current working conditions. Key aspects of the scheme are comfort, durability, flexibility and security, above all to create an inspiring environment that evokes an atmosphere of emotional security.

## The rebuilding project

### Scope of Work

- Demolition of single-storey rear extension
- Addition of 2-storey rear extension, with internal mezzanine balcony, to form:  
Ground Floor: Entrance lobby, Stairwell, Class room, Accessible bathrooms, Laundry, Medical room, Storage.  
First Floor: Performance workshop Space, Audio-visual room  
Second floor: Balcony  
This will increase the internal floor area by 96m<sup>2</sup>
- Provision of lift access to new and existing upper floors in the south tower
- Provision of new stair to new and existing upper floors in the south tower
- Refurbishment of existing internal spaces
- Refurbishment of existing exterior including replacement of entrance door from Chalton Street and removal of window grilles
- Landscaping  
There is a proposal to improve the landscaping to the entrance courtyard facing Chalton Street. It is however not included in the scope of works of the rebuilding project.

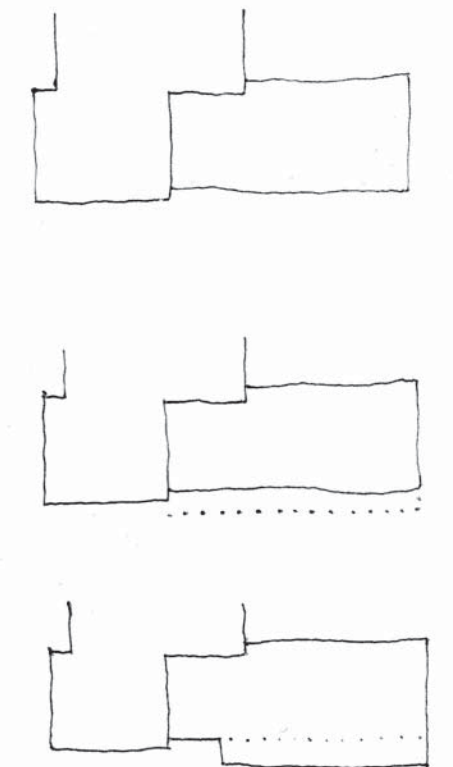


Photograph of existing single storey extension

### Demolition

The proposal requires the demolition of the existing single-storey extension as it is structurally unsound and will not be capable of taking the extra load from the proposed roof. With reference to PPG15 (3.12 - 3.15) the scheme has been developed in close cooperation with conservation bodies, none of whom have had objections to the demolition. (Refer to consultations, pp 11-13)

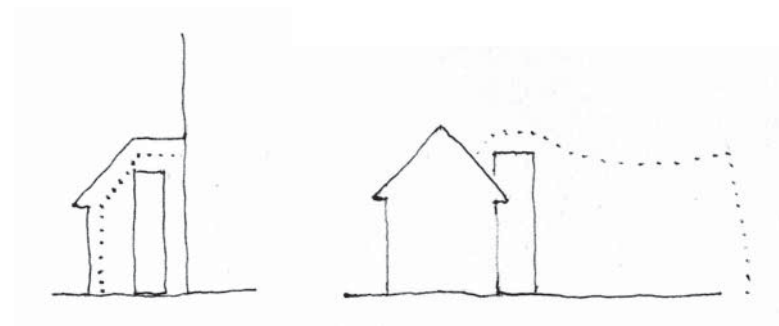
The original masterplan for the estate clearly shows that a building was intended in this location. However the existing extension was not built until later, and then of a far poorer quality than the surrounding estate. The building is in a poor state of repair, and has poor thermal performance. (Refer to structural engineer's statement, Appendix 3)



### Footprint

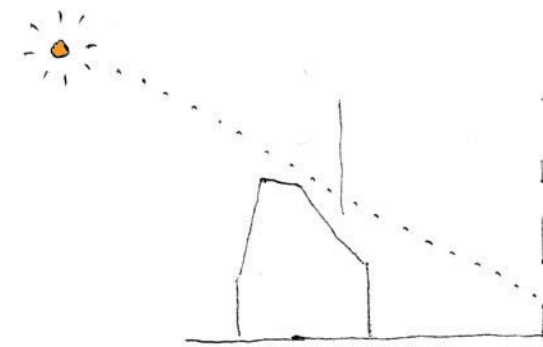
The new extension follows the footprint of the existing extension on the north and east elevations. To the south, the plan sets back to leave the south tower legible and form a natural legible entrance. The new extension is then 600 mm wider than the existing

## Constraints



### Part M

A new lift will allow full access to the upper floors of the existing south tower. A hydraulic lift has been chosen to reduce the headroom required. Still, this determines a minimum height for the new roof at the junction with the existing.



### Daylight

The new extension uses the pitched roof profile to minimise the impact on daylight to the neighbouring flats in Levita House

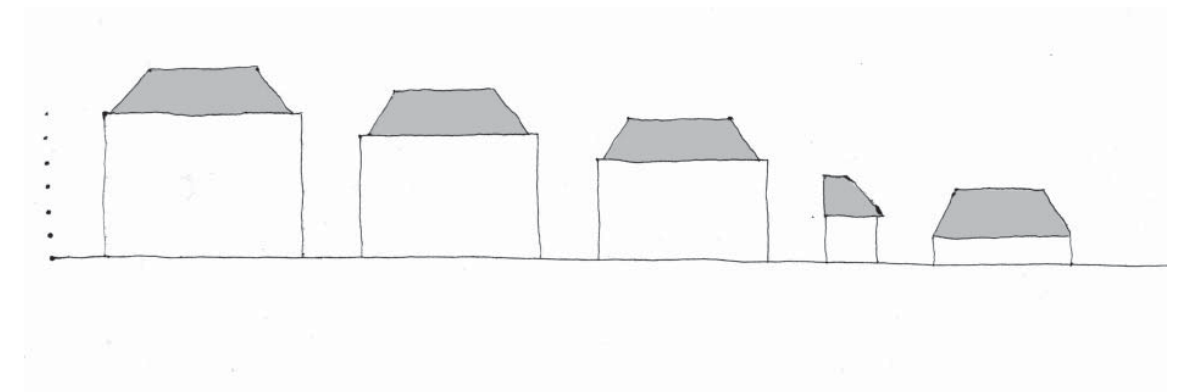


### Listed building context

A highly contextual approach has been taken, making a series of relationships between the new and the old without resorting to mimicry or pastiche



## Relationship to Context



### Immediate context

The immediate context of Levita House and the Somers Town Coffee House are unique, special building ensembles. As outlined in the Conservation Report (see appendix 1) both display an unusual combination of design approaches - blending romantic Arts and Crafts with a tough modernism, enlivened by an abundance of eccentric, expressionistic details.

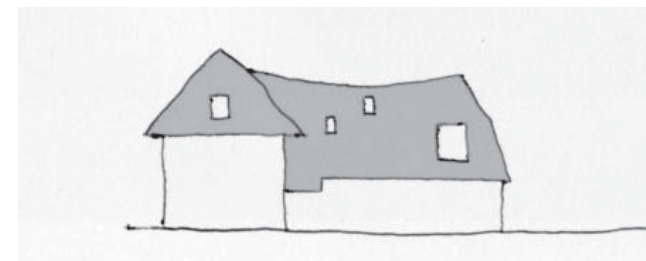
We do not feel that it is appropriate to attempt to design the new building 'in the manner of' the surrounding buildings. As well as confusing the historical legibility of the ensemble; the original buildings are a record and a product of a precise moment in architectural history, highly fascinating. Also would be a dis-service to a unique piece of architecture to categorise it as a style to be copied.

We have sought to design a contextually sensitive building in order to establish relationships with the surrounding buildings of a more profound nature:

### • Massing

The extension roof and walls are set back from the ridge and corner of the existing south tower, leaving the original profiles and volumes clearly legible.

The extension is articulated as a separate pavilion building in a similar manner to that of the south tower.



### • Steeply pitched roofs, dormer windows

The familiarity and popularity of the pitched roof is a shared part of our culture. This is a distinctive feature of the original buildings. Dormer windows are a prominent element in the existing building; the new building continues this language.

### • A Series of Roofscapes

Extending the massing strategy of the Topham Forrest design. The estate reads as being broken down into a series of buildings of different sizes each with a similar roof profile, ranging from 6-storey to 3-storey such as the south tower, part of NHYC. Our proposal follows on from this, giving the smallest of the set.



### • Roof - wall transition

In the existing building two conditions of junctions between roof and wall can be found. Condition 1, where the roof is partly obscured by a parapet, can be found on all the 4 (and more) storey buildings. On lower buildings, the roof projects out over the wall (condition 2). Continuing on from this, with an eaves line even lower than in condition 2, the roof cladding above the new side entrance drops down even further, extending down unto the entrance assembly (condition 3), while most of the new extension retains a condition similar to 2.

## Relationship to Context



Rendering of proposed side elevation

### • Grand scale

Levita house has a grand heroic scale. There is the danger of a 2-storey addition looking too weak in scale. Therefore we have sought to make the roof of a scale that allows the extension to be read as a continuation of the existing roofscape yet clearly identifies the extension as an element in its own right.

### • Quality, durable materials

Materials in the immediate context are:

Pre-cast concrete, rough render (painted), concrete and clay roof-tiling, copper, zinc and lead roofing.

Levita house is unusual in eschewing the more familiar brickwork and having a prominent plinth of pre-cast concrete blocks. These are strongly textured, and carefully detailed with ornamentation. This also applies to the render coating and to the pre-cast elements dotted about the estate, forming balconies, mullions, cornices, bin stores etc.

The external cladding of the new extension must meet the following criteria:

- high quality appearance
- suitable for the complex geometry
- very durable: resistant to vandalism and graffiti
- sustainable source
- low embodied-energy of production
- fully recyclable

Brass - a naturally patinating copper alloy that will not turn green - has been chosen as roof cladding. Its colour echoes the colour of the existing roofs and forms an under-stated and harmonious palette with the existing materials. It will be applied in forms of shingles.

It is a material at once old and new - familiar from historic buildings, but also relevant today.

The walls will be finished in a rough render painted white, similar to the one to be found on the existing buildings. The roughness will deter graffiti and vandalism, the paint finish allows for easy maintenance.





The metal shingle system allows for clean detailing, maintaining the buildings formal identity



Subtle variations in colour in concrete blocks that form the plinth of Levita House

## Relationship to Context

### •Materials and Ornamentation

We are responding to the playful ornamentation found on Levita House, with a series of ornamental embellishments at a variety of scales. These follow the traditional pattern of celebrating entrances and key openings, of telling a tectonic story, amplifying key transitions.

- The scale of the proposed metal shingle roof cladding relates the stone- coursing of the concrete plinth to the scale of the clay tiles used on the roofs of the existing buildings.

- The new side entrance door and surround will be given a more elaborate decorative treatment, so making the entrance clearly legible and introducing a finer grain.

- The proposed metal shingle system will introduce its own language of intricate details and allows for the careful integration of secondary building elements such as ducts, ventilation outlets and gutters. Additionally it allows for a clean junction between new and existing roof.

- A decorative roof ridge-line will be developed in collaboration with the roofing suppliers.

This offers legibility and enjoyment, and gives a continuity of cultural tradition.



Sample of brass when installed



Sample of brass when weathered. After a period of 3 months the brass will have acquired the patination as shown above. Individual shingles will weather with slight variations in colour, giving a texture that will reflect the condition found in the concrete blocks that form the plinth to Levita House.



Perforations in various sizes can be introduced to serve as ventilation outlets or to provide shading.



## Key Views



1. View towards south tower and extension from Chalton Street  
Key characteristics of Levita House remain visible from Chalton Street:  
The decorated cornice, the set-back in the main courtyard elevation and the  
roof landscape with chimney stacks and dormer windows.  
The set-back of the extension allows for the south tower to be clearly read as  
an individual object.



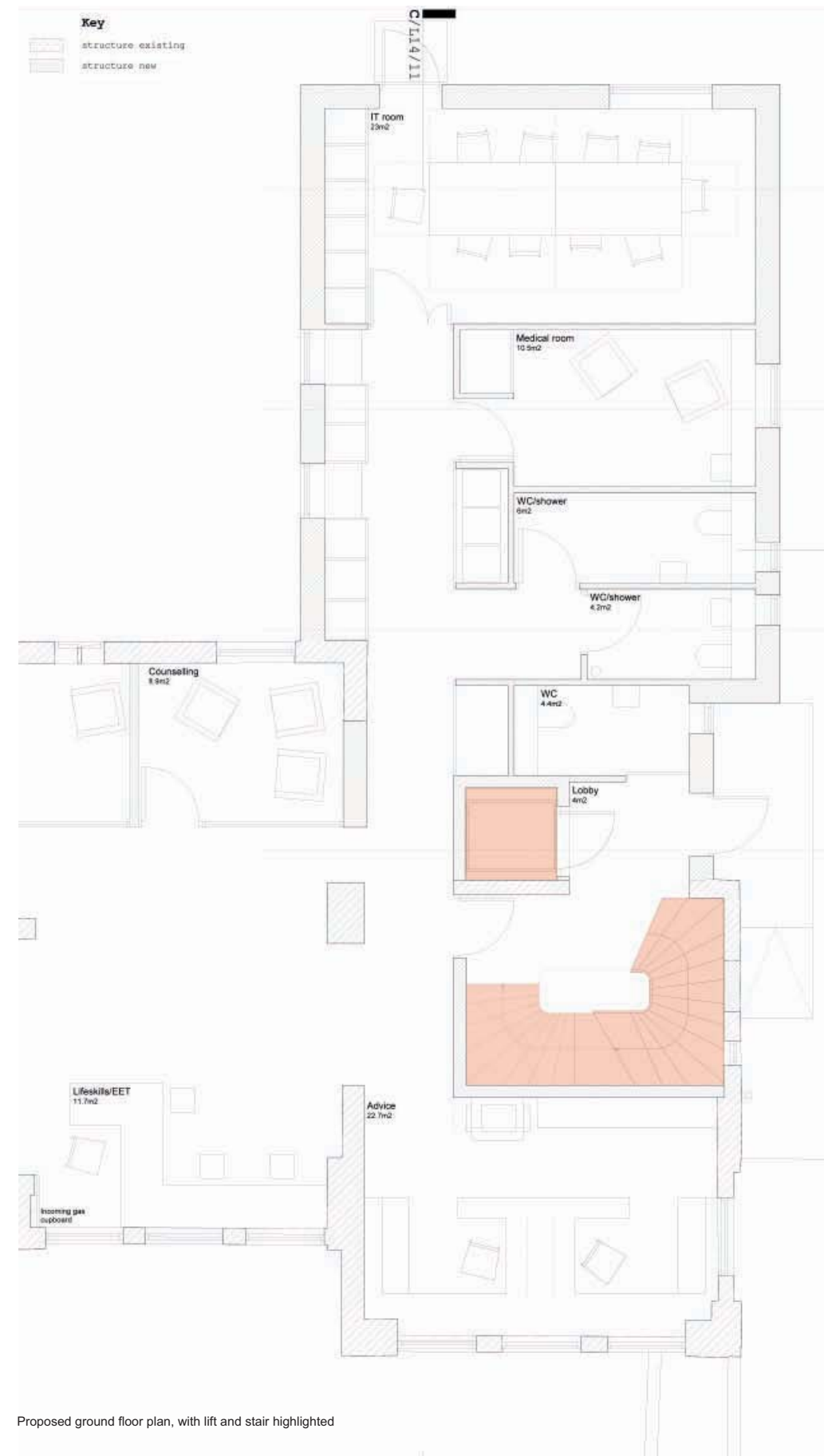
2. View from Chalton Street into the northern courtyard  
The new side entrance marks the transition between the existing  
building and the new extension. The variety of windows in different  
sizes echo the situation in the adjacent elevation of the south tower.



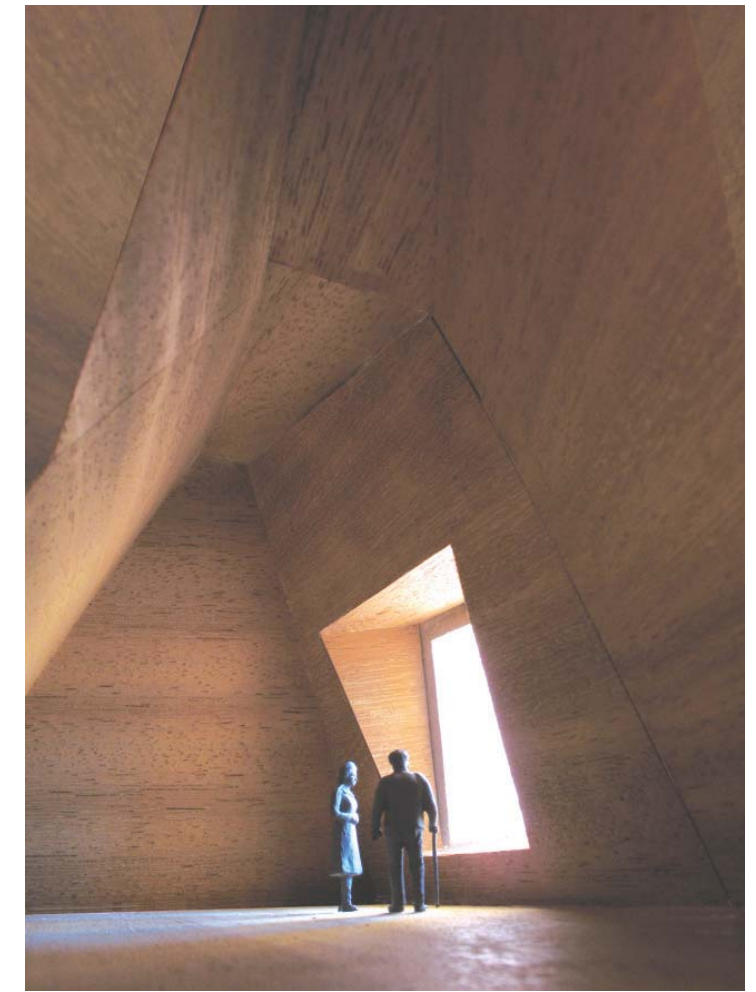
## Use & Access



Interior view on ground floor (competition stage)



Proposed ground floor plan, with lift and stair highlighted



Interior view of performance space (competition stage)

### Use

The ground floor extension provides fully accessible medical and washing facilities, and a classroom for IT teaching

A performance workshop space on the first floor can be used independently by the local community as a meeting hall.

The ground floor has been laid out as a carefully controlled set of spaces of varying openness and privacy.

### Access

The centre's main access remains on Chalton Street. The side entrance to the new extension serves as a separate access to the performance space so that it can be used by members of the local community without disturbing the centre in its operation.

A ramp provides wheelchair access to the ground floor lobby. From there, a lift allows disabled access to first and second floors and a new stair provides Part M compliant access to the first floor.

A wheelchair accessible WC on the ground floor is available for external visitors of the performance space.

The rear courtyard door is a fire exit only.

# Daylight



Rendering of proposed rear elevation



Model photograph

## Daylight

The proposal uses the pitch of the roof to reduce the impact on daylight for the neighbouring housing. A daylight analysis was undertaken by Gordon Ingram Associates, (see Appendix 2) to assess and quantify the effect of the proposed new roof.

The roof shape tries to minimise a potential loss of daylight to adjoining properties by moving away from the existing building.





## Front garden

Elevation of new front garden, Levita House in the background. Not to scale

### Layout

A proposal to improve the entrance courtyard both for the users of the centre and for the public has been developed. A new series of planting beds at different levels and widths follows the perimeter of the front courtyard and frames the entrance, dividing the yard into two areas. The northern part provides a more private environment, whilst the southern part is more open to the public. A new metal gate secures the main entrance and a metal fence provides an initial barrier while plants are growing. Eventually, the fence will become overgrown and lost in the plants. The height of 1.4m of both gate and fence follows precedences in other areas of Levita House and while providing privacy still allows for views across.

Towards the driveway into the courtyard the planter drops in level to form a long bench, providing a place of rest for members of the local community visiting the weekly market on Chalton Street and for people using the new side entrance to the extension of the youth centre.

### Planting

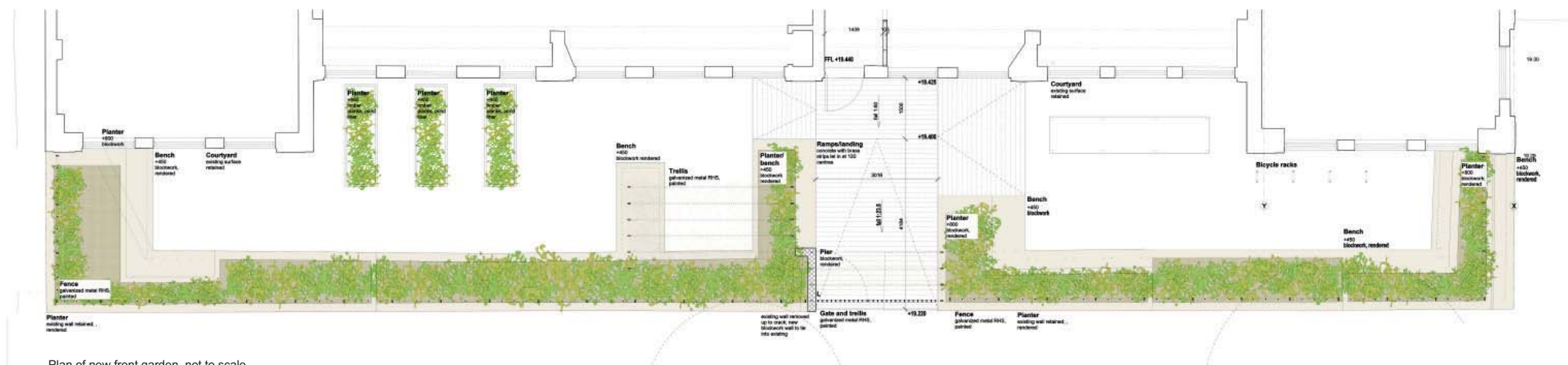
Where possible, the existing plants will be retained for the new garden, and will be complemented with native plants to result in an environment attractive to the local wildlife. A row of planters will accommodate kitchen herbs and vegetables for the use of the centre.

### Furniture

A series of benches is integrated into the planter, providing a number of distinct areas for seating. A large table will be positioned in the southern part of the yard, providing a platform for working, dining, play and potential interaction with the local community.



Existing courtyard



Plan of new front garden, not to scale





Piers flanking entrances

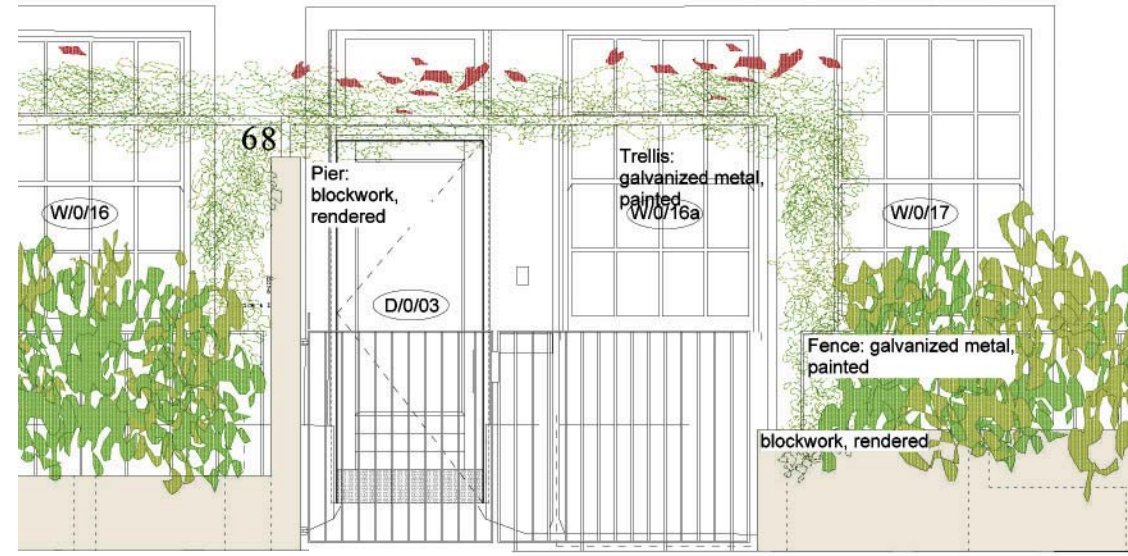


Garden wall and fence along Ossulsten Street



Garden wall and fence along Ossulsten Street

## Front garden



Entrance to the youth centre, with pier to the left of the gate, and trellis above

### Entrance

The low level garden wall will rise to a pier on one side of the gate, marking the entrance to the youth centre. The gate will be covered by a light weight steel trellis, which extends to form a small arbour inside the courtyard to the left of the pier. Similar to the fence, this will be overgrown with climbing plants, covering a small outside seating area.

The trellis covered entrance adopts a detail found in many Arts and Crafts houses, both emphasizing the idea of creating a home for the users of the centre and referring to the historical background of Levita House.

### Materials

Following the precedence found along Ossulsten Street, walls to planters, benches and the pier marking the entrance will be from blockwork, to be rendered and painted. Fence, gate and trellis will be from painted galvanised metal.

Fence and trellis will provide an initial boundary between the public area and the more private front garden, and will be gradually overgrown with plants.



Entrance an Arts and Crafts country house by E. Lutyens

## Consultations

Preliminary consultations have been carried out with the following:

- English Heritage
- The Twentieth Century Society
- Camden Conservation Officer
- Staff of New Horizon Youth Centre
- Neighbours

<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Drawings issued</b>
English Heritage	Richard Parish	site walk 18.01.08	Conservation Report Competition Panels
The Twentieth Century Society	Jon Wright	site walk 19.12.07	Conservation Report Competition Panels
Camden Conservation Officer	Hannah Walker	meeting 20.12.07	Conservation Report Competition Panels
Staff of New Horizon Youth Centre	Shelagh O'Connor	26.10.07	Competition Panels
Neighbours	James, Levita House	16.02.08	Competition Panels



## Consultations

### Comments and design responses

We have found the consultations to be extremely valuable and through our work over the past months have managed to incorporate the suggestions and criticisms made.

#### English Heritage - Richard Parrish:

verbally and e-mail 4.03.08

In respect of the analysis of the Estate you provided, this was very thorough and a good analysis of the development and built forms of the estate.

In respect of the proposals, the existing single storey extension appears from the plans to have been part of the original design for the estate, although the finishes and existing form makes me think that has been altered at some juncture, and it is currently very run down. It also has the unfortunate effect of creating a dark and unpleasant alley to the north. As such I would not object to the remodelling of this extension to provide greater use and activity in this part of the building.

Given the uniformity of materials within the Estate any development should be in brick and adopt the architectural language displayed throughout (I acknowledge that the actual forms and roofscape are varied).

I would however favour a more traditional roof form and felt that the high apex of the roof could be problematic in its relationship with the rear roof of the New Horizon building.

I also felt that this might cause light problems with the building directly behind.

However, I appreciate the internal intentions and felt that the internal form did create an exciting interior. However, I suspect that practicality may be an issue for the Centre and as such the flexibility of the internal space.

With regard to the outside space on Charlton Street I agree that this would benefit from a better quality treatment which would enhance the public realm and relationship to the street and that the current arrangement does not make a positive contribution.

- The apex has been lowered.
- The profile of the roof has been adjusted to visually detach the new extension
- The pitch of the roof has been adjusted to reduce the impact on daylight - refer to daylight study (Appx.2)

#### Camden Conservation Officer - Hannah Walker

HW indicated that LB Camden might not oppose the demolition of the existing extension as it was not of any significant value to the overall complex of Levita House.

#### Design considerations

HW mentioned the following aspects should be taken into consideration

- Height of the new extension
- Sightlines from Chalton Street: The view of the decorated eaves on the 6 storey part of Levita House and the chimney stacks should not be obscured by the new building.
- The mix of materials present in Levita House.
- The relationship between the proposed extension and the existing building fabric. Might the new extension read more as an individual pavilion detached from the rest of the building?
- The register of the set-back of the existing extension against the south tower.

- The roof height has been reduced - the decorated eaves and chimney stacks remain visible from Chalton Street

- The footprint has been given a set-back at the junction with the existing south tower

#### General comments

- HW expressed general support for the project

## Consultations

### Consultee comment

### Design response

The Twentieth Century Society - Jon Wright 19.12.07

#### Demolition of existing extension

JW indicated that the C20thsoc might not oppose demolishing the existing extension as it was not of any significant value to the overall complex of Levita House.

#### Design considerations

JW mentioned the following aspects should be taken into consideration

- 'Gateway' situation between the Somers Town Coffee House and the new extension

- Sightlines from Chalton street: The view of the decorated eaves on the 6 storey part of Levita House and the chimney stacks should not be obscured by the new building.
- The playful language of Levita House does allow for a playful addition.
- The mix of materials present in Levita House.
- The aspect of ornamentation and its influence on the proposed scheme.
- The relationship between the proposed extension and the existing building fabric: Avoiding the extremes of historical pastiche and a proposal completely alien to the existing, a fine balance has to be found. This is foremost important in the joint between old and new.

#### General comments

- Landscaping: the existing complex presents an innovative approach in making the exterior areas an integral part of the overall layout. This is also reflected in the hierarchy of elevations: the elevations facing the courtyards are more richly adorned with decoration than the elevations facing Chalton Street.
- JW expressed general support for the project, but would like to see the aspect of ornamentation featured more prominently.
- A final assessment however would only be made by the 20th CS committee.

- The South Tower, the new extension and the Somers Town Coffee House form an ensemble framing the entrance to the courtyard

- The decorated eaves remain visible from Chalton Street

#### Staff of New Horizon Youth Centre

Will the sloping roofs limit the internal useable space?

Access control required to all upper floor areas.

Laundry should not be a separate room.

Could the front courtyard be made more private, perhaps a hedge?

- The profile of the roof has been adjusted - raising the north eaves line

- Stairwell re-planned; door added.

- Laundry now within storage wall

- Landscaping proposal developed

#### Neighbour - James, Levita House

Existing kitchen extract noisy and close to his window

Existing boiler flue noisy and close to his window

Existing laundry extract vents noisy and close to his window

- The new kitchen and boiler extracts will be run in new positions, out of the north side of the building, away from residential windows

## Accommodation schedule

<b>Location</b>	<b>Room</b>	<b>m<sup>2</sup></b>
NT GF	Admin	25.8
NT 01	Admin	30.5
NT 02	Admin	28
Main GF	Kitchen	17
	WC	5.8
	Boiler cupboard	3.3
	Eating / social area	67
	Drop-in / advice	51.5
	Reception	8.6
	Lifeskills EET	11.7
	Counselling 01	8.3
	Counselling 02	8.9
	Storage	2.1
ST GF	Advice	22.7
ST 01	Admin	24
ST 02	Staff meeting	16.5
Extension GF	Medical advice	10.5
	WC/shower	14.6
	IT room / education	23
Extension 01	Performance	55
	Control room	7.1
Extension 02	Balcony	11