

Conversion of Office to Residence and associated Alterations and Extension

at

31 Great James Street

Camden

London



Design & Access Statement

May 2013

cowper griffith

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1.0 The Proposal

1.1 Introduction

The applicants wish to convert the 4 storey historic terraced townhouse plus basement from office/ part residential use into a family home to live in with their extended family. The conversion will include: a) the sensitive restoration of the historic fabric where damage has occurred as a result of the office use: b) Essential repairs required that have transpired due to a lack of recent maintenance: c) Modernisation of mechanical and electrical services throughout: d) Improvements in the thermal insulation and airtightness of the existing house: e) Rebuilding of later structures to the rear of the property to provide a new kitchen at ground floor level and utility areas at basement level.

1.2 Opportunities

Restore the building fabric where damaged by an unsympathetic office conversion.

The long-term preservation of the house by returning the building to a desirable family home.

1.3 Constraints

Grade II* Listed status of the building.

2.0 List of Drawn Information

2.1 This Design and Access Statement accompanies the Planning Application and should be read in conjunction with the following design drawings:

2.2 Cowper Griffith Architects LLP – General Arrangement and Design Proposal drawings as follows:

Drawing No.	Drawing Title
1257/ 300	Ground Floor Plan
1257/ 301	First Floor Plan
1257/ 302	Second Floor Plan
1257/ 303	Third Floor Plan
1257/ 304	Roof Plan
1257/ 305	Basement Plan
1257/ 310	Section AA
1257/ 311	Sections 01 – 03
1257/ 313	Section BB
1257/ 314	Strip out Grd and Basement floors
1257/ 315	Strip out First and Second floors
1257/ 316	Strip out Third floor and roof
1257/ 601	Ground Floor Joinery and Fireplace Details
1257/ 602	First Floor Joinery and Fireplace Details
1257/ 603	Second Floor Joinery and Fireplace Details
1257/ 604	Third Floor Joinery and Fireplace Details

2.1.3 Andrew Firebrace Partnership – Structural Sketch:

13/80/SK3	Replacement steel floor beams
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2.1.4 ON CENTRE SURVEYS LTD - Measured Survey Drawings of the Existing Building

21043A-1	BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
21043A-2	GROUND FLOOR PLAN
21043A-3	FIRST FLOOR PLAN
21043A-4	SECOND FLOOR PLAN
21043A-5	THIRD FLOOR PLAN
21043A-6	ROOF PLAN
21043A-7	SECTION A-A
21043A-8-1	FRONT ELEVATIONS
21043A-8-2	REAR ELEVATION
21043A-8-3	SIDE ELEVATIONS
21043A-8-4	REAR ELEVATION
21043A-9-1	INTERNAL ELEVATIONS BASEMENT
21043A-9-2	INTERNAL ELEVATIONS BASEMENT
21043A-10-2	INTERNAL ELEVATIONS GROUND FLOOR
21043A-11	INTERNAL ELEVATIONS FIRST FLOOR
21043A-12	INTERNAL ELEVATIONS SECOND FLOOR
21043A-13	INTERNAL ELEVATIONS THIRD FLOOR

3.0 Context

- 3.1 The site is located in Camden, Northwest London.
- 3.2 The house is Grade II* and is within a designated conservation area.
- 3.3 In terms of Significance of Heritage Assets the original form of the house and its setting are both considered generally of very high significance with only one part considered of low significance. The low significance element is the late C20 ground floor single storey extension and link corridor connecting the main house and later parts at basement level surrounding the external yard.
- 3.4 For a comprehensive description of the context and historic significance of the house and its setting please refer to the Heritage Statement dated May 2013 compiled by Beacon Planning

4.0 Planning Status

- 4.1 For a comprehensive assessment of the current planning status please refer to the accompanying Planning Statement dated May 2013 compiled by Beacon Planning.
- 4.2 In addition pre-application advice has been sought as set out below:
 - 4.2.1 There is no objection in principle to the following works proposed. However these will need to be fully assessed as part of a formal application:
 - 4.2.1.1 The 'wig cupboard' void which has been used for services in the past and sits in the corner between the front and middle rooms is proposed as a vertical service riser to carry the waste pipe down from the third floor bathroom in the front room. This will link with the riser shown on the basement plan. Pipes will run at third floor level beneath the floorboards parallel with the floor joists to reach the riser.
 - 4.2.1.2 The wastes from the bathrooms within the closet wing will run externally as at present.
 - 4.2.1.3 No damp proofing works are proposed to the existing fabric.
 - 4.2.1.4 The only floors to be levelled will be those in the closet wing at first, second and third floors where shower rooms are to be provided.
 - 4.2.1.5 Remove what is a later partition (demonstrated by the absence of a partition on the floor plans from 1946) to the second floor front room.
 - 4.2.2 Broadly accept the following proposals but would need to assess all works as part of a formal application, as follows:

- 4.2.2.1 Proposed re-introduction of the blocked up doorway between the middle and rear room at basement level.
- 4.2.2.2 Proposal to remove the existing partition between the front and middle rooms at ground floor level.
- 4.2.2.3 Proposal to reposition the rainwater downpipe on the street front to avoid it cutting across the canopy above the front door.
- 4.2.3 Replacement windows - The Council would be willing to consider slim double glazed units provided the applicant could provide convincing evidence that the final window appearance would match the single glazed windows at 12 Bedford Row (*Please note: The applicant has subsequently decided not to pursue the proposal to incorporate slim double glazed units because it is agreed that single glazing in restoration glass will be more in keeping*).
- 4.2.4 Asbestos removal is agreed in principle on the basis that:
1. The floorboards must not be cut and should be lifted with care using non-powered hand tools.
 2. No features of interest shall be removed from their current locations as part of these works or without approval prior agreement.
 3. Alert the Council planning department for agreement to remove any items of special architectural and historic interest containing asbestos.
- 4.3 The proposed addition of a ground floor WC pod structure has not been pursued after considering the advice received from the conservation officer.

5.0 Design

5.1 Architectural Approach

- 5.1.1 The change of use from offices to residential seeks to minimise the disruption to both the external and internal fabric of the house and consequently its character, with all new interventions kept to a minimum to preserve the integrity of the original house.
- 5.1.2 Restore features lost over time to match the surviving original details in the house. The most significant is the proposal to replace the later rise and fall sashes to the street elevation. Full details of all proposals to restore lost features are to be found in the Heritage Statement and on the drawings.
- 5.1.3 All new interventions are designed to be contemporary in material and detailing so that they are distinct and easily readable (changes that are necessary to facilitate the new use). At the same time they make reference to the existing house.
- 5.1.4 Reinstall original layout of yards, including removal of all poor quality and harmful materials including the later basement additions and ground floor single storey rear extension.
- 5.1.5 Form a new partially green roof to the rear of the house over the new extension to provide a visual softening of the back yard areas. The garden will be accessible and is designed to be viewed only. The roof garden will be designed to be largely maintenance free (achieved by careful selection of plants and use of an irrigation system) and access provided for maintenance only.
- 5.1.6 The intention is not to over-restore the building fabric. It is important that the aged and worn appearance is maintained by repair rather than replacement with new material. There are a number of exceptions to this where for example some windows are in a parlous state and beyond repair.
- 5.1.7 Replace the poor quality roof covering materials to the main roof.
- 5.1.8 Basement vault to be reopened (as 1946 plan).
- 5.1.9 All services are to be completely renewed throughout the house and concealed with nothing left exposed by utilising existing voids. A new boiler is proposed within the existing basement vault with a flue discharging through the roof.

5.1.10 Fire strategy:

a) Means of escape - As the dwelling has floors situated at 7.5m above ground floor level and an alternative escape from those floors cannot be achieved, a residential sprinkler installation is proposed as the only viable compliant solution. Sprinklers will be installed throughout the dwelling (including the stairwell) but not in bathroom spaces of not more than 5m² and certain small cupboards. Case studies are available to support the use of sprinklers within an historic context. Installations can be integrated into a project without affecting appearance. Sprinklers should be seen as just another type of services along with heating pipework and drainage. The use of sprinklers can support variations to other requirements of the Building Regulations such as omission of surface spread of flame upgrades within rooms and possible relaxation of need to upgrade fire rating of floors and stairwell walls, which would be desirable and something the applicant will pursue to further help protect historic fabric.

b) In addition to the sprinkler system a fire detection systems is a requirement. The installation will incorporate detectors in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape routes from the dwelling. The system is a mains powered installation with battery back-up.

c) The stairwell is to become a protected stair to a minimum 30 minutes fire resistance. Doors between stairwell and rooms will be upgraded to achieve a FD20 rating by using intumescent paint and paper to panels. Walls between stairwell and rooms to have a minimum 30 minutes fire resistance achieved by treating the existing fabric with fire resistant coatings.

d) Surface spread of flame ratings to walls and ceilings are to be treated to class 1 classification of linings with a clear coating.

e) All service shaft risers will be protected to achieve minimum 30 minutes fire resistance.

5.1.11 Schedule summarising window changes.

For a full description of all changes please refer to the Heritage Statement.

Window	Room	Decision	Notes
All windows to street elevation		Localised repairs to box frames: replace sashes to match the only surviving original window WB03	Making good poor modern interventions: for a full description of the proposals and justification for these proposals please refer to the Heritage Statement
WT05	Third middle	Replace window with pattern of 6 over 6 glazing bars to match existing	Currently 1 over 1 and foreshortened to accommodate kitchen counter top. Poor later intervention.

		window WF05	
WS05	Second Middle	Replace bottom sash to pattern of 6 to match existing window WF05: cut off horns to top sash	Currently 6 over 1 (poor later intervention of one pane to bottom sash); top sash has horns out of keeping with all other windows
WF05	First Middle	Localised repairs and improvements to air tightness	Some rot: poorly fitting sashes
WG03	Middle Ground	Replace like with like	Parlous state: and poor later interventions where the sashes are smaller than the aperture and inappropriate cover beads used. A new window to the correct size will help restore shutter function.
WB03	Middle Basement	Restore by removing later cover beads: localised repair: improvements to airtightness: new stone cill matching original window opening WF05 above.	Earliest original window with poor later interventions.
WT06	Third Closet	Replace to match WS06	Currently a modern casement window in a parlous state.
WS06	Second Closet	Replace like with like	Window is in a parlous state beyond repair
WF06	First Closet	Replace like with like	Window presently too far forward in opening (flush mounted with face of brickwork): incorrect size for the aperture which prevents restoring the shutter function
DG02 (part window)	Ground Closet	Localised repairs	
WB06	Basement closet	Replace door with window to match WB03	Later intervention of door: window required for new function of room
WT04	Third Stair	Replace like with like	Window is in a parlous state beyond repair
WS04	Second Stair	Localised repairs	
WF04	First Stair	Localised repairs	

5.1.12 Schedule summarising fire surround changes.

For a full description of all changes please refer to the Heritage Statement.

Room Reference	Room Location	Decision	Notes
T01	Third Front bedroom	No fireplace	No surround present and chamber bricked up.
T02	Third Middle bedroom	No fireplace	No surround present and chamber bricked up.
T04	Third Closet, bathroom	No fireplace	No surround present.
S01	Second, master bedroom- front	Replace surround with stone to match original fire surround present at the neighbouring house (no 32). All as drawing 1257/ 603	Existing surround is an incongruous assembly of parts that does not fit with original panelling.
S02	Second dressing room- middle	Replace surround with stone to match original fire surround present at the neighbouring house (no 32). All as drawing 1257/ 603	Existing surround is an incongruous assembly of parts that does not fit with original panelling.
S04	Second bathroom	No fireplace	No surround present.
F01	First front- living room	Replace surround with stone to match original stone fire surround present at the neighbouring house (no 32). All as drawing 1257/ 602	Existing surround is an incongruous assembly of parts that does not fit with original panelling.
F02	First Middle- bedroom	Replace surround with stone to match original fire surround present at the neighbouring house (no 32). All as drawing 1257/ 602	There is currently a simple painted surround with wooden mantel that does not respect the panelling or style of the period.
F04	First Shower room	Restore existing. All as drawing 1257/ 602	Existing fireplace is original and in need of careful restoration

G02	Ground Front	Replace surround with stone to match original fire surround present at the neighbouring house (no 32). All as drawing 1257/601	Existing is a later simple wood surround and does not fit with original panelling.
G03	Ground Middle	Replace surround with stone to match original fire surround present at the neighbouring house (no 32). All as drawing 1257/601	New surround proposed on the assumption that the existing surround does not survive. The aperture is currently covered over with asbestos sheet. Any original fire surround revealed following removal of asbestos will be carefully restored.
G04	Ground Closet	New stone surround to match original in F04	There is currently no surround in this panelled room. A new surround will be in keeping to match the room above.
B01	Basement front-reception	Stove with simple stone surround.	Final proposals are subject to what is found after opening up works.
B02	Basement middle bedroom	No fireplace	No surround present.
B03	Basement bathroom	No fireplace	No surround present.

5.2 Use

5.2.1 The building is presently vacant.

5.2.2 The presently designated use is mostly commercial office space with the third floor designated residential use.

5.2.3 The applicants wish to return the building to its original residential use to provide a single dwelling as a family home to live in with their extended family.

5.3 Amount

5.3.1 The existing site area extends to approximately 155 M sq.

5.3.2 Summary of the overall floor area of the proposed dwelling (area calculation measured from internal face of external walls)

Basement	104.35 Msq.
Ground floor	090.10 Msq.
First floor	055.20 Msq.
Second floor	055.10 Msq.
Third floor	055.90 Msq.

Total for the house 360.65 Mq.

5.3.3 Schedule of Accommodation:

- 2 principle reception rooms
- Games/ TV room
- 5 bedrooms
- 5 bathrooms (4 of the 5 bathrooms are ensuite)
- Kitchen and dining room (combined in one space)
- Small home office
- Small gym, cloakroom, laundry room, boiler room and shower room to vault.
- Small service yard at basement level
- Small dining terrace at ground floor level

5.4 Layout

5.4.1 The house is a single terraced dwelling with the street front and front rooms facing north eastward, and correspondingly south west light to back rooms.

5.4.2 Layout of accommodation will broadly be as the original house. The house is divided in to principal and secondary floors. Principal floors are distinguished by the tallest ceiling heights and slightly more embellishment of the architectural details. The approach is to retain this distinction and not confuse it by for instance the use of ornament at basement level.

- 5.4.3 The house will provide residential accommodation over five floors, comprising principle accommodation on the ground (street level) and first floor level, and secondary accommodation in the basement along with the second and third floors.
- 5.4.4 Ground Floor: provides the main principle reception room of the house, entrance hall, stair hall, and a small office to the closet wing, all within the existing part of the house. The extended part behind the house provides a kitchen and dining space with external dining terrace and new linking corridor to connect the extension to the back of the house. The kitchen is purposely located outside of the main house to ensure the original ground floor rooms of the house can be returned to their original function and not confused by incorporating a kitchen.
- 5.4.5 Basement: off the stair hall is a games/ tv room on the street side with access to the external lightwell (and off this lightwell access to the existing vaulted coal stores under the pavement), a bedroom provided to the middle room and its ensuite bathroom to the closet wing back room. Also off the stair hall access is provided to a linking corridor to a small gym. Off the gym a laundry room and boiler room are located under the existing vaults, and a third vault (to be reopened) will provide a shower room. Also external access is provided off the gym to what has always been and remains the small basement service yard area.
- 5.4.6 First Floor: comprising the stair hall, off which is the second principle reception room to the front room and a principle bedroom to the middle room with ensuite bathroom to the back room in the closet wing.
- 5.4.7 Second Floor: provides a main bedroom to the front room, a dressing room to the middle room and ensuite bathroom to the closet wing.
- 5.4.8 Third floor: provides a bathroom and bedroom to the original front room (the later subdivision of the original front room will remain), a bedroom to the middle room and its ensuite bathroom located in the closet wing.

5.5 Scale

- 5.5.1 The extent of new development proposed is limited to the rebuilding of a small part of the basement and the single storey extension and link corridor connecting the house at the rear yard on the ground floor. The new single storey extension and link corridor will be to a similar scale with only a relatively small increase in height.

5.5.2 The proposed single storey extension is low scale and will not detract from the tall and narrow four storey terraced town house which measures approximately 6.0 M across the street frontage between boundaries, by 16.7 M high from basement floor level to roof ridge height.

5.5.3 Ceiling heights within the existing house range from high to low:

Basement	2575 mm
Ground floor	2960 mm – principal floor
First floor	3140 mm – principal floor
Second floor	2845 mm
Third floor	2300 mm

The proposed extension is intended to match the ceiling height at ground floor level at around 3000 mm. The new linking corridor will be lower at 2575 mm.

5.5.4 The total volume of the existing building amounts to approximately 1200 M3.

Volume to be demolished on the ground floor is approx. 112 M3 (40 M sq. floor area).

Volume of proposed extension to the ground floor is approx. 110 M3 (36.6 M sq. floor area).

The volume of the new extension represents a very small percentage of the total volume of the existing building and the new extension is smaller in volume than the part of the building demolished.

5.6 Landscape

The scope is very limited, and is summarised as follows:

5.6.1 Soft Landscaping

The yard and extension roof will be utilised for domestic garden use with a small amount of soft landscaping. The extension roof is intended as an attractive garden designed to be viewed rather than used with direct views from the upper rooms of the house. The use of planting is intended to slightly soften the hard surfaces of the yard areas to the backs of the majority of houses in the terrace.

5.6.2 Hard Landscaping

The new dining terrace at ground floor level is conceived as a contemporary space with simple large format paving.

New railings on two sides of the basement lightwell follow historic precedent of railings along this line. Nothing of the original railing however survives and so these new metal railings are to be contemporary in design.

The small basement level yard's size and shape is as the original, which is clearly evident at neighbouring properties on the same street. The existing asphalt finish to the yard will be removed and replaced with new paving laid to falls.

5.7 Appearance

- 5.7.1 Existing brickwork to street front to be repointed using the tuck pointing technique by a specialist with relevant experience to restore the main façade (street elevation) to its original appearance. The sand and cement mortar will be raked out, and general brickwork repairs carried out.
- 5.7.2 The rainwater downpipe to the main façade is to be relocated to the boundary of number 31/32 to improve the present problem of the downpipe dogleg around the entrance door canopy. The downpipe and hopper head and all associated fixing brackets are to be reused. The new section of downpipe required from ground to basement level will be in matching materials, details and finish.
- 5.7.3 Replace the later rise and fall window sashes with sash details to match the original. The proposal is to install six over six glass panes to all windows except for first floor windows which will be nine over six. Sashes and glazing bars to be in hardwood and glazed with restoration glass panes set in putty. Sash boxes to be repaired as required. Brush type draught stripping to be provided in staff and parting beads.
- 5.7.4 The modern metal tubular railings at roof level to be removed on the street side to restore the original appearance of the house.
- 5.7.5 New stone coping to the parapet wall of the main façade to replace concrete capping. New coping to be raised up 1 brick course to original level with matching bricks in lime mortar.
- 5.7.6 The ground floor extension to the rear will be principally made up of large areas of slim-frame glazing to make best use of the diminished light fall due to the surrounding building shadow. Timber decking to high part of extension roof and housing galvanised steel planting troughs. The dining terrace will be paved using simple large format paving.
- 5.7.7 Insertion of bathrooms and shower rooms with minimal disruption. Use of free standing shower enclosures to keep walls free of tiling where walls are panelled.

- 5.7.8 Where stone used both internally and externally this will be a natural stone to match original stonework surviving at the house.
- 5.7.9 Rear elevation: essential repairs to brickwork proposed: removal of render and decoration with lime shelter coat: window repairs and replacement as schedule: replace external foul drainage pipes with new matching cast iron. The dogleg in the rainwater downpipe to closet wing is to be removed and new matching straight section of cast iron pipe introduced to return pipe to its original straight drop below existing hopper.
- 5.7.10 Modern roof coverings to the main roof and all modern gutter linings are to be replaced. The machine made roof tiles on all but two of the roof slopes, the machine made ridge and hip tiles are to be removed and replaced with handmade red clay plain tiles to match the tiles on the two roof slopes that have surviving handmade tiles. The ridge and hips are to be in lead.
- 5.7.11 Light fittings and electrical accessories are to be contemporary in style. Power sockets are to be concealed within floor voids and accessible by lifting a section of floorboard. Architrave switches are to be used to suit the panelling but only where cables can be concealed within a void (where single depth panelled partitions are found the light switches will be located on adjacent walls).
- 5.7.12 Fireplaces – all later fireplaces are to be removed and replaced with new fireplaces detailed appropriately in keeping with C18 historic precedent.
- 5.7.13 The extensive wall panelling throughout the majority of the house is to be retained and restored where damaged. Wall panelling is to be reinstated to original details where lost, and panelling to be uncovered where it has been over clad in modern materials.
- 5.7.14 Paint decoration to be carried out using traditional paints to all principal areas: Street railings, rainwater and foul drainpipes are to be painted with Antirugine paint (micaceous iron oxide): Limewash/ Shelter coat to yard walls and removal of existing cement render from ground and basement floor levels.
- 5.7.15 Floor finishes proposed are generally to be as follows: Basement floor - carpet in bedroom and TV room; floor tiles elsewhere; Ground floor - oiled wood floors throughout house, kitchen extension – floor tiles; first and second floor - oiled wood in bedrooms/ reception rooms; floor tiles on bathroom floors; third floor - carpet in bedrooms, floor tiles in bathrooms; stairs will have a central carpet runner.
- 5.7.16 The staircase will be stripped of all the later applied carpet and associated trims: The later unpainted barley twist balusters will be painted in with cut string.

- 5.7.17 All lighting and electrical accessories are to be renewed and new fittings to be contemporary in design.
- 5.7.18 All ironmongery is to be retained as found. New ironmongery required to the existing house will match the existing adjacent ironmongery (for instance brass ball knob handles). The extensions have contrasting contemporary ironmongery in a brushed stainless steel finish.

6.0 Sustainable Development

- 6.1 The conversion will be carried out to high standards, achieving air tightness and thermal insulation to the highest degree possible whilst working within the limitations of the existing structure. Maximising insulation within roof void is the only realistic option for thermal insulation. Lining the internal or external face of external walls is not proposed because this would be harmful to the character and appearance of the building.
- 6.2 The extension will exceed Building Regulation standards for airtightness and thermal insulation.
- 6.3 The dwelling will be naturally ventilated, achieved by bringing in controlled air through the existing rise and fall sash windows fitted with vent locks to the existing house. The extension will be naturally ventilated with stale air removed at high-level and incoming fresh air brought in at low-level, both via the glazed doors.
- 6.4 Mechanical ventilation will be provided to the kitchen and all bathrooms/ shower rooms.
- 6.5 The heating system will comprise a new efficient condensing gas boiler combined with under-floor heating to ground, first and second floor sensitively incorporated between floor joists. The basement and third floor will be provided with radiators. In addition, the use of smokeless fuel to a number of fireplaces will allow for additional periodic heating in the living areas. A small stove is proposed in the front room of the basement (the detail is subject to what is found during following opening up).
- 6.6 All timber for new construction, joinery and joinery repairs will be obtained exclusively from certified sustainable sources.
- 6.7 Good levels of Natural Daylight are already provided by the existing windows in the house. For the extension, natural daylight is maximised with a large area of well-insulated fenestration and rooflights.
- 6.8 Artificial lighting internally and externally will utilise energy efficient lighting.
- 6.9 Artificial lighting externally will be shrouded downlights to prevent light pollution and nuisance to neighbours.
- 6.10 All new fenestration will utilise thermally broken frames and high performance thermal double glazed units.
- 6.11 A series of Solar PV / PVT panels will be sited on the roof set at the optimum efficient angle to the sun. Exact number and orientation is subject to a survey.

- 6.12 Rainwater run off will be slowed as much as possible by the introduction of the garden roof. A water butt will be provided to the basement yard to collect rainwater for garden use and at the same time also slow run off.
- 6.13 The conversion will achieve a rating as high as possible under the Code for Sustainable Homes.

7.0 Access Statement

- 7.1 Access to the site for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles will remain unchanged.
 - 7.1.1 Good access to public transport is available.
 - 7.1.2 Vehicle on street parking possible with a permit.
 - 7.1.3 Clear access for the emergency services is possible to the street front but access to the rear is limited.
- 7.2 Inclusive access
 - 7.2.1 The historic nature of the house with its steps to the main entrance door and many changes in floor levels make inclusive access problematic.
 - 7.2.2 Lack of inclusive access makes the use of the building less suitable for modern office/ employment space and more suited for residential use.
 - 7.2.3 Means of access for wheelchair users will be difficult to achieve and substantial harm to the historic fabric will result from incorporating methods to improve access. Therefore no improvements are proposed in this application and none are required under Building Regulations to a change of use.