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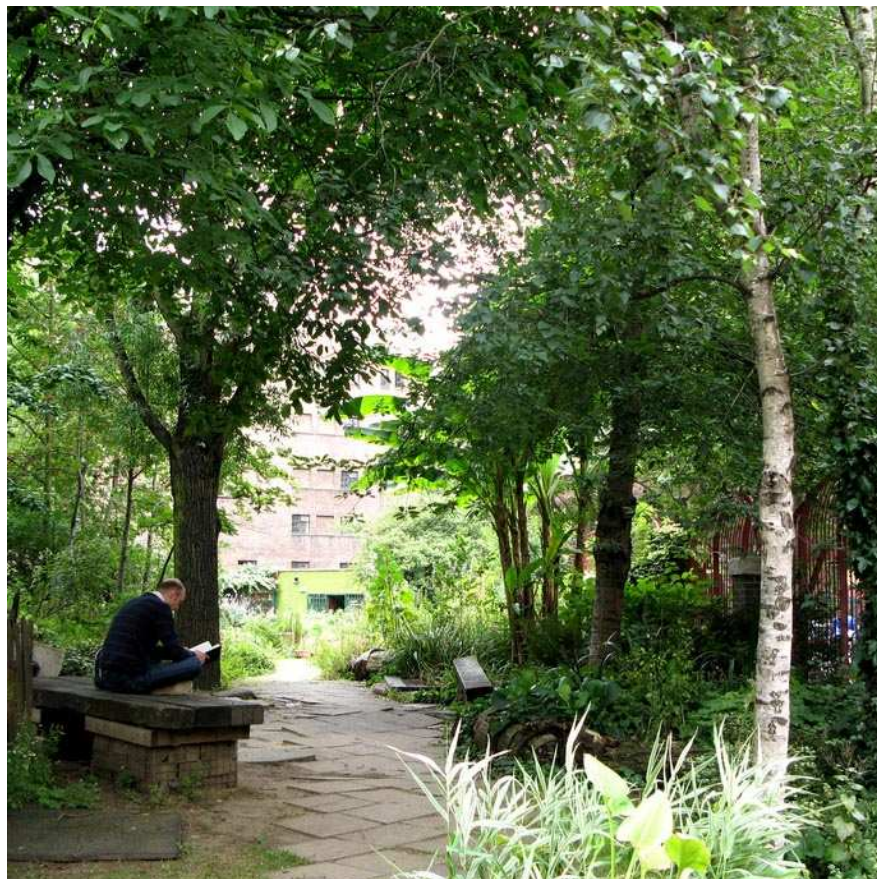
19.11.14

THE PROPOSAL:
DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STORAGE AND CARETAKER BUILDINGS

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SINGLE STOREY BUILDING TO FACILITATE THE USE OF THE PHOENIX GARDEN

AT
Phoenix Community Garden
21 Stacey Street
London
WC2H 8DG

FOR
The Phoenix Garden Committee



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To be read in conjunction with associated drawings by Office Sian Architecture + Design

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Phoenix Garden Project

The Phoenix Garden [Charity no. 287502], is a community garden in central London which was created to provide a green retreat from the stresses of London's West End, and a vital habitat for urban wildlife. The garden is managed by volunteers under the guidance of the Head Gardener, Chris Raeburn.

The garden was founded in 1984 on the site of a car park, and is a former bomb site. It is the last remaining of the original six Covent Garden Community Gardens. Acting as a hub for community activity, the Phoenix Garden has been successful in tackling anti-social behaviour, including drug dealing and street crime.

The garden is maintained using sustainable techniques and an innovative approach to wildlife gardening. Initiatives such as building retaining walls from recycled newspaper, and gabion walling from excavated rubble, highlight this ethos. The garden uses plants that grow reliably in dry conditions, look good all year round and are of maximum benefit to wildlife; different habitats are created to encourage as many species as possible. The garden has become a habitat for the capital's urban wildlife, including five species of bee, butterflies and birds, as well as the West End's only amphibians.

The charity also provides a garden advice resource to local community groups and organises a wide range of community events. It welcomes all visitors and is open every day of the year. Thanks to the vision of the Head Gardener, and a team of volunteers, the garden continues to thrive and adapt. It has been the recipient of Camden in Bloom Best Environmental Garden [2007], and the Best Community Wildlife-friendly Garden [2009].

1.2 Community Centre Vision

The current garden building was built by volunteers in 1984. It was expected to be in use for just five years. Now, over 25 years later, it is in a severe state of disrepair, and does not provide the basic facilities which are needed.

The charity has the following charitable objectives:

To Provide and maintain [or assist in the provision and maintenance of] public gardens and open spaces for the use and benefit of the inhabitants of Covent Garden and others, in the interest of social welfare and with the object of improving conditions of life for the said inhabitants and to create and maintain suitable habitats to support and encourage wildlife.

To continue to perform these objectives to a high level, Office Sian Architecture + Design were appointed as Architects to develop a proposal for a new building to replace the existing structures on site. This new building is to provide facilities for the upkeep of the garden, and serve the needs of visitors.

The following functional aspirations for the new building are stated by the Charity:

- a warm, dry, welcoming space for our volunteers and visitors
- a space for a programme of community events
- facilities to work with local schools and youth groups
- tool storage, toilets and running water

Letters of support in favour of this vision and the building of a new facility are included in Appendix 6.5.



1.3 Urban Ecology

When the Phoenix Garden was formed in 1984, the volunteers took over a former bomb damaged site and car park, and set about creating a wildlife haven in one of the busiest parts of inner London. Now, The Phoenix Garden is looking forward to promoting new ideas, where understanding its activities and how ecosystems work will inform a wider audience wishing to learn lessons of species survival. In the context of climate change, and the need for peace and tranquillity within central London, this is a much lauded ambition.

The garden is currently bounded by high railings and low boundary walls, and a series of mature trees of substance, with heights up to 15m. Planting areas are interspersed with ponds of varying sizes.

Planting strategy has developed to suit the difficult growing conditions and to support as wide a range of wildlife species as possible. Planting is multilayered and where species are seeded by dispersal, they are moved so that a continuous range of conditions is created. The garden planting includes trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants, climbers, under planting, ground cover, grasses, etc. This has created an attractive year-round display, and is home to an astonishing range of wildlife including five different species of bee, various butterflies, many birds and the West End's only frogs.

The head gardener continues to introduce innovative methods to create new habitats and improve the garden. Retaining walls have been built from recycled newspaper, and gabion walling from excavated rubble highlight this ethos. The garden uses plants that grow reliably in dry conditions, that look good all year round and that will be of maximum benefit to wildlife.

The aspiration for the new facility is to integrate plant species and habitats onto and into the new building structure, with planting wires and growing screens. Proposed 'green' and 'brown' roofs to the building will create nesting sites for local birds, and butterflies and insects will find more attractive areas in the climbing plants on the façade of the building.

1.4 Trees

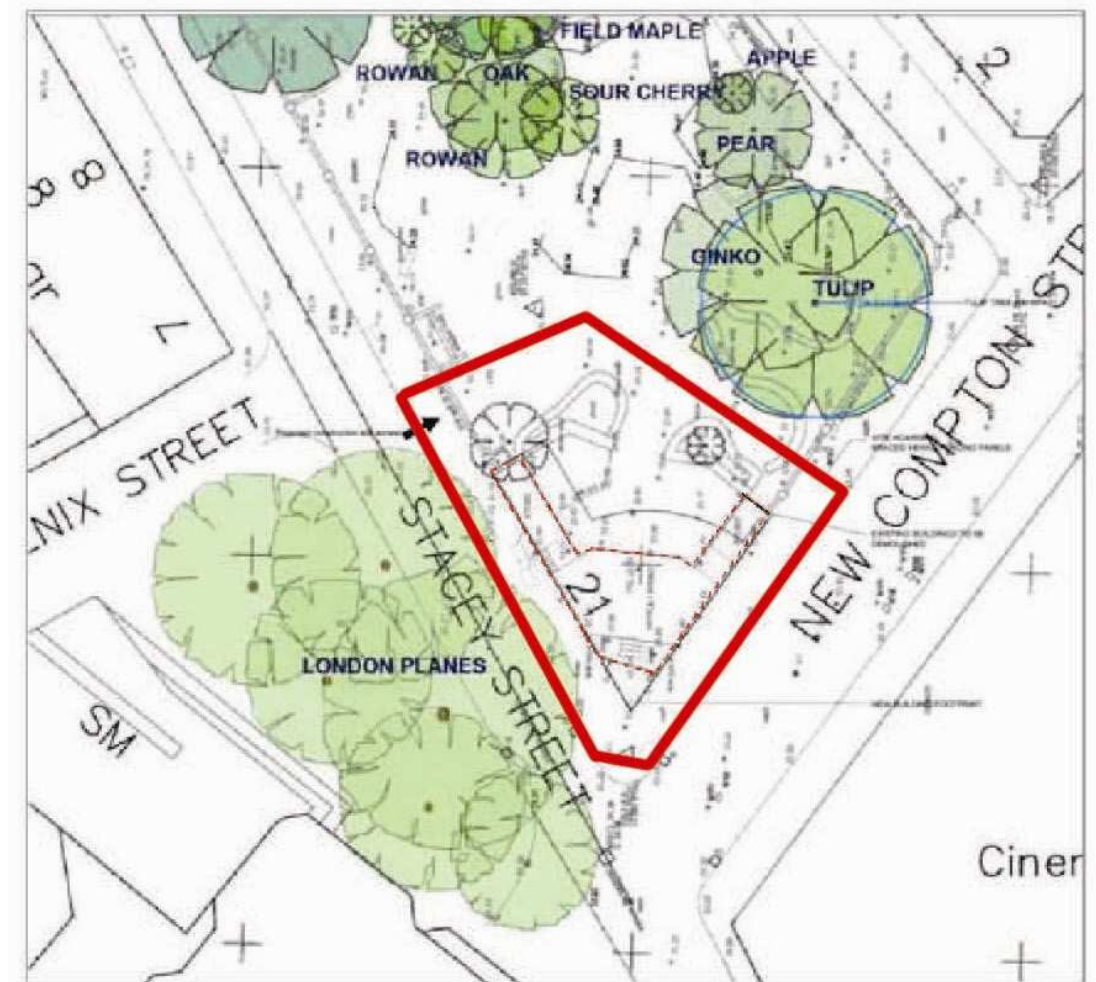
The following trees are all growing in Phoenix Garden:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| - Tulip | - Oak |
| - Maidenhair | - Silver Birch |
| - Wild Pear | - Holly |
| - Walnut | - Horse Chestnut |
| - Great White Cherry | - Sycamore |
| - Sour Cherry | - Field Maple |
| - Myroloban | - Fig |
| - Rowan | - Elder |

The Tree Protection Plan shows species, spread, roots [trunk positions], and Root Protection Area [RPA]

Tree Protection Method Statement:

1. No work to existing trees on site as part of this development.
2. Protection of RPA for retained trees: No excavations should be undertaken or structures erected within the RPA [shown in red].
3. No Changes in soil levels in close proximity to retained trees.
4. Foundation type and design TBC by Structural Engineer. No foundations within RPA.
5. No excavation of service trenches in close proximity to retained trees or RPAs.
6. No construction works causing compaction damage within RPA.
7. Site access restricted to area within hoarding away from RPAs.
8. Protection and prevention of damage to retained tree canopies during construction.
9. Site supervision. Contractor's Method Statement will be required to ensure that the protection recommendations in this statement are adhered to during the construction phase.



Tree Protection Plan

2.0 Context

2.1 Location

The Phoenix Garden sits within Denmark Street Conservation area. Tottenham Court Road Station lies to the north of the site, with Shaftesbury Avenue to the south. It is well located in terms of public routes to the garden, with vehicular and pedestrian access available directly from Charing Cross Road [via Phoenix Street], and from Shaftesbury Avenue [via Stacey Street and St Giles Passage]. Pedestrian access is also available to the site from St Giles in the Fields Church, which lies immediately to the north.

2.2 Brief Chronological History of Area and Buildings

- 1775. Historic building in the area can be dated back to 1775. Stidwell Street remained New Compton Street.
- 1878. Brown's Gardens renamed Stacey Street.
- Early 1900s to 1940. The site of Phoenix Gardens was occupied by a mix of residential and commercial properties, including car garages, and motor engineering businesses.
- 9th October 1940. The area was heavily bombed, in particular to the rear of St Giles-in-the-Fields Church [on the corner of Stacey Street and New Compton Street]. Houses to the east side of Stacey Street were damaged, and there was a direct bomb hit on 62 New Compton Street, which is the location of the existing Phoenix Garden.
- After 1945 until 1984. The site was used as a car park for the British National Car Parks.
- 1984. The Phoenix Garden is established by the Covent Garden Open Spaces Association.

2.3 Planning Policy

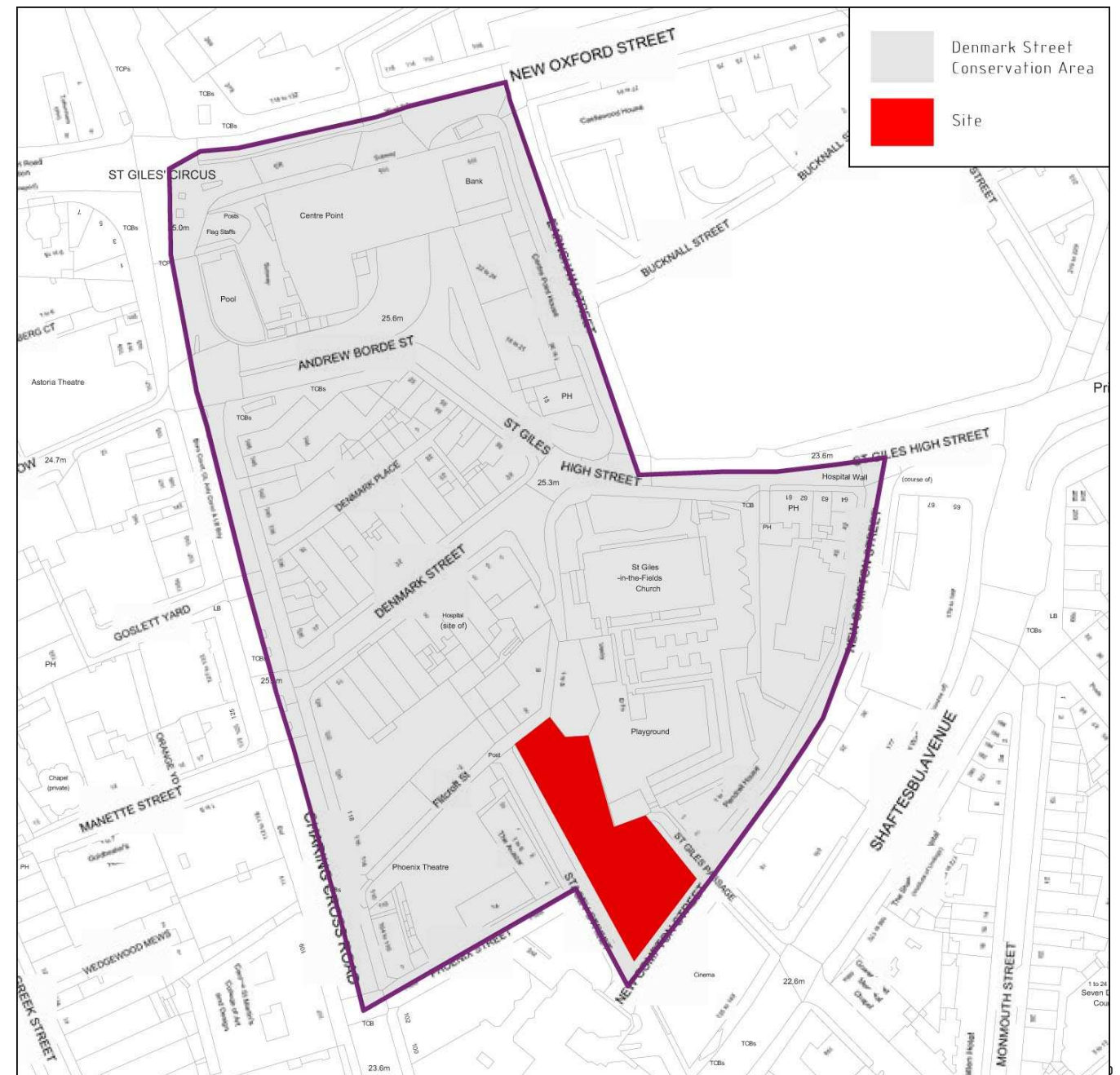
- The site is located within the Denmark Street Conservation Area, with the following statement taken from the Appraisal and Management Strategy [adopted 16th March 2010]:

3.27 Phoenix Community Garden was formed in 1985. It is identified in the UDP as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance [Local], and provides an unexpected area of open space and greenery within an otherwise densely built up area. It allows for views through the CA, provides welcome recreation space, and enhances the setting of St Giles Church.

- The site is situated in an archaeological priority area due to the medieval and post-medieval development.

The site has the following Planning designations:

- Public Open Space
- Site of Nature Conservation Importance [Local]
- Denmark Street Conservation Area – Sub Area 2 St Giles Church
- Tree Preservation Order
- Central London Archaeological Priority Area
- Proximity to Listed Buildings
- Crossrail Act 2008



The following LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies are relevant to this proposal:

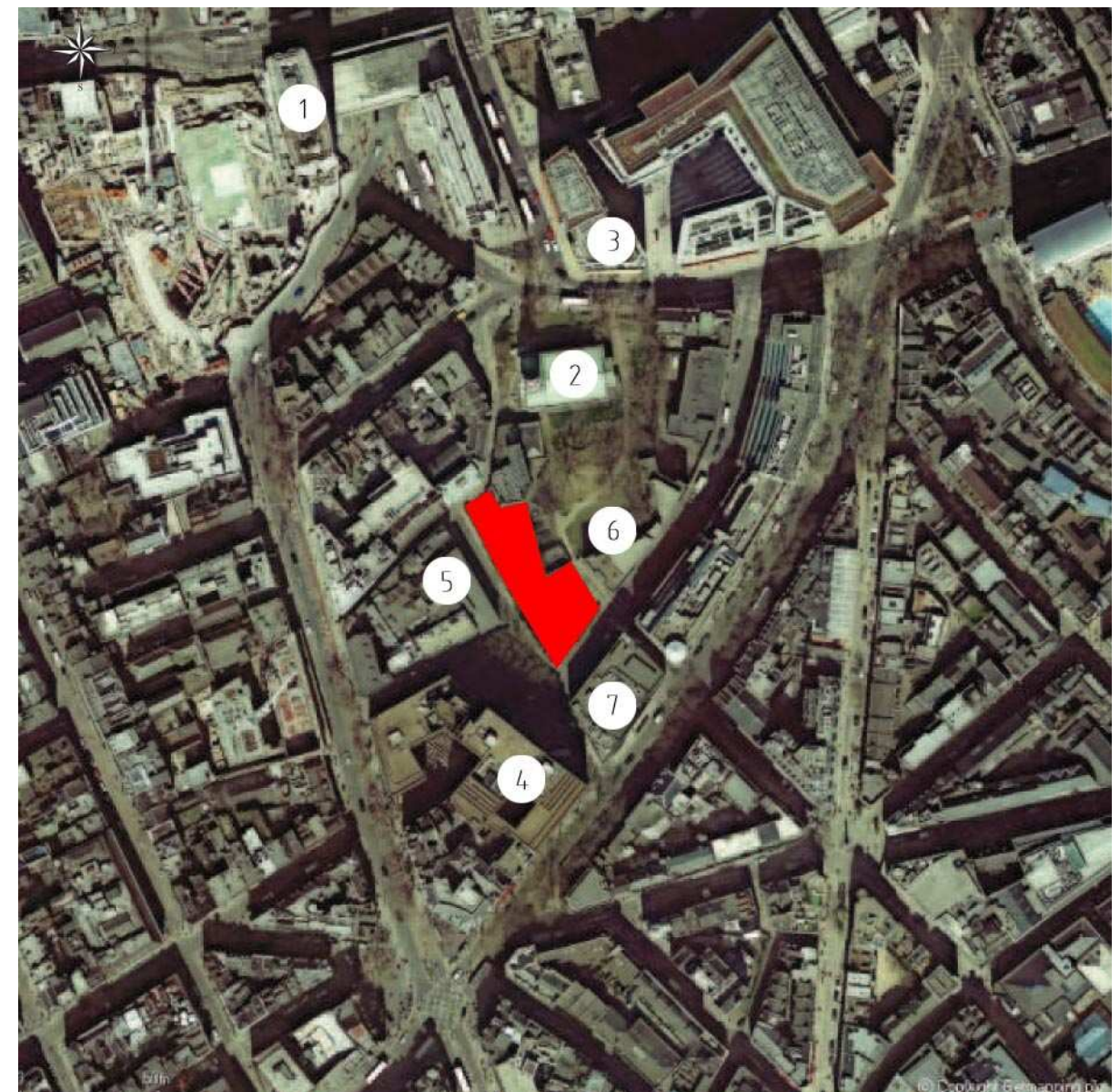
- CS3 Other highly accessible areas
- CS5 Managing the impact of growth and development
- CS9 Achieving a successful Central London
- CS10 Supporting community facilities and services
- CS13 Tackling climate change and promoting higher environmental standards
- CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
- CS15 Protecting and improving our parks and open spaces and encouraging biodiversity
- DP15 Community and leisure uses
- DP22 Promoting sustainable design and construction
- DP23 Water
- DP24 Securing high quality design
- DP25 Conserving Camden's heritage
- DP26 Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours
- DP32 Air quality and Camden's Clear Zone
- Camden Planning Guidance 2011
- Denmark Street Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy
- Camden Biodiversity Action Plan
- The London Plan 2011
- NPPF 2012

2.4 Existing Site Description and Appraisal

2.4.1 Surrounding Buildings

In its present condition, The Phoenix Garden is an urban haven providing a quiet and relaxing public garden to workers and inhabitants, in the heart of London. The garden site is a pocket of greenery surrounded by a dense network of residential and commercial buildings [numbered and marked on aerial photograph opposite]:

1. 35 storey high Centre Point Tower to the North. Materials: White concrete and glass.
2. Grade I listed St Giles in the Fields Church to the North [dated from 1731-33]: Materials: White stonework.
3. 15 storey high St Giles office development to the North. Materials: Multi-coloured façade and glass.
4. 11 storey high Lloyds Banking Group office development to the West on Shaftesbury Avenue and Stacey Street. Materials: Brickwork.
5. 4/5 storey residential and commercial buildings to the West and North on Stacey Street. The courtyard just by Stacey Street is used as a lunchtime meeting area for workers. Materials: Brickwork.
6. 5-8 storey residential buildings to the East on St Giles Passage and New Compton Street. Materials: Coloured panelled facades and glass.
7. 7 storey Odeon cinema to the South on New Compton Street. Materials: Brickwork.



2.42 Approaches to the Garden Site and Views

The vast majority of visitors to the garden arrive by foot. The small passageway from St Giles in the Fields Church, Phoenix Street, Stacey Street and St Giles Passage provide the main walking routes which all lead from main roads. The existing buildings in the garden are all situated on the corner of New Compton Street and Stacey Street. Because they are located on a busy and exposed corner, these buildings are often the first visual contact visitors have of the Phoenix Gardens. Unfortunately, for visitors and passersby alike, these buildings also 'hide' the garden from public view in an ugly manner.

From entering into the garden at St Giles Passage, visitors can expect a wide range of well maintained plant life, together with a natural habitat for animals such as butterflies, birds and amphibians. Visitors can follow marked brickwork paths which wind around the garden, and can rest on benches.



Approach View from New Compton Street



Approach View from the north on Stacey Street



Approach View from the south on Stacey Street, showing existing buildings on site

2.43 The Phoenix Garden

On Stacey Street and New Compton Street, the garden is bounded by low brickwork walls and railings. A small complex of buildings lie at the intersection of these two streets. These buildings are used for storage purposes, and as a simple secure room for the caretaker's tools. They are in stark contrast to the immediate surrounding buildings, and can be said to be an eyesore, especially in relation to the garden itself. The area of garden immediately bounding these buildings is in poor condition, and in some parts filled with concrete and rubble. There is no sheltered accommodation for visiting schools or groups of people.

The brickwork construction of the structure in the garden is of poor quality, and is painted in a green colour which has no reference to the garden, or surrounding buildings. It provides hardly no useful functions, other than storage, with currently no water, toilets or built-in heating. The structures detract from the picturesque setting of the garden, and further, provide inadequate facilities for the caretaker and visitors to the garden. The key view towards the picturesque St Giles in the Fields Church is maintained from within the garden.

2.44 Existing Conditions and Site Opportunities

- Quality. The strong quality of the garden is at the heart of the Charity's objectives. However, the facilities supporting the garden are of poor construction, and serve little purpose for the needs of both the head gardener and visitors. The current buildings in the garden are an eyesore, and detract from the beautiful haven created by the charity. It is the charity's intention to propose a high-quality, functioning building which complements both the garden and the aesthetic of the surrounding area.
- Maintenance. Whilst upkeep and maintenance of the garden is conducted by the gardener and volunteers, the maintenance of the buildings is clearly outside of their expertise, and draws attention and effort away from the core principles of the charity. The design and construction of the existing buildings make them quite difficult to maintain. It is the charity's intention to procure a new building which is designed and built to allow for a low level of maintenance and upkeep, whilst providing facilities more attuned to their current needs and future aims.

- Community. The garden is for community use. It provides fantastic and unique outdoor facilities for visitors and inhabitants of the Covent Garden area. However, as mentioned above, facilities for the maximum use and enjoyment of this resource are clearly lacking. With currently no covered spaces for educational or revenue-making purposes, it is the charity's intention to propose a new building which will enhance the idea of the garden as a sustainable and educational opportunity, and thus increase the charity's ability to grow bonds with the community.
- Ecology. The garden is a vibrant and ecologically sensitive area in an urban environment. It is natural that any building in the garden should conform to this ethos. The current structure performs poorly in this regard. However, there is clearly an opportunity to remedy this with a new building proposal.
- Energy. The current building/s on site have little or no sound and thermal capacities. They are not energy efficient and therefore are poorly functioning working environments. There is opportunity here to improve on this situation with a new building which conforms to modern Part L standards with regard to energy use.
- Building Resources. There are unused sinks, WCs, bricks and other usable building materials on the site, which can be recycled for use in any new proposal.

2.4 Consultation and Support

Letters of support in favour of a proposal on this site have been received from various local community organisations. Copies of these letters are included in Appendix 6.5.



Existing views from within the garden

3.0 The Brief

3.1 The Client's Brief and Proposed Building Functions

The Client's brief is as follows:

The design of a new-build Phoenix Garden Community and Education Centre. The new building should house a community office/meeting space. The new building is to be in the same location as the existing buildings. The building should provide a new educational facility, of capacity up to one half of a school class size [15 pupils]. Storage to be provided, along with kitchenette and WC facilities. The roof should be accessible and safe for use as a secure propagation area.

The building is to showcase, where practical, the ecology of the garden, and be robust in the face of potential vandalism, graffiti, climbing, forced entry, etc.

3.2 Sustainability and Ecological Aspirations

The charity has ambitions to enhance the biodiversity of the garden by creating new habitats in and around the proposed building. This proposal is seen as a catalyst for learning about ecology and biodiversity, and a key resource for the local community and schools. The new building features:

- the use of high quality, sustainable, and easily maintained materials
- where possible, reclaimed materials [brick, for example], taken from the garden
- a building fabric insulated to Building Regulations standards, to minimise energy requirements
- a compact and adaptable layout, ensuring economical use of space, and the least impact of encroachment into the garden
- the provision of 'green' and 'brown' roofs, with propagation areas
- water harvesting, for the collection of water to be used for the garden

4.0 The Proposal

4.1 The Design Process

The design of this proposal has been developed along a process which has taken into account the local and general context, views to and from the site, ecology and conservation concerns and opportunities, the history of the site, together with local community opinions. Further, as explained below, comments from Camden Council made with regard to a previous Planning Application for this site have been taken into account with regard to the size, scale and materials proposed for this design.

In particular, care has been taken to design a facility which works in harmony with the garden, and the immediate views to other buildings. This is a building which should be beneficial to the local community and visitors in general to the area.

4.2 Views and Visitor Approach

As stated in the Denmark Street Conservation Area Statement, the garden "...enhances the setting of St Giles Church". Any visitor approaching the garden from the south has to, however, contend with the existing painted brickwork structures on the corner of Stacey Street and New Compton Street. This is a key view, as St Giles Church is seen in the distance, directly behind the structures. In fact, from this viewpoint, the existing structures only achieve in hiding the beauty of the garden from view.



Proposed View, from Shaftesbury Avenue, Stacey Street

A clearly defined entrance to the new facility is positioned at the corner of Stacey Street and New Compton Street, on the New Compton Street façade. It is the aim of this proposal not to detract from the view of the garden and St Giles Church; a 'green' roof is proposed on the building's Stacey Street elevation so as to 'draw' the garden further to the corner of the site, and thus provide a more welcoming view from the south. The planting on the roof serves to frame the new building within the context of the garden, and not visa versa. It is important that the building, although on a prominent site and location and seen as a welcoming feature for visitors, is designed to work within the context, and not dominate the delicate nature of the garden.

The 'green' roof element on the Stacey Street elevation also has a positive impact for visitors approaching from Charing Cross Road via Phoenix Street. Instead of approaching a blank side elevation, a more interesting side of the building is presented, with small trees and foliage on the roof suggesting that the garden 'grows' over the building.

Views from the relative low-rise housing on Stacey Street have been taken into account in the design of this proposal. It is proposed to allow for these inhabitants to benefit as much as possible from a garden view across the street, and so a 'green' roof facing Stacey Street and stretching towards New Compton Street only enhances this idea.

Stacey Street is tree-lined. The paved forecourt on the corner of Stacey Street and Phoenix Street becomes a meeting point for workers in the area, especially at lunchtimes. By extending the garden over the proposed building, the 'green' roof references these trees and this meeting point, to create a more pleasant meeting area.

Views from the approach from New Compton Street are dominated by the somewhat overbearing rear facades of the Odeon Cinema and Lloyds building, and so the existing garden setting acts as a needed counterpoint to this. The extent of the garden is not reduced by the new proposal, and planting frames attached to the garden-facing façade of the new building add to the amount of greenery on view from this aspect.



Proposed View, from corner of New Compton Street and Stacey Street



Proposed View of garden-facing facade



Proposed View, from corner of New Compton Street and St Giles Passage

4.2 Uses

Policy CS3 states that:

"The Council will promote appropriate development in the highly accessible areas of.....Tottenham Court Road. These areas are considered suitable locations for the provision of..... community facilities....."

Although the buildings on site are to be demolished, the functions of these buildings will be maintained, and complemented with additional facilities within the new-build proposal to allow the charity to fulfil their stated aspirations. They offer much needed upgrades to what is currently available on site, for community and staff use. The proposal is deemed to be supported by Policies CS3 and CS10.

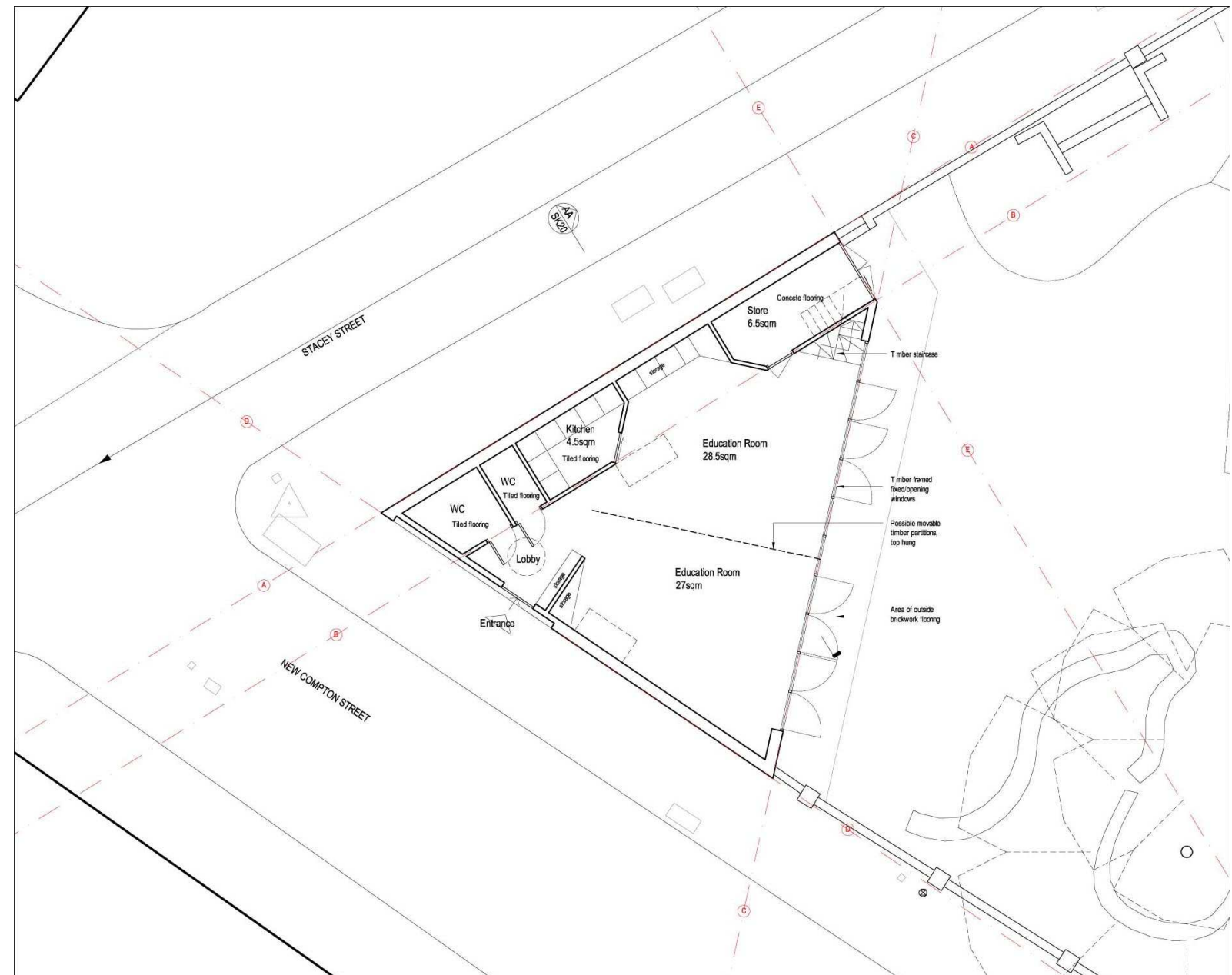
The following room functions are proposed within the new building:

- 1no. Education/Community Meeting/Activity Room, approx 28.5sqm
- 1no. Education/Community Meeting/Activity Room, approx 27sqm
- 1no. Kitchenette, approx 4.5sqm
- 1no. Storage Room, approx 6.5sqm
- 2no. WC facilities, including 1no. fully assessable WC
- Entrance Lobby area, and storage space

These functions are arranged over one floor of the single storey proposal, with the roof used for a planting and propagation area.



Proposed View, from Stacey Street towards Shaftesbury Avenue



Proposed Ground Floor, Not to scale

4.3 Amount

The amount and density of the design is in keeping with the surrounding built environment, and the aspirations of the charity to be a continued community hub. The allowance of meeting and education spaces, with fully accessible WC facilities within the building, are proposed to enhance the visitor's relationship to the garden, and lessen the strain on existing facilities in the area.

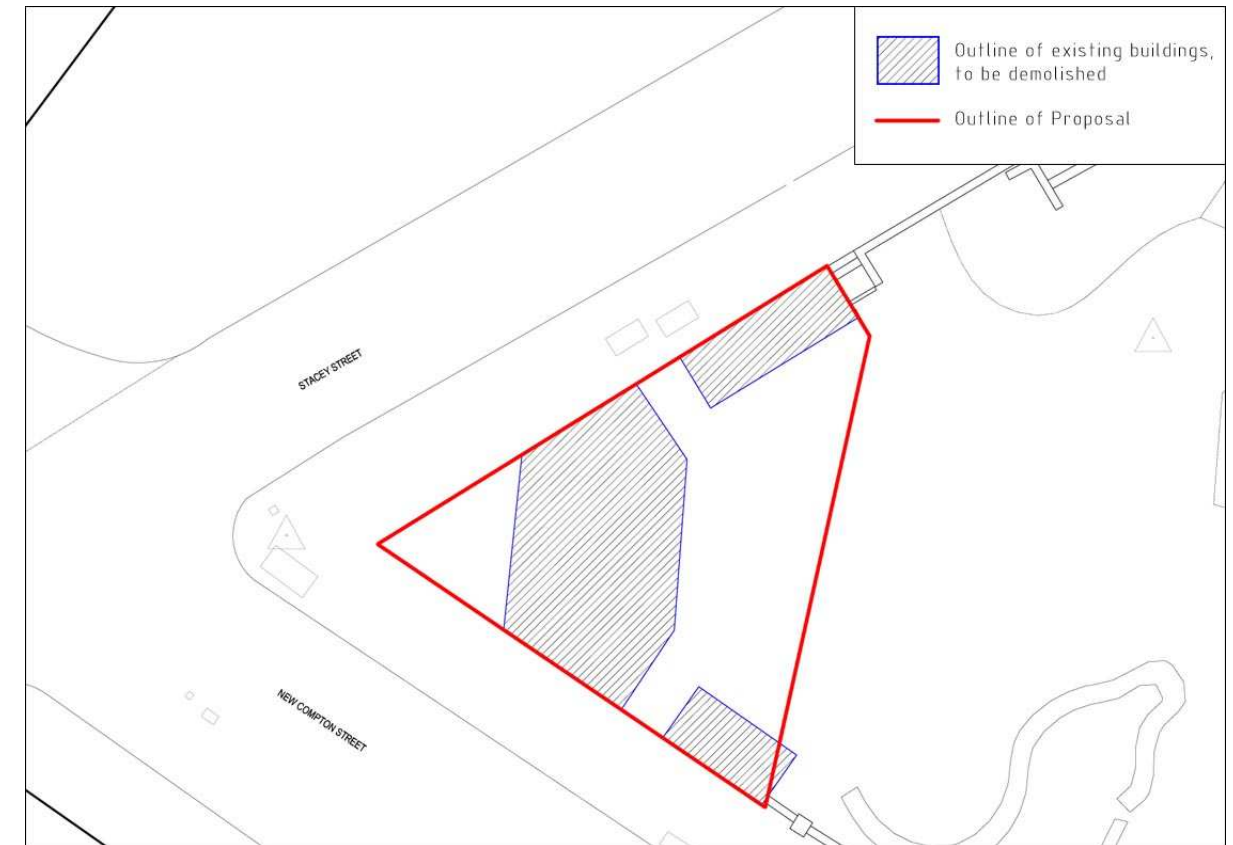
4.4 Setting and Layout

The proposed building is located on the same location of the existing office and storage structures. These are all proposed to be demolished. This is the preferred positioning for any new building, so as to limit possible excavations on a site of high archaeological interest, and also to preserve the current ecology of the existing garden. The relationships between the street facing facades have been designed specifically to respond to their setting.

Further, this corner setting provides a decent level of street security, through traffic entering and exiting the building.

When entering the building from New Compton Street, the visitors enter a lobby space, from where most functions of the building can be accessed. WCs and a small cloakroom are located by this entrance. The 'service' functions of the building [WCs, kitchenette, storage], are placed on the 'noisy' sides of the side, bounding the roads. These rooms function as a sound and visual buffer to the main space, allowing the central space of the building to benefit from the tranquillity of the garden.

The layout of the proposal shows that each function of the building has a clearly delineated space. The meeting/event rooms face onto the garden, with a large level of glazing on this façade to allow for interaction between the interior and exterior spaces. The meeting rooms also can be adapted with a movable screen, so that this room can cater for a variety of uses and numbers of visitors.



Outline Plan, Not to scale

4.5 Scale

The proposal is a single-storey building, with a flat roof at two levels. This small building is approximately only 1.15m higher than the existing structure, and is dwarfed by the surrounding buildings of varying heights. The height and scale of the proposal are not only determined by the functions of the building, client aspirations, and the site constraints, but also by the importance of The Phoenix Garden as a much-valued community resource, and the architectural qualities of designing for 'corner sites'.

A slightly taller building to the one existing is proposed not only to maximise the visual impact of the garden from within the building, but also to recognise that the building should be seen as a proud advertisement of the garden itself. The existing green-painted brick buildings are an eyesore, and it is the charity's ambition to promote the garden through a high-quality new building which stands proud in an important and historic location.

Further, the existing squat buildings on site do not maximise the potential and the uniqueness that a 'corner site' encourages. A building located at the corner of a larger site should be seen to provide a clear design statement and aesthetic, especially as the proposal is seen in context in more than one street scene.

There is approximately 1130sqm of open space in the Phoenix Gardens, with the existing structures adding around 60sqm in footprint area. The proposed building's footprint is 89sqm. Therefore, the proposed buildings would encroach in the open space by approximately 2.6%. This is considered a negligible amount, with no harmful impact on the designated open space, and therefore in compliance with policies CS15 and DP31.

4.6 Landscape, Amenity and Ecology

Policy CS5 states:

*"The Council will manage the impact of growth and development in Camden....
With consideration given to... providing sustainable buildings and spaces of the
highest quality.... and protecting and enhancing our environment and heritage
and the amenity and quality of life of local communities."*

The proposed building use will be ancillary to the garden, and the single-storey height of the building is not deemed to affect sunlight or daylight levels to the garden or neighbouring buildings. In this regard, the proposal is compliant with Policy CS5 and DP26.

In consultation with the Head Gardener, Chris Raeburn, a fully integrated landscaping and ecology solution, incorporating the existing garden and new planting features within the new building, is proposed. Both a 'green' and 'brown' roof is proposed, with a propagation area. Wall attached frames will be proposed to the garden-facing façade to aid the growth of hanging and climbing plants. By improving the provision to the garden, and increasing the amount of landscaping to encourage biodiversity, the proposal is in compliance with Policy CS15.

The green roof area of the roof will be planted with a selection of shrubs and small trees adapted to and well able to grow un-irrigated in the summer-dry conditions. Species chosen will be similar to those already utilised in the garden, having proven themselves successful in the thin dry soil above the rubble matrix that is found in the garden. These species bring habitat boosting benefits to the site and extend the area of the garden available for colonisation by wildlife, whether as direct food source or as provision of dense cover. The planting will include;

- Rosa pimpinellifolia
- Coronilla glauca
- Spartium junceum
- Prunus spinosa
- Lavatera olbia
- Hedera helix – adult form



Proposed Roof Plan, Not to scale

Brown roof areas will be used to extend the dry low growth areas of the garden's habitat. Over the years, this habitat niche has become increasingly scarce onsite as shrubby growth has matured and shaded out lower herbaceous growth. The charity is particularly keen to ensure that the invertebrate species that require these conditions are not lost from the garden. The undisturbed areas of the roof, free from the activities of garden visitors, will provide an ideal environment to establish this habitat for the long term. By seeding the roof with materials collected onsite, the garden's existing native wildflower community will be utilised, creating a community comprising of 'brown field' scrubland species, including;

- Greater Mullein
- Black Horehound
- Field Scabious
- Herb Robert
- Red Campion
- Ox-eye Daisy
- Ivy-leaved Toadflax

The garden-facing façade will be clothed in a selection of ornamental, habitat boosting species. Particular selections for wildlife provision will be;

- Clematis 'Summer Snow' – a long flowering clematis hybrid developed for bee-forage.

- *Lonicera periclymenum* – native honeysuckle, supplying nectar for moths and berries for birds.

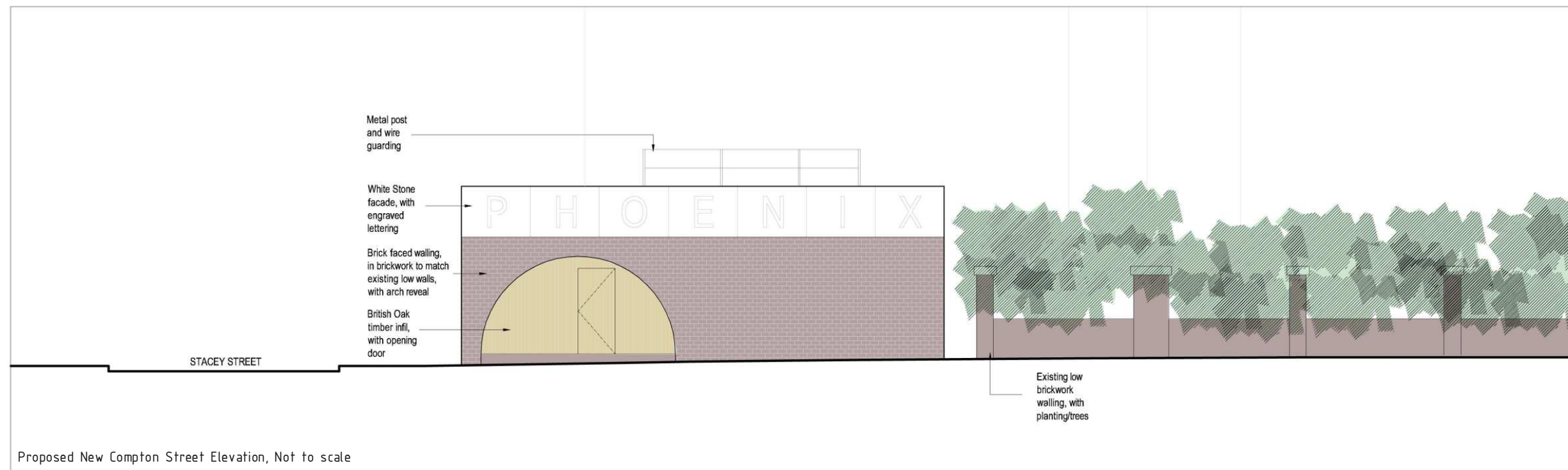
The proposal is sited where the existing structures and hard standing are located, and thus falls within a previous developed area of the site. No trees in the garden are likely to be affected by the proposal. Further, the new building is well below the canopy of nearby trees. As such, and in reference to the Delegated Report for the previous granted application for a building on this site [application number 2012/2580/P], the proposal is deemed to have no adverse impact in a Local Site of Importance for Nature Conservation [SINC], and therefore a separate ecological report is not required. Indeed, the proposed ecological enhancements integrated within the proposal should result in an overall increase in the biodiversity value of the site as a whole. Further, with the new facility able to provide a higher level of provision to sustain the growth of the charity and garden, the proposal is deemed to be in compliance with Policy CS13.

4.7 Appearance and Materials

Policy CS14 states that the:

“...Council will ensure that Camden’s places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by...requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character,... And preserving and enhancing Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens...”

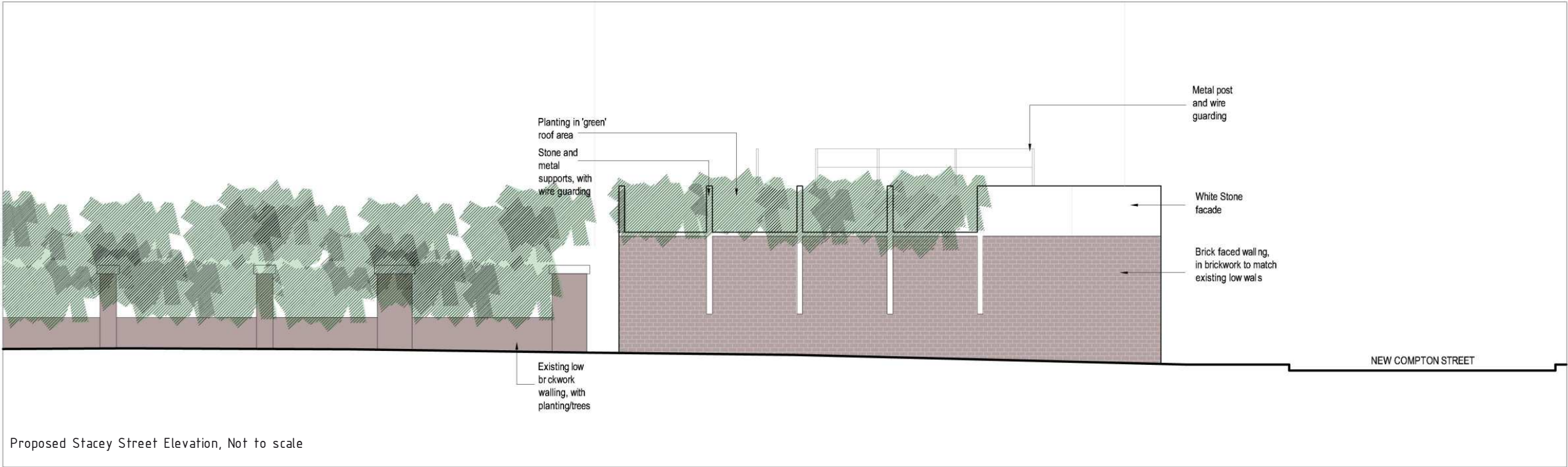
The design of this single-storey proposal has been carefully developed with a concept which references the garden as a key component. The new building is envisaged as a ‘Garden Wall’ as seen from Stacey Street and New Compton Street, which respects the status of the Phoenix Garden as a true hidden haven. Both the Stacey Street and New Compton Street elevations are modest in design, which is seen to be in keeping with the garden setting. The scale of the proposal is modest in height, and the use of brick which matches the existing low boundary walling is seen as a detail which will respect the vernacular of the immediate area, and also the large proliferation of red-brick building in the locale.



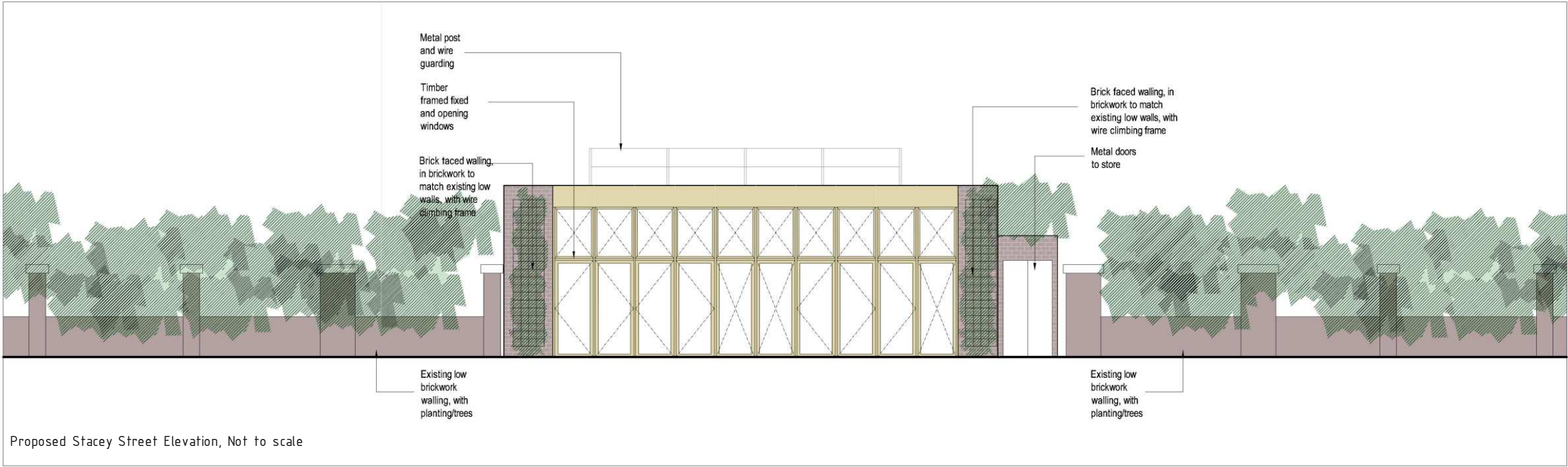
The entrance archway is an unpretentious design detail in keeping with the ‘Garden Wall’ concept. It provides a welcoming entrance for any visitor to the garden and facility, whilst not being overpowering in aesthetic. Further it references other brick buildings of note in the area. It is proposed that the species of timber used for the door and infill panelling within the arch is British Oak [a species directly relating to the trees growing in the garden itself]. The facility is proposed as a learning centre, and so any manner in which the proposal can promote this is a positive.

The upper portion of the New Compton Street façade is faced in white stone, with the words ‘PHOENIX’ carved into them. Acknowledging the importance of the view through to St Giles Church, the white stone is proposed to reference the stonework of the church. The proposed design does not seek to parody or mimic any style of existing building in the area. However, subtle references to the St Giles Church, and brick buildings in the area, have been incorporated into the design development to propose a new building which complements the surrounding ecology and built environment.

The Stacey Street elevation is of brickwork, again to match the brickwork of the existing boundary walls. This side of the building is lower than the New Compton Road façade, so as to accommodate a 'green' roof, with planting and foliage held in place with wire and stone guarding. The guarding follows the rhythm of the existing low boundary walling and railings. Both the street elevation walls extend along the streets to the extent of the existing structures.



The garden-facing façade is far more expressive in character, with timber framed fixed and opening glazing elements creating a light and open 'edge' to the garden. Wall-attached metal frames are proposed to encourage hanging and climbing plants to take root over the façade of the building, and further 'bed' the new building into the ecology of the garden. A large element of glazing is proposed in this elevation so as to allow for the maximum amount of visibility towards the garden. This is proposed to aid in helping the charity provide a strong year-round, all-weather learning facility, which at present, it cannot.



4.8 Access

Policy CS14 states the importance of:

"...promoting high quality landscaping and works to streets and public spaces.... and seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible..."

Policy DP15 states the importance of community and leisure facilities in areas close to people who use them. Access to the garden directly from the street is not to change from its present location. It is proposed that access to the new building should be in a highly visible position, so as to be obvious to any new visitor, but also to deter against anti-social behaviour in the area. Level access from inside the building directly to the garden is proposed.

4.9 Energy and Construction

Although there is no requirement for a proposed building of this size to achieve a specific BREEAM rating, policy DP22 does state that the Council will require sustainable design and construction methods. The proposed building is to be constructed with a lightweight timber insulated frame, with brickwork and stone exterior cladding. Reclaimed materials such as brickwork, which is currently stored in the garden, will be used in the construction of the building. A fully insulated roof, with provision for an area for 'green' and 'brown' roofs, and a propagation area for seedlings for the garden, is proposed. High quality double glazing will be used for all glazing elements, and will conform to all Building Regulations stipulations. A rainwater harvesting system is proposed for plant watering and pond refills.

4.10 Archaeology

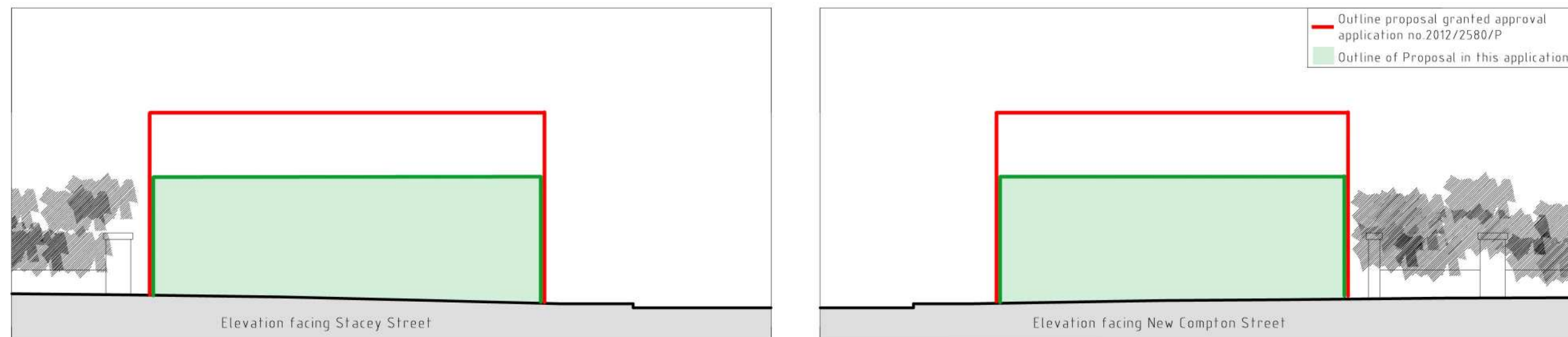
The site is located within an archaeological priority area, which historically suffered substantial bomb damage. In reference to the previous granted application for this site [application number 2012/2580/P], it was recorded that English Heritage confirmed no need for a Full Heritage Statement and Historic Assessment, given that the proposed building footprint is as near as possible to the existing building footprint. Further, it was suggested that the cost of this report would be prohibitively expensive given the small size of the project and the budgetary constraints of the charity.

An Environmental Survey Report in Appendix 6.2, which constitutes a desktop survey, is included within this document together with analysis of below ground risks in relation to contaminated land, soil qualities, below ground make-up, and unexploded ordinance.

4.11 Previous Proposal

A previous proposal for this site, granted approval in 2012 [application number 2012/2580/P], was for a community building with the same functional requirements as proposed within this application. The following points are to be noted:

- Height and Scale. A concern raised at pre-planning stage for the application referenced above was with regard to the height of the proposal, and its impact on views through to St Giles Church. The building proposed in this application is 1.5m lower than the building granted permission from the previous application.
- Use. The proposal outlined in this application, although smaller in scale and single-storey compared with the two-storey previous proposal, contains the same level of functioning rooms.
- Materials. Comments in the Delegated Report for application 2012/2580/P made reference to the positive impact of a 'soft' appearance to the street-facing facades. Brickwork to match the existing bricks which form the low boundary walls are proposed to reflect this comment, and is seen as an improvement with regard to the painted render finish proposed for the previous two-storey building.



5.0 Conclusion

This proposal, which includes the colour, materials, proportions and scale of all proposed elements, has been developed in close consultation with the Clients and community, and in reference to the site history, local conditions, planning policy and sustainability and ecology factors over a short and long-term future. The aim has been to create a high quality and feasible design which caters to the needs and aims of the Charity. This design replaces an existing eyesore and poorly functioning buildings, with a new building built of high-quality materials which respects, preserves and enhances both the Denmark Street Conservation Area, and The Phoenix Garden.

