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HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In respect of

Nos. 61-63 Rochester Place, Camden

On behalf of

Digits2Widgets

AHC REF: ND/SW/9257

Date: April 2015

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APPENDIX 1

English Heritage List Entry for 108-132 St Pancras Way

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 1.1 This report has been prepared and written by Dr Nicholas Doggett, MCIfA, IHBC, Managing Director of Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd. and Sarah Watt, MCIfA, Director of Asset Heritage, on behalf of Digits2Widgets, the applicant. Its purpose is to assess the impact of the proposals for a second-floor extension to the premises at 61-63 Rochester Place on the setting of nearby heritage assets; the application building itself is not listed, nor is it included in a conservation area, but it is located within the settings of two conservation areas and a Grade II listed terrace.
- 1.2 This report, which also takes into account the recent appeal decision to allow a first-floor extension to the building (PINS ref: APP/X5210/A/14/2223247; LPA ref: 2013/0643/P), describes the application site and assesses the contribution it currently makes to the character and appearance of the adjoining conservation areas and to the setting of the nearby listed terrace. It then goes on to discuss the impact of the new proposals on the setting of these heritage assets, providing a reasoned justification in heritage terms for the proposed redevelopment scheme.
- 1.3 This assessment is made in accordance with paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires applicants *'to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'*.
- 1.4 For the reasons set out in this report, we are satisfied that the proposed scheme, which is written in the context of the recent appeal decision referred to above, preserves the character and appearance of the conservation areas and the setting of nearby listed buildings.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING BUILDING, HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

Description

- 2.1 61-63 Rochester Place is located to the east of Royal College Street where it splits with St Pancras Way, east of Kentish Town Road in Kentish Town, Camden. It lies to the south of Rochester Road, Rochester Terrace and Rochester Terrace Gardens and west of its intersection with Wilmot Place. Reeds Place is located to the west. Rochester Place forms a mews to Rochester Terrace.
- 2.2 The application building is a part one-storey and part two-storey building designated as B1/B8 Use and currently occupied by a 3D Printing Studio with workshop/office space on the ground floor and office space on the first floor. The building (of irregular plan-form) extends across the two plots (the plot of 63 Rochester Place is double the width of the plot of No.61), and appears to have been built between 1946 and 1954. The application building covers the vast majority of the plot with a very small yard located at the rear. The building has been extensively altered over time and used for various purposes.
- 2.3 The application building is steel framed with solid London stock brick external walls and flat roofs with roof lights to the main workshop spaces (**Plates 1-4**). The façade of No.61 projects slightly forward of the façade of No.63. A small section at the western end of No.63 with areas of patched brickwork also projects forward very slightly. Detailing on the façade is minimal. There are two entrance doors and a garage door with sliding shutters, three horizontal sliding metal windows and one tall vertical metal window, all with brick headers. On the rear elevation is a pair of glazed doors overlooking the small yard. The side elevations, where visible, present long blank ranges of solid brick, render and black roofing material. Essential repairs have recently been carried out to the roof, which was previously in poor condition.
- 2.4 In summary, the application building is of a utilitarian design with plain, unadorned elevations and has little or no claim to visual interest or significance.

- 2.5 The application building has no true architectural or heritage merit. Nevertheless, given its location immediately adjoining two conservation areas (despite the fact that the boundaries of both have been deliberately drawn to exclude the building from them) and the potential impact of the proposals on the character, appearance and setting of the conservation areas and the setting of nearby listed buildings, it is helpful in the following paragraphs to discuss the general historical evolution of the surrounding area.

Historical Background

- 2.6 The plot of 63 Rochester Place is double the width of the plot of No.61, which has influenced the application building's form. The plot was originally partly developed by 1873 when a rectangular structure fronting onto Rochester Place existed on the eastern portion of the site (plot No.61); this may have served as a mews building to 122 St Pancras Way. The rectangular structure appears to have been extended by 1895.
- 2.7 At some point between 1916 and 1946, further building had occurred on the plot on the portion occupied by No.63 but it appears the application building itself was probably only erected between 1946 and 1954 as a wholly new structure. By 1954 it was part of a 'Scientific Instruments Works' which extended onto the adjoining plot, No.59. It also served light industrial and warehousing purposes, and today is used as a 3D Printing Studio.
- 2.8 Details on the development of Kentish Town and 61-63 Rochester Place as summarised below are drawn from a number of sources, including the Rochester Conservation Area Statement (2001), Jeffrey's Street Conservation Area Statement (2002) and historic Ordnance Survey Maps.
- 2.9 Kentish Town was formerly the main village in the parish of St Pancras and a settlement is likely to have been established near St Pancras Old Church in St Pancras Way (today one of the oldest churches in London and on the site of an even earlier church), by 400 AD. Kentish Town developed along the road to Highgate which followed the course of the Fleet River.

- 2.10 The likely impetus for development is reflected in the number of inns built along Kentish Town Road to cater to the travellers passing through on their way between London and the north. With time the village became known as a convenient and healthy escape from the city. Further growth occurred in Kentish Town in the 18th century as London expanded. More houses were built on the main road, farms produced milk for sale in the city and hay was grown to feed the increasing horse population. Proprietors built extensive pleasure grounds at their inns, enticing travellers to stop.
- 2.11 The Fleet River, which flows down from Hampstead and Highgate, was the cause of frequent flooding in the area but also caused further difficulties in the form of pollution. While the Hampstead Water Company leased and built ponds in the 17th century to supply water, which reduced the river's flow, increased sewage output from new houses further burdened the river and it was slowly culverted over.
- 2.12 Lord Camden attained an Act of Parliament in 1791 allowing him to develop land along the east side of Camden High Street. Development expanded, soon linking up with the southern end of Kentish Town. Between the mid-1840s and 1870 Kentish Town experienced a transformation, with rapid growth triggered by the sale of Lord Southampton's land in 1840 and the building up of the streets between Kentish Town Road and Haverstock Hill. Not only were many houses built over the former fields but the railways cut through the area.
- 2.13 By 1849 the houses on Wilmot Place had been built, as had some of the houses on Rochester Road. By 1860 Rochester Road and Rochester Terrace had been finished, with the gardens of the Rochester Terrace houses extending back to Rochester Place.
- 2.14 Railway development in the area included the Midland Railway Line, which bought up unbuilt land for its sidings, workshops and train sheds, and the 1850 North London Line, built on its brick viaduct above the southern end of Kentish Town. Ten years later the branch that turns through Kentish Town to Gospel Oak and Hampstead Heath followed. To the south, Agar Town was wiped out by St Pancras and its associated goods yard. Northern Kentish Town suffered when it absorbed displaced residents from elsewhere and became a crowded working-class district.

- 2.15 More positively the railways brought industry and jobs, including a massive coal depot. Piano making was centred on Kentish Town and Camden Town and 300 workers were employed in the largest factory on Grafton Road. False teeth, furniture, wallpaper and artists' materials were also made in factories in the area, with metal works and suppliers to the building trade in business as well.
- 2.16 Schools, public baths and churches were erected in the second half of the 19th century to serve the densely built-up areas of housing, and sanitation, street lighting and public transport were improved, the latter by the introduction of horse-drawn trams in the 1870s.
- 2.17 At the same time mews-type buildings were erected on Rochester Place with some of them built to serve Rochester Terrace resulting in a mixture of light industrial and residential use. The 1873 and 1875 Ordnance Survey maps depict the site of the application building, which then comprised three adjoining plots which were connected to or were part of plots fronting onto St Pancras Way (called Kings Road at the time), two with gaps in their shared boundary walls, linking the respective spaces together (**Figs.1 and 2**).
- 2.18 Nos.118 and 120 St Pancras Way stood behind 63 Rochester Place and 122 St Pancras Way behind 61 Rochester Place. The two plots comprising 63 Rochester Place are shown to be unoccupied by any built structures, except for what appear to be tracks. The single plot comprising No.61 has a rectangular structure fronting onto Rochester Place with what appear to be unroofed enclosed spaces behind; this may have served as a mews building and stabling to 122 St Pancras Way.
- 2.19 The maps show that to the north-west of the application building, along Rochester Place, there was a circular building holding an organ works, as well as other warehouses with a large open plot located to the west of the organ works. To the south-east beyond Wilmot Place, Rochester Place was called Camden Cottages Mews. Practically all of the south side of Rochester Place had been built up by this time but the north side was little developed with many of the gardens belonging to the terraced houses on the south side of Rochester Terrace still reaching back to Rochester Place.

- 2.20 By the 1870s there was already a variety of built form in the vicinity of the application site, including detached, semi-detached and terraced properties with a range of garden sizes to the residential properties. The 1870s' maps also illustrate other industries and other uses, including two nurseries to the east and north-east, a coal depot and Camden Brewery to the south-west. Institutions included various churches and schools and Camden Town Station on the North London Railway was in existence by then.
- 2.21 By the time of publication of the 1895 and 1896 OS maps, two of the application site's three plots (those comprising 63 Rochester Place) appear to have been separated from 120 and 122 St Pancras Way (**Figs.3 and 4**). No.61 was still connected to 118 St Pancras Way; the building occupying the site in 1873 appears to have been extended to the rear and another longer rectangular building built behind and attached to it. The trade and professional directory for 1895 lists a Frederick Richards, undertaker, with addresses at 149 Kentish Town Road as well as 59 and 61 Rochester Place.
- 2.22 A school for boys, girls and infants had been built on the large open plot to the west of the Rotunda Organ Works on Rochester Place. The tramways may be seen running along Kentish Town Road, Great College Street (Royal College Street) and Camden Road. While most of the immediate area appears to be built up there were still a few nurseries as well and a timber yard and pianoforte works comprised some of the other industrial uses in the area. Public transport in Kentish Town continued to improve at this period with the Northern Line opening in 1907 and the trains being electrified in c.1908.
- 2.23 No change appears to have occurred on the application site's three plots by the time the 1916 OS map was published, although a few more buildings had appeared on the north side of Rochester Place (**Fig.5**). The circular organ works has been replaced by an expanded school building and one of the nurseries by a garage and laundry. The tramway on Kentish Town Road had been removed.
- 2.24 There is a local story that there may have been a small factory on the application site which produced Spitfire canopies during the Second World War, although to date no direct evidence has been found to support this. The building then on the application

site may well however have suffered bomb damage given that two high explosive bombs fell on Rochester Place between 7 October 1940 and 6 June 1941 (information from the website Bombsight.org). One bomb fell very near to Reeds Place and could have hit 61-63 Rochester Place, with the second one nearer to Wilmot Place.

- 2.25 On a 1946 RAF aerial photograph, plot No.63 appears to comprise a small rectangular flat-roofed building fronting Rochester Place. There also seems to be a long and narrow building behind the small rectangular building running the length of the plot between the empty area and the rear wall of 1-8 Reed's Place. Plot No.61 appears to have contained a gable-roofed building with a flat-roofed structure behind (**Fig.6**). A large area of demolition at the north-east corner of Camden Road and St Pancras Way and the removal of the tramways on Great College Street (Royal College Street) and Camden Road are further evidence of extensive change in the neighbourhood (again, possibly due to wartime bomb damage).
- 2.26 By the mid-20th century Kentish Town Road had become an important shopping centre and most of the older houses had been converted or rebuilt as shops. Drapers expanded and became department stores. While the street continued to prosper in this way during the 1950s, the aftermath of the Second World War brought supermarkets, chain stores and the burden of increased traffic, all of which contributed to the street's decline. The post-war period also saw housing projects replace a substantial number of Victorian dwellings.
- 2.27 By the time of publication of the 1954 and 1955 OS maps, 61-63 Rochester Place was part of a 'Scientific Instruments Works', comprising a newly-built irregular plan-form building that also extends onto plot No.59 (behind a smaller structure fronting on Rochester Place) and incorporates a long rectangular building on plot No.57 (**Figs.7 and 8**). This must effectively be the present application building, as there are clear similarities of form on the frontage to Rochester Place, where No.61 juts out beyond the front building plane of No.63, albeit significant additions and alterations have been carried out to the rear since then.
- 2.28 A much larger 'Scientific Instruments Works' was also located to the south-east on Rochester Place in the 1950s, encompassing an entire block for the erection of which large swathes of houses were demolished, with another building across Rochester

Place. Nos.61-63 may have been associated with this larger works. There was a tractor service depot opposite the application building as well as other commercial and industrial uses in the area, including warehouses, a joinery shop, a garage, a bottling depot and an Employment Exchange with various large blocks of flats a little further away.

- 2.29 By 1963 an engineering works had been built at 68-70 Rochester Place. The 1969 Land Registry plan illustrates the composition of the application building at that time in greater detail than the OS maps (**Fig.9**). No.63 contains the longer of two rectangular structures, covering nearly the whole of the plot except for a small triangular yard at the rear, and No.61 contained a narrower (by half) and shorter rectangular building. At the rear, the building on plot No. 59 fits around the end of No.61 and abuts No.63. The application building is still marked on the Land Registry plan as part of the 'Scientific Instruments Works'.
- 2.30 In 1976 and 1977 several planning applications were submitted and approved for various works at the application building, consisting of the construction of a caretaker's flat, garage and new means of access to the highway, refurbishment and the reconstruction and extension of the first floor to be used as a staff room/canteen. The approved works proposed to re-clad part or all of the façade with glazed ceramic wall tiles and to install a large plate-glass showroom window with a curved pane to the entrance.
- 2.31 It is not known how much, if any, of this work was carried out (if it was it may simply have been swept away by still later alterations). The north-west side elevation of the first-floor portion was to have a series of windows looking out over the ground-floor roof which, according to plans accompanying planning application ref CTP/22145, had a large section of lantern lights casting light into the interior. They have however been replaced by the double-glazed pyramidal lights on the existing building.
- 2.32 According to the OS maps, the application building continued to be part of the 'Scientific Instruments Works' up until at least 1982, as shown on the OS map from that year (**Fig.10**). In 1987, according to planning application ref 8701396, the building was in use for clothing manufacturing. From 1992 the application building is identified on the OS maps simply as a 'Works' (**Fig.11**). Other industrial uses located

nearby, including on Rochester Place, comprise other 'Works', warehouses and garages. From 1993-2003 the application building was occupied by 'Studiospares', a distributor and seller of audio and sound equipment, who also used the premises for warehousing.

- 2.33 In March 2005 the application building was described in a Planning & Design Statement associated with planning application ref 2005/1047/P as '*effectively a shell with no internal fittings or sub-divisions at ground floor*'. The first floor was described as 'outdated', the office space insufficient and the existing flat roof prone to deterioration and requiring frequent repair.

Contribution to Adjoining Heritage Assets

- 2.34 Two adjacent conservation areas were designated in the late 1980s and 2000s and in 1994 the late Georgian terrace, 108-132 St Pancras Way and its attached railings, located behind the application building, was statutorily listed at Grade II. Jeffrey's Street Conservation Area, located to the north-west, west and south-west of Nos.61-63, was first designated on 12 November 1985 and extended on 19 November 2002 to include College Gardens, buildings to the south and east of the gardens, the shops along the west side of Royal College Street and Reeds Place. Rochester Conservation Area, located to the north, north-east and north-west across Rochester Place from Nos. 61-63, was designated on 12 December 2001 and its boundaries are unchanged.
- 2.35 Rochester Place itself (i.e. the traditionally paved street) is excluded from both conservation areas as, rather oddly, the two conservation areas come very close to each other but do not quite abut, leaving a narrow gap between them (i.e., Rochester Place) rather than meeting at a line drawn along the centre of the road. This is a little strange considering that the street itself is generally an attractive one, particularly in terms of the views along it and its traditional paved surfacing, the latter feature being specifically noted in the Rochester Conservation Area Statement.
- 2.36 Rochester Place's narrow width (6m with pavements of 1m each), small-scale development and one- to two-storey buildings provide a sense of enclosure which form a distinct contrast with the wider surrounding roads and larger terrace on St Pancras Way and villa-style properties on Rochester Terrace (**Plates 5 and 6**). The

current buildings on Rochester Place include residences and commercial units and range in date from 1870 until at least 1990, if not more recently. For instance, the workshops at 50-54 Rochester Place were built in 1900 by Philip Wilson, van and wagon builders (**Plate 7**), and Nos.42-44, at the end of Reed Place, built by David Wild between 1980-85 in a modernist style as his own home and an adjacent house for a neighbour provide good examples of buildings at both end of this date spectrum.

- 2.37 The earlier buildings (many of which originated as industrial or other non-residential structures) generally have fewer architectural details and are uniform in plot width and construction. They have coach-house style front doors with window base panels, box windows with gauged arch heads and stone cills, shallow pitched slate or tile-clad roofs and timber doors (originally hoist doors) on upper-floor levels. The street itself retains granite sett surfacing, channels and kerbs as well as rectangular cast-iron obelisk bollards.
- 2.38 Buildings referred to in the Rochester Conservation Area Statement as detracting from the character and appearance of the conservation area include Nos.36-38 Rochester Place (permission was granted for refurbishment and minor alterations of the facade in late 2007 (ref 2007/4688/P)), which was latterly Soul II Soul sound studios, and before that a warehouse.
- 2.39 This building, located directly opposite the application building is described in the Character Statement as '*a bold structure, which forms a hard and featureless façade. The bulk, massing and form of its elevation has a detrimental impact on the street*' (**Plate 8**).
- 2.40 Although some buildings considered to detract from the conservation areas are nevertheless included within their boundaries, the application building was apparently deliberately excluded from the Jeffrey's Street Conservation Area, along with neighbouring buildings to the south-east on Rochester Place and Wilmot Place, which omission must be a clear reflection of their lack of architectural or other heritage interest. The boundary of the Rochester Conservation Area is drawn at the southern boundary line of the buildings on the northern side of Rochester Place.

- 2.41 The prime architectural interest of the late Georgian Grade II listed terrace, 108-132 St Pancras Way, located behind the application building, lies in the façades to the street and in its form as a 'set piece' of architecture which creates '*a strong and cohesive piece of townscape seen across College Green*' (to quote the listed building description attached at **Appendix 1**). This view from across College Green is clearly the key element of the terrace's setting (**Plates 9 & 10**).
- 2.42 The busy intersection of Kentish Town Road, Royal College Street and Jeffrey's Street and the quieter Reeds Place and Rochester Place, College Gardens, also form part of the listed terrace's setting but the views from the windows in the rear elevation of the terrace, which (as is usually the case in such situations has also been considerably altered) towards the application building and Rochester Place in general are very obviously not significant ones in heritage terms. In this context it is worth noting that views from 120 St Pancras Way were examined as part of the Inspector's site visit in connection with planning application ref 2013/0643/P: see paragraph 3.6 below).
- 2.43 The application building does not, in our opinion, contribute in any meaningful way to the setting of either of the adjoining conservation areas or of the nearby listed buildings identified above. Indeed, if anything, its relatively modern date and uncompromisingly utilitarian character tends to detract from the established character and appearance of the conservation areas. Certainly, there is no credible reason for considering that it makes a 'positive' contribution to the setting of any of the nearby designated heritage assets.
- 2.44 Given the building's lack of architectural interest and heritage significance it clearly has considerable capacity for change, provided of course that this change 'preserves or enhances' the character, appearance and setting of the respective conservation areas and 'preserves' the setting of the nearby listed buildings. This capacity for change has already been demonstrated by the recent approval on appeal (examined in some detail in Section 4.0 below) for the construction of a first-floor extension to the building.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

The Application Building

- 3.1 Various proposals for planning permission were applied for and refused (with some dismissed on appeal) in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007 for full demolition of the application building, and in 2009 and 2012 for redevelopment to create new business space and flats above. It is important to note that these refusals were all *'essentially due to [the] quality of replacement business space,'* and not for reasons of bulk, height, mass or design or harmful impact in heritage terms.
- 3.2 On 29 May 2012, under ref 2012/0983/P, planning permission was refused for the redevelopment of the site, with excavation of the floor and retention of perimeter walls, to provide a part two-, part three-storey building comprising business/warehouse space (Class B1/B8) at ground-floor level plus residential entrance, cycle and refuse storage, and six self-contained flats (2 x 1 bedroom, 3 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom) at first- and second-floor levels; creation of terraces at first- and second-floor levels; and installation of roof lights, green roofs and photovoltaic panels at roof levels.
- 3.3 Critically, the Planning officer wrote in the Development Control Committee Report that these proposals were, *'refused only on [the] grounds of inadequate quality and quantity of replacement employment space and absence of Basement Impact Assessment- it should be noted that the scheme was considered acceptable in terms of bulk, design and impact on [the] amenities of residents'.*
- 3.4 Planning permission was granted on 12 October 2012, under ref 2012/4165/P, for external alterations including the installation of an enlarged replacement door and new ventilation grilles on the front elevation, and installation of eight new roof lights at a warehouse/business unit (Class B1/B8) (these works have been implemented).
- 3.5 On 5 August 2013, under ref 2013/2779/P, planning permission was granted for the installation of two air-conditioning units with acoustic enclosure and two exhaust air extraction units with timber trellis within existing rear yard space in connection with studio (Class B1) (these works have now been implemented).

- 3.6 On 28 October 2014 planning permission was granted on appeal for a first-floor extension (Use B1/B8) to the existing building and alterations to its front façade, which appeal had been made necessary following refusal of planning application ref 2013/0643/P on 3 April 2014 by the Council's Development Control Committee Members, notwithstanding the recommendation to approve made by the Council's officers in their report to this committee.

Sites in the Vicinity of the Application Building

- 3.7 A number of the premises near the application building have applied for and received planning permission to undertake works, some of which have been of radical and contemporary design. These include work to statutorily listed buildings, buildings in the conservation areas and to buildings which are neither listed nor in the conservation areas.
- **No.1 Reed's Place** (the garden backs onto the flanking wall of 61-63 Rochester Place towards the very rear of the application building). Application ref. 2011/5840/P was approved on 23 January 2012 for the '*Erection of mansard roof extension to create an additional floor at second floor level with two Velux roof lights on the front elevation and window at the rear, and a single storey rear extension and conservatory extension with doors at rear ground floor level to dwelling house*'. The application originally sought to build a flat-roof extension to the rear of the house but the Council would not permit this. Although the revised scheme with a mansard at the rear was approved, it has yet to be implemented. This building is in the Jeffrey's Street Conservation Area.
 - **No.1a Reed's Place** (the garden backs onto the flanking wall of 61-63 Rochester Place towards the very rear of the application building). Planning permission ref 2009/4604/P was given on 25 November 2009 for the '*Erection of ground floor rear extension with lantern rooflights; erection of mansard roof extension with front dormer window and installation of solar panel at roof level of single dwellinghouse (Class C3)*'. This building is in the Jeffrey's Street Conservation Area.

- **No.2 Reed's Place** (the garden backs onto the flanking wall of 61-63 Rochester Place towards the rear of the application building). Planning permission (ref 2014/2816/P) was granted on 26 June 2014 for a new rear extension, new roof extension and refurbishment. The existing rear extension is to be demolished. A similar proposal was consented in 2006 but not implemented. This building is in the Jeffrey's Street Conservation Area.
- **Nos.36-38 Rochester Place** (the site is opposite 61-63 Rochester Place) (**see Plate 8**). On 26 November 2007 permission was granted for application ref 2007/4688/P for '*Alterations to elevations including replacement of ground floor roller shutters and doors to front elevation, and replacement of first floor windows to front and rear elevations*'. This application also included refurbishment of the façade. The building lies within but is considered by the Council to detract from the Rochester Conservation Area.
- **Nos.55 Rochester Place & 3a Wilmot Place**. On 2 October 2012 application ref 2012/3293/P was approved to carry out the following works: '*Erection of a single storey roof extension with associated external terrace on Rochester Place (north-east) elevation to provide additional flexible Class B1 floorspace; erection of a two storey extension on Wilmot Place (south-east) elevation including mansard roof extension in association with reconfiguration of existing flexible Class B1 floorspace and creation of 1x3 bed self-contained residential unit (Class C3) fronting Wilmot Place, together with associated alterations*' (**Plate 9**). This building is not in either of the conservation areas.
- **Nos.57-59 Rochester Place** (the site adjoins the eastern wall of 61-63 Rochester Place, see **Plate 11**). An application (ref 2013/7845/P) was approved on 31 January 2014 for the '*Conversion of garage into habitable space with aluminium glazed window*'. Like 61-63 Rochester Place, this site is not in the conservation areas. A more radical application (ref PEX0300049) was granted on 10 April 2003 for the '*Demolition and redevelopment of the site to provide part 3/2 and single storey buildings accommodating approximately 95m² of office space (Class B1), 15m² of garage space to be utilised for storage, and 470m² of residential accommodation comprising 1 x 2 bedroom house, 3 x 1 bed flats and 1 x 2 bed flats*'.

- **Nos.1 – 2 Wilmot Place.** Planning permission (ref 2014/2998/P) was granted (subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement) on 28 July 2014 for the '*Erection of third floor extension to provide a two-bed self-contained flat (C3), alterations to commercial ground and residential first and second floor level elevations with associated ramp access. (Alterations to permission ref: 2012/3167/P - dated 17th April 2013)*'. It also includes the installation of six roof lights, six solar panels and a green roof; the creation of a rear roof terrace with a glass balustrade at third floor level (overlooking 61-63 Rochester Place); and the removal of ground-floor garage.
- The 2012 approved application noted above (ref 2012/3167/P), provided for a similar third-floor extension. A change of use from an office to five studio flats at the ground floor was granted by the Council in February 2014 (ref 2014/3339/P).
- **104-106 St Pancras Way/16-32 Wilmot Place.** This large, much altered, early 20th-century building was (according to historic OS map evidence) built between 1916 and 1946 and appears to incorporate a pair of semi-detached Victorian villas fronting onto St Pancras Way (**Plate 12**). Latterly a Job Centre, the building is now private housing and is not situated in either the Rochester or Jeffery's Street Conservation Areas.
- It is noted that (owing to its previous status as a government office) the Council could not control any of the works carried out to this building, including the detail of its appearance, when it was in this use. The online planning history is limited; it lists permitted advertising consent (the most recent application (ref 9380145) is from 1993 requesting permission to display a Job Centre sign on St Pancras Way) but the only development applications listed are for relatively minor alterations, the Council's comments on which are marked '*Observations - No Objections*'.
- The last recorded application for development (ref 9130002), observations dated 23 April 1991, was for '*Alterations to the elevations of the building as shown on drawing nos. 236-32/01a 02a and 03*'. No documents associated with any of the applications are available online; nor is there any information

available online relating to the large heavily glazed box-like extension on top of the building, despite the significant impact this has had, both on the character and appearance of the building itself and the general street scene.

- There have also been various approvals for roof and rear extensions to Nos.3, 5, 6 and 7 Reed's Place in recent years.

4.0 THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS AND THE HERITAGE ISSUES

The Application Proposals

- 4.1 As the previous sections of this report make clear, the application building very obviously has ample 'capacity for change' for alterations and extensions to enable the continuation and expansion of its use as a place of business, provided of course that such change itself 'preserves or enhances' the character, appearance and setting of the immediately adjoining conservation areas, and 'preserves' the setting of the nearby listed buildings.
- 4.2 As referred to above at paragraph 2.44, this capacity for change has recently been recognised by the Inspector at the appeal which approved the first-floor extension under ref 2013/0643/P on 28 October 2014. Indeed, this capacity was also recognised by the Council's Case Officer for the same scheme, who recommended the proposal for the first-floor extension for approval, saying in his report to the Development Control Committee that in his view, *'The first floor extension is considered appropriate in terms of bulk, height and footprint, and facade design and it will preserve the character of the street scene and surroundings and the adjoining conservation area...'*
- 4.3 These proposals consisted of the erection of a first-floor extension with new roof lights and PV panels to the existing business unit (Class B1), relocated roof lights on an existing first floor and external alterations to the front elevation.
- 4.4 The Council gave two reasons for refusing these proposals, the first being: *'The proposed extension, by reason of its bulk, size, location, design and materials, would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the immediate area and adjoining conservation areas'*, contrary to local policy. The second reason related to the residential amenities of neighbouring properties in Reeds Place.
- 4.5 The Inspector concluded, in respect of the first (heritage-related) refusal reason that, *'the proposal, by virtue of its bulk, scale, siting, design and materials would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and would preserve the character and appearance of the adjoining conservation areas'* in line with all relevant local policy. He was also of the view that the scheme *'would preserve the setting of the*

listed terrace at Nos.108-132 St Pancras Way (and it should also be noted that the Council did not raise any concern in this respect).

- 4.6 The purpose of setting out these comments here is that the new proposal for a second-floor office extension (which comprises additional office space with external terraces enclosed by obscured glass screens to front and rear) is designed by the same architect, who has taken a wholly integrated approach to the design of the scheme in terms of how it fits with the approved scheme with regard to bulk, scale, siting and the overall massing of both first and proposed second floors, together with the materials to be used.
- 4.7 In this context, it is quite clear that, for the same reasons that the approved scheme was found acceptable and compatible with its environs, the new proposal is also acceptable and would clearly have no adverse impact on nearby heritage assets.
- 4.8 The principal 'material' difference is of course that the proposed second floor will add more height to the building, but in terms of public perception this will not easily be discernible with no real (and certainly no harmful) change from the scheme recently permitted on appeal. There are several reasons for this.
- 4.9 On the Rochester Place frontage the approved first-floor office studio extension will appear only 2m wider than the present first floor because of the existing projecting staircase here and will be set 2.2m above roof level at the street frontage, matching the height of the existing first-floor roof; otherwise it is 2.5m high along the main part behind the frontage.
- 4.10 The first-floor extension will be set back 5m away from the site boundary with 2-7 Reeds Place and 8m away from the boundary of 120 St Pancras Way (and the listed terrace in general). The roof will be flat to match the existing first-floor portion, but will rise up another 0.3m from a point 6m behind the façade. The north-west side facing Reeds Place will have a bevelled edge so that the elevation here will be only 1.5m high but rise to 2.5m high at 1m behind the building line.

- 4.11 The proposed second-floor extension will sit for the most part above the existing first-floor structure and partly above the approved first-floor extension, but it will be set well back from the latter's north-western building line so that the structure as a whole is stepped back to the south-east as it increases in height.
- 4.12 The extension is to have a curved form at the north-eastern (front) end facing onto Rochester Place and will be set back from the latter behind both the existing and approved first-floor extension building lines behind an external terrace enclosed by an obscure glazed screen. The curving form has been deliberately designed in order to reduce any perception of the bulk of the structure from Rochester Place and to maintain a sightline to the northern side of Rochester Place from the rear part of 57-59 Rochester Place (see paragraph 4.17 below).
- 4.13 From Rochester Place it will in any case be difficult to see the extension in direct views because of the set-back from the frontage. Similarly, in oblique views from the north-west along Rochester Place, the extension will be visible but will be seen in the context of and as an integral part of the already approved first-floor extension. **Plates 11, 13 & 14** illustrate the low visual impact of the relatively recent second-floor additions and roof terraces to 57-59 and 55 Rochester Place, the latter also having a glazed screen to the roof terrace against the street frontage.
- 4.14 In short, the proposal will sit well within and conform to the established pattern and character of built form in this streetscape.
- 4.15 The Inspector who recently approved the first-floor extension said of that proposal that it *'would maintain the incremental step down in building heights towards Reeds Place and would protect the transition between the industrial buildings and the residential properties. The design of the proposal also encourages this, with its bevelled edge that reduces the bulk of the proposed extension when viewed from the street scene. Whilst views of part of the length of the proposed extension would be visible from further along Rochester Place where it adjoins Reeds Place, I consider that the proposed extension would appear relatively modest in the street scene'*.
- 4.16 The present proposal takes the same design approach in maintaining an incremental step down in building heights towards Reeds Place and also has a bevelled edge to the

same side, following that of the first-floor extension; any perception of bulk will be further reduced by the curved corner to the front. This means that the new proposal will have a similarly modest visual impact on the existing street scene.

- 4.17 The proposals for the first-floor extension were in fact a revision of an earlier scheme, which also included a second-floor self-contained flat with associated front and rear terraces and roof lights. This element of the scheme has been removed, primarily due to concerns expressed by third parties about the potential impact on outlook from a flat in 57-59 Rochester Place, an issue which the present scheme addresses by incorporating the curved corner to the front.
- 4.18 It is also worth noting that an application refused in 2012 (see paragraphs 3.2-3.3 above) included the effective replacement of the existing building with a part two- and part three-storey building with terraces at first- and second-floor levels, and although this application was refused, the refusal was not on heritage/conservation grounds, the scheme being considered acceptable by the Council in terms of bulk, design and the impact on the amenities of local residents.
- 4.19 The integration of the overall form of the second-floor extension with the approved first-floor extension is reinforced by the palette of materials to be used. This includes insulated pre-fabricated fibre cement panels to the long north-west (side) elevation, ensuring a continuity of appearance with the first-floor extension, which also uses this material on this side; render and powder-coated aluminium-framed obscured glazing. The curved section to the front will comprise full-height glazing overlooking the proposed terrace, which will be enclosed by an obscured glass screen as will the much smaller terrace proposed to the rear.
- 4.20 The pre-fabricated panels are lightweight and quick to build, which will minimise disruption to the neighbourhood during the construction process.
- 4.21 The style of the proposed extension is deliberately intended to continue the style of the approved first-floor extension, creating a distinct and direct contrast with the traditional London stock brick cladding of the existing and surrounding buildings. In this way both extensions will be seen together as a modern addition to and clearly distinguishable from the existing building. The materials and form of both extensions

will maintain an industrial language through the selection of facing materials that are in keeping with the hi-tech industrial use of the building and other industrial buildings in the immediate area.

- 4.22 As made clear in Section 2.0 above, Rochester Place is a mews street that has historically been home to residential, commercial and industrial buildings and related uses. The proposals for 61-63 Rochester Place fit into this long-established tradition and pattern of development, which continue to be prevailing characteristics of the area to this day.
- 4.23 This contemporary design approach and materials were considered acceptable both by the Council's officers and by the recent appeal Inspector whose view was that '*the contemporary design would complement the range of styles in the area*'. The proposed second-floor extension, in using the same architectural language and palette of materials, must therefore also be regarded as acceptable in this respect.

Impact on Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

- 4.24 The first-floor extension was carefully located so that it is set well back from the site boundaries with 2-7 Reeds Place and the listed terrace at 108-132 St Pancras Way. The proposed second-floor extension adopts a similar approach of stepping back from both the Reeds Place and St Pancras Way properties.
- 4.25 It is also for the most part set back from the long south-eastern side building line of the existing first-floor structure, with only about one third of the building's length projecting south-east to correspond to the existing building line; an open terrace fills the remaining space, with planters proposed behind the parapet on the south-east side which, together with the curve to the front, will considerably 'soften' the appearance of the extension when viewed from 57-59 Rochester Place.
- 4.26 The proposed extension is significantly set back from the perimeters of the building, and will be seen in a limited way from Rochester Place in the context of other similar second-floor extensions at the neighbouring 57-59 and 55, and in views from the rears of properties within the Jeffrey's Street Conservation Area (Reeds Place and St

Pancras Way) which are in any case not significant in heritage terms. It is therefore quite clear that it will not have any harmful impact on the character or appearance of either of the adjoining conservation areas or on the setting of the listed terrace at 108-132 St Pancras Way.

- 4.27 The important 'show elevation' of the listed terrace is on St Pancras Way (see **Plates 9 & 10**) and in much the same way that it is the views from College Green that demonstrate this elevation to form '*a strong and cohesive piece of townscape*' it is the views from this elevation towards the green that were the most importantly historically and remain so today.
- 4.28 The application building is located within a part of the terrace's setting that is of secondary importance and even this is not in any meaningful or discernible way adversely affected by the proposal.
- 4.29 Other developments with a contemporary appearance have recently been permitted on Rochester Place. The refurbishment of the façade of 36-38 Rochester Place was permitted in late 2007 although, as mentioned in Section 2.0 above, this building is considered by the Council to detract from the character and appearance of the Rochester Conservation Area, its Rochester Conservation Area Statement describing it as '*a bold structure, which forms a hard and featureless façade. The bulk, massing and form of its elevation has a detrimental impact on the street*' (see **Plate 8**).
- 4.30 The architect of the present proposal (the same architect who designed the recently approved first-floor extension) has designed a scheme that taken overall is far more modest in bulk, massing and form than 36-38 Rochester Place.
- 4.31 In the mid-2000s 57-59 Rochester Place (next door to the application building) was demolished and replaced with the existing structure (see **Plate 11**). Despite the use of traditional yellow stock brick the overall feel is distinctly contemporary as expressed by the rendered garages and two inset glazed balconies painted red and black. The application proposals are similarly designed in a contemporary idiom which is wholly compatible with the character of this mixed-use area.

- 4.32 The second floor and associated glazed external terrace with privacy screens on either side which were added to the 55 Rochester Place elevation of the property forming 3 Wilmot Place & 55 Rochester Place following approval in October 2012 are set back and constructed in a metal cladding, similar to that of the second floor of 57 Rochester Place (**Plate 11**).
- 4.33 The Planning Officer noted in his Delegated Report on that scheme that the '*proposed changes would enhance the industrial character found along Rochester Place*'. He then concluded that '*the set back nature of the extension will reduce its impact from the street scene and is considered to align satisfactorily with the height of the neighbouring three-storey No. 57 Rochester Place*'.
- 4.34 This contemporary extension was designed to complement the main building yet remain clearly secondary to it. This is another case where the use of a contemporary design strategy similar to that of the application building has been considered to '*preserve the character of the street scene and surroundings and the adjoining conservation area[s]*'.
- 4.35 Lastly, the traditional and modern design aesthetic are carefully (if not altogether successfully) combined on 104-106 St Pancras Way/16-32 Wilmot Place (**see Plate 12**). Certainly, the glazed roof extension here with its deep overhanging eaves and the bold projecting rendered stairwell entrances with their tall windows strongly contrast with the brickwork and timber sash windows of the traditional building below.
- 4.36 These alterations and extensions (which are much more prominent in nature than those proposed for the application building) have certainly had a significant impact on the setting of the adjoining conservation areas irrespective of whether or not they fell within the Council's control.
- 4.37 In light of all this and in consideration of the detailed proposals for Nos.61-63, it is our professional opinion that the proposed second-floor extension will not harm the character, appearance or setting of the adjoining conservation areas, or the setting of the nearby listed buildings.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 In short, for all the detailed reasons set out above, it is our professional opinion that the proposal for a second-floor extension to 61-63 Rochester Place is entirely compatible with the Council's own heritage policies in its Development Policies and Core Strategy, the government guidance contained in Section 12 of the NPPF and the accompanying guidance in the PPG and, most importantly of all, meets the statutory tests set by Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.



Plate 1: Nos.61-63 looking south-east along Rochester Place



Plate 2: Nos.61-63 Rochester Place, detail of right-hand portion, looking south-west



Plate 3: Nos.61-63 Rochester Place, detail of left-hand portion, looking south



Plate 4: Nos.61-63 Rochester Place, roof of ground floor portion and east side elevation of first floor portion, looking north-east



Plate 5: Rochester Place, looking north-west from Reeds Place



Plate 6: Rochester Place, looking south-east from just north-west of Reeds Place



Plate 7: Nos.50-54 Rochester Place, built in 1900 by van and wagon builders, continue in commercial use



Plate 8: Nos.36-38 Rochester Place (opposite the application building). The Council considers that this building detracts from the character and appearance of the Rochester Conservation Area



Plate 9: View north-east to front of listed terrace at 108-132 St Pancras Way



Plate 10: View north-west to front of listed terrace at 108-132 St Pancras Way



Plate 11: Façade of Nos.55 Rochester Place (& 3a Wilmot Place) with its second floor extension and roof terrace and the modern Nos.57-59 Rochester Place



Plate 12: Nos.104-106 St Pancras Way/16-32 Wilmot Place; the traditional and modern design aesthetic is carefully if not altogether successfully combined here



Plate 13: Looking north-west along Rochester Place; note second-floor addition with roof terrace to left on 55 Rochester Place, with roof terrace also on adjoining 57-59, with 61-63 beyond



Plate 14: Looking south-east along Rochester Place towards 61-63, with roof additions and terraces beyond on 55 and 57-59

Fig. 1: Ordnance Survey Map (1:1,056), 1873

Nos.61-63 Rochester Place consist of three plots which were part of the houses at Nos.118-122 St Pancras Way. The gardens of Rochester Terrace back onto Rochester Place

Fig. 2: Ordnance Survey Map (1:2,500), 1875

Fig. 3: Ordnance Survey Map (1:1,056), 1895

Two of the appeal site's three plots, comprising No.63 Rochester Place, appear to have been separated from Nos.120 and 122 St Pancras Way. No.61 is still connected to No.118 St Pancras Way. A school has been built to the south-east of the organ works

Fig. 4: Ordnance Survey Map (1:2,500), 1896

Fig. 5: Ordnance Survey Map (1:2,500), 1916

No change appears to have occurred to 61-63 Rochester Place in the intervening years. A former nursery has been converted to a garage and laundry

Fig. 6: Historic Aerial Photography (1:1,250), 1946

The appeal site appears to be comprised of a small rectangular flat-roofed building on plot No.63 fronting Rochester Place. There may also be a long and narrow building behind with an empty area possibly with aeroplanes parked on it and a gable-roofed building with a flat roofed structure behind on plot No.61

Fig. 7: Ordnance Survey Map (1:1,250), 1954

**Nos. 61-63 Rochester Place are part of a 'Scientific Instruments Works' with a larger
'Scientific Instruments Works' to the south-east**

Fig. 8: Ordnance Survey Map (1:1,250), 1963

No change to the application building is apparent. An engineering works has been built at 68-70 Rochester Place

Fig. 9: HM Land Registry Plan Ordnance Survey Map (1:1,250), 1969



At the time 61-63 Rochester Place was comprised of the following: No.63 has the longer of two rectangular buildings which covers nearly the whole of the plot except for a small triangular yard at the rear and No.61 has a narrower and shorter rectangular building

Fig. 10: Ordnance Survey Map (1:1,250), 1982

The application building is still part of the 'Scientific Instruments Works'

Fig.11: Ordnance Survey Map (1:1,250), 1992

The application building is identified simply as 'Works' and other industrial uses such as works, warehouses and garages continue in the area, including on Rochester Place

Appendix 1:
English Heritage List Description for Nos.108-132 St Pancras Way



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IoE Number:477952

Location: NUMBERS 108-132 AND ATTACHED RAILINGS, 108-132 ST PANCRAS WAY (north east side)

CAMDEN TOWN, CAMDEN, GREATER LONDON

Photographer: Mr Tom Cronin

Date Photographed: 07 August 2004

Date listed: 28 October 1994

Date of last amendment: 28 October 1994

Grade II

CAMDEN TQ2984SW ST PANCRAS WAY 798-1/66/1773 (North East side) 28/10/94 Nos.108-132 (Even) and attached railings GV II Terrace of 13 houses, 4 with shops. Mid-1820s. Stock brick and stucco, slate roofs. EXTERIOR: 3 storeys and basements, No.112 with added mansard storey not of special interest. Each house is 2 windows wide except for No.108 (one window wide), with doors to right reached up steps over basement areas; the end houses with entrances on side returns. Stuccoed ground floors and basements with banded rustication treated as keystones over openings. A hierarchy of 12- and 8-light glazing bar sashes to the upper windows. The ground floors have always had a variety of fenestration, with margin lights to No.120 and round-arched windows to the remainder, Nos 114 and 130 with 12 lights and central round-arched glazing bars. Nos 116 and 122 with modern casement windows of no interest. Original doors except to No.122. All doorcases with engaged, fluted pilasters and semicircular toplights, No.130 with decorative fanlight, save Nos 108, 110, 112 and 132 which have shopfronts. Those to Nos 108 and 132 of particular interest as early C19 examples, with corner entrances. No.108 has moulded eaves cornice, deep frieze, engaged unmoulded pilasters and small panels under 6- and 4-light windows, these with thin mullions and central transoms. That to No.132 has simpler cornice and sides, but 12 and 10 smaller panes between slender glazing bars, and margin lights to top; square top-light over modern door at corner. Shopfront to No.114 with pleasant early C20 margin-light decoration to top, and contemporary door. INTERIORS not inspected but many are noted to retain original cornices and shutterboxes as well as staircases. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: spearhead railings to basement areas and entrance steps in the properties without shopfronts. This terrace forms a strong and cohesive piece of townscape seen across College Green.