

Alexandra Road Estate

Rowley Way Flat 65A

Design & Access Statement

Rev C

August 2015

Levitt Bernstein

Contents

01 Introduction

Introduction	05
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02 Analysis

The Alexandra Road Estate	07
The A3 Flat Type	08
Protected Features	10

03 Proposed Works

Design Approach	13
Current Condition	14
Kitchen Details	16
Products	18
Scope of Works	19

Section 01

01

Introduction



Section 01

Introduction

This Design and Access statement has been produced by Levitt Bernstein, on behalf of Camden Council, as part of a Listed Building Consent application for flat 65A in the Alexandra Road Estate.

Context

Camden Council owns a number of 'void' properties that have been vacated by their tenants. Works are proposed to address change, wear and damage that has affected these properties over time, and to adapt the original layouts to be suitable for contemporary needs.

There are a number of concurrent applications for the 'voids', of which this is one. The contents of the applications will also inform two other sets of works, the Better Homes programme and a future set of Estate Management Guidelines.

Better Homes

Simultaneously with the voids applications, the Council is preparing a programme of works to achieve Better Homes standards, to be rolled out across the Estate. Comprising alterations and refurbishment to kitchens and bathrooms, and re-wiring, this will affect all Council-owned dwellings on the Estate. The void dwellings will be the first to which the Better Homes changes apply.

The voids applications therefore act as a pilot for the Better Homes works. The Better Homes applications will follow separately, giving the opportunity to learn from these first dwellings and to engage further in stakeholder consultation, developing the detail as that project moves forward.

Management Guidelines

Similarly, the Council is preparing for the creation of a new set of Estate Management Guidelines.

Previously, the Estate was part of a pilot scheme by English Heritage (now Historic England), 'Streamlining Listed Building Consent'. Here, principles and agreed works were written down in a set of Management Guidelines to enable regular maintenance, repairs and minor alterations to occur without recourse to Listed Building Consent.

The original Management Guidelines developed by English Heritage and Camden's District Housing Office were put in place in March 2000.

In 2003 the District Housing Office commissioned SEF Architects to prepare Listed Building Applications for the then void properties. It was agreed with English Heritage to extend this across the whole estate, covering current and future void properties. Three listed building consents were granted on this basis:

LWX0202074	18th June 2002
LWX0202178	18th June 2002
LWX0202179	18th June 2002

Levitt Bernstein have been involved with the Alexandra Road Estate since 2001 and have seen through a number of capital projects with London Borough of Camden and other pilot works with English Heritage. In August 2004 Levitt Bernstein were appointed to update the Management Guidelines and to incorporate the work of SEF architects above.

Due to organisational changes within EH and the London Borough of Camden the exercise was never concluded. As an interim measure London Borough of Camden put a draft version of the Management Guidelines on their website dated January 2006.

Through the voids and Better Homes works, there is the opportunity to revisit and update the Management Guidelines and complete the work started in 2004. The voids applications mark the start of this process, again giving an opportunity to learn and develop the proposals, which will eventually become the basis of a Heritage Partnership Agreement with Historic England.

A temporary first version of the Heritage Partnership Agreement is intended to form the basis of the Better Homes works.

The current application

This application therefore relates to specific works within one dwelling, but lessons learnt through the works and through the associated consultation will be used to inform the Better Homes works and the first and final versions of the Heritage Partnership Agreement.

This is a second version of the information originally submitted, which has been revised in response to consultation meetings with Camden Council's Conservation Officer, Historic England, and the Alexandra and Ainsworth Estate Tenants and Residents Association Better Homes and Conservation Consultation Group.

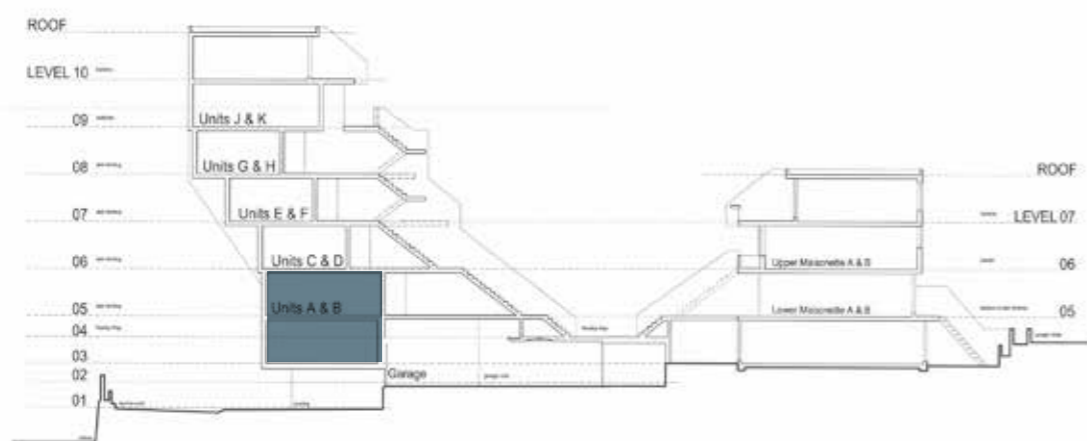
Section 02

02

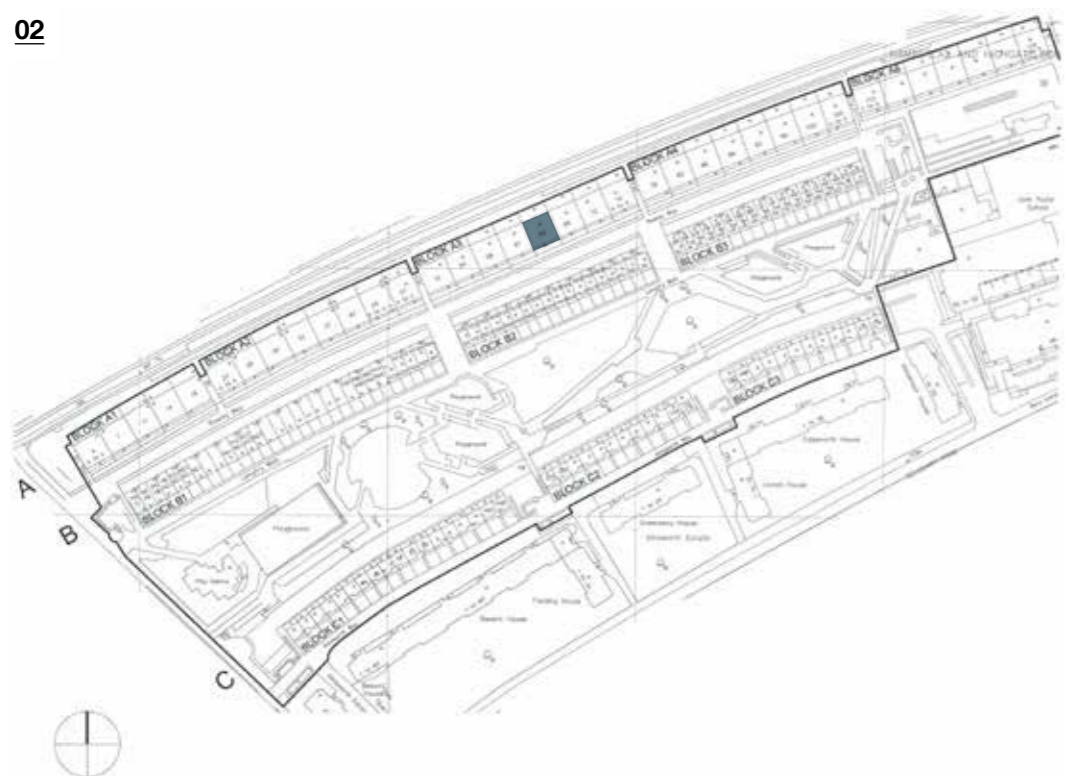
Analysis

The Alexandra Road Estate

01



02



Key:

■ Flat Location

01 Cross section
02 Location plan

The quality and importance of the estate has been widely recognised both in England and abroad. It is a powerful icon of the optimism and idealism that underpinned post-war public sector architecture.

Statement of Significance

The Alexandra Road Estate is a residential estate of 520 dwellings in Camden, NW8. The majority of the estate was listed Grade II* in 1993, the remainder now falling within the Alexandra Road Conservation Area, designated in 1996.

Designed in 1968 by Neave Brown of the London Borough of Camden Architects Department and built between 1972-78, the estate is among the most ambitious social housing schemes of this time, one of a series of low rise, high density schemes.

The street is the dominant element in the design, a modern translation of the traditional London street where the sum of the whole exceeds the individual parts. The linear, stepped section, influenced by Leslie Martin's work, by Denys Lasdun at the University of East Anglia (1962-68) and by Patrick Hodgkinson at the Brunswick Centre (1967-72), enables all dwellings to have a sunny outdoor space and the seven storey A block shields the estate from the noise of the railway line to the north.

The estate also represents a development of Brown's earlier work in private practice, for housing societies at Winscombe Street and Fleet Road. Though much smaller, these too were essays in high-density developments of stacked dwellings and the considered sequencing of spaces from public and semi-public to private and semi-private.

Internal features

The estate contains a number of different dwelling types, all sharing a similar approach and a number of key features. The high density of the estate led to tight interior layouts, mitigated by open plan elements. Sliding doors and glazed partitions allow flexible arrangements, with the potential for views and light to pass through each dwelling.

The proximate relationship of public and private is eased by porches, decks and planting.

Finishes are restrained, white paint contrasting with stained timber and brown tiling. Simple joinery shelves and cupboards are formed from plywood, while the stairs are a more developed piece of joinery work. In the kitchens, concrete worktops form a striking, almost sculptural element. These are tiled, as are the walls, forming a very deliberate composition.

The number of bespoke elements is unusual in authority-built housing, and the level of ambition has led to some long-term issues. The tiled surfaces, for example, the best that could be done with the budget at the time, are now missing tiles, with the grout hard to clean. The sliding partitions are prone to stick and fail. These elements will have to be mended or replaced, as appropriate.

The A3 Flat type

This maisonette is situated on levels 03, 04 & 05 of Block A and is flat type A3.

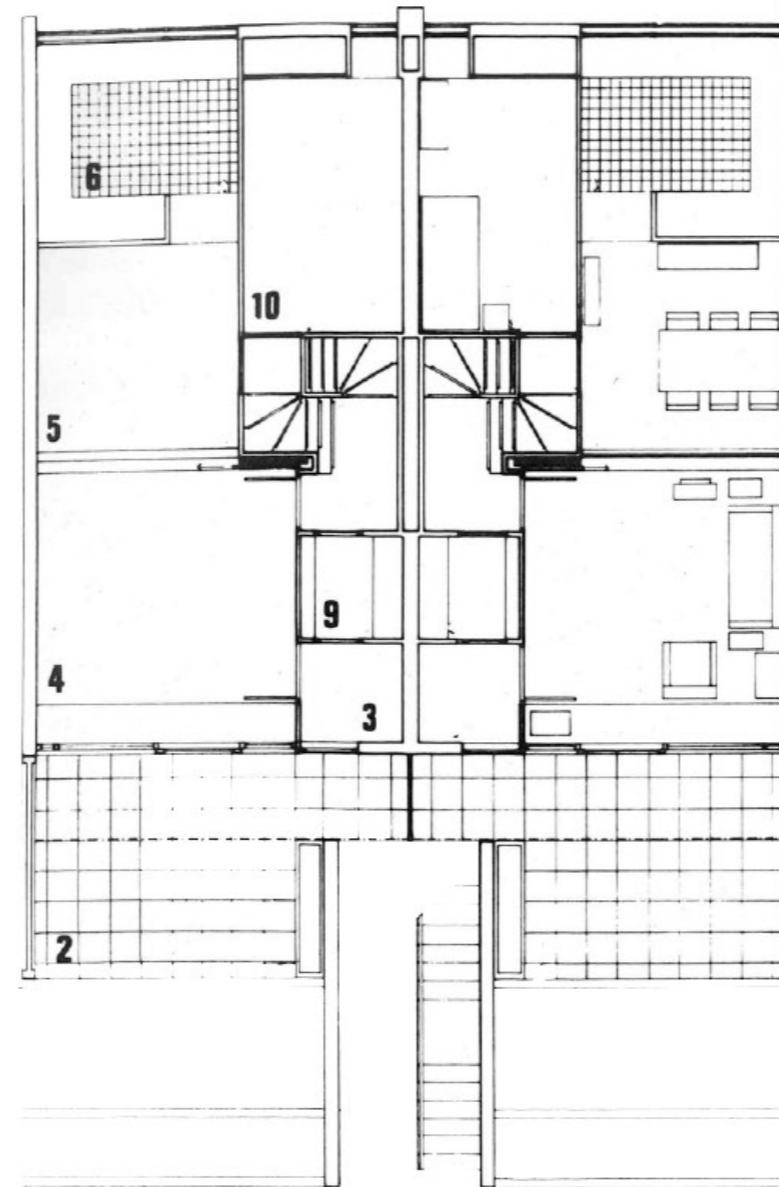
Flat Description

This is a duplex arrangement with three bedrooms. The entry level contains the living area which is linked, via a high-level opening, to the kitchen/dining. The kitchen/dining room is a mezzanine level which also contains the first bedroom and is accessed via the stair in the entrance corridor. This stair also takes you down to the lowest level which houses the 2nd and 3rd bedrooms, the bathroom, WC and utility/store.

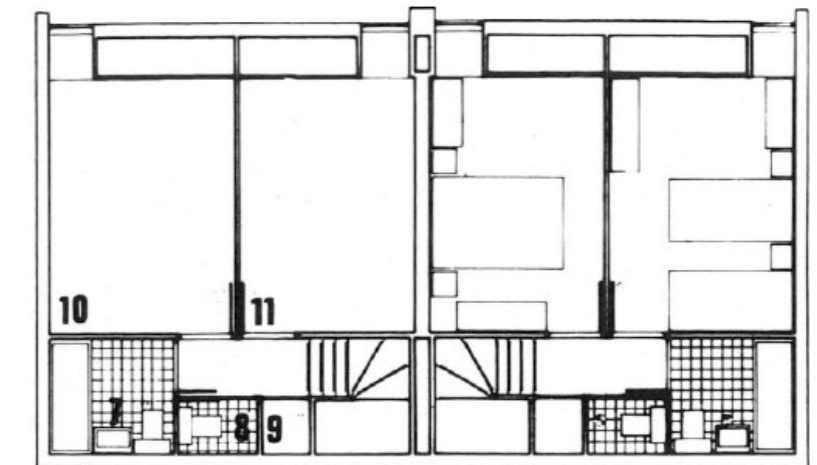
Kitchen Layout

The kitchen is a three-sided arrangement, with in-situ concrete worktops to two sides, clad with tiles that also extend up the walls to form a splash back. The third side is formed from three lift-out panels, so that additional appliances could easily be incorporated as required. Unusually there are no wall mounted cupboards in this kitchen layout however there is a deep window recess to the railway side with glazed sliding fronts. The kitchen is open plan to the dining room with a raised bar between the two.

The kitchen design shows a clear, well-ordered concept, with a limited, complementary range of robust materials and a rigorous yet almost playful arrangement in plan. However, by modern standards there is very little room for storage and very little room for appliances. There is an opportunity to address this, where possible, in restoring the room.



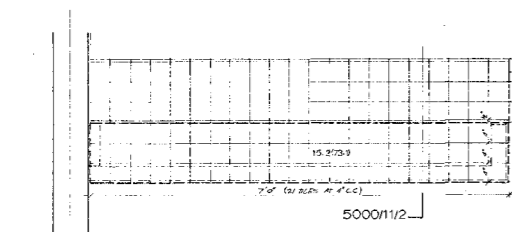
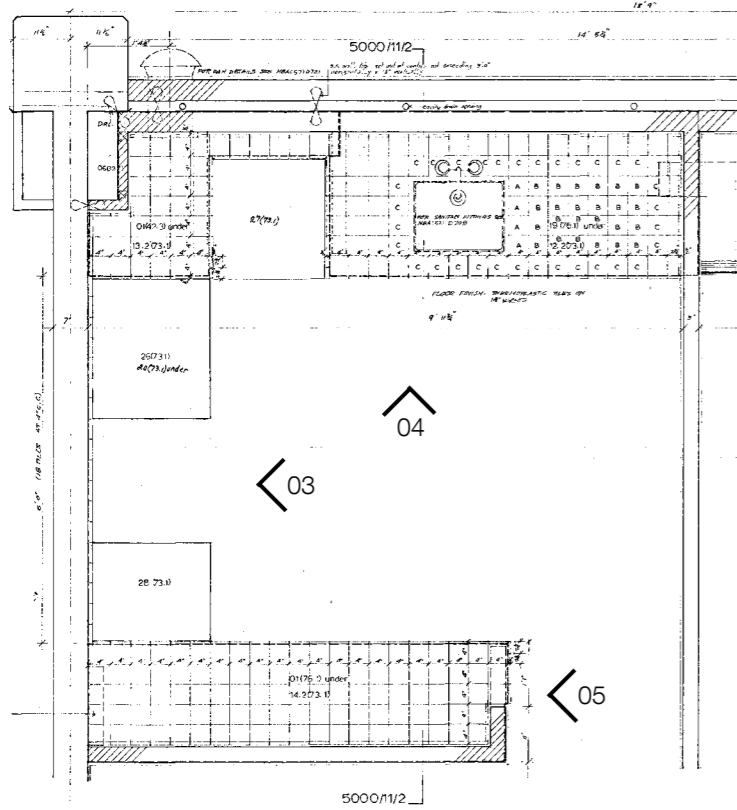
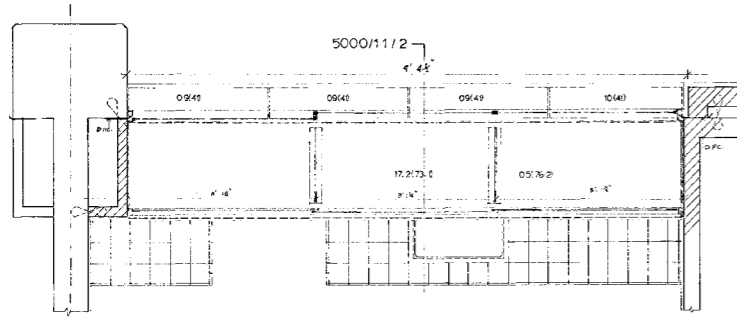
block A: five-person unit
upper floor plan



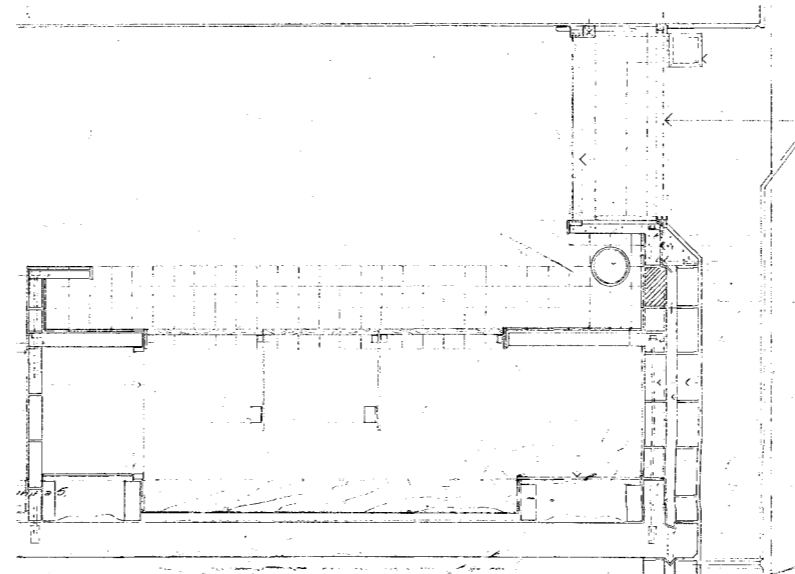
lower floor plan

key to plans

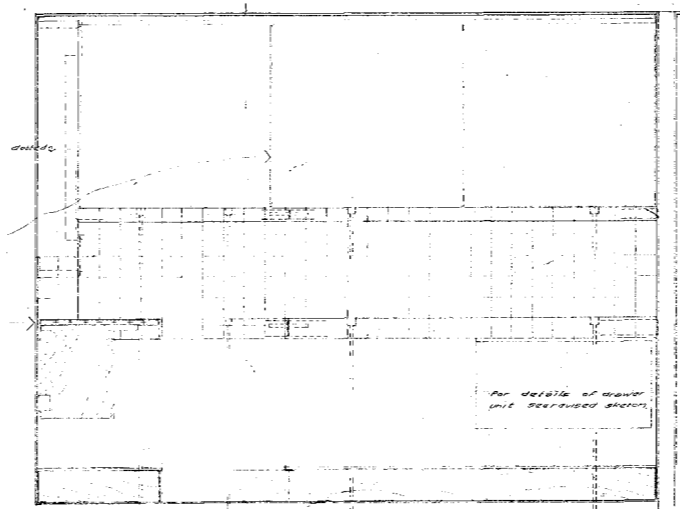
- 1, walkway
- 2, terrace
- 3, entrance
- 4, living
- 5, dining
- 6, kitchen
- 7, bathroom,
- 8, wc
- 9, utility/store
- 10, bedroom 2
- 11, bedroom 1
- 12, dressing room



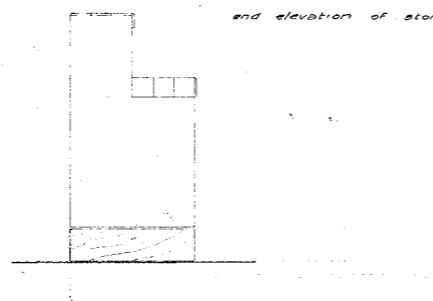
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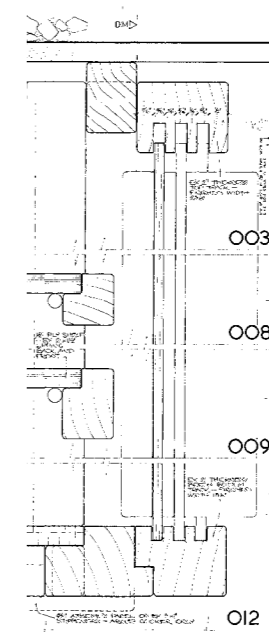
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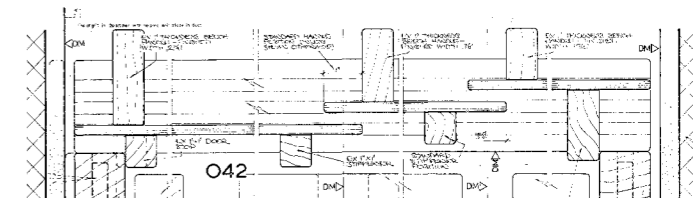
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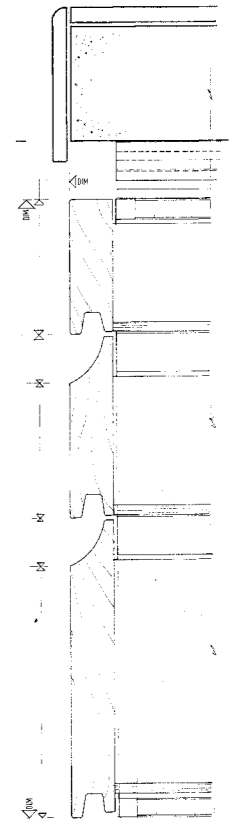
05



06



06



07

- 01 Apartment Plan
- 02 Kitchen plans
- 03-05 Kitchen elevations
- 06 Plan/section details of sliding doors
- 07 Section details of drawers

Protected Features

The heritage listing of the property is specific to certain original features and finishes of the individual properties.

Features to be preserved and restored

The images to the right show typical completed interiors to various dwelling types (not just A3), with their original intended finishes and fittings.

Many of the properties have been altered by their tenants over the years with many of the original features and finishes either altered or removed completely.

Sliding Partitions

The original design of the flat included sliding partitions and built-in furniture which unified the spaces and gave the flats a degree of flexibility. These sliding screens are one element that is to be preserved and restored where necessary. Many of the screens require paint to be stripped from their frames and restoration of the track mechanisms.

Windows and Doors

All original windows are single glazed softwood timber units with a dark brown/black stain. Most of these are in good condition, having been replaced in the 1990s however many have been painted internally and require stripping back to their original condition.

Kitchen

The kitchen finishes and fittings are another item of specific architectural historic interest. This is described in more detail in the following section.

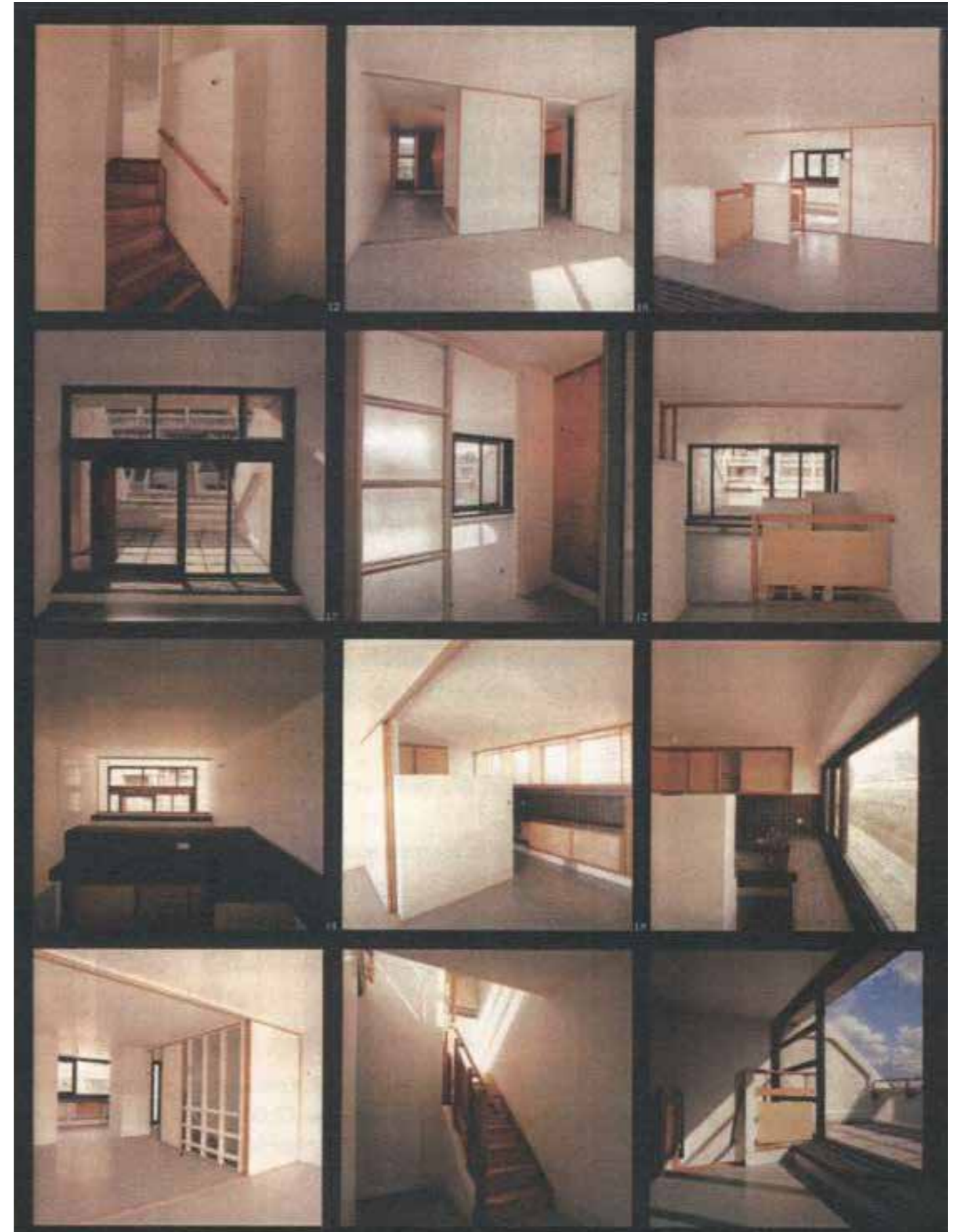
Other features

Other features and finishes of the flats that are significant but which previously did not require Listed Building Consent to alter are:

- floor finishes
- paint finishes
- wall tiles
- shelving
- electrical fittings
- sanitaryware

Those making alterations to any of the above were encouraged by the 'Alexandra Road Estate Management Guidelines' to do so in the spirit of the original design. A similar approach will be used here.

On the opposite page are a series of images of a part-refurbished type A1 flat with examples of well restored finishes and fittings.



- 01 Shallow tiled kitchen worktop with cupboards above and below
- 02 Deep tiled kitchen worktop with kitchen cupboards above and below.
- 03 Built-in shelf unit above bed
- 04 Timber sliding doors to cupboard and window
- 05 Sliding partition from living/dining to bedroom



Section 03

03

Proposed Works

Design Approach

The proposed works are generally limited to refurbishment and reinstatement of the existing scheme. The arrangement of the flat will be unchanged.

Use, scale and layout

There are no proposed changes to the use, scale or layout of the dwelling.

Access and Inclusive Design

There are no proposed changes to transport provision or the external approach to the dwelling. It is not proposed to change the dwelling itself, beyond reconfiguration of the kitchen worktops.

Basic Principles

An appropriate level of reinstatement must be agreed, one which takes account of current regulations (e.g. gas, electricity and energy certificates) and the needs and aspirations of the residents but maintains the historic, listed interiors.

Bespoke features, introduced by residents, present a maintenance liability for London Borough of Camden and are generally stripped out when renovating voids.

However, London Borough of Camden's Conservation Team requires original features removed without authorisation/consent to be reinstated as original or agreed alternative arrangement.

Approaches to existing elements

Wherever practical, the original elements will be kept in place and refurbished. Subsequent elements and finishes will be removed, to reinstate the original scheme, or a new scheme that is more sympathetic to the original intentions.

The ideal extent of works would be limited to repair of the existing finishes and minimal changes in order to accommodate modern appliances. Only where the original fittings have been significantly damaged or removed would there be the opportunity to install a comprehensive new scheme.

A hierarchy of approaches, in order of descending preference, informs the decision-making behind the design as follows:

1. Keep original elements intact and in place. Refurbish them. Reinstatement of original elements (or damaged parts of elements) that have been removed, with matching designs.
2. Make alterations to existing elements that are no longer compliant, or relocate them if necessary. Replace original elements (or damaged parts of elements) with historically sensitive alternatives.
3. Remove or replace existing elements, or introduce wholly new alternatives.

Current condition

The current condition and the extent of alterations to be rectified within the flat is considered below.

Entrance Lobby:

- Resident installed shelving in cupboard.

Living:

- Non-original wallpaper applied to one wall.
- Resident installed artificial pilaster fixed to wall at termination of sliding screens. [02]
- Non- original curtains and track fixed to full height windows. [01]

Kitchen/dining:

- Missing tiles to front of bar at sliding screen. [03]
- Sliding shutters to living room no longer in working order. [02]
- Non-original tiled splash-back. [05 + 06]
- No original worktops and cupboards to kitchen. [05 +06]
- Original bar has been altered by resident. [05 + 06]

Bedroom 01 (upstairs):

- Sliding door to cupboard has been painted over and glazing is broken. [07]
- Shelving and pinboard have been added by resident. [07]

Bedroom 02:

- All timber features have been painted. [09]
- Sliding cupboard doors missing including glazed panel to window. [09]

Bedroom 03:

- Original acoustic tiles to window recess missing. [10]

Bathroom:

- Has been completely remodelled with no original features remaining. [08]

Stair:

- Wall at top of stair has been coated with artex.
- One original stained timber tread has split.

General:

- Flooring has been replaced throughout.
- Some movement/damp damage to walls observed in the stairwell and lower bedrooms.





Kitchen Details

The most significant works within the dwelling will affect the kitchen, where changes are required to accommodate modern appliances below the low, concrete worktops, and where current regulations prohibit low cupboards above oven hobs.

The level of remodelling carried out by previous tenants in this dwelling make it necessary to carry out a comprehensive reinstatement of the original kitchen design. This gives an opportunity to accommodate appliances beneath the worktop.

Worktop materials

The original worktops, brown tiling over reinforced concrete, formed a striking, heavy feature that related to the scale and weight of the estate. These were, in the original design, complemented by lightweight elements: Steel sink units, and hardwood infill panels that could be removed, enabling taller fridge units to be installed if required.

All worktops will be replicated, formed from timber framing with marine ply facing. The surface of the marine ply is to be tiled to match the original appearance.

As an oven can no longer be installed below the projecting window, owing to regulations, this worktop will be continuous, without the former recess. The oven will instead replace one of the removable hard wood sections.

A second removable hardwood section will be removed to accommodate a fridge-freezer unit. The panel between this and the oven will be adjusted in width to suit.

The washine machine will be housed remotely, in a utility/store room.

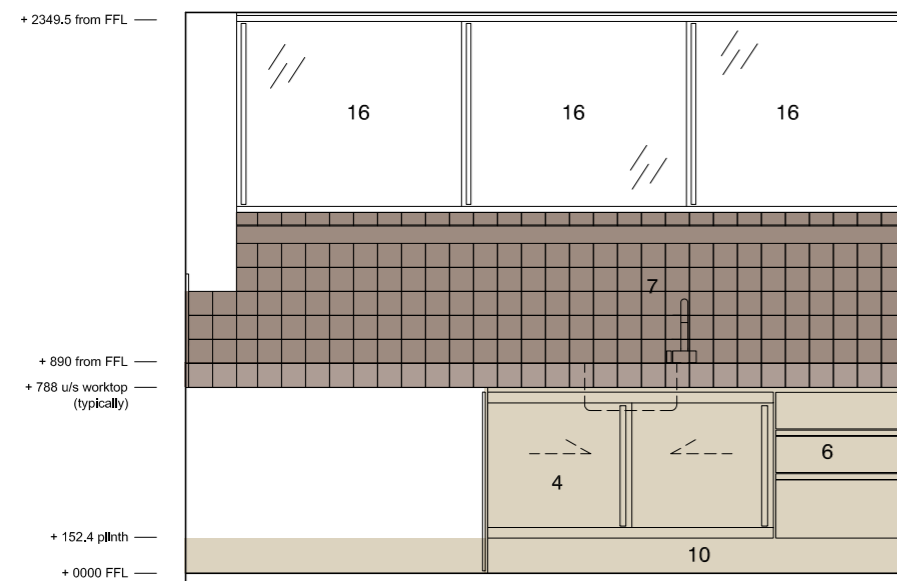
Cupboards

All cupboards will be reinstated. For ease of construction, standard carcass units will be used behind sympathetic plywood cladding. The sliding doors, horizontal timber head and base details will all be reproduced, as will the vertical plywood panel at any exposed ends.

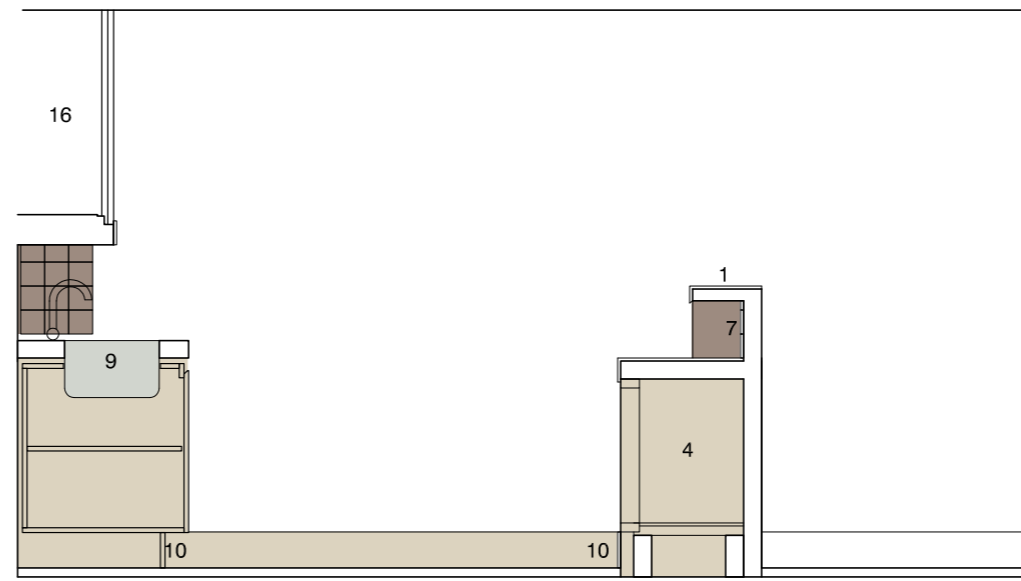
To provide additional storage, a drawer unit will be installed below the sink, using the finger pull detail found elsewhere on the Estate.

Joinery

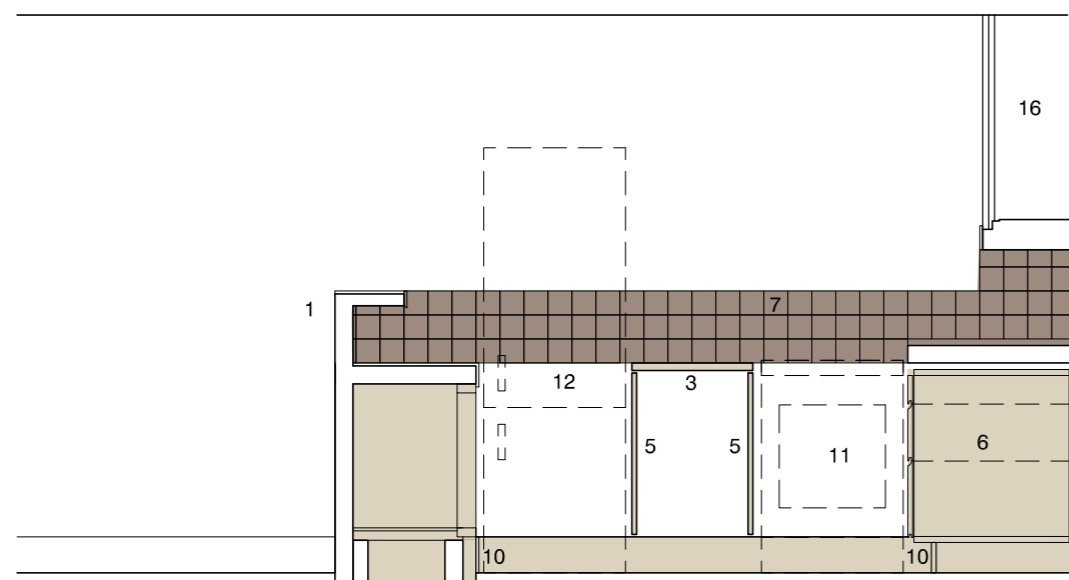
Doors will be replaced by new to match the existing. Where pull handles have been over-painted, it may be more effective to replace the pull handle rather than attempt to strip it in-situ. Where pull handles have become damaged or warped, this may be more appropriate in any case.



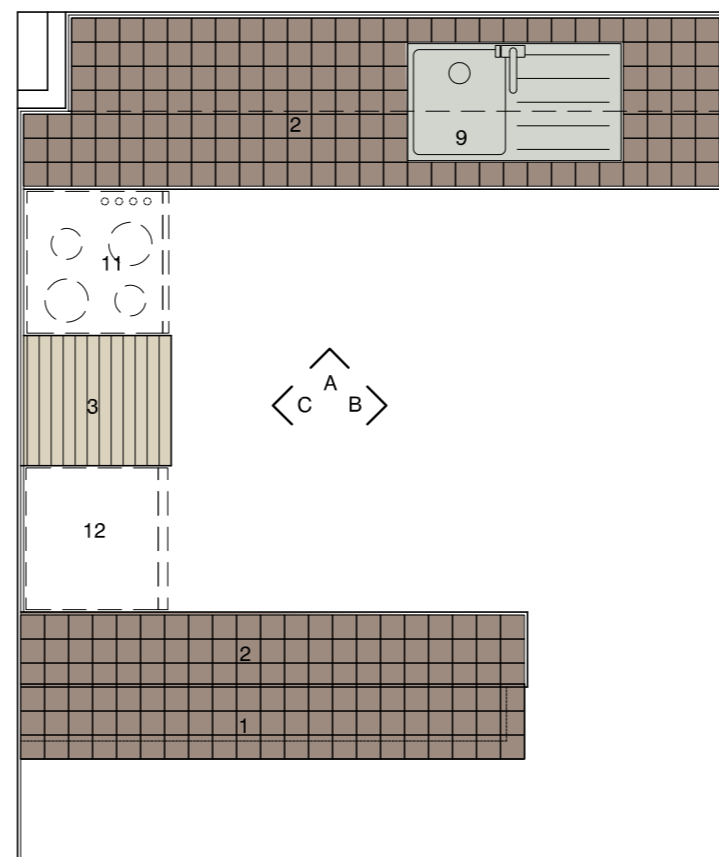
A



B



C



Key

- 1 Replica wall and shelf
- 2 Replica tiled worktop
- 3 Beech worktop, on plywood end support
- 4 Plywood faced cupboard with standardised carcass, replica doors and trims, replica end panels
- 5 Replica plywood fin support detail
- 6 Plywood faced drawer unit
- 7 Tiled splashback
- 8 -
- 9 Stainless steel sink and drainer
- 10 Replica plywood plinth
- 11 Space for freestanding oven
- 12 Space for fridge or fridge/freezer
- 13 -
- 14 Lino floor
- 15 -
- 16 Existing window

Note: Washing machine to be located elsewhere within dwelling

Products

Alterations by the tenants of the dwelling over time has resulted in a mix of original fabric, in need of restoration, and contemporary replacements not in line with the heritage listing of the dwelling. The products below are suggested substitutions for the original fabric that maintain the aesthetic and functional aspirations of the original designs.

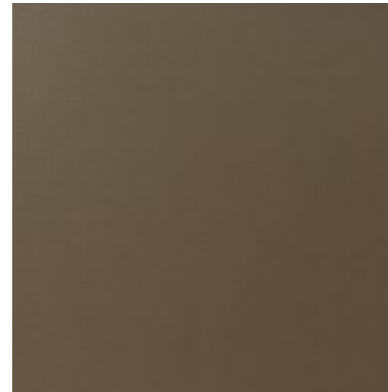
Bathroom Tiles

A plain off-white matt tile, as per the original specification:



Kitchen Tiles

A plain dark brown matt tile, as per the original specification:



Lino Floor Tiles

A mid-grey textured lino tile:



Plywood Cabinetry

High grade birch plywood stained and varnished to match existing:



Scope of Works

Note:

- Where existing tile are in good condition, retain and repair any damage and replace any missing.
- Any original fabric removed is to be retained and stored for future use.
- All wiring at low level to be concealed in skirting.
- All wiring at high level to be chased into plaster and made good.
- Where necessary strip any paint from balcony walls and remove all fixed shelving, clothes drying apparatus and garden furniture.

The elements and works listed reflect site discussions with the London Borough of Camden's Conservation Officer. The specification notes are drawn from products and systems previously agreed with London Borough of Camden, either via Listed Building Consent applications elsewhere on the Estate, or via the Estate Action Works documentation.

Element	Works	Specification notes	Listing sensitive
1.0 Walls			
1.1 Sliding partitions	Strip any painting to the stained timber pull details.	Replace pull detail if stripping in-situ proves unfeasible.	Y
2.0 Kitchen units and fittings			
2.1 Reinstate concrete worktops and pedestal units	Replace tiled concrete worktop and suspended joinery cupboard. Height to be raised to suit new appliances.	Install timber framed worktop with marine ply facing tiled to match existing; with cupboards below. Cupboards formed ex stock carcass with James Latham birch plywood facing and replica handle. Franke or Blanco Claron undermounted sink with drainer and Minta mixer tap.	Y
3.0 Wall Mounted Cupboards			
3.1 NA			
4.0 Tiling, sanitaryware			
4.1 Kitchen tiling	Remove missing/non-original tiling in kitchen, replace with new tiling to match original.	Square, matt brown tiles to be selected (to match existing), with white grout.	N
4.2 Bathroom tiling	Remove non-original tiling in bathroom, replace with new tiling to match original.	Square, matt white tiles to be selected, with white grout.	N
4.3 Bathroom sanitaryware	Replace all sanitaryware	Specification to be approved, to be visually similar to original	N

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