Grenville Street

Downing Court

Front elevation detail

Rear elevation

Rear elevation detail

Entrance

Existing flat roof looking north

Existing flat roof looking west

2.2 Existing building

The existing building has six storeys above the basement, arranged as an L-shaped block at the street corner.

The building was constructed in the inter-war period as a residential mansion block. It currently provides 27 flats. That includes a new 2-bed flat which was converted from part of the basement as consented in July 2009 (ref.2008/4096/P) and renewed in December 2012 (ref.2012/2291/P). The remaining basement areas are used for storage, plant and car parking.

The existing structure is of concrete-encased steel frame construction with hollow pot floors and some load-bearing masonry piers. Facades are in brick with a rendered ground floor. The front elevations each have two symmetrical projecting bay windows and are in robustly detailed multi-coloured brickwork. The rear elevations are in a lighter buff brick with less articulation.

The building is not listed but is identified in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy as a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the CA.

The entrance to the building is from Grenville Street. Access to all apartments is via a single shared circulation core with a small (6 person) lift. Access from the mews at the rear is down a vehicle ramp to a sunken yard at basement level which accesses the four parking spaces and plant areas.

The existing flat roof has a parapet all round, approx 900mm high. Access to the roof is currently for maintenance only. Part is occupied by a single storey enclosure housing access stair and water tanks. There is also a small lift gear room and an extract fan unit serving flats below.
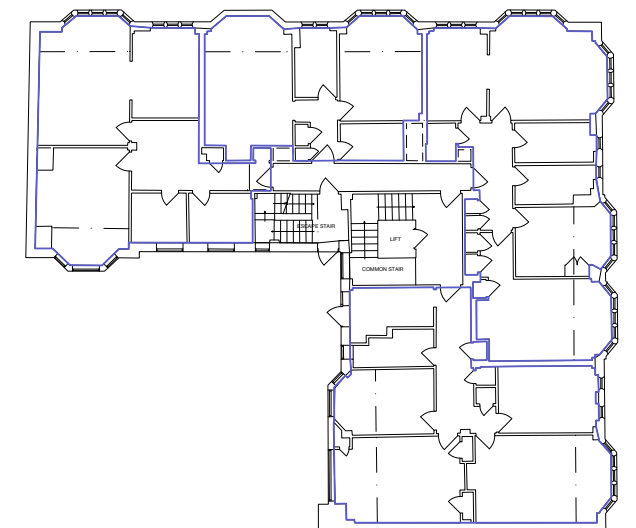
Typical floor plan as existing (from drawing 312.PL.017)

KEY:

- Bloomsbury Conservation Area
- Open Space
- Protected view - Blackheath Point to St Paul's Cathedral
- Protected View - Greenwich Park Wolfe statue to St Paul's Cathedral
- Protected view - Primrose Hill summit to St Paul's Cathedral
- Metropolitan Walk Silver Jubilee Walk
- Neighbourhood Centre
- Holborn Growth Area

Proposals Map

Aerial View from east

2.3 Planning policy context

The **Planning Statement** submitted with the application sets out the planning policy issues in detail.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The statutory development plan in this case comprises the Further Alterations to the London Plan (March 2013), Camden's Core Strategy (CS, 2010) and Camden's Development Policies Document (2010). Regard should also be had to the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012).

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (Aril 2011), the Camden Planning Guidance No. 1 Design (April 2011), No. 8 Planning Obligations (April 2011), No.2 Housing (Sept 2013), and No.6 Amenity (Sept 2013) also form a material consideration.

The Proposals Map shows the site as falling within the following designations:
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- Central London Area (Clear Zone Region) CLA.
- Designated View- Primrose Hill summit to St Paul's Cathedral, Landmark Viewing Corridor (4A.1).

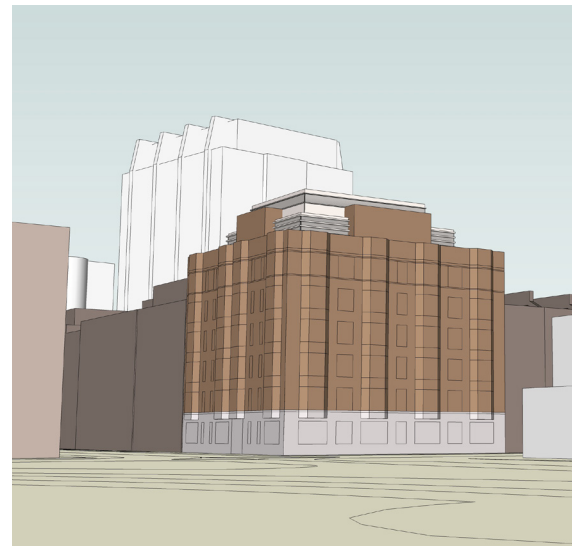The Central London Area forms part of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) designated in the London Plan.

Downing Court is not a listed building. It is however adjacent to the grade II listed 11-27 Bernard Street and opposite the grade II listed Brunswick Centre.
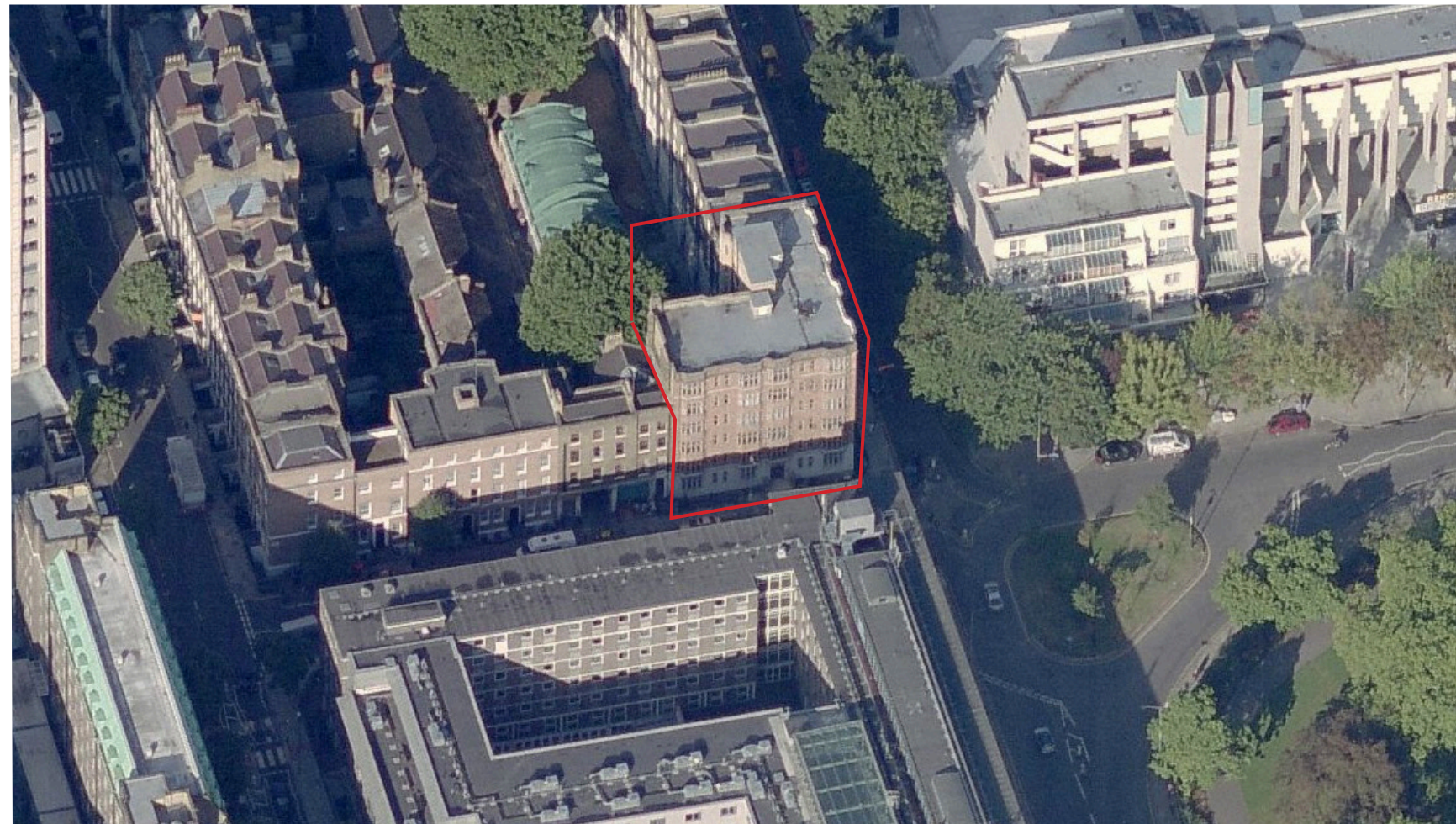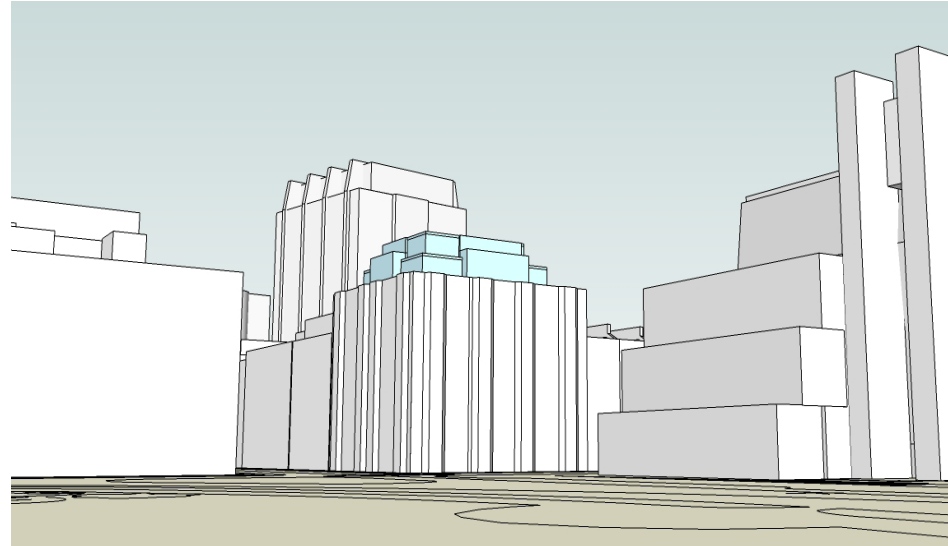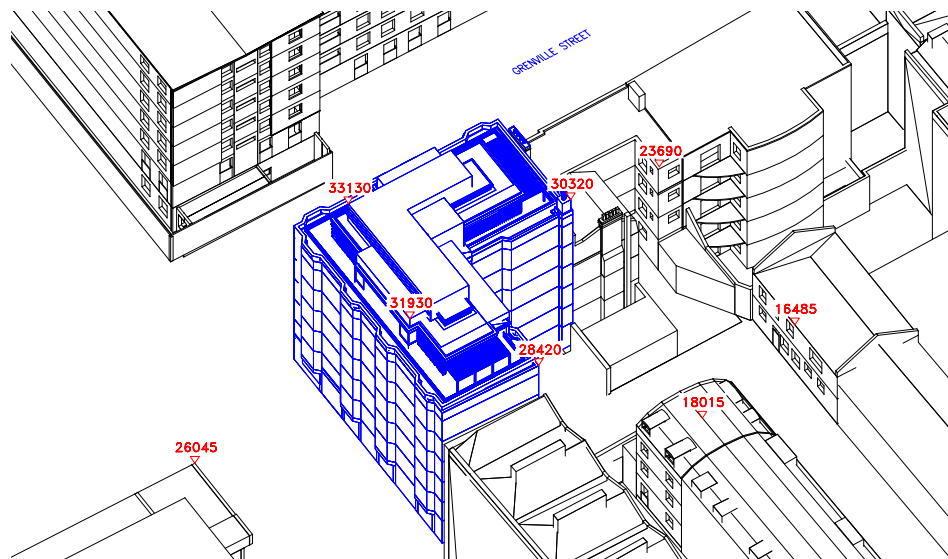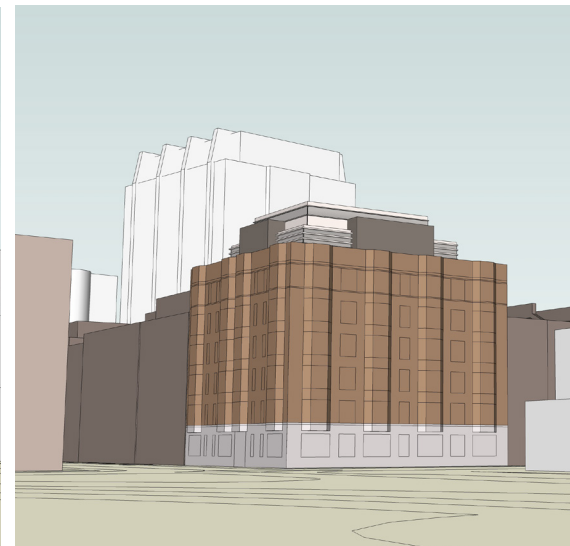
Sketch massing options (pre-app stage) - 2 storey extension

Sketch options (pre-app stage)- material and articulation

Daylight/sunlight analysis model

3.0 Design development process

3.1 Options

Options were considered for different layouts and massing of the rooftop development. An initial proposal was submitted in April 2012 for pre-application consultation, consisting of a set-back part 1-storey/part 2-storey extension providing 3 new flats. The massing was articulated to pick up the existing central bay windows and provide a more resolved top to the existing building as seen against the skyline.

Following officers' request, more detailed options were subsequently submitted for consultation to explore more detailed articulation and details.

3.2 Consultation

Pre-application advice received from officers at the meeting of 8 May 2012 recommended revisions to the scheme which would be required including that any extension should be no more than single storey, should prioritise 2-3 bed flats and that use of materials similar to the existing would be preferred, as well as giving guidance on other policies to be followed.

The possibility of cladding the extension in brick was investigated but found not to be possible because of restrictions on weight. Options were explored for alternative cladding materials which best relate to the existing building.

Consultation with **existing residents** and **local amenity groups**, including the Brunswick Group and Marchmont Street Association, has been carried out. No responses have been received to date from the local amenity groups. Four responses were received from existing residents, primarily objecting to the principle of development and highlighting management/construction concerns. A draft Construction Management Plan accompanies the planning application.

3.3 Technical assessments

The design process was informed by specialist input from team members, including technical assessments of the existing building and effect of design proposals including heritage constraints, transport, structure, services, acoustics, sustainability, sunlight/daylight impacts and construction management.

Final reports on these are included where appropriate as accompanying documents submitted with the application.

McDowell+Benedetti