

BEDFORD HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE
Minor Material Amendments
Ref. 2014/0304/P



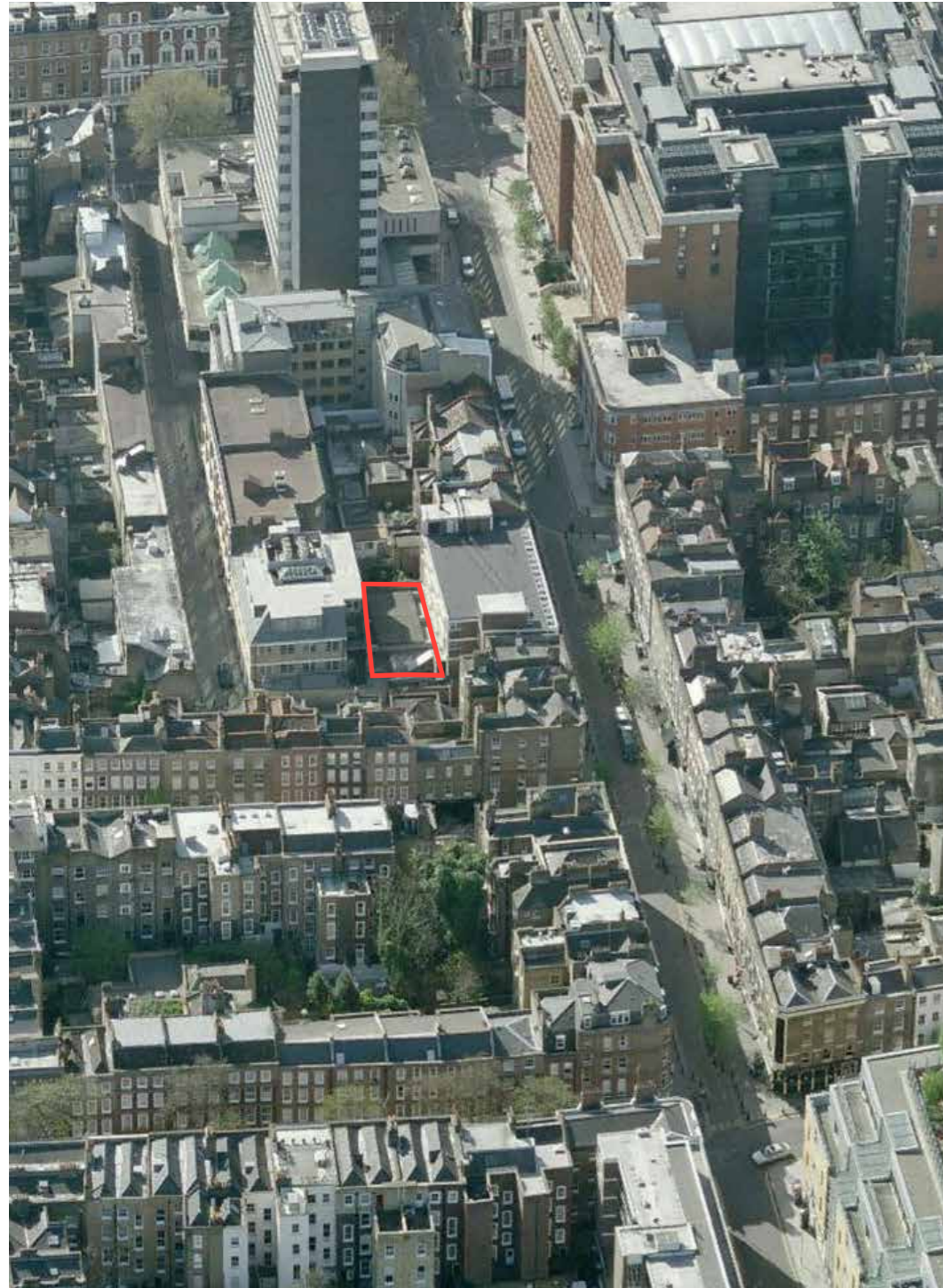
June 2016

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View from above looking South towards Holborn Police Station

1.0 Introduction

This document has been prepared by 6a architects on behalf of the Holborn Community Association (HCA).

HCA is a community anchor organisation whose activities are based across two sites in Holborn: Bedford House Community Centre and Millman Street Resource Centre. It is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. See <http://www.holborncommunity.co.uk/>.

Full Planning Permission was granted in June 2014 for the redevelopment and expansion of one of these centres - Bedford House, which is located at 35 Emerald Street, London.

Since consent was granted, the neighbouring UCL Estate has uncovered an old restrictive covenant from 1932 that affects the permitted height of the proposal across half of the site.

The Minor Material Amendments described in this report are mostly the result of this constraint on the envelope of the building but also refer to the part of the neighbouring building being incorporated into the building under a flying freehold to allow the community centre to maximise space above and below it; and to the recommendations made by the Highways team at the Council with regards to the ramp for access to the building.

The amendments to the scheme are as follows:

1. The removal of the second storey to the building and its replacement with a roof garden, as a consequence of the restrictive covenant
2. The inclusion of the area to the north east corner of the site as a flying-freehold, widening the building's frontage to the alleyway. The rear of the building was already full width.
3. Amendments to the position of the rear rooflights, and facade windows in response to the widened facade
4. The inclusion of an external ramp to the alleyway to provide level access



2.0 Minor Material Amendments

2.1 Restrictive Covenant Revised Scheme

The removal of the second storey to the building and its replacement with a roof garden, as a consequence of the restrictive covenant

Since the planning submission, UCL Estates, owners of the neighbouring building at 23-29 Emerald Street have uncovered a covenant dating from 1932 that affects the permitted height of development across half of the site. Following discussions with UCL Estates, and Rugby School, with whom the covenant is made, it is likely that the covenant will be annulled or revised in future, however this is a complex legal process and its timeline is as yet unknown.

Currently the project has various funding commitment deadlines and community centre programme dates to meet and in light of this, the submitted scheme was revised to conform to the restrictive covenant as a temporary measure.

The revised scheme will be able to incorporate the top floor seminar room at a later date. It improves the current permission with a small planted rear terrace instead of the current sloped roof. However, if for any reason the covenant were not annulled, the revised scheme offers a very positive long term alternative to the building.

The revised scheme takes the ground and first floor storeys up to the restricted height and takes the lift up to the 2nd floor, which is now a new mesh-enclosed roof garden. The building is not a storey higher, however the lift shaft is higher than the consented scheme.

The roof garden will have deep planters around it with climbers and dense edible, aromatic and seasonal planting that will both maintain privacy and provide therapeutic garden space for the adult and accompanied children.

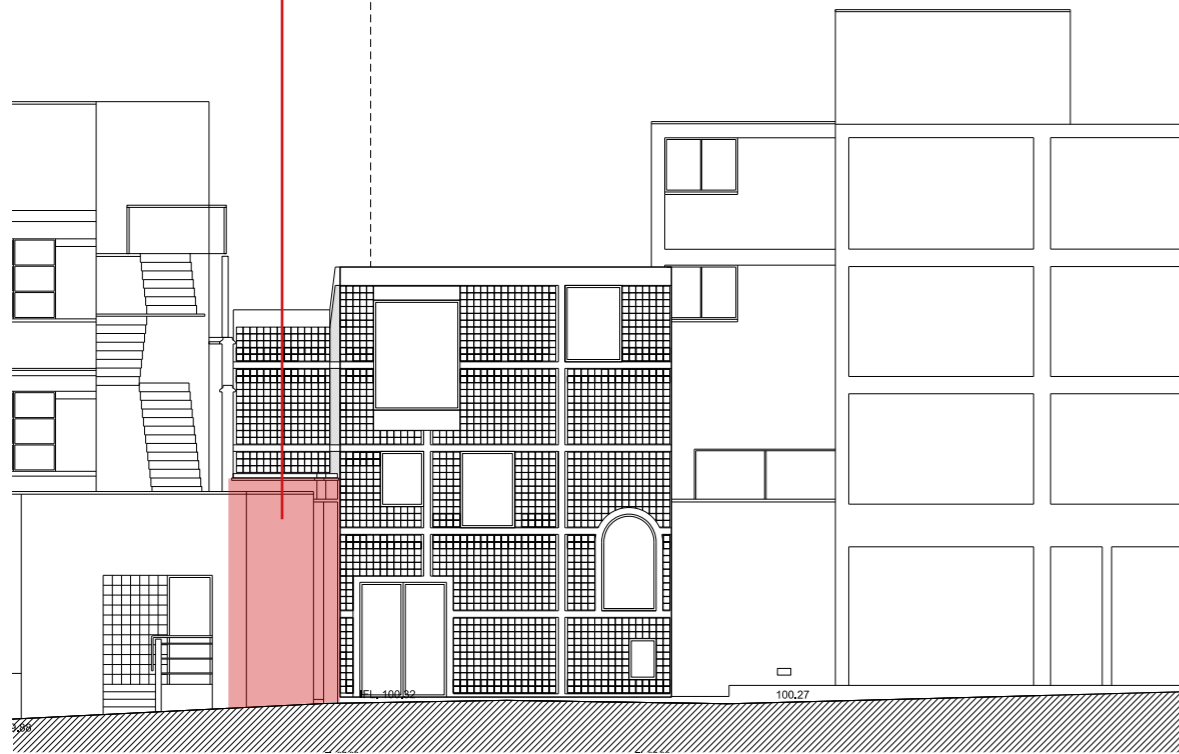
The community centre will programme the space considerably with residents and offices in mind. The roof garden of Bedford House will be occupied during working hours as a quiet activity space. Activities centred around the planting will include gardening and memory and sensory activities. There will also be a programme of activities for the over 55's: meditation, yoga, tai chi, staying-steady exercises and seated exercise classes.

Both immediately adjacent buildings belonging to UCL and GMS estates are supportive of the revised scheme and are working spaces. They are supportive of the planting screen acting as a buffer to the rear of the terrace. The building fronts onto the passageway, small office and work units behind Rugby Street. It is fortunate also to face a gap in the terraced housing on both sides of Rugby street for most of its façade.

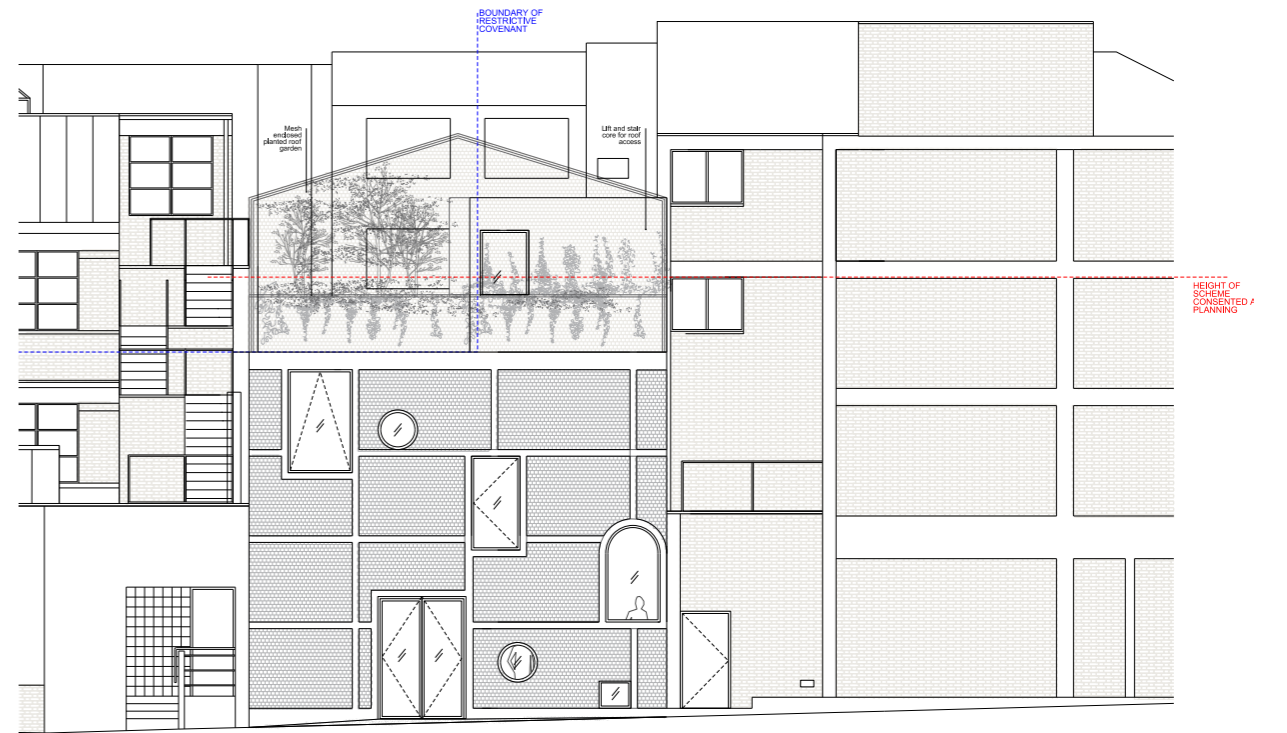
The idea of a mesh garden enclosure was previously supported by Planning when 6a architects discussed a feasibility for the Community Centre to buy Rapier house, and discovered Rapier House had once had a mesh enclosure on it. With this precedent in mind, and the rooftop mesh on the school at Queens Square and rooftop playgrounds across the area, a new garden is felt to be appropriate and adds to and maintains the presence of the building on the alleyway even if it becomes just two tall storeys.

Precedent of planters as privacy screen on the top floor balcony of Rapier House on Lambs Conduit Street

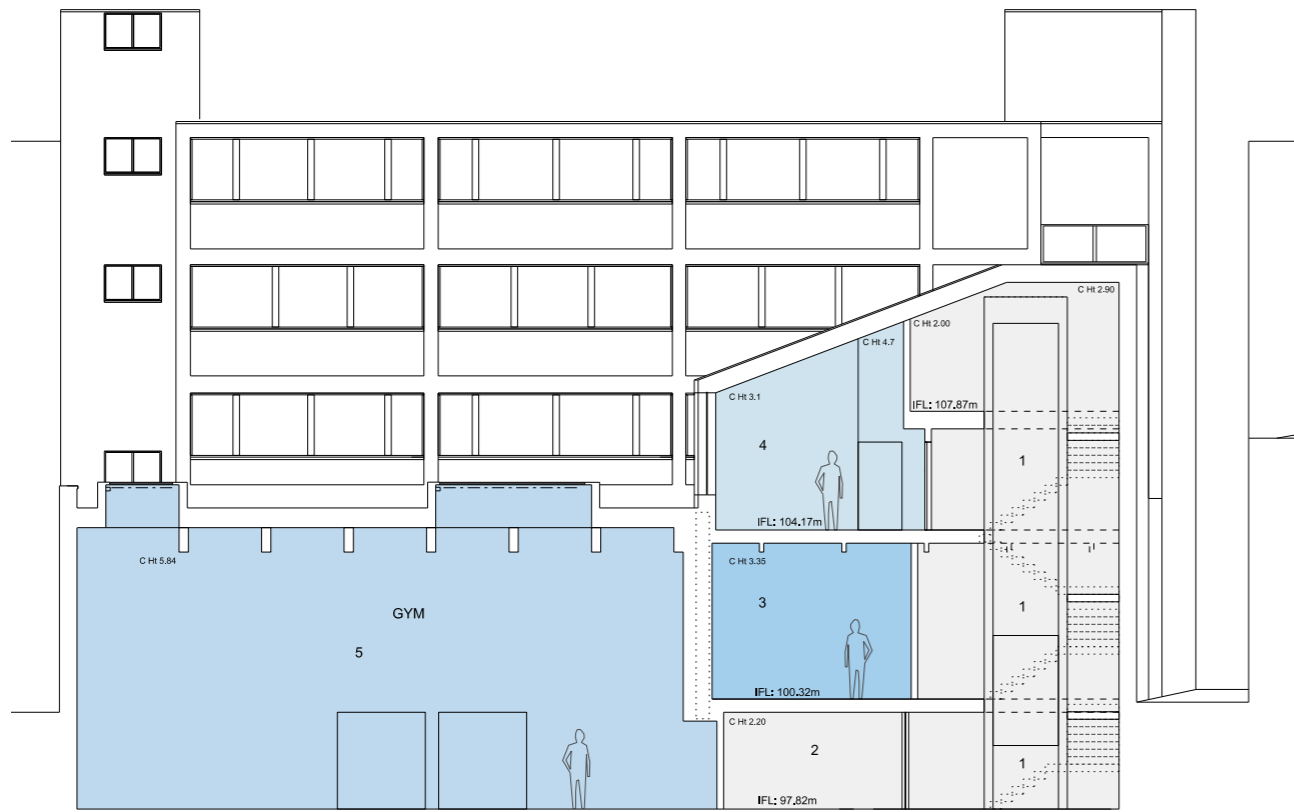
Existing single-storey construction of a WC,
over which the Flying Freehold will be acquired (Section 2.2)



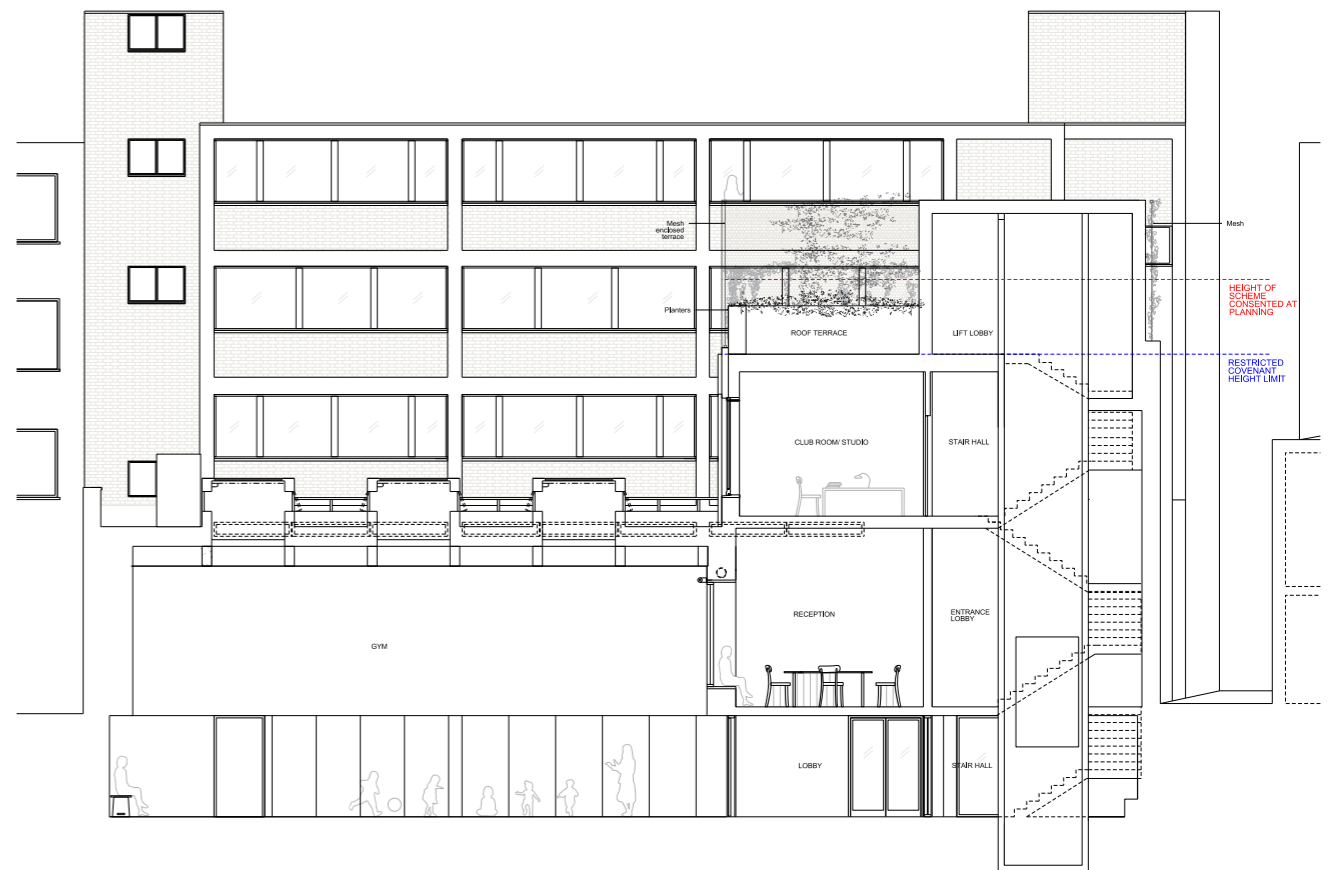
North Elevation as consented



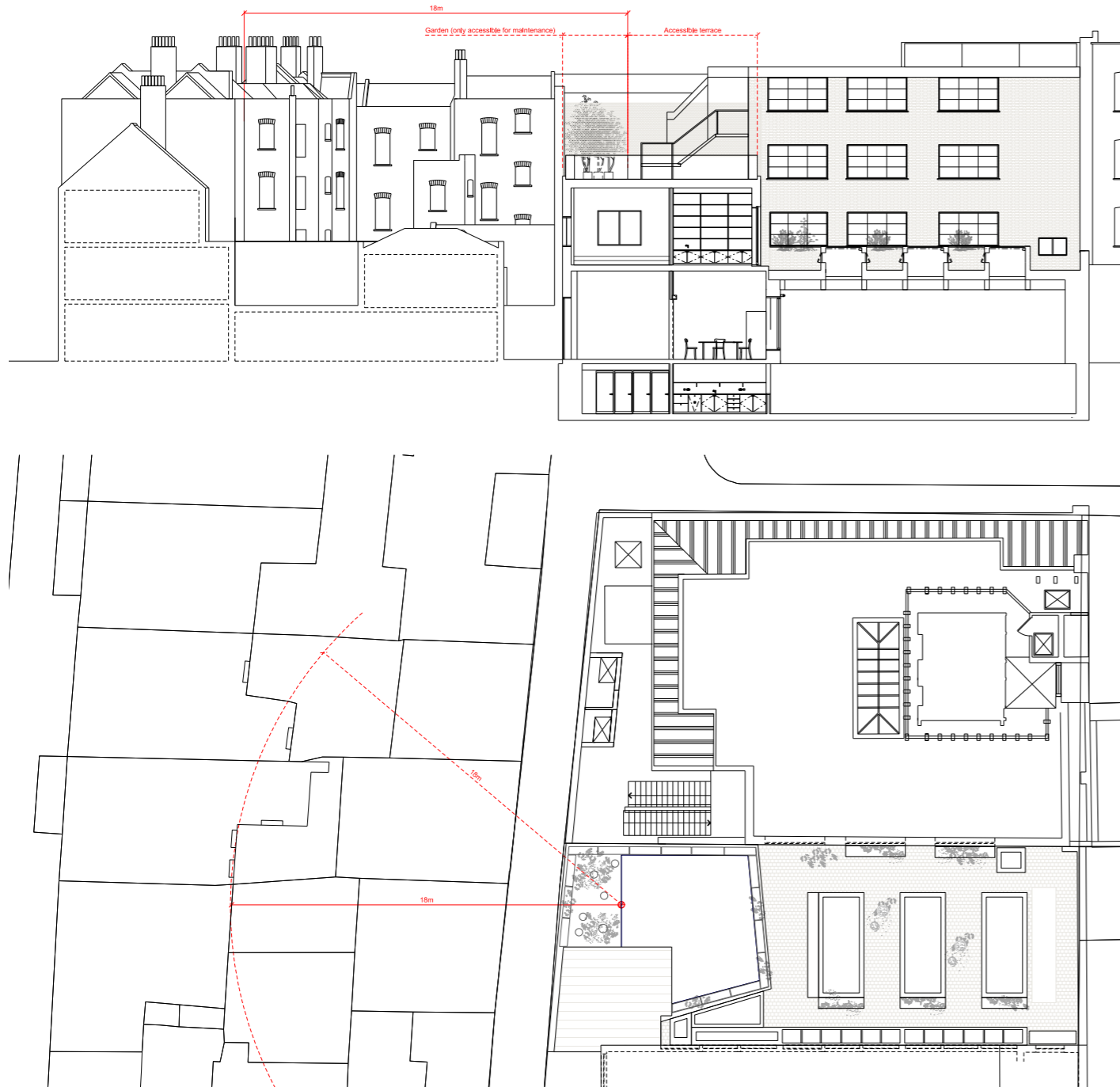
North Elevation as proposed, widened to incorporate the flying freehold (see Section 2.2) also showing the new positions of the front facade windows (see Section 2.3)



Section A as consented



Section A as proposed

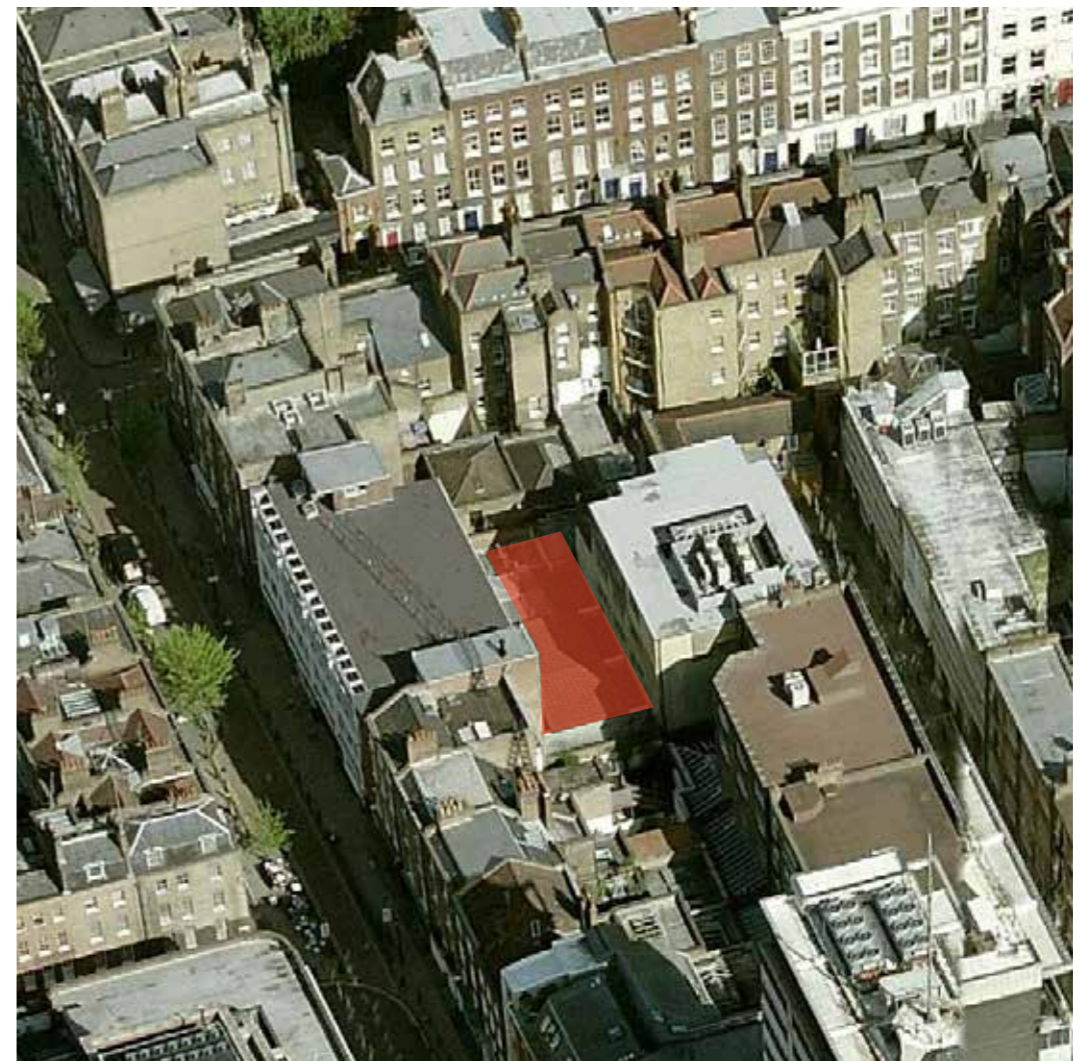


Location Plan and Contextual Section

Revised Scheme and Overlooking

The accessible area of the garden roof is offset by 3 metres from the Emerald Street face of the building. This setback introduces a distance of 18m between the rear facades with windows of the terraced houses on Rugby Street and the new roof terrace, preventing any overlooking between the properties.

Whilst the perimeter climbing plants will obscure the mesh, the 3 metre zone will form a garden with smaller trees and plants. It will act as a densely planted buffer between the terrace and other buildings. This area will be accessed only for maintenance.



Aerial view of Bedford House