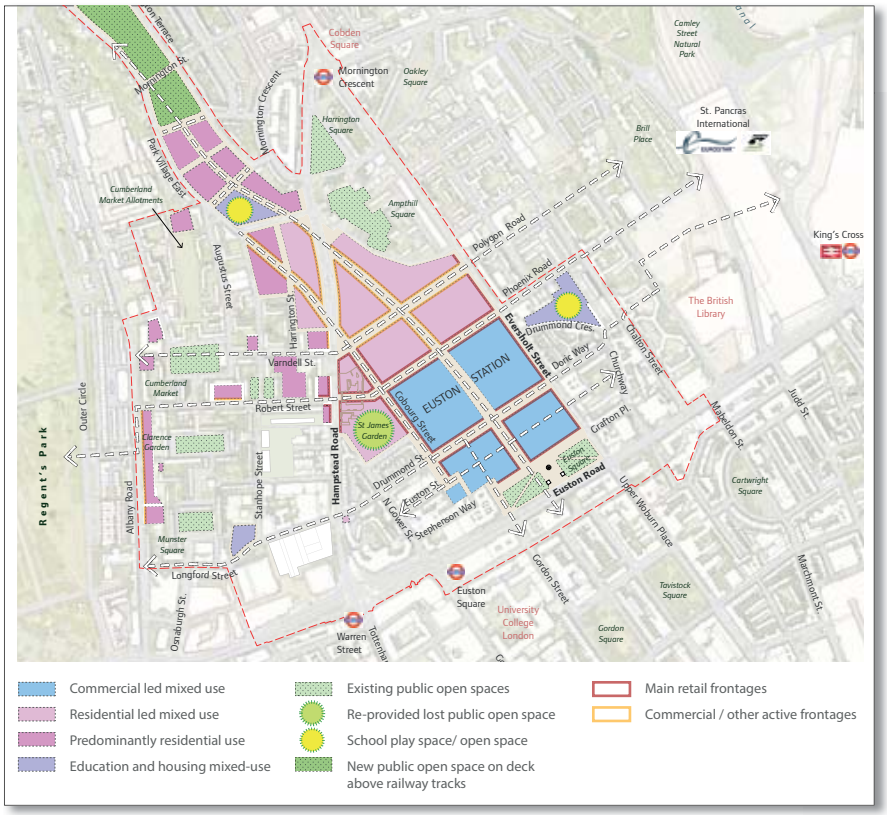


EAP proposed uses and key routes

- residential
- food and beverages
- community/ health/ education
- shops and services
- employment
- no.42 Phoenix Road
- active frontage
- active frontage requiring improvement
- blank frontage
- residential frontage
- listed buildings

Ground floor land use and frontage

2.7 SURROUNDING USES

Somers Town is a vibrant residential area and has been since its earliest development in the 17th century. This remains the case today with many large blocks of flats arranged around semi-private courtyards.

In addition to residential uses, there are a number of existing small shops, business units, cafes, bars and a public house. Most of the active street frontage is concentrated along Chalton Street where many small businesses are located. The Somers Town Sports Centre is nearby and there are several schools, churches and community centres in the area, including the Somers Town Community Centre on Ossulston Street.

Chalton Street Local Centre

The EAP promotes the improvement of character, vibrancy and vitality of Chalton Street and Phoenix Road and encourages new development to build on opportunities created by change and growth in the area.

At the junction of Chalton Street and Phoenix Road a key east-west pedestrian route, 42 Phoenix Road is well placed to contribute towards creating active streets and a vibrant public realm for Somers Town.

Aspirations of the EAP

The growth of the two major transport interchanges has bought new uses to Euston and King's Cross, including a particular spurt in the creative, research and development industries. The presence of Google, Central St Martins and the Crick Institute certainly make it an attractive place for students.

Strategic Principle EAP1 D: Retail and Leisure is focused on the future amount, location and type of retail uses in and around Euston Station. The plan actively encourages vibrant ground floor uses along Robert Street which will eventually create one long joined up east-west route through the station connecting to Phoenix Road and King's Cross. It notes that *'smaller scale, independent retail to meet the needs of local communities in the neighbourhood centres and along key streets will be supported'*.

The EAP proposes that improvements to existing shop fronts along Phoenix Road should be supported to create a more vibrant image for the street. A quick analysis of Phoenix Road shows that there are currently very few publicly accessible buildings along the street and therefore limited opportunities for active frontage.

In response to this, the EAP says *'opportunities should be taken to provide more active frontage where sites and buildings currently fail to address the street, both in terms of improved building design and more active uses that generate additional activity and overlooking of the street'*.

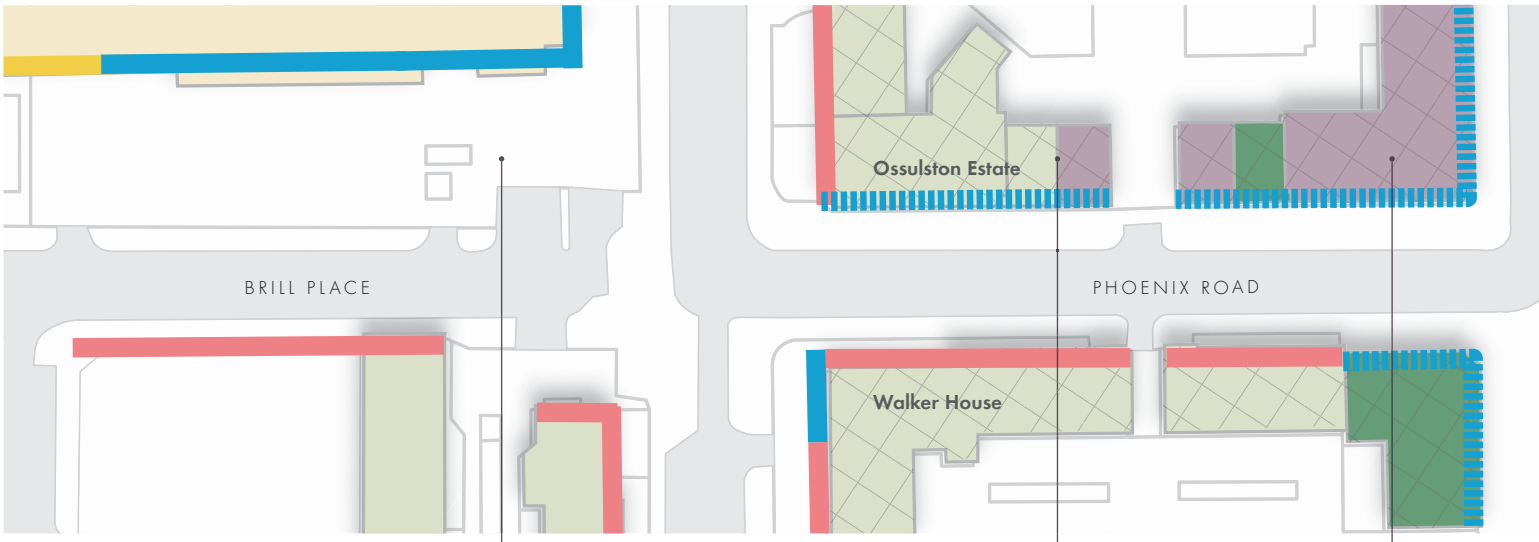
The existing building at 42 Phoenix Road is not currently fulling its potential or the ambitions of the EAP and the borough's planning policies.

Adjacent neighbours

Number 42 is surrounded by residential buildings. Upholding the existing amenity and privacy of these neighbours will be a key concern of any proposed development. Particularly the privacy of neighbours in the Chalton House estate to the south of 42 Phoenix Road, should any windows be considered on the rear elevation of the building.

Phoenix Road, North Elevation

Phoenix Road, South Elevation



The future of Phoenix Road

Crick service entrance and loading bay

Only limited changes possible to listed buildings

Existing retail frontages to be improved as part of the EAP

Future potentia frontage on str

0 30 50m

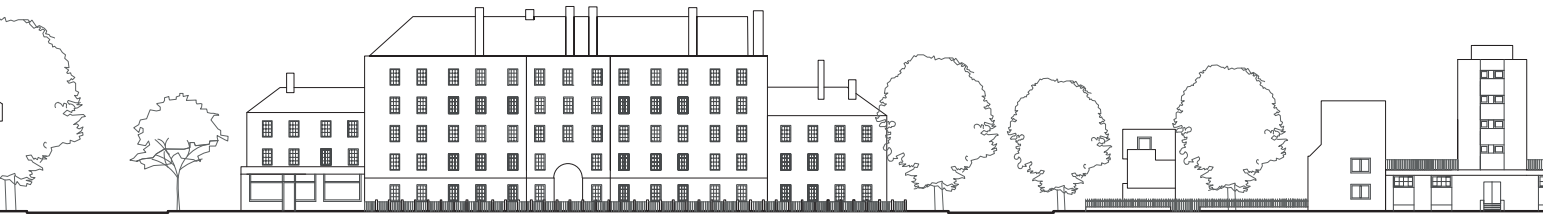
N

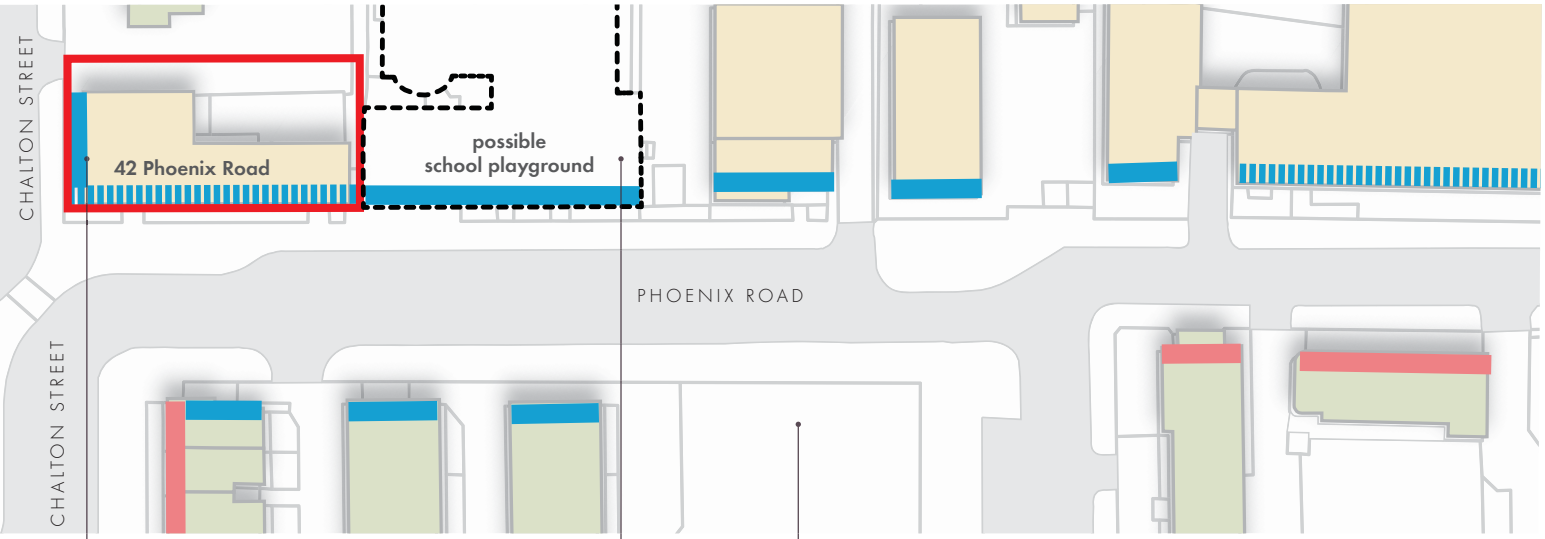
- residential
- food and beverages
- community/ health/ education
- shops and services
- employment
- no.42 Phoenix Road
- active frontage
- active frontage requiring improvement
- blank frontage
- residential frontage
- listed buildings

2.8 PHOENIX ROAD AS KEY ROUTE

Phoenix Road is a key pedestrian thoroughfare and in the future will be part of a major east-west route lined with shops and offices at the western end.

The drawings below demonstrates the diverse nature of the street at present and the importance of number 42 amongst limited opportunities to improve active frontages.





l for active
eet corner

Maria Fidelis School to be demolished and currently thought to be replaced with playground wall onto street

Oakshott Court open space, underused and inactive

42 Phoenix Road, Chalton Street elevation

42 Phoenix Road, rear elevation from Clarendon Grove

3 EXISTING BUILDING

3.1 DESCRIPTION

Background

42 Phoenix Road was built in 1931 as a nursery and day centre with matron's and staff accommodation on the upper floors. The centre was run by Camden Council until it closed in 1992. The Council sold the building with vacant possession to the Findlay Estate Company in 1993.

The Findlay Estate Company initially carried out cosmetic refurbishment for Save the Children Fund to occupy the lower three floors, with student accommodation on the floors above.

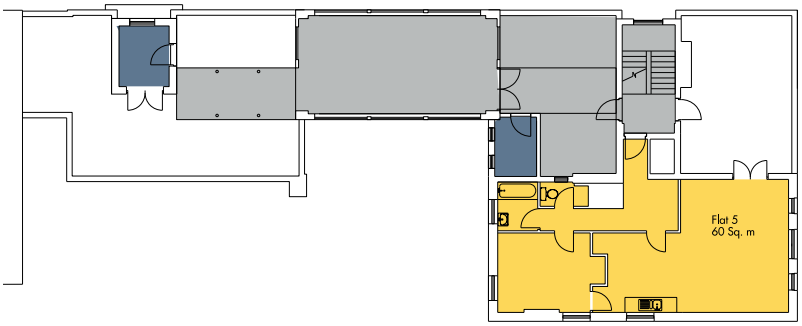
Hopscotch Asian Women's Centre replaced Save the Children Fund in 1998 but the increased importance of access for all when applying for funding prevented Hopscotch meeting their criteria for further funding and as a result they had to relocate to premises in Kentish Town.

The Bishmillah Academy currently rent the lower floors of the building for after school tuition on a temporary 12 month renewable licence. There are five student apartments on the upper floors of the building and these are let and managed by the Findlay Estate Company.

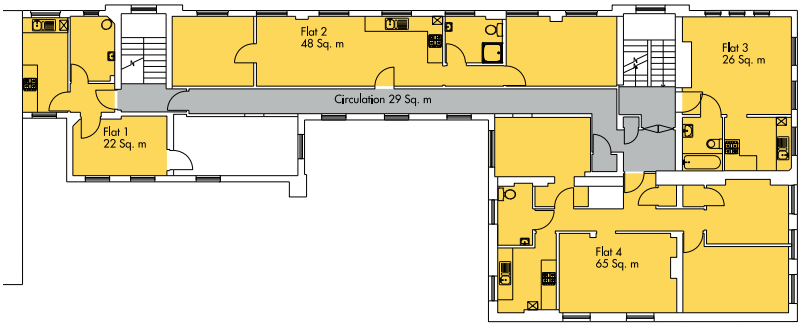
Appearance

The north and east facades of 42 Phoenix Road are constructed from a light grey brick with neo regency crittal style windows in a white painted metalwork. Some windows are not original but galvanised steel and UPVC replacements - windows at 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors have been replaced, including the oriel bay windows at ground floor. The symmetrical stair cores are expressed on the north elevation clad in concrete tiles, topped with green pan tiles at roof level.

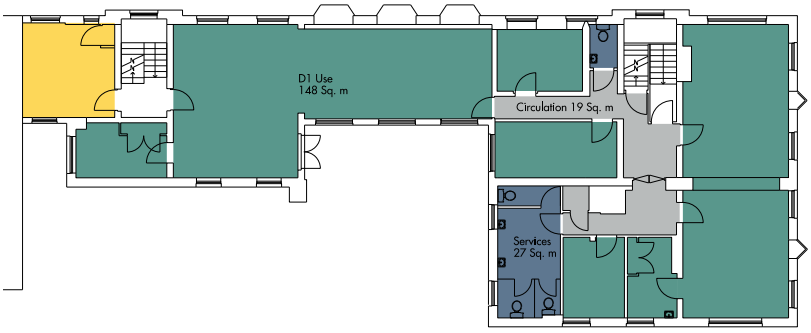
Made from cheap fletton bricks, the rear façade of the building is significantly less appealing, with a mixture of windows, some of which are galvanised street or PVC replacements. There is a colour change in the brickwork on the east elevation where the rainwater pipe disguises the joint between the existing building and what is thought to be a rear extension completed shortly after the original construction. The flat roof of the building is a jumble of various infill extensions such that the massing is confused and piecemeal.



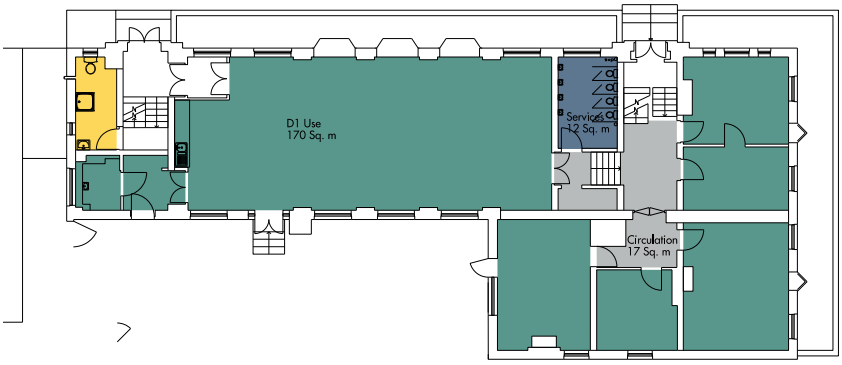
Existing third floor



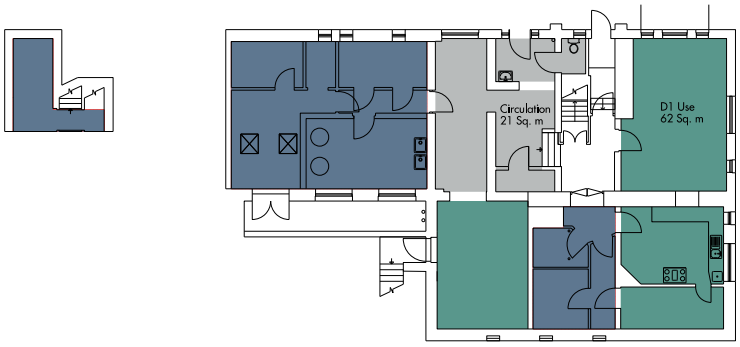
Existing second floor



Existing first floor



Existing ground floor



Existing lower ground floor

Student residential
D1 use
Circulation
Plant/Services

Roof top porch

Ground floor classroom

Stairwell

Bay window

Existing use and floor space

The lower floors of the building are currently used by the Bismillah Academy after school tuition. The existing floor space at lower ground to first floor is considered as D1 with student accommodation above. The lower floors have multiple split levels and the floor plates are divided into irregular small rooms, some of which cannot be considered usable due to low head room, awkward service installations and lack of windows. The existing building provides a total of 1,087 sqm GEA. This is split between 740sqm of D1 space and 347sqm student residential space (GEA).

The convoluted floor plans necessitated by the two stair cores, split levels and L-Shaped plan result in a poor net to gross efficiency in the existing building of approximately 58%. Inaccessibility and inefficiency are fundamental constraints to the viability of retaining the existing footprint.

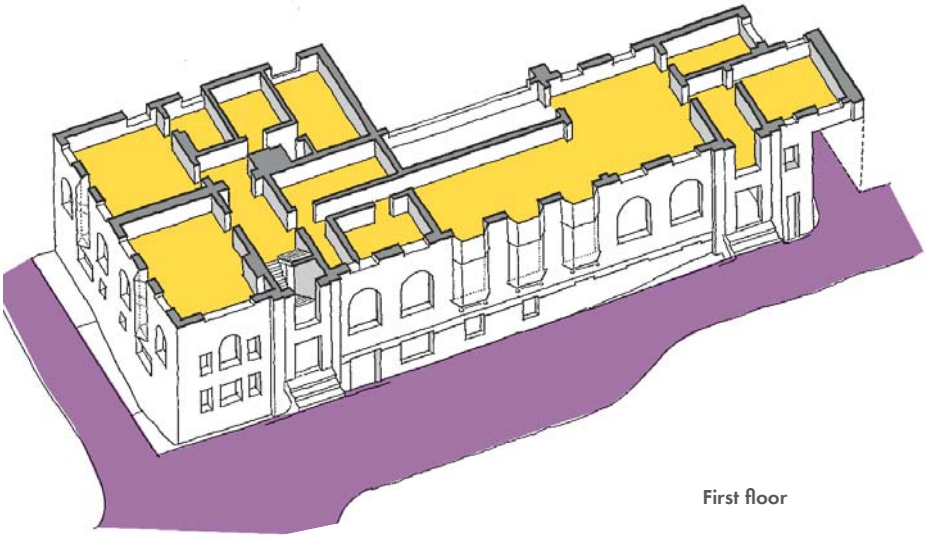
The total usable D1 space in the existing building (excluding circulation and service areas) is 380sqm NIA. The entire building is inaccessible due to steps at all entrance levels. The space is not compliant with current regulation and upgrades to the existing layout would inevitably result in a further reduction of usable area.

Spread across floors two and three of the building are five self contained student flats. These consist one 3 bed, two 2 bed, one 1 bed and a studio flat. There are a total of 9 student bedrooms in the existing building and the total existing student residential floor space is approximately 250sqm NIA.

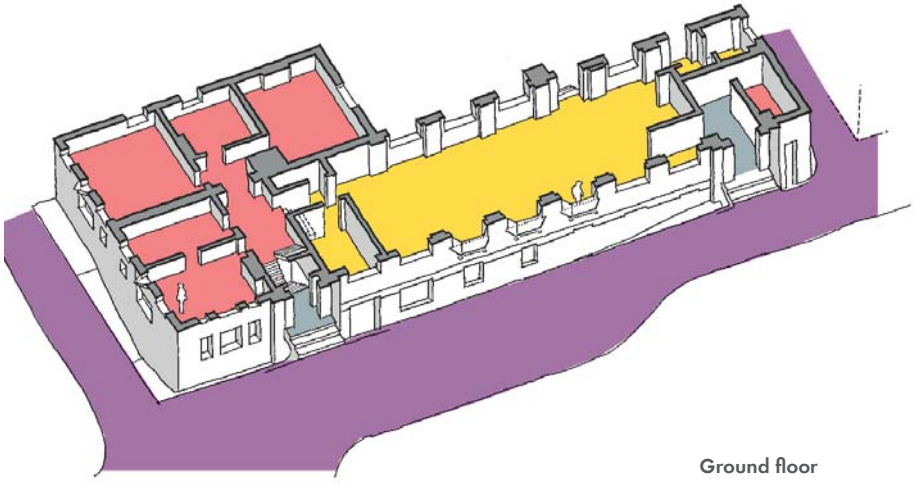
Interior

The buildings interior is plain and functional with very little decorative features. Due to adaptation over the years, the accommodation on the upper floors of the building is compromised in scale and layout. The existing services are significantly outdated and inefficient. In places these intrude unsympathetically on the internal space. The original building fabric is poor and falls far short of modern standards. The concrete floors are inflexible for adaptation and the rerouting of services.

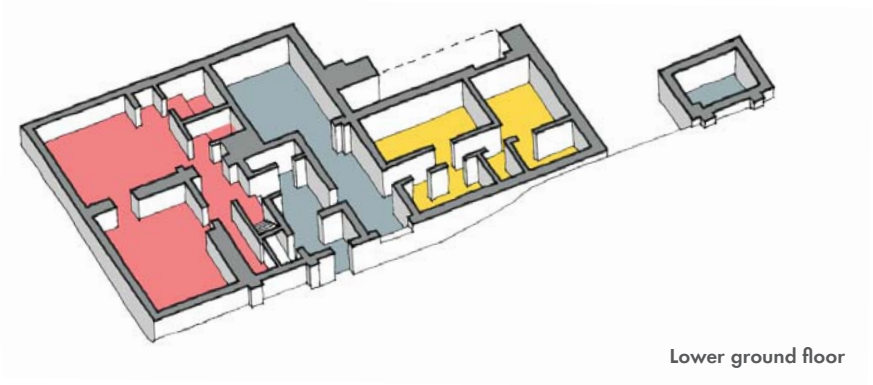
The performance of the building is not sustainable or economic. Some deterioration is evident in the concrete structure and the existing structural capacities will place significant limitations on any extension to the height of the building.



First floor



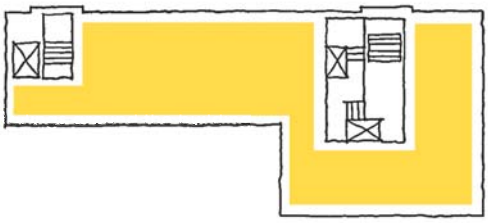
Ground floor



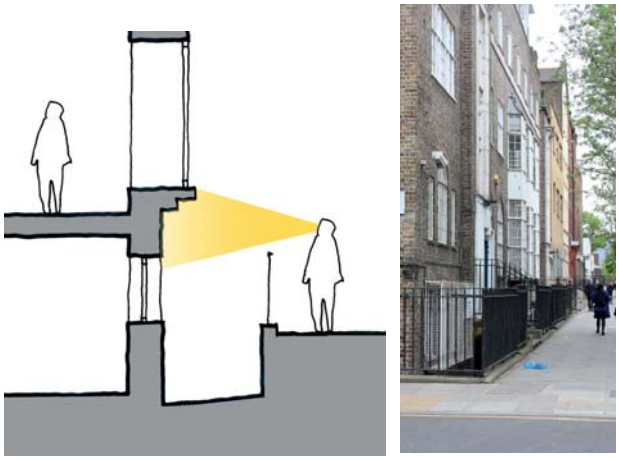
Lower ground floor

level 3
level 2
level 1
street level

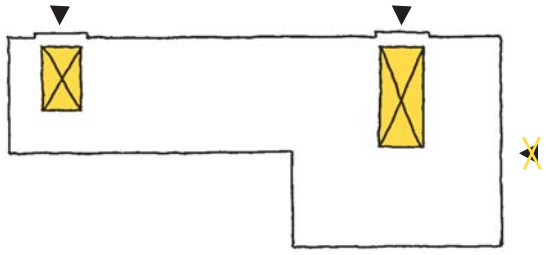
1. Stepped access from street level



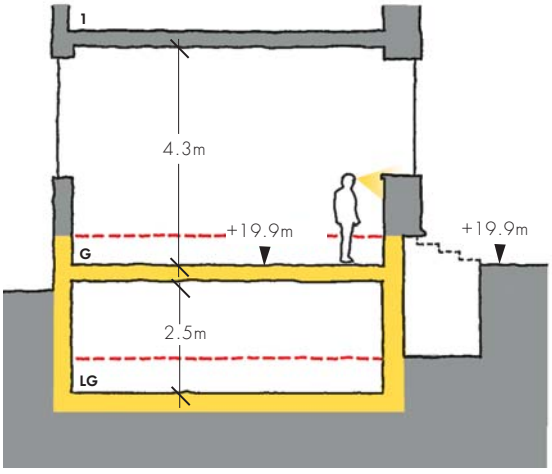
2. Efficiency of floor plate



3. Raised ground floor



4. No entrance on Chalton Street



5. Consequence of dropped floor

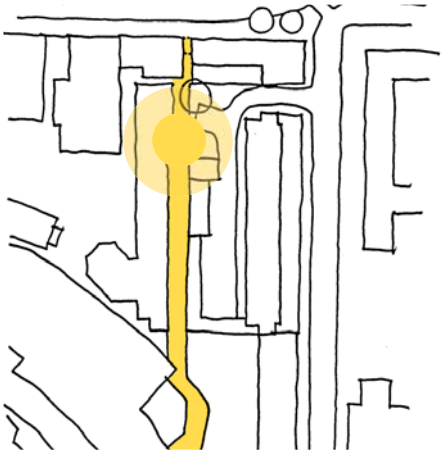
3.2 EXISTING CONSTRAINTS

As part of the initial feasibility study, Allies and Morrison reviewed the condition of the existing building to understand its potential for future reuse and adaptation.

From an early stage, a team of structural, services and fire engineers were also appointed to comment on the ease of reusing the existing building. Early feasibility reports from these consultants can be found in Appendix C.

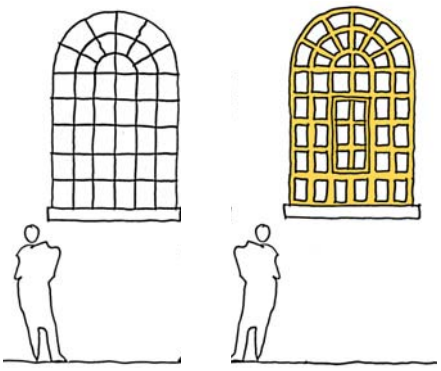
The following is a list of the existing constraints as identified by the team. Any refurbishment or retention of the existing building would first need to address these fundamental constraints:

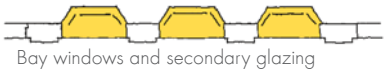
1. The stepped access up from street level does not meet current design standards to provide access and inclusivity for all.
2. The existing multi level floor space is not efficient and the usable space inside the building would be reduced further by refurbishment and access upgrades – as such substantial enabling development would be required to increase the viability of investment in retention of the existing building.
3. The raised ground floor of the existing building prohibits views into the building from the street level, resulting in a blank facade. The railings and light well present a further boundary to street activation.
4. There is currently no entrance and no active frontage onto Chalton Street which is a missed opportunity given the prominence of the building at the end of the block and for the future of Chalton Street as a 'Local Centre', as identified in the EAP.
5. If the internal floor level is dropped to be level with the street to allow access for all, then occupants will not be able to see out of the windows due to the high cill heights. If cill heights are subsequently lowered to permit views out then the existing character of the elevation is compromised and the local listing qualities are significantly altered.



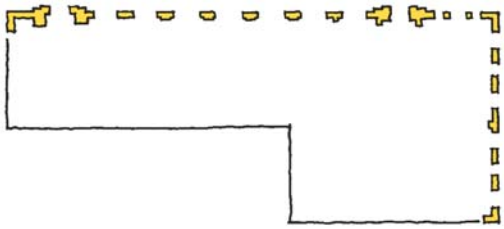
6. Crime hotspot onto Phoenix Road

7. Upper and lower regions of the facade are of poor quality design and no heritage value

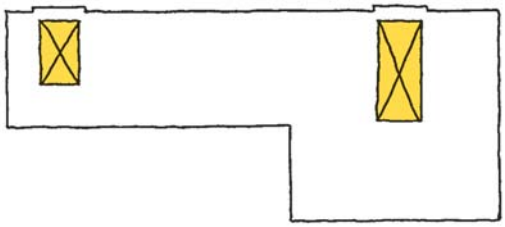




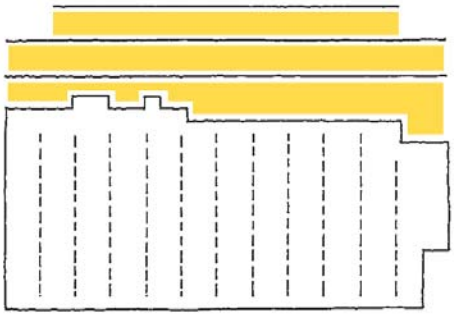
8. Modernisation impact on fenestration



9. Phoenix Road and Chalton Street facade elements are considered of some merit



10. A core at either end of the building

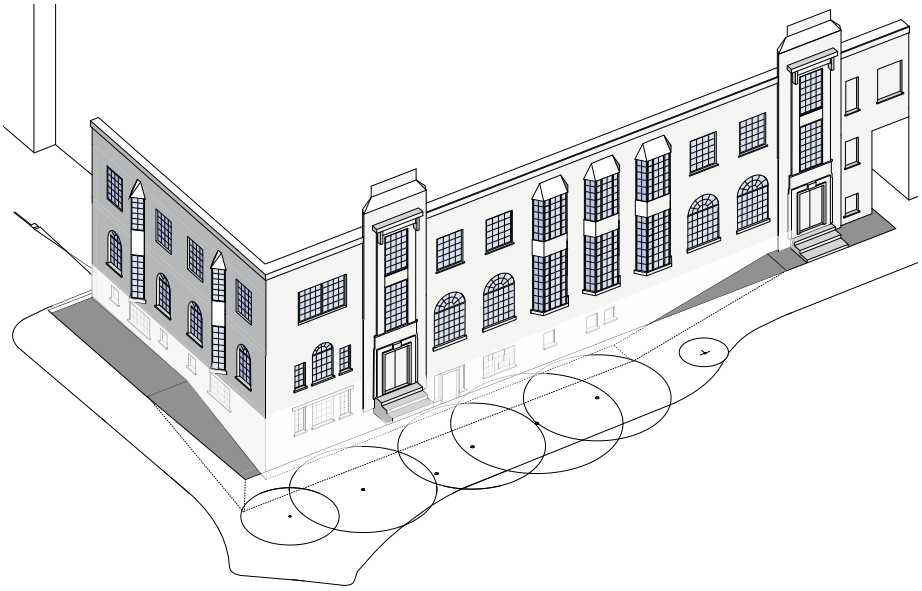


11. Insufficient structural capacity and dated service installations

6. The existing pedestrian passageway – Clarendon Grove – passes through number 42 as a narrow, dark and uninviting space that is considered unsafe by the Police, Camden Council and local residents.
7. The building has undergone various alterations and accretions over the years; these are of poor design quality and have compromised the qualities of the original facades.
8. The poor energy performance of the fabric falls significantly short of contemporary building regulations. The building is not statutorily listed so it is assumed that improved performance will be required. Upgrades to fabric to meet standards (e.g. window replacement) will impact on the appearance of the building and its validity as a non-designated heritage asset.
9. Only the ground and first floor elevations of the north and east facade are considered to have an architectural heritage value. To retain these in a facade retention scheme would make it hard to reconcile the proportional relationship between the scale of the existing building and new extension.
10. The existing layout with a core at either end of the building dramatically reduces the overall efficiency of the building.
11. There is limited structural capacity for an extension in height to provide enabling development. New structure will take out more usable space within the building. The existing services are extremely complicated and beyond their useful life and will need complete replacement throughout the building.

Areas of facade agreed with Camden as having limited heritage value

Existing building



Extent of facade which Camden Council state contributes to the building as a non-designated heritage asset

Rounded flush windows

Projecting oriel windows, replaced in the 1960's

Northern elevation on to Phoenix Road

3.3 EXISTING QUALITIES

In the pre application meeting with Camden Council it was agreed that only the ground and first floors facades on the east and north elevation have any heritage value. Whilst there are a great many constraints involved in retaining two sections of the existing facade, it is recognised that the existing building has positive characteristics. The features of note in the existing building are the projecting oriel bay windows and their fine white metalwork. The existing colour and texture of the light grey brickwork is successful against the surrounding red brick and white render of nearby buildings.

Although pleasing, these details are not considered exemplar and these positive characteristics of the building could readily be reproduced, or even enhanced, by a contemporary building of high quality design. It goes without saying that a proposal to replace a building on the Local List should be one of high quality and design merit.

Any new proposal should look to the architectural qualities in the wider area which include tall pitched roofs, chimneys and dormer windows.

Refer to the Heritage Statement submitted as part of this application for further consideration of the existing building and its inclusion on Camden's local list.

Rear elevation has no heritage value