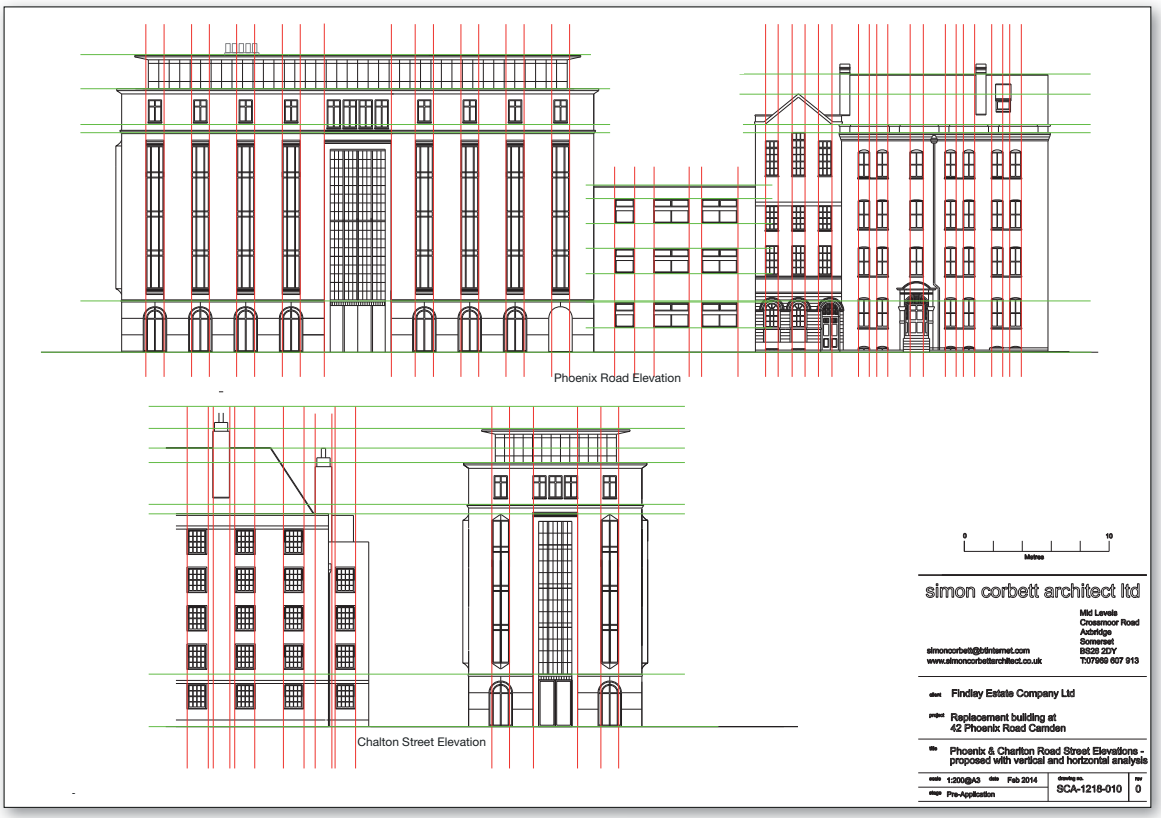


Proposed elevation drawings from initial pre application document (now superseded)

Existing

As proposed in initial pre application document (now superseded)

Existing

As proposed in initial pre application document (now superseded)

1. MARCH 2014

Initial pre application submission 2014/5841/PRE

In March 2014 the applicant submitted a pre application enquiry which included a scheme proposal for a 7 storey building containing 65 student bedrooms designed by Simon Corbett Architects. At the time of submitting the pre application proposals, the applicant was unaware that the building had been placed on Camden's draft local list. As a result, the scheme proposals had not addressed the significance of this.

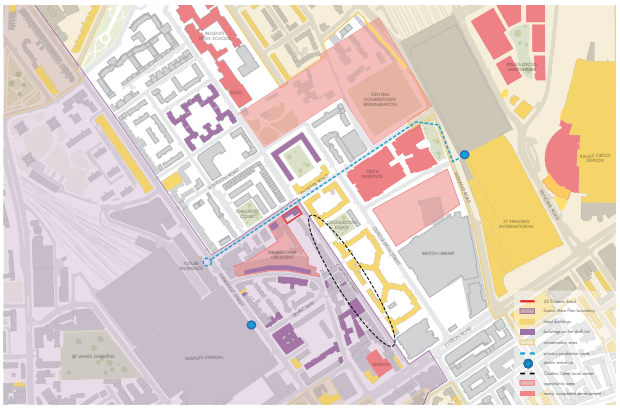
2. JUNE 2014

Initial pre application meeting

During the pre app meeting, it was agreed that more work should be undertaken to review the status of the building on the local list and any impact this might have on the development proposal.

Following this meeting the applicant appointed a heritage consultant, Geoff Noble Heritage and Urban Design, to review the significance of the existing building and its position on the local list. The results of this exercise can be found in the Heritage Statement submitted as part of this application.

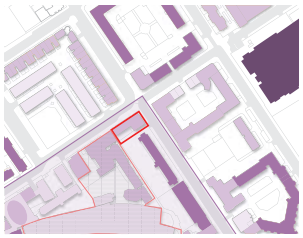
In addition to the issue of the local list, some feedback was given on the scale and character of the proposed building. At 7 storeys tall and civic in its character, the proposal was considered to be inappropriate for this location.



wider context

PHOENIX ROAD

Allies and Morrison
November 2014



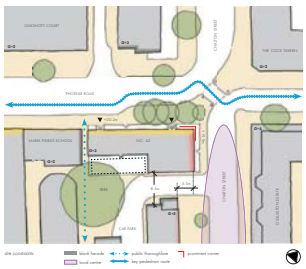
building heights

ground floor land use

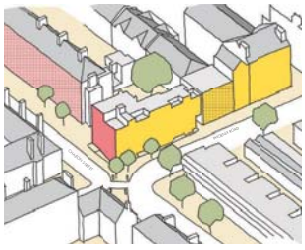
site context

PHOENIX ROAD

Allies and Morrison
November 2014



site constraints



existing building and townscape

public footpath

car park

rear of no.42

Chalton Street

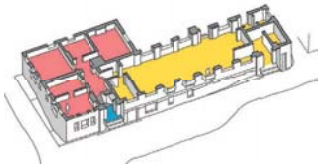
no.42 Phoenix Road

Maria Fidelis School

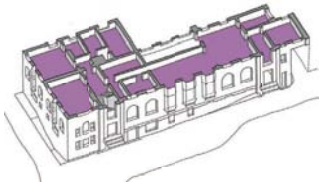
site analysis

PHOENIX ROAD

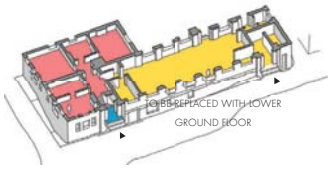
Allies and Morrison
November 2014



ground floor axonometric



first floor axonometric



lower ground floor axonometric

existing section

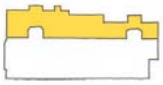
analysis of existing building

PHOENIX ROAD

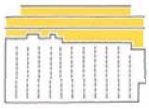
Allies and Morrison
November 2014

upgrading Critall windows

only north and east elevations demonstrate quality fenestrate



upper floors are of low quality



capacity of existing structure to support additional floors

existing Critall windows

rear facade

second and third floor of low quality

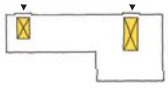
existing light weight upper floor

analysis of existing building

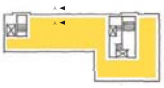
PHOENIX ROAD

Allies and Morrison
November 2014

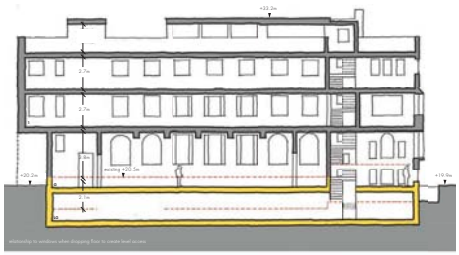
split lower ground



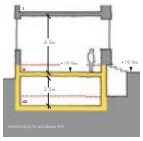
currently two entrance cores (neither central)



retaining levels and improving accessibility will result in loss of floor space



relationship to windows when dropping floor to create level access

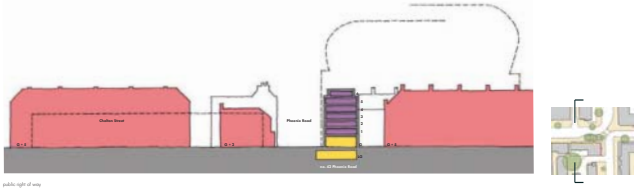


relationship to windows AA

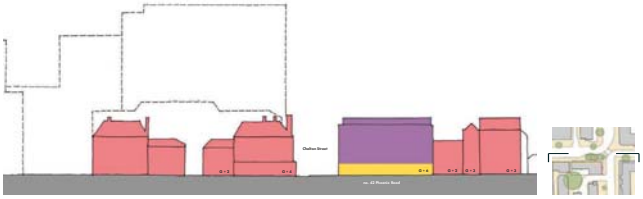
analysis of existing building

PHOENIX ROAD

Allies and Morrison
November 2014



public right of way

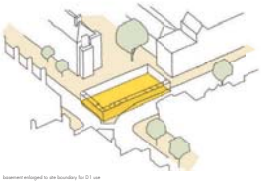


Phoenix Road

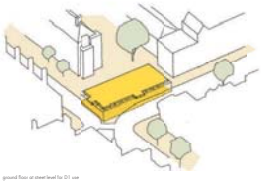
proposed massing

PHOENIX ROAD

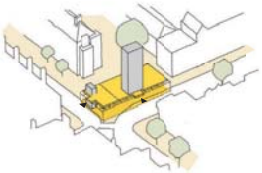
Allies and Morrison
November 2014



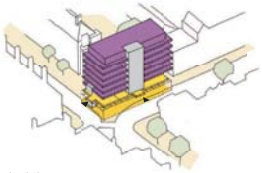
basement enlarged to site boundary for D1 use



ground floor at street level for D1 use



an entrance onto both streets and circulation cores



student residential

proposed uses

PHOENIX ROAD

Allies and Morrison
November 2014

3. SEPTEMBER 2014

Heritage Report submitted

In response to concerns about the buildings position on the local list, a heritage report was prepared by Geoff Noble Heritage and Urban Design and submitted to Camden.

4. NOVEMBER 2014

New team appointed

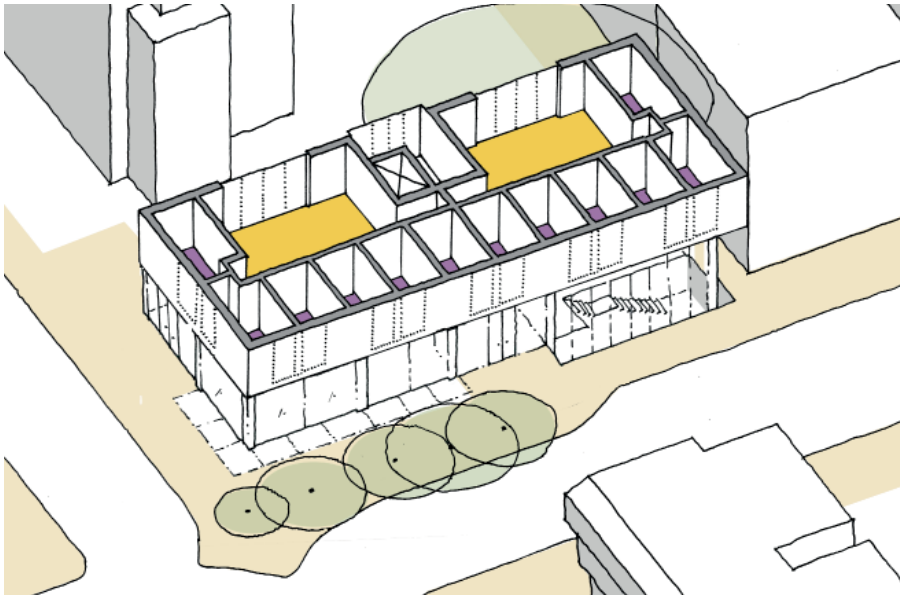
Geoff Noble (Heritage Consultant), Protean Planning (Planning Consultants) and Allies and Morrison (Architects) were appointed by the applicant in October 2014 to review the design in response to the planner's initial comments and the position of the building on the local list.

A second meeting was held with planning officers at 42 Phoenix Road in November 2014. In this meeting the extent of the listing was discussed as were the constraints of the existing building and some 'in principle' points in relation to future development.

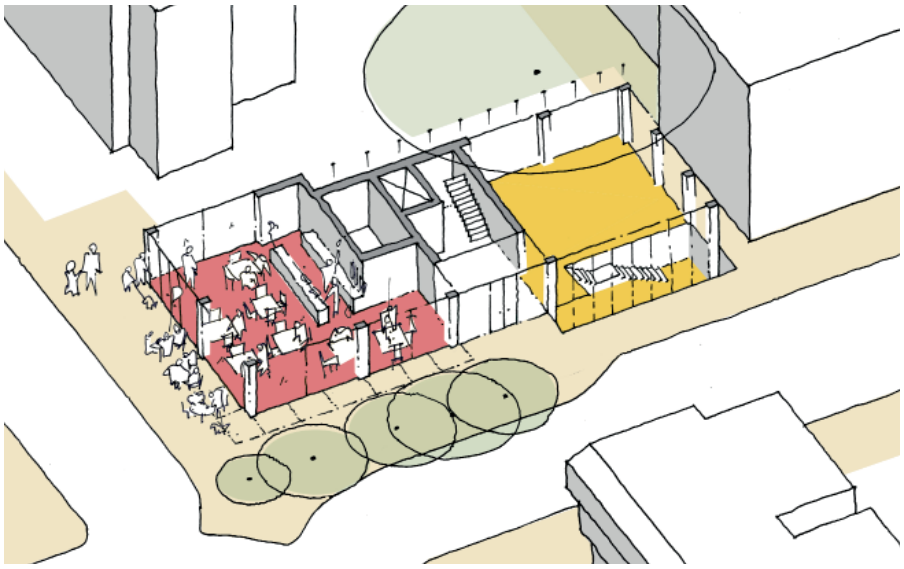
During the meeting the design team were referred to a couple of recent façade retention schemes in the area and asked to do further work to explore the possibilities of achieving level access whilst retaining the parts of the building with heritage value.

Following this meeting Allies and Morrison undertook a detailed study with cost consultants Gardiner and Theobald to determine the viability of retaining the existing building. This study can be found in Appendix A of this document.

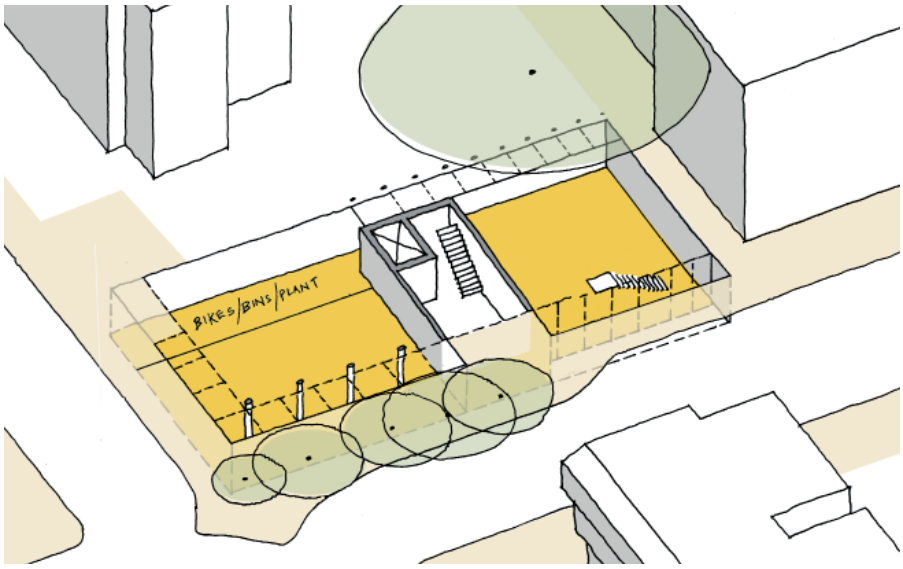
The architects also undertook a detailed comparison of the facade retention projects in the surrounding area and this study can be found in Appendix B of this document.



Student bedrooms facing north onto Phoenix Road with living spaces at the rear



Active frontage onto Phoenix Road, Chalton Street and Clarendon Grove through active uses



Increased D1 Space at lower ground floor level

5. JANUARY 2015

Follow up meeting

The team met at the council offices in January 2015 to discuss the response to the two studies undertaken.

The officers acknowledged that the feasibility study had shown that the heavy remodelling of the floor levels within the building would be unviable. They also agreed that in the case of substantial remodelling, it was likely that significant extension would be required as enabling development to substantiate this cost.

In addition to the issue of the local list, the team were keen at this meeting to gauge officers opinion on the general aspirations and design principles for the site. In particular with reference to the EAP, which should underlie any redevelopment of the existing building, whether a façade retention or replacement building.

Design Principles

The following issues were addressed in the meeting; height, bulk, massing, site coverage, active frontage, overlooking, sunlight and daylight amenity, proximity to listed buildings, townscape views, proximity to Maria Fidelis and the relationship with the adjacent footpath, Clarendon Grove and future uses for the building. Each of these points was addressed in the officers comments which followed on from this meeting.

The diagrams shown here were presented to the council and they represent the key design objectives which had been set based on the site analysis of the surrounding area. They set out the aspirations for the development and the positive qualities a new building would bring to the area.

Officers suggested in this meeting that they would present this study to Somers Town place shaping team and officers involved with the Community Investment Programme but we understand for reasons unknown to the design team, this meeting did not take place ahead of receiving formal pre application advice from Camden.

6.2 OFFICERS COMMENTS

MARCH 2015

Officers Comments received 10th March 2015

The applicant and team had no further contact from the planning department following the second meeting in January and received formal written feedback in March.

The feedback concluded that the buildings inclusion on the local list establishes an overwhelming presumption in favour of the retention of the existing building.

The feedback is summarised here. These key concerns from planners have informed the design evolution from 2014 to 2015.

We believe that with the exception of the local listing, all of these issues have been addressed in the current design proposal and the rationale is described across the suite of documents submitted as part of the planning application.

- **Any remodelling of the building should not result in the loss of D1 space**
  We have been sure to accurately re-measure the existing D1 space and make sure no space is lost in the current proposal. Indeed space of a substantially higher quality is gained.

- **There would be no objection to a scheme which retains the two principle façades below second floor level**
  We have reviewed the viability of this and found it to be unviable in terms of the townscape impact of enabling development required to offset the substantial cost of the works

- **The study omitted the option of a roof extension proposed in 2010 – could this less intrusive option be acceptable?**
  We have reviewed this option. It is referred to here as a suitable alternative but in 2010 the application was rejected by officers for fundamental reasons which were considered unacceptable in principle. For example, 'the loss of D1 floor space, amendments to the façade to form an entrance and an overbearing extension at roof level'

- **In the pre-application meeting, Camden town planning representatives were in agreement that wholesale façade retention would be so costly to warrant a significant increase in replacement floor space but the formal feedback concluded that the existing facilities could be improved upon through minor interventions**
  Minor iterventions to the existing building would not address the townscape constraints of the existing building highlighted in the previous chapter. It would be a missed opportunity in terms of the public benefits brought by a replacement building and the investment in regeneration

of the area – aspirations which closely align with the Somers Town CIP and the Euston Area Plan. Minor interventions to the existing building would not achieve access for all, without significant loss of floorspace there would be no environmental benefit and the building would continue to be used inefficiently and be expensive to run with reduced enabling work to increase rental return

- **A Section 106 Agreement would be required to ensure that the accommodation was used as student housing and not C3 or C4 residential use classes**
  This arrangement is acceptable to the applicant – there is no intention that the flats are rented or sold as private accommodation

- **Proposed replacement building is alien to its surrounding in terms of height, scale massing and the resulting building would have a dominant impact on the street scene**
  The proposed height would result in an overly dominant impact on neighbouring residential occupiers
  These comments were based on the initial Simon Corbett proposal for a 7 storey building. A&M have since reduced the proposal to ground + 5 storeys with a set back roof at 5th floor level. A&M have carefully considered the scale of the proposal to be in keeping with surrounding development in form an character

- **Blackheath to St Paul viewing corridor**
  The proposed building is consistent with the height of many of the mansion blocks in the neighbourhood and will not be discernible in the background within the Blackheath to St Paul's viewing corridor. The proposed development will cause no harm to the setting or significance of St Paul's Cathedral

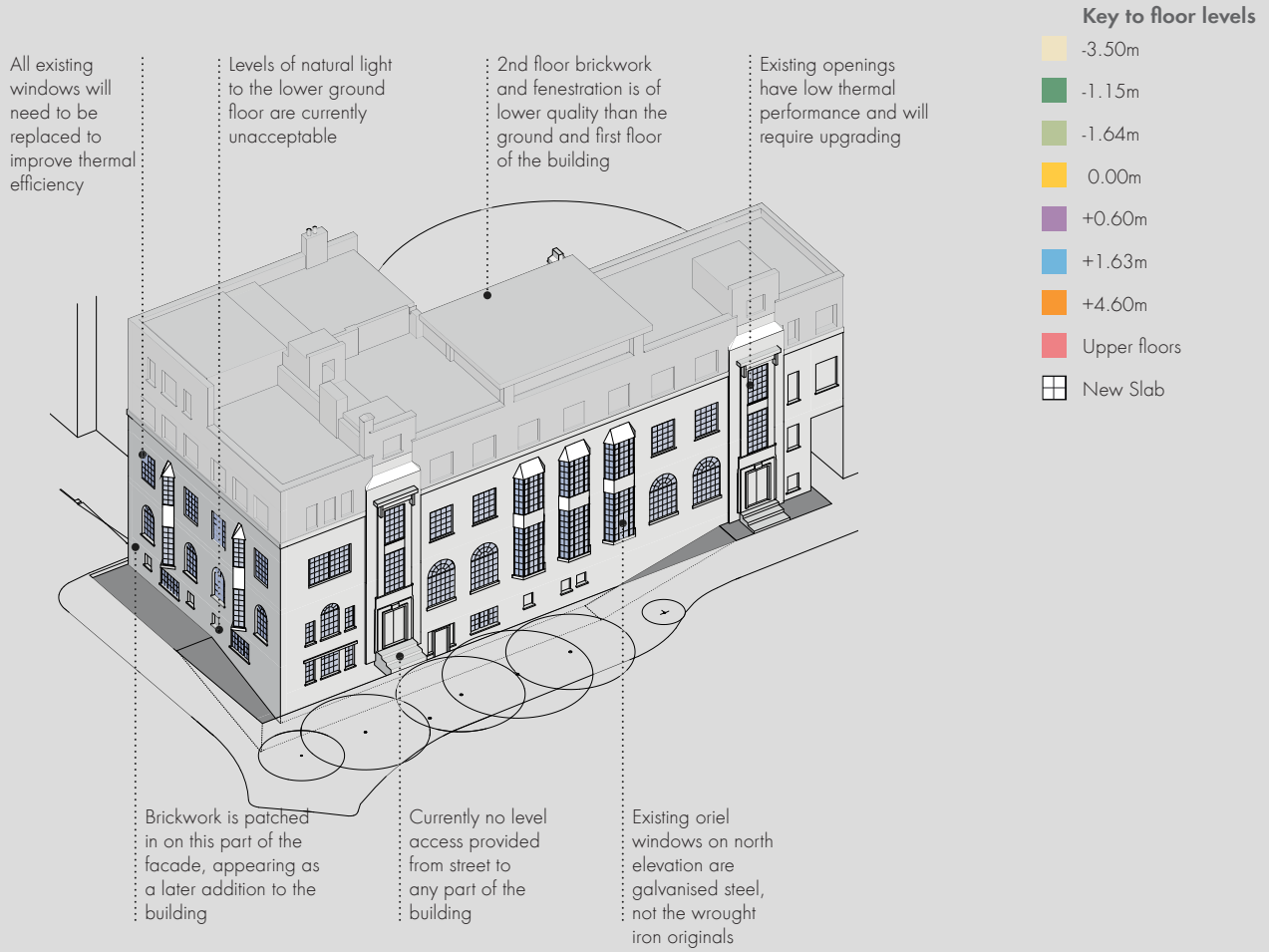
- **Daylight and sunlight report required to support any application for increase in height**
  A daylight and sunlight study has been completed for the proposed development and is submitted as part of this application. There is predicted to be little or no adverse impact on neighbouring properties

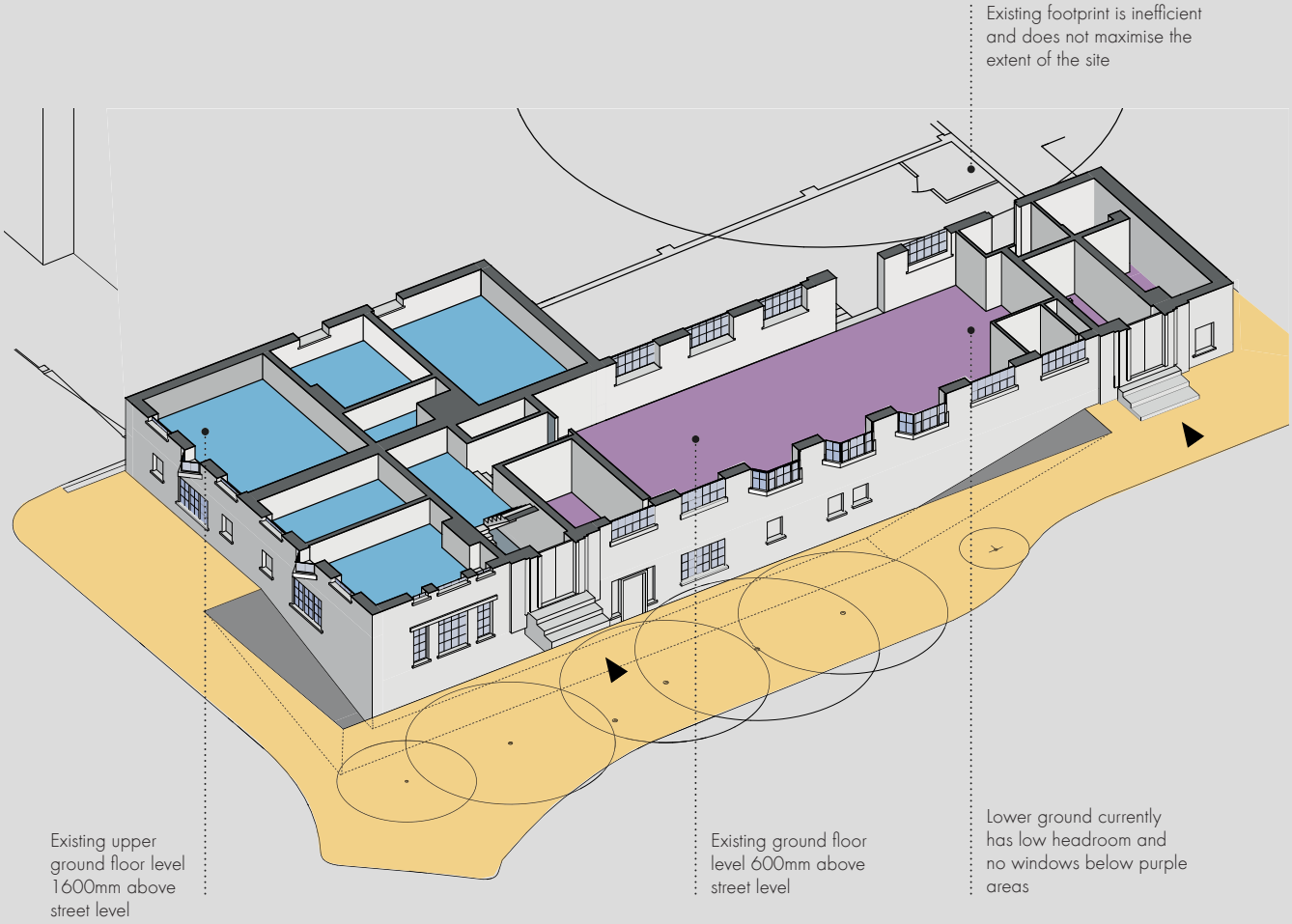
- **Privacy to residents of Chalton House should be considered**
  The proximity to neighbours has been constantly considered during design development and the outlook from the building has been designed to avoid intrusion on the nearby Ossulston Estate. No issues are anticipated with the proposal in this regard. Public consultation has been held at the Somers Town Community Association and all local residents invited to voice any concerns in regards to privacy and amenity. No comments were received to this affect

- **A degree of private or communal space should be provided in relation to new residential accommodation**
  A communal roof terrace has been included on the 5th floor adjacent to the stair core. All of the apartments on the top (5th floor) have balconies and access to roof terraces. The application is for student residential accommodation and not self contained housing

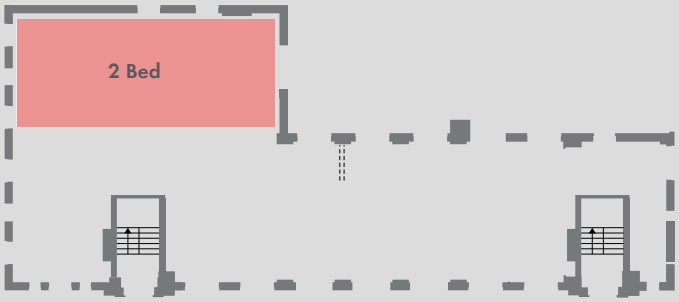
- **Expect developments to be car free or provide the minimum parking allocation**
  The development will be car free

- **Secure cycle storage facilities should be provided in the development**
  Cycle spaces have been provided in the basement of the building where their storage is secure with good access to all floors of the building via a lift

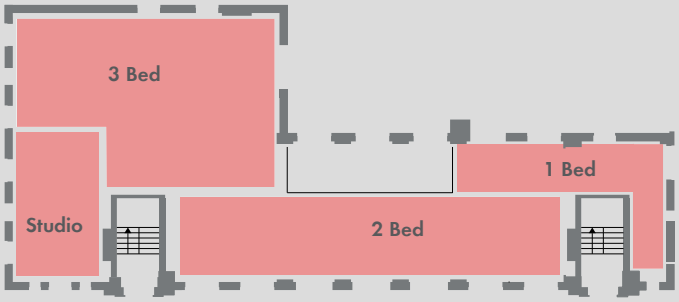




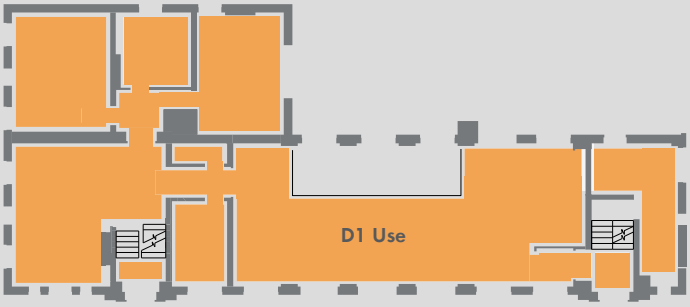
EXISTING BUILDING



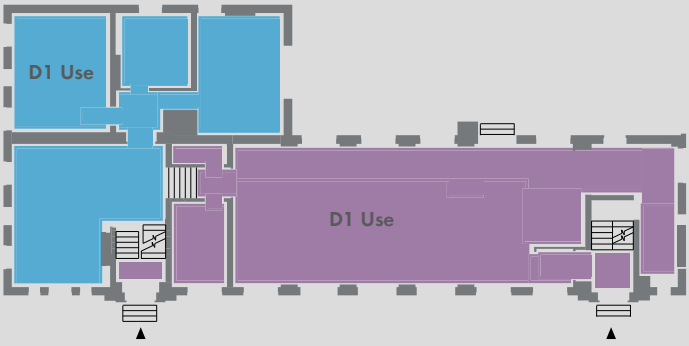
Existing Third Floor



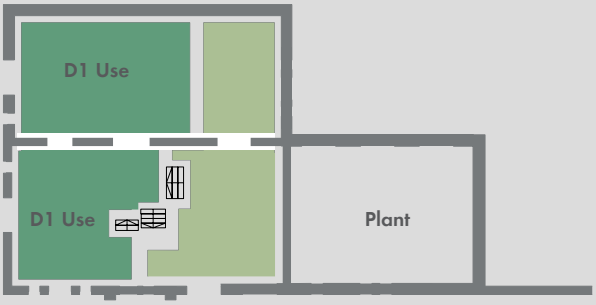
Existing Second Floor



Existing First Floor



Existing Ground Floor



Existing Lower Ground Floor

6.3 RETENTION VIABILITY

In response to a request from Camden, Allies and Morrison undertook a detailed analysis and feasibility study of retaining and adapting or extending the existing building. This submission, made to Camden on the 8th December 2014, is included in Appendix A of this document. The version of it shown here has been updated to include the financial viability analysis for each option and an additional option considered to be relevant following pre application advice (now option two).

As part of the feasibility study, Allies and Morrison have reviewed the condition of the existing building to understand its potential for reuse and adaptation. This exercise was extensive, requiring detailed 3D computer modelling of the existing building to ensure the assessment could be rigorously carried out.

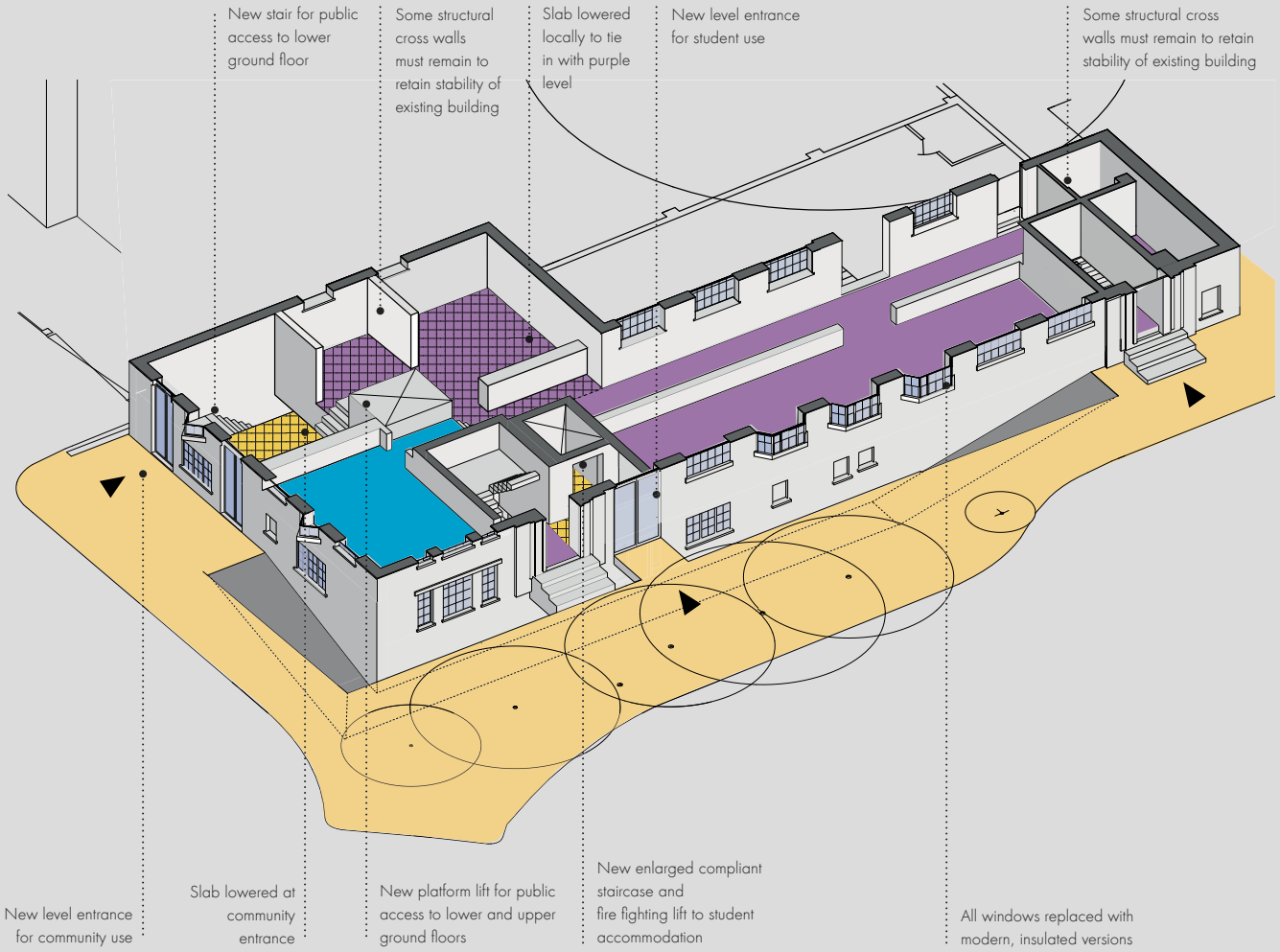
A team of services, structure and fire engineers were also appointed at an early stage to comment on the likelihood of reusing the existing building. Cost consultants have provided advice on the economic viability of various approaches.

The extensive study was distilled to three principal options which are set out in Appendix A and summarised in the following pages, with one additional option, more recently added. The study takes its starting point from the existing building which is summarised here on the left. The existing building is 4 storeys tall, has 380sqm (NIA) of D1 floor space and 9 student bedrooms.

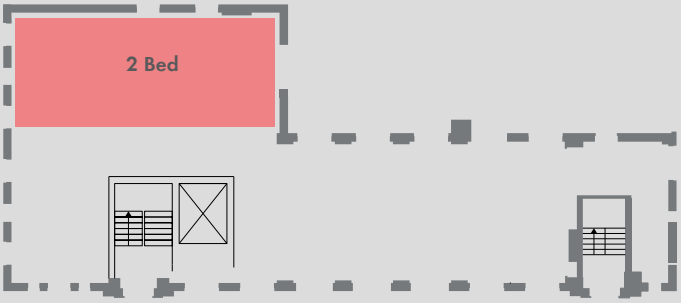
In order to be truly viable, the options for retention, adaption and extension would need to comply with the following key criteria:

- The amount of D1 space in the building must be retained and improved
- Both the quality and amount of lettable space must be improved overall
- The integrity of the existing building (and features which result in its position on the local list) must be retained
- All areas of the building must be fully accessible to all
- The works must be financially and operationally viable for the Applicant

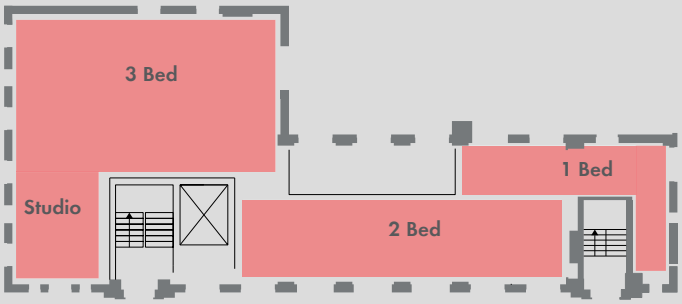

All existing windows will need to be replaced to improve thermal efficiency
New openings extended to ground with new glazing
New openings extended to ground with new glazing
Key to floor levels
-3.50m
-1.15m
-1.64m
0.00m
+0.60m
+1.63m
+4.60m
Upper floors
New Slab


New stair for public access to lower ground floor
Some structural cross walls must remain to retain stability of existing building
Slab lowered locally to tie in with purple level
New level entrance for student use
Some structural cross walls must remain to retain stability of existing building
New level entrance for community use
Slab lowered at community entrance
New platform lift for public access to lower and upper ground floors
New enlarged compliant staircase and fire fighting lift to student accommodation
All windows replaced with modern, insulated versions

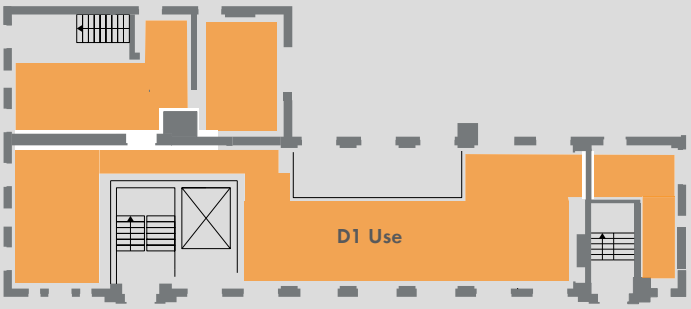
OPTION ONE



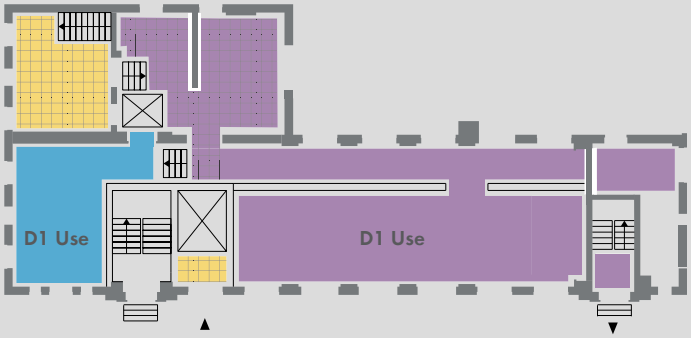
Third Floor (enlarged stair core, otherwise no change proposed)



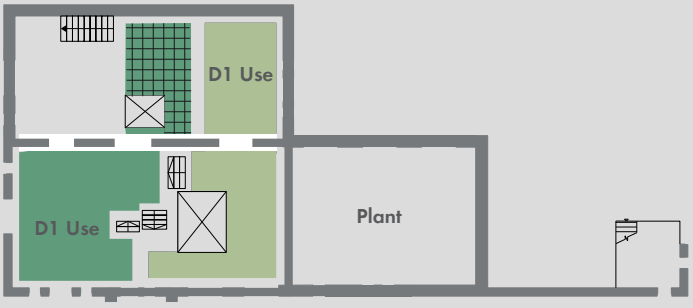
Second Floor (enlarged stair core, otherwise no change proposed)



First Floor



Ground Floor



Lower Ground Floor

OPTION ONE – ADAPTATION & REFURBISHMENT

Install level access with lifts at entrance locations, otherwise retain and refurbish the building in its current configuration.

Brief description

Broadly keep the existing building as it is today but provide level access to both the D1 space on lower floors and the student residential accommodation on upper floors. Generally refurbish the building and upgrade thermal performance of the existing fabric.

Works required

- Cut out and lower two sections of cast in situ concrete ground floor slab
- Construct new larger stair core and lift from lower ground to third floor
- Install new platform lift and new staircase between lower ground and first floor for D1 use
- Remove some internal walls
- Widen and drop the cill heights to ground of 3no openings. Block up 2no. openings and construct bridge across lightwell
- Replace balance of windows and bring external fabric up to modern specification
- Review and update building services

Resultant accommodation

- The finished building will be 4 storeys tall
- The D1 space in the building would reduce to 264 sqm NIA
- There would be 9 student bedrooms in the building

3D view of Option One

AS EXISTING	
COST OF THE WORK	£0
D1 NIA	380 sqm
GAIN/LOSS D1	n/a
STUDENT BEDROOMS	9
GAIN/LOSS BEDROOMS	n/a
RENTAL VALUE	£170,600
GAIN/LOSS RENTAL VALUE	n/a
CAPITAL VALUE	£2,160,000
CAPITAL VALUE TO COST	n/a
CAPITAL VALUE PER FLOOR	n/a
NO. EXTRA FLOORS REQUIRED	n/a

Summary of the financial viability of the existing building

OPTION ONE	
COST OF THE WORK	£3,496,000
D1 NIA	264 sqm
GAIN/LOSS D1	- 116 sqm
STUDENT BEDROOMS	9
GAIN/LOSS BEDROOMS	0
RENTAL VALUE	£140,000 pa
GAIN/LOSS RENTAL VALUE	- £30,600
CAPITAL VALUE	£1,892,500
CAPITAL VALUE TO COST	- £267,500
CAPITAL VALUE PER FLOOR	n/a
NO. EXTRA FLOORS REQUIRED	n/a

Summary of the financial viability analysis for Option One

OPTION ONE – ADAPTATION & REFURBISHMENT

Does this option provide usable spaces?

No. These interventions would substantially reduce the usable D1 floor space within the building at ground and lower ground floors. The introduction of the lift to service student residential floors would also reduce the upper floor efficiency.

The blocking up of windows and external door at lower ground floor will reduce the natural light to unacceptable levels and likely contravene fire regulations regarding means of escape.

Does this option retain the façade unaltered?

No. These interventions would require removing a large arched window onto Phoenix Road, opening up the façade to install a new street level entrance via a bridge across the lightwell, and blocking up of the window and door below. Plus the removal and blocking up of two street level windows onto Chalton Street, removal and extension of two arched windows and opening the façade to install a new street level entrance.

To ensure that the thermal performance is upgraded, the balance of the remaining windows on all facades would need to be replaced with heavier framed equivalents to meet modern environmental standards.

Is this option viable?

No. Assuming the existing building could cope with such significant structural alterations, the substantial costs involved in cutting out two sections of the reinforced cast in-situ concrete floor slab, their reconstruction at street level, corresponding lowering of window sill heights, removal of internal structural walls, installation of two passenger lifts and four staircases, together with the myriad of environmental upgrades required to meet modern building regulations are exacerbated by a significant reduction in the net lettable area within the building.

Conclusion

This option is structurally difficult to undertake and correspondingly extremely expensive. The work would result in a substantial loss of D1 floor area across the lower three floors and the remaining space would be less efficient and more congested due to the installations of new stairs and lifts.

It is clear that such an option would be wholly unviable in both economic and planning terms. The existing façade to both Phoenix Road and particularly Chalton Street would be altered so as to warrant the building's likely removal from the local list and there would be positive harm to the streetscape and local community.