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Fig. 1 aerial view



Fig. 2 aerial view

1.1 General Overview

A Listed Building Consent is sought for alterations to the Old Postmen’s Office which would include works to the interior of the building. The proposed works are to install an accessible WC/Shower and a Kitchen/Store within the office, a mezzanine with two stairs and to adjust the existing entrance door to swing outward. It is also proposed to install a comfort cooling and heating system which would require two external fan coil units to be placed on the roof of the lower single storey entrance block, hidden from the street behind the existing pediment.

Two planning permissions have already been granted for the refurbishment of the listed building and the residential redevelopment at rear of the site and this new application is only focusing on the proposals which have not been previously shown. A comparison between the previously consented scheme and the proposed one is presented later in this document.

2.1 Site Description

The site sits between Leighton Road, which largely comprises 19th century private houses, and Kentish Town Railway station, built in the 1860s. The main building on the site was built as a Royal Mail sorting office in 1903, and operated as such until around 1996 when it was taken over by its current owners. The larger studio building to the rear was added shortly after this, and the smaller building around 2005. Since 1996 the site has functioned as studio and office space. The building is currently leased by a clothing company’s head office.

28 Leighton Road & adjoining terrace - Immediately to the east of the Leighton Rd frontage is a terrace of mainly 3-storey private houses. These have back gardens which adjoin the side of the main sorting hall and the area currently occupied by the main studio building.

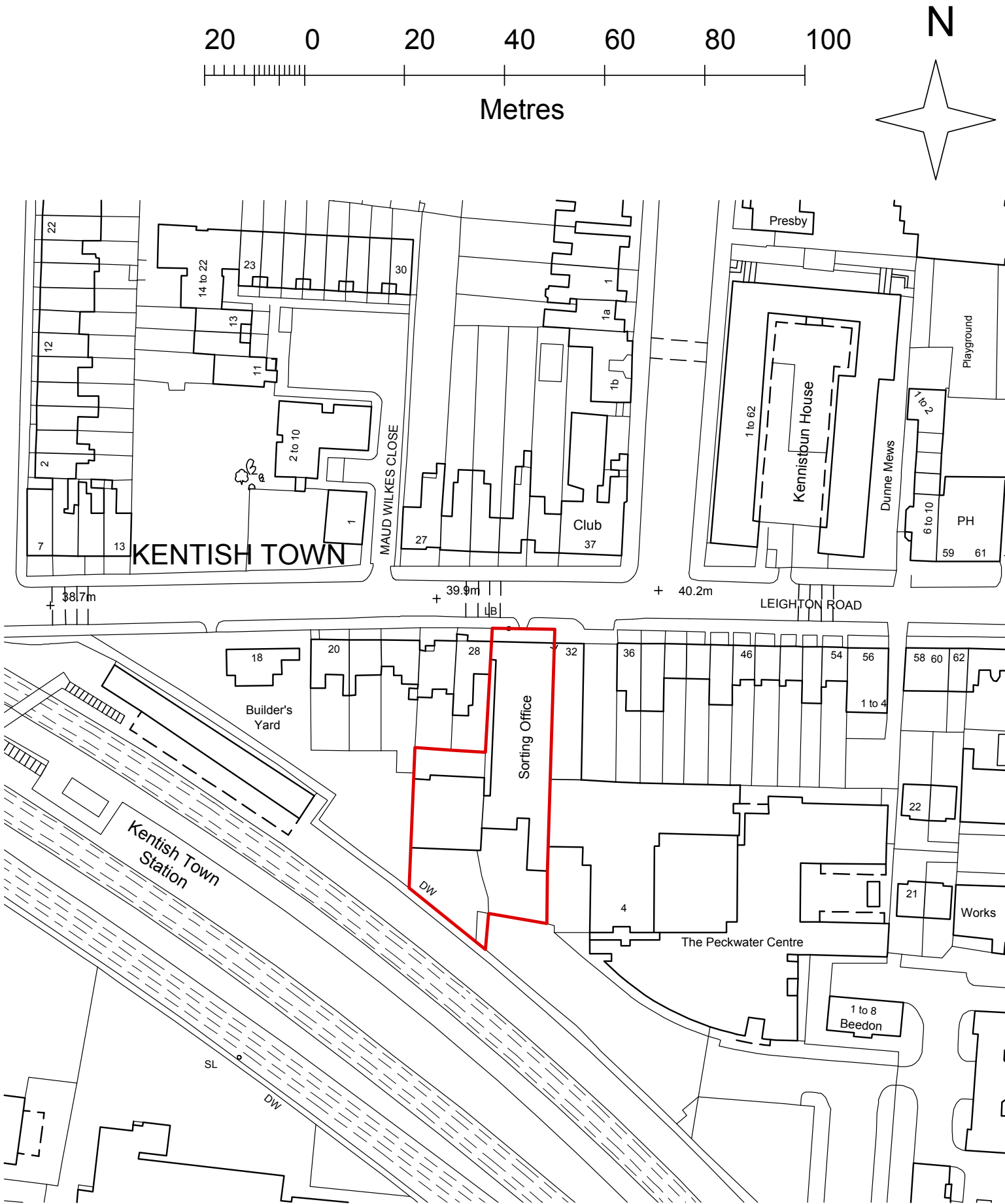
32 Leighton Rd - Immediately to the west of the Leighton Road frontage is a flat-roofed two storey building built in 1972 and currently occupied by the London Centre for Psychotherapy. This building shares a party/boundary wall with the entire length of the eastern side of the main sorting office hall.

Peckwater St - Adjoining the eastern and part of the southern boundary of the site is a 2 - 3 storey building and associated car park which are part of a GPs’ surgery and health centre, the Caversham Group Practice. Part of this building directly adjoins the party wall, and part of it is set back from the boundary line by approximately 8 metres.

Kentish Town railway station - Forming a section of the southern boundary of the site is a brick retaining wall, at the bottom of which is one of the railway station platforms. The railway station is owned by Network Rail. It is understood that there is a legal agreement that no buildings can be erected on the land without prior approval within 12m of the shared boundary, not to be unreasonably withheld from Network Rail.

The applicants are currently in negotiations to acquire the land to the rear of the site which is currently in Network Rail ownership so it can be used as a landscaped area as part of the proposed development. Notice will served on Network Rail as part of this application and Certificate B declaration will be submitted.

18 Leighton Rd - Adjoining the west side of the rear part of the site is a storage yard and vehicle depot occupied by Meeres Civil Engineering Ltd. This yard extends from an entrance at 18 Leighton Rd. There are no permanent structures adjoining the site at this point.



Location Plan - Not To Scale

2.2 Heritage Designation of Postmen's Office

We are submitting a full heritage report alongside this application prepared by KM Heritage which deals in detail with the significance of the existing listed Postmen's Office building and the proposed alterations contained within this application for Listed Building Consent. The following is a summary of the findings.

30 Leighton Road is listed Grade II; the list description is: TQ2985SW LEIGHTON ROAD 798-1/43/1024 (South side) 13/02/95 No.30 Kentish Town Sorting Office (Formerly Listed as: LEIGHTON ROAD No.30 (former Royal Mail sorting office - incl. attached railings))

“Royal Mail sorting office. Dated 1903. Red brick with stone dressings. Hipped slated roof with central tall panelled brick chimney-stack set above a segmental pediment and flanked by brick pediments with ball finials above Diocletian windows with keystones. Symmetrical design. Lower single storey facade projects forward beneath the Diocletian windows to give a segmental-arched entrance with pilasters having enriched capitals and frieze inscribed “Postmen's Office”, above which a pediment with carved royal coat of arms; original part-glazed double doors. Left hand bay with 2 sashes, upper halves with glazing bars; right hand bay with 3 smaller sashes, upper halves with glazing bars. Both bays with brick parapets, corresponding to doorway frieze, and having central segmental headed plaques carved with royal GR monograms. Original rainwater head and pipe to left hand bay. INTERIOR: not inspected.”

The nature of its special architectural and historic interest (the statutory definition of the quality possessed by a listed building, as set out in S.1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) is analysed below. Nos 20, 22, 24, 26 and 28 Leighton Road are also listed Grade II.

30 Leighton Road and the other listed buildings are located in the Kentish Town Conservation Area. The boundary of the conservation area runs along the northern boundary of the railway line, which is also partly the southern boundary of the site of 30 Leighton Road. It returns north along the eastern boundary of 30 Leighton Road with No 32 Leighton Road, and then goes eastwards to include those properties on the southern side of Leighton Road.

30 Leighton Road, the other listed buildings and the Kentish Town Conservation Area are ‘designated heritage assets’, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF). Structures that make a positive contribution to the conservation area can be considered as ‘undesigned heritage assets’.



Fig. 3 Archive image of frontage



Kentish town conservation area

2.3 Heritage Significance

‘Significance’ is defined in the NPPF as ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic’. The English Heritage ‘Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide’ puts it slightly differently – as ‘the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest’. ‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment’ (English Heritage, April 2008) describes a number of ‘heritage values’ that may be present in a ‘significant place’. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value. The concept of heritage significance is consistent with that of the ‘special architectural and historic interest’ of listed buildings and conservation areas.

30 Leighton Road possesses each of these qualities to a certain degree. The special historic interest or historical value of 30 Leighton Road lies in its former use as a postal sorting office and the date of its construction; its role as a signifier of the development of the modern post office distribution network; and its role in the area of which it forms a part.

Its special architectural interest or aesthetic significance lies in:

- The front part of the building facing Leighton Road: as the public face of the former sorting office this was afforded the greatest architectural effort and is a good example of the degree of effort and attention given to the architecture of public buildings – even relatively humble buildings – in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. This part of the building is well executed in brick and Portland stone, with some fine detail (above and around the entrance, the stone window architraves, the plaque in the parapet above the windows, the chimney, the brick header gables above the Diocletian windows lighting the main hall) and a partially intact boundary treatment incorporating custom-designed railings.
- The single large space of the former sorting office: this space is directly linked to the original use of the listed building, and is thus the principal spatial feature of the building. Plan forms are an inherent part of special interest, and the key feature of the plan of this building is – because it was a sorting office – a single large space in which the building’s principal activity occurred. Within this space is a physical expression of how that activity was managed – the former supervisor’s office sits above the space in the northern internal wall of the hall, in a position where the sorting office workers could be observed at their work.
- Other aspects of the listed building’s significance are the treatment of the side wall (on the western side) and the survival in a vestigial state of some structures to the rear that were clearly ancillary to the main building.

The modern insertions within the main building and the modern extensions to the rear are not considered to be of heritage significance.



Fig. 4 existing frontage of brick and Portland stone



Fig. 5 existing bespoke railings to Leighton Rd



Fig. 6 existing Diocletian windows



Fig. 7 archive view of main hall



Fig. 8 archive view of main hall

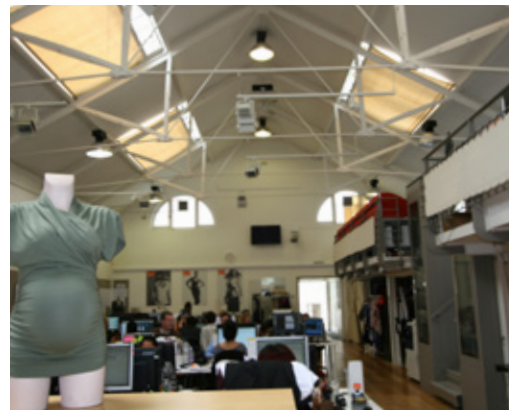


Fig. 9 existing view of main hall



Fig. 10-12 existing view of ancillary buildings

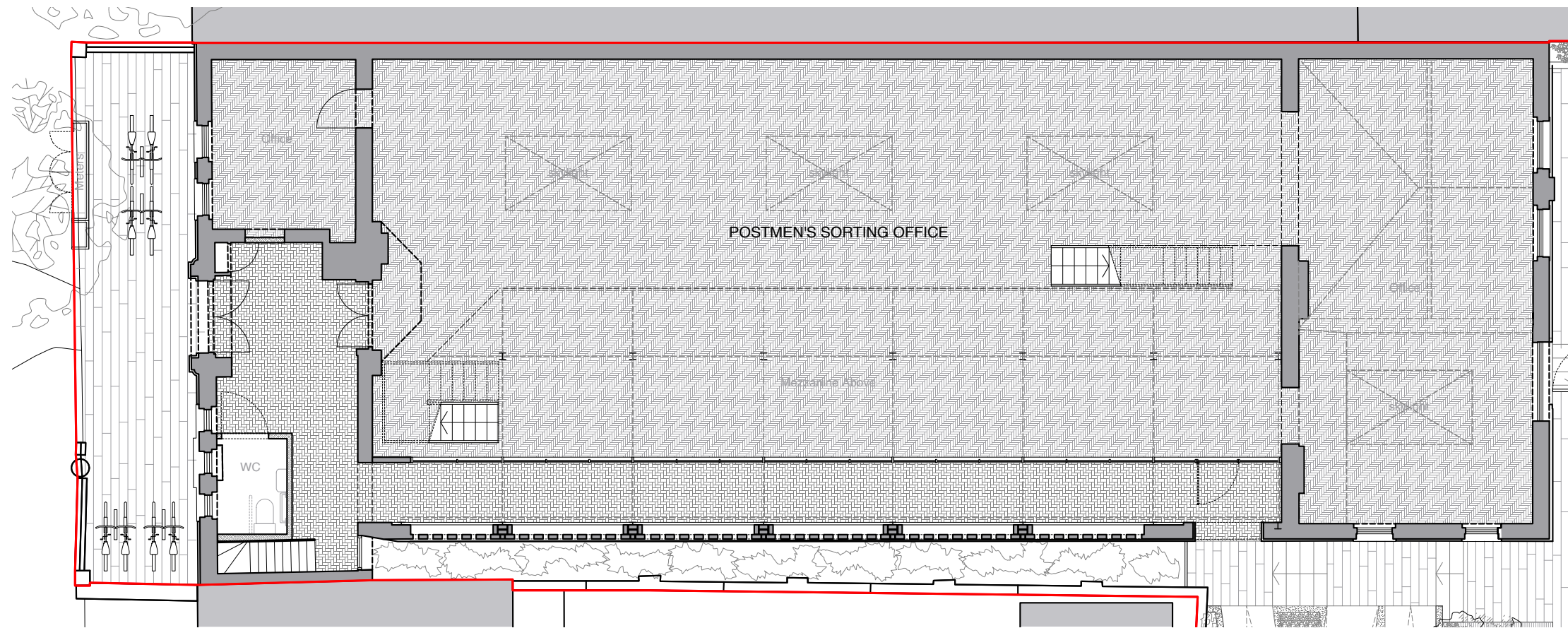


3.1. Summary

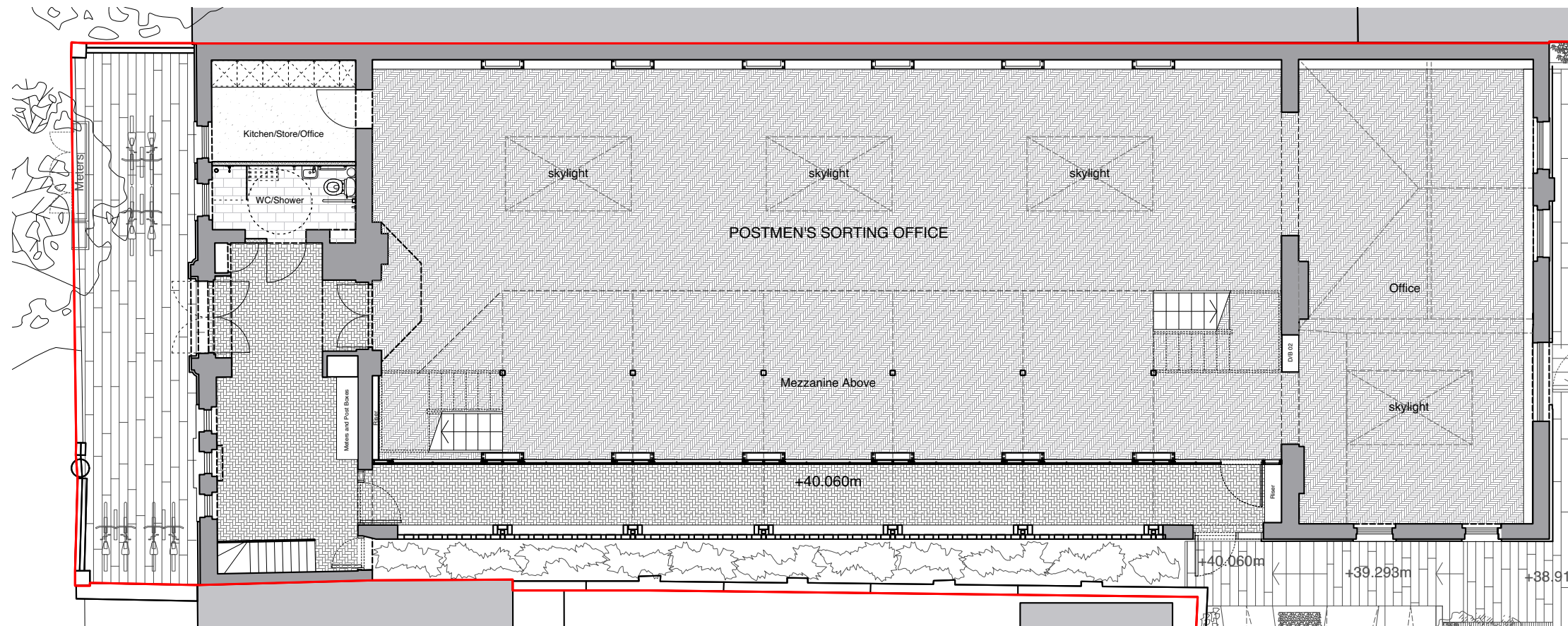
A planning permission was granted in 2016 (2015/4856/L) for “Internal and external alterations to the Postman’s Office and associated demolition of rear additions to provide B1a offices and communal access corridor to residential redevelopment at rear of site”. A separate planning permission (2015/4778/P) was given for the new mixed redevelopment at the back of the site for “Refurbishment with alterations of the Postman’s Office to provide offices (Class B1a) and a communal access corridor and redevelopment of the rear of the site to provide three 2-3 storey blocks for 2 live/work units (Sui Generis) and 7 residential units (Class C3), with associated landscaping, cycle and refuse stores”.

This new application for a Listed Building Consent is concerned with the following proposed works:

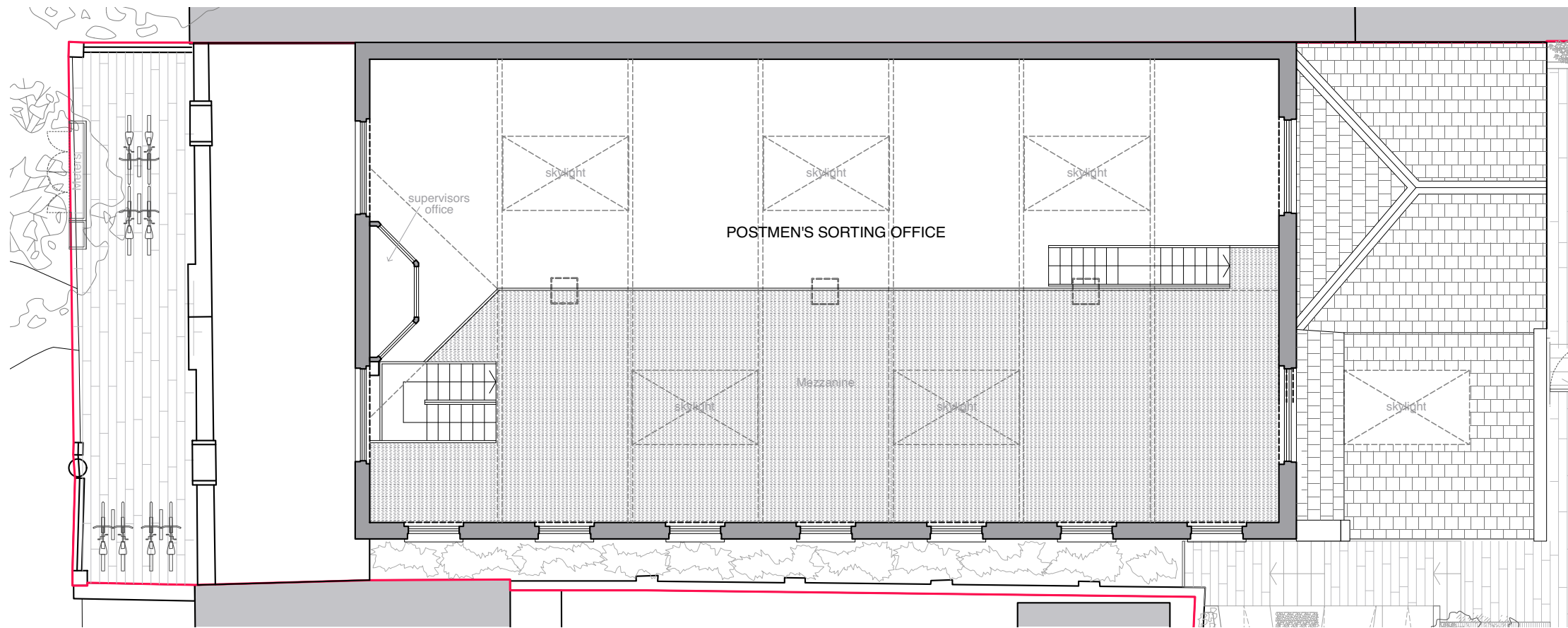
- Installation of the accessible WC/Shower and Kitchen/Store inside of the existing office enclosure to the east of the building to leave the existing entrance hall unchanged from its existing condition.
- Installation of the mezzanine with two dog-legged stairs to each end. The proposed layout is a result of a consultation process with the Building Control with respect to maximum distances between the stairs and fire exits.
- Adjustment of the main entrance door to swing outward in order to satisfy the Building Control requirements regarding the means of escape in case of fire.
- Installation of two external air cooled VRV condensers mounted on the flat roof behind the existing raised parapet wall.



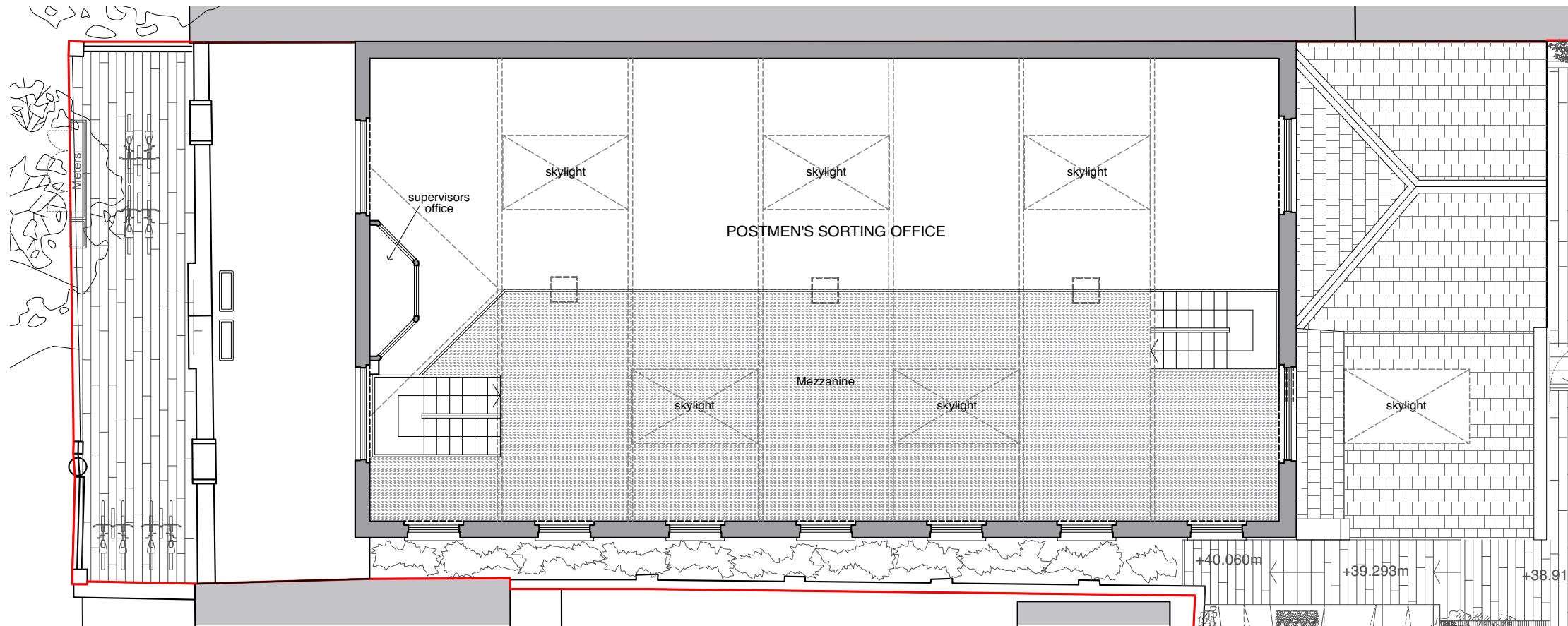
Previously Consented Scheme Ground Floor Plan - Not To Scale



Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Not To Scale



Previously Consented Scheme First Floor Plan - Not To Scale



Proposed First Floor Plan - Not To Scale