

BEDFORD HOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE
Renewal of Planning Permission

Ref. 2014/0304/P

Ref. 2016/3333/P



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Location plan



Aerial view from the north

Preface

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 three sites in Holborn: Bedford House Community Centre, the 1A Arts Centre and Millman Street Resource Centre. It is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. See <http://www.holborncommunity.co.uk/>.

This application is for the renewal of existing planning permission for the redevelopment of Bedford House. The documents are unchanged from those originally submitted, with the exception of the removal of the wire mesh enclosure to the proposed roof terrace. A few additional images have been added and some updates to the text in the document have been made where information was out of date.

Full Planning Permission was granted in June 2014 for the redevelopment and expansion of Bedford House, which is located at 35 Emerald Street, London. This planning permission is due to expire on the 11th of June 2017, its reference number is 2014/0304/P.

A Minor Material Amendment application, reference number 2016/3333/P was granted consent in September 2016 following the discovery of an old restrictive covenant from 1932 that affects the permitted height of the proposal across half of the site.

The Minor Material Amendments consented were 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 proposal 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.

Negotiations are in process with UCL Estates, and Rugby School, with whom the covenant is made to annul or revise the covenant, 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 it for any reason the covenant were not annulled, the revised scheme offers a very positive long term alternative to the building.

The amendments to the scheme were 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

What follows is the original Design and Access Statement incorporating the minor amendments. Both former Design and Access statements are attached as appendices.



Existing Emerald Street North Elevation

Bedford House sits in the centre between the UCL building (left) and Rapier House (right)



Existing Emerald Street South Elevation

1.0 Introduction

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

HCA is a community anchor organisation whose activities are based across three sites in Holborn; Bedford House Community Centre, the 1A Arts Centre and Millman Street Resource Centre. The statement supports a proposal for the redevelopment and expansion of one of these centres; Bedford House, which is located at 35 Emerald Street, London.

Bedford House is used intensively to host a diverse range of activities for all ages, from dance to community classes, music, meetings, training days and playschemes. The existing centre was purpose built in the 1950's as a mixed use building with dedicated community use areas. This has shrunk to now operate over two floors with a gymnasium in the basement and reception on the ground floor. Whilst Bedford House is recognized as an invaluable community resource, its current accommodation has a huge number of shortcomings and the building is past its useful life. Redevelopment of the site will allow the centre to expand its offer through improved facilities, enabling a broad range of sports and arts activities for community use. This will allow the centre to generate income so that it can support itself financially. The proposed building is larger than the existing. It is fully accessible with improved environmental performance and a legible identity strengthening its public presence.

1.1 The History of Bedford House

Bedford House has a fascinating history and deep connections within the local community. It was originally built for the Holborn Boys Club.

William Harpur, a 16th Century Mayor of London is ultimately responsible for the inception of the Holborn Boys Club on Lambs Conduit St. With revenue accrued from land in Holborn he set up the Bedford school in his home county. In turn, Holborn Boys Club was set up in the 1920's by Bedford School. It was a socially driven project with the aim of bringing greater equality to disadvantaged boys from this inner city area by providing the range of activities usually available to public school children; chess, fencing, athletics, music, drama and travel amongst others.

The club's building was bombed in 1944 during the Second World War and following the war the club was given two ex-army Nissan huts as a temporary residency. These were taken on delightedly and well inhabited by the boys until in the 1950's a new building was commissioned by the Harper Trust for some commercial enterprise onto Lambs Conduit Street and to house the Boy's Club and their sister group, the Dame Alice Girls Club in 3rd floor activity spaces, a rooftop games area and the basement gymnasium accessed from Emerald Street.

The 1960's saw the boys' and girls' clubs merge and by the 1970's following financial difficulties and a spell of closure the Holborn Community Association had formed to steer a broader general community centre and reopen the building with support from Camden youth services. Although the trust sold the building into private ownership.

Today, Bedford House is on the cusp of dramatic changes and has the potential to fulfill an even more visible and ambitious role within the community. Holborn Community Association purchased a 50 year lease of the building in 2012.

The history of Bedford House is documented and illustrated in a separate booklet produced by 6a Architects in collaboration with Bedford House staff.



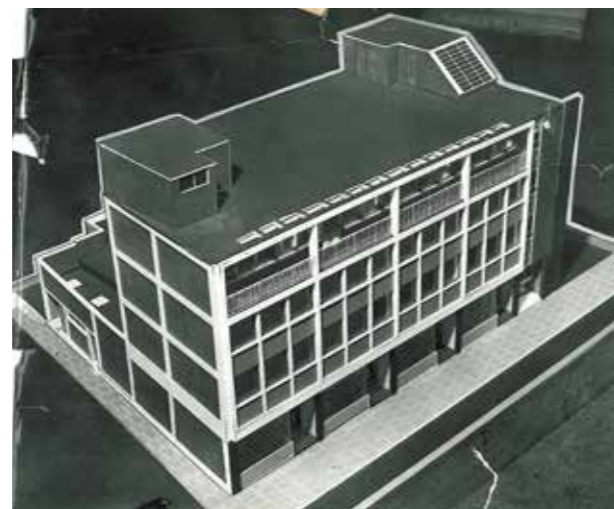
Boys enjoying a game of football in war-torn Lamb's Conduit Street



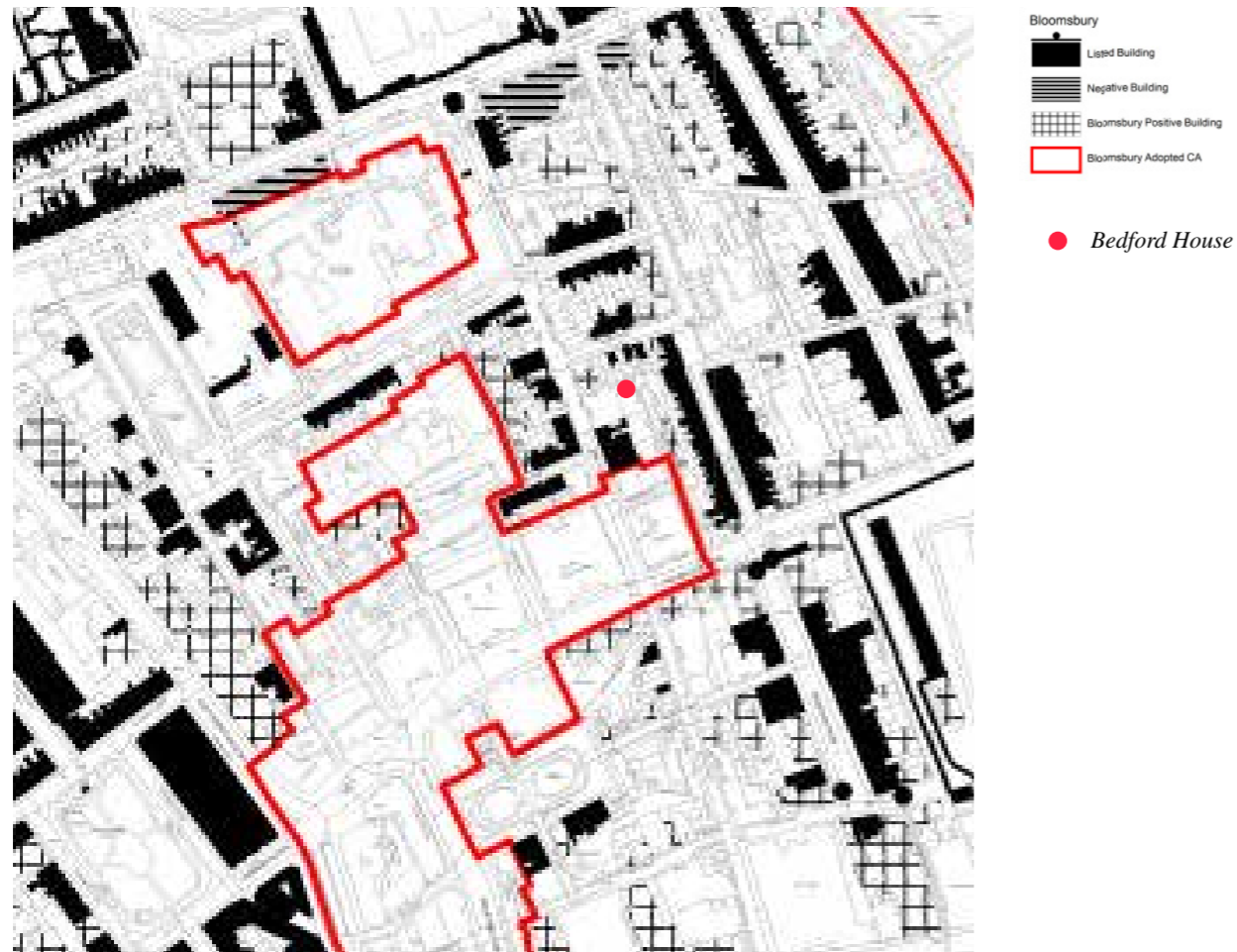
The two huts under construction, they were erected with the efforts of 'Old Bedfordians', ex-Bedford School Boys



Boys discuss ideas for their new gym



Rapier house



Bloomsbury Conservation Area.



Holborn Growth Area.
The draft for consultation identified Bedford House.



Lambs Conduit Street Neighbourhood Centre Boundary.

1.2 Planning Context

CS10

The proposal meets a number of the objectives set out in the Local Development Framework, in particular Policy CS10 – Supporting Community Facilities and Services.

The Council will:

- f) support the retention and enhancement of existing community, leisure and cultural facilities; and
- g) facilitate the efficient use of community facilities and the provision of multipurpose community facilities that can provide a range of services to the community at a single, accessible location.

Policy CS10. Camden Core Strategy.

Conservation

The site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The building is not listed. The buildings adjacent on either side and on the opposite side of the passageway are not listed buildings, nor are they positive contributors. See section 2.1.

Neighbourhood Centre Boundary

The site lies within the perimeter of the Neighbourhood Centre Boundary (Policy CS7, CPG5). The proposal for Bedford House would make a positive contribution to the individual character and thriving street life of Lambs Conduit Street that is within arms' reach. The centre generates footfall, serves a local population and the proposed appearance and materiality of the new building have emerged from a close reading of its context.

Growth Area

The site is just outside the Holborn Growth Area. As such, it has the potential to serve Holborn's expanding population as was recognised in consultation on Camden's core strategy. In turn, development in the growth areas is expected to provide appropriate benefits for surrounding areas and communities. (CS2,e).

CPG1-design

Proposals have been developed with reference to supplementary planning guidance, CPG1-design.

CIL

The development is exempt from the Community Infrastructure Levy as it is undertaken by a charity.

Consultation

The proposal has been discussed with local residents and stakeholders and with planning officers at LB Camden. See appendix. Daylight and sunlight studies have been undertaken in response to provisional conversations with the planning department. See section 2.9

1.3 Fundraising and Support

Since the original application was consented the unique role of Bedford House has been recognized by multiple funding bodies. £2 million has already been secured from the following sources:

- Camden Borough Council £1 million
- Sport England £500,000
- London Marathon Charitable Trust £200,000
- Power to Change (Big Lottery) £300,000

Existing funding commitments require that completion of the project is reached within set timeframes, which consequently requires that work starts on site imminently.

The outstanding amount of funding to be raised for the project is being brought about by Cause 4's (<http://www.cause4.co.uk/>) dedicated charitable fundraising team.

2.0 Design Statement

2.1 Context

The site is surrounded by buildings of varied typology and form. Lamb's Conduit Street (circa.1710) and its secondary thoroughfares such as Rugby street comprise predominanatly of 18th and early 19th century brick townhouses, three to four storeys in height, with shops on the ground floor. A number of mixed use blocks were built, mid-century, infilling war damaged terraces. They have larger than townhouse footprints and some have paneled facades but generally provide continuous frontages and respect the historic streetscape. Lambs Conduit Street is bookended by some bulkier developments; the Great Ormond Street Hospital site, at the Northern end of the street, and Lacon House to the South. There are also tall buildings in close proximity and view, such as the tower of the Holborn Police Station and Tybald's Estate.

Emerald Street is a doglegged mews. Where it meets Theobalds Road, it is of a larger scale, of cobbled surface and there are 19th and early 20th century warehouses that are now home to a number of small businesses. Where it leads into Lambs Conduit Street, it becomes more of an asphalt alleyway with blank rear elevations, the current entrance to Bedford House and some modest single & two storey mews buildings that hold a mix of uses from storage to studios.



*18th Century townhouses,
Lambs Conduit Street and Rugby Street.*

*Warehouses,
Emerald Street.*

*Typical 2 storey mews,
Emerald Street*



*Mid Century Blocks,
Lambs Conduit Street*

*Large developments,
Lambs Conduit Street*

Tall buildings in close proximity



23-29 Emerald Street, rear elevation.
Offices overlooking the roof of Bedford House gymnasium



Rapier House, rear elevation.
Offices overlooking the roof of Bedford House gymnasium



23-29 Emerald Street,
side elevation.
Blank rendered facade



Rapier House, from Lamb's Conduit Street.
Shops at ground floor with offices above



23-29 Emerald Street. The Institute of Education



AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE BEDFORD HOUSE LOCAL APPEAL
The Duke of Richmond, Mr. Christopher Chataway and Mr. Christopher Brasher (on right) being shown by John Miner, a member of the Boys' Club, the model of the new building

The Duke of Richmond and Olympic athletes are shown a model of Bedford House (now Rapier House) by a member of the boys club. 1956

2.2 The Existing Building

Bedford house is located between 23-29 Emerald Street and Rapier House.

23-29 Emerald Street

23-29 Emerald Street, is a four storey building located to the east of Bedford House. It is owned and occupied by the UCL's Institute of Education. It is concrete frame, clad in masonry on its front and rear elevations and rendered on the alleyway elevation, which is blank apart from a fire escape.

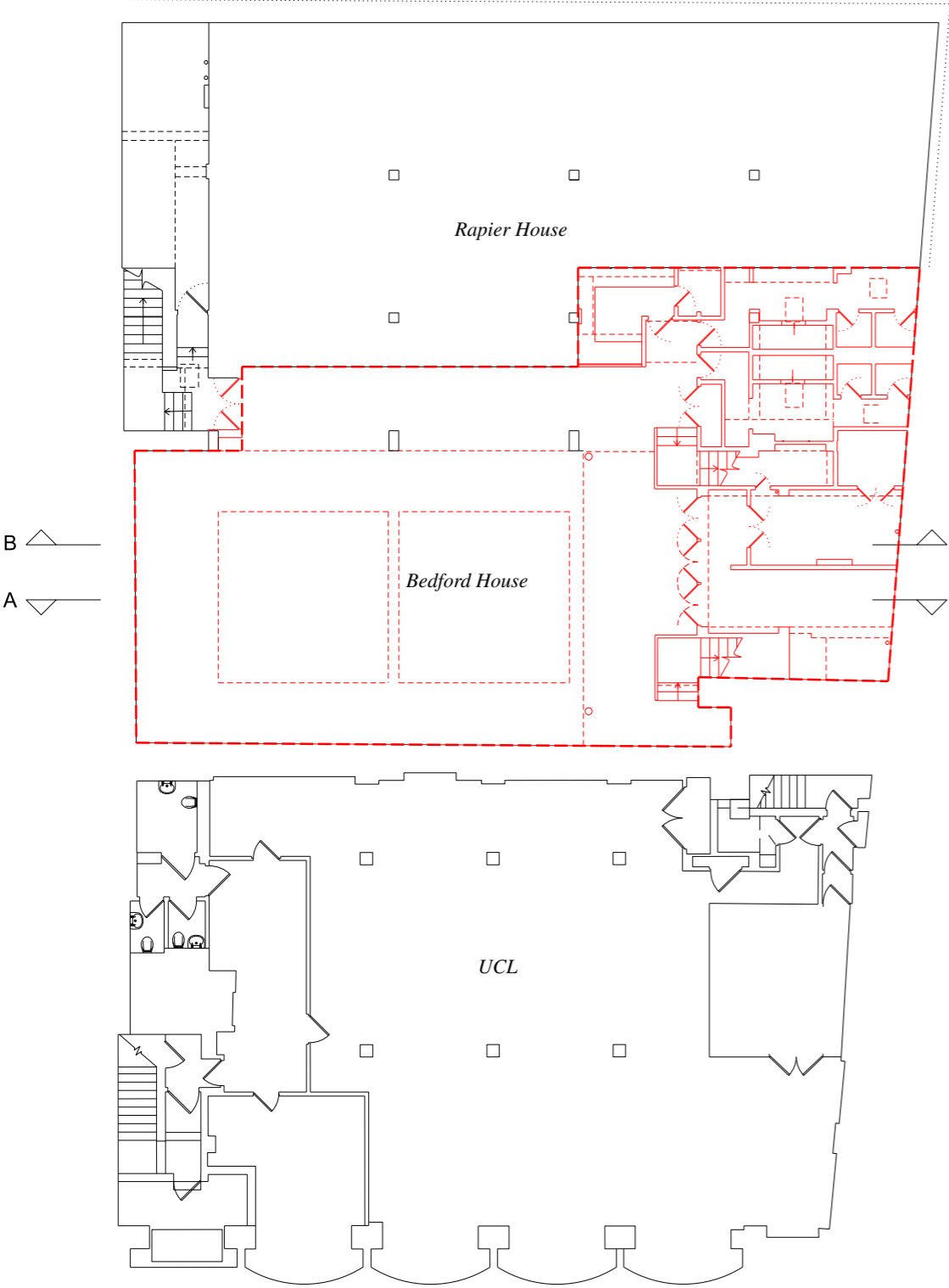
Rapier House

Rapier House is located at 40-46 Lamb's Conduit Street. The building has an expressed concrete frame structure. The frame is painted white with dark red masonry infill on the side and rear elevations and painted rendered infill panels on the Lamb's Conduit Street façade. The building was purpose built in 1957 with a generous grant from the Harpur Trust for the Holborn Boys and Girls Club, the predecessor of Bedford House. The ground and first floor levels have always been dedicated retail and office space. Today Rapier House is owned by GMS Estates Ltd. who have recently renovated the building in 2013. Bedford House continues to operate across the rear ground and basement levels, whilst small businesses lease the shop units and the floors above, overlooking the roof of the gymnasium.

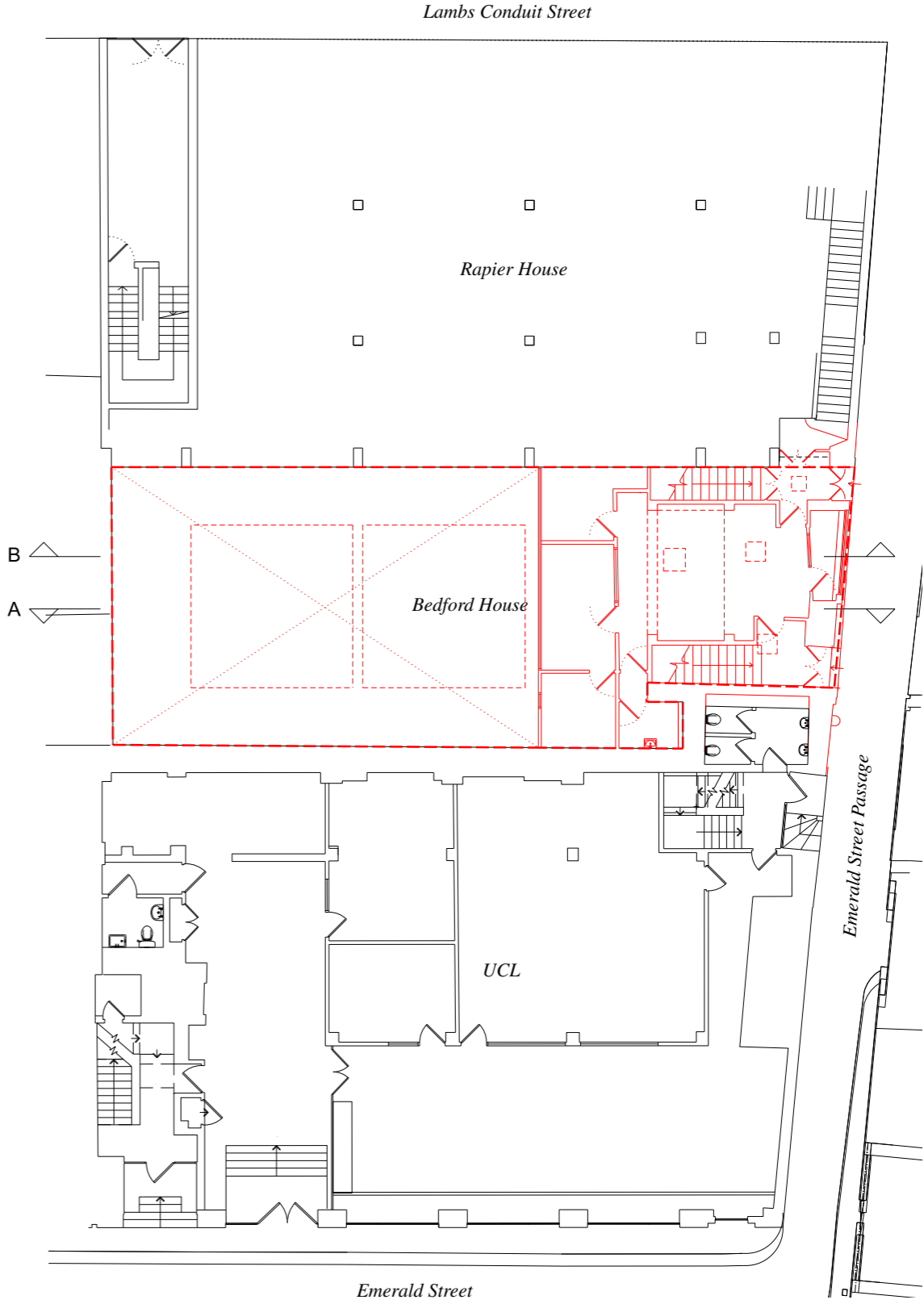


Location plan

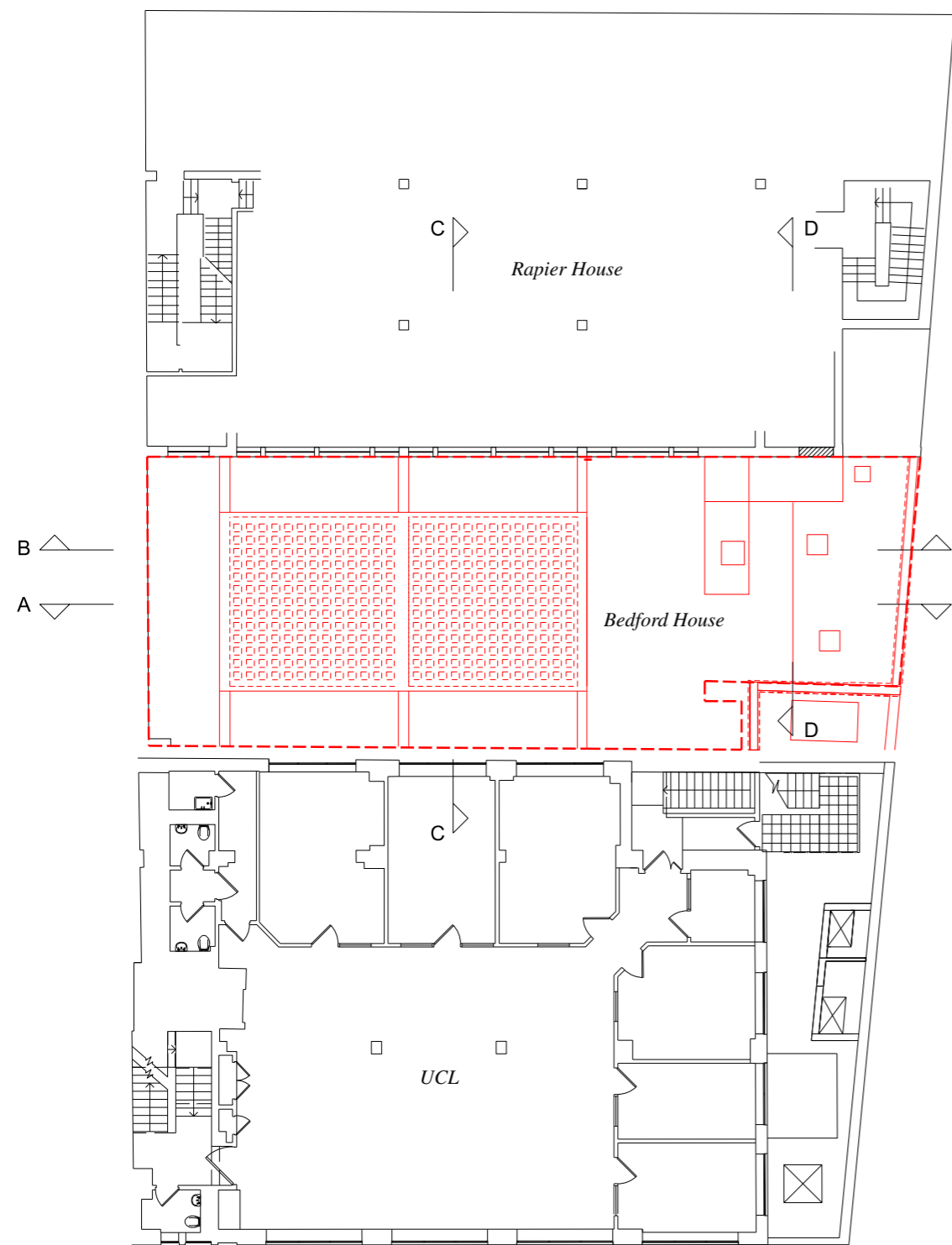
2.2 The Existing Building



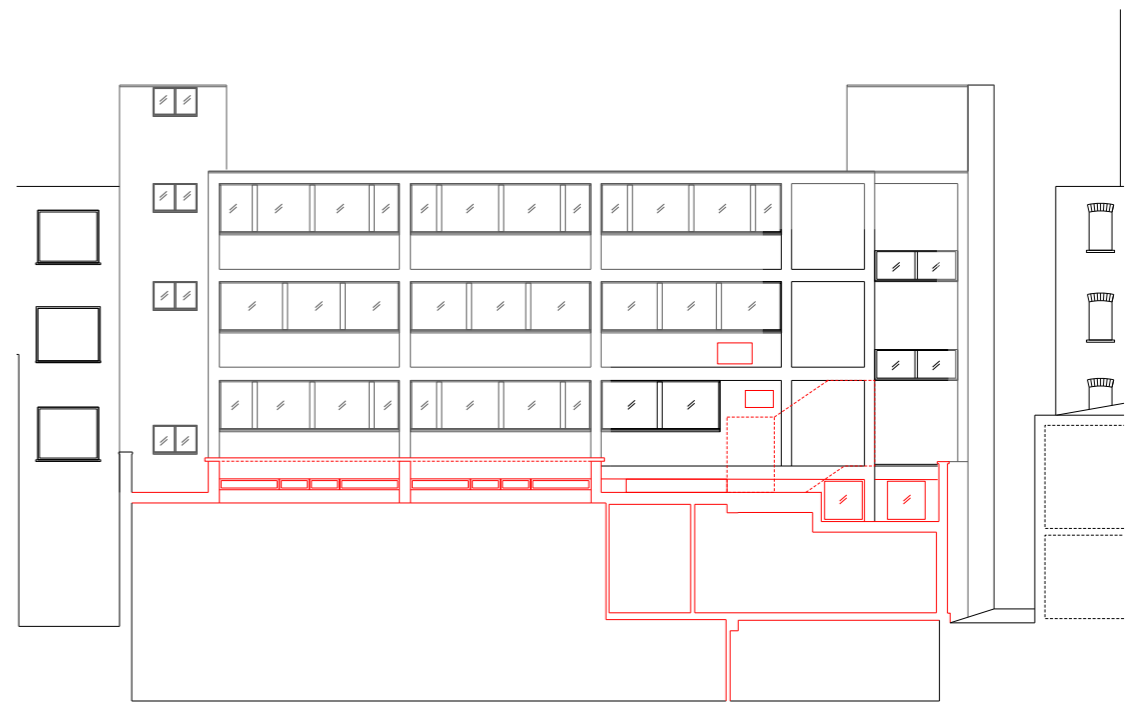
Basement Plan



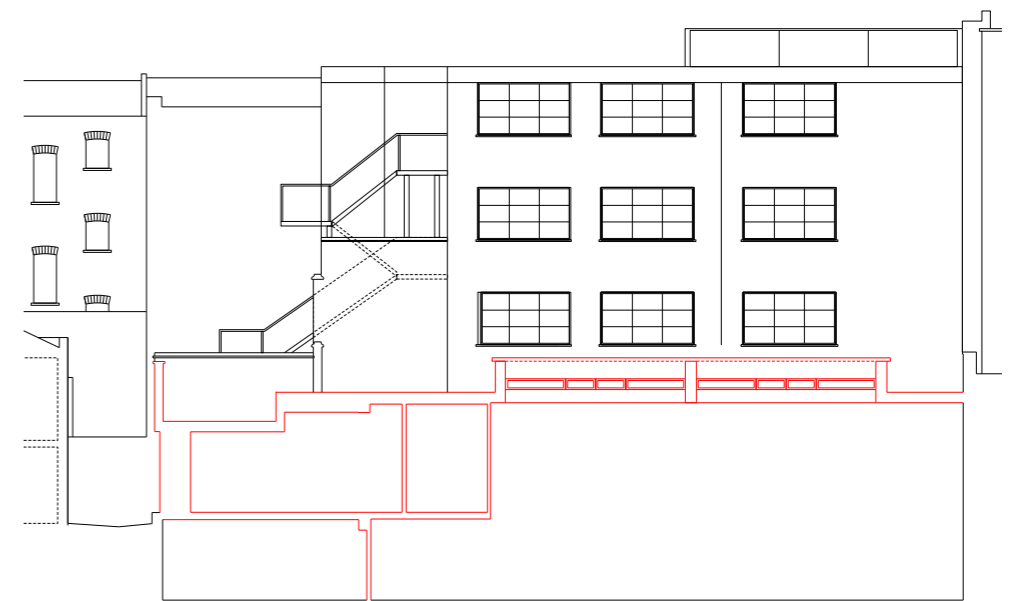
Ground Floor Plan



Roof Plan



Section B



Section A

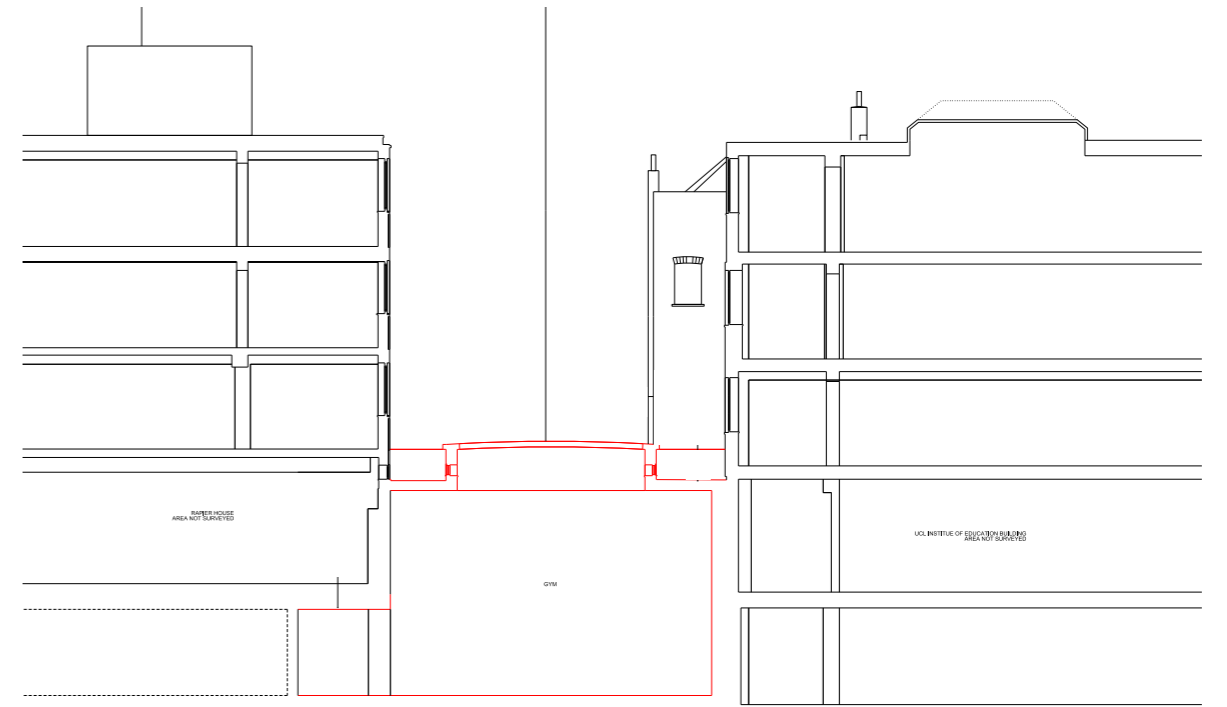


UCL, 23-29 Emerald Street

Bedford House

Rapier House

Section D



Rapier House

Bedford House

UCL, 23-29 Emerald Street

Section C



Entry: Lack of public face



Overcrowding, lack of storage



2.3 Shortcomings of the Existing Building

Whilst Bedford House is a thriving organization, the existing building at Emerald Street now has many shortcomings that limit its function and potential for growth or self sufficiency.

Inaccessibility

The most urgent issue is that of accessibility. The building has steps up to the entrance and stairs to every other floor/activity that are steep and badly lit. It has no lift.

Lack of Public Face

The centre is not visible from Lambs Conduit Street. The entrance from the alleyway is uninviting, has stepped access, is mean in proportion and is blocked by an office.

Poor Surveillance

The ground floor reception space cannot monitor the entrance to the rest of the building. It cannot provide security to children/adults coming to and going from the centre.

Limited Capacity

The space is overcrowded. The parents' waiting area has to double as changing rooms for the childrens' gymnastics and dance classes and as a buggy park when Baby Gym is on.

Disrepair

The facilities are degraded.

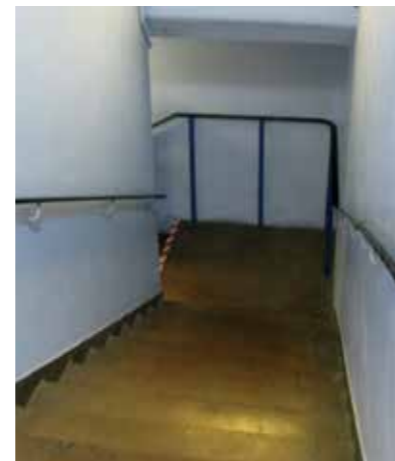
Poor Environmental Performance

The building is uninsulated and lacks natural light and ventilation. Its environmental performance is poor.

The use, amount and layout of the existing building is described in sections 2.4 and 2.5.



Ground floor: Lack of openness and transparency



Inaccessible



Poor environmental performance - poorly ventilated and lit. Uninsulated



Tae Kwon Do



Over 55's short mat bowls



Quiz night



Arts & Crafts



Play, holiday scheme



Gymnastics

2.4 Use/ Activities

The use class of the existing centre is D2 (assembly and leisure).
The use class of the proposed centre will also be D2 (assembly and leisure).

As explained above, the proposed redevelopment of the site will allow the centre;

- to expand its programme through improved facilities for community use and
- to generate income so that it can support itself financially.

Improved facilities for physical activity

The basement gymnasium at Bedford House is a large volume for the inner city and supports Camden's commitment to encouraging the community to improve their health through regular exercise. As shown opposite, the gym plays host to a wide range of physical activities for all ages ranging from over 55's line dancing, baby gym, tae kwondo and accredited gymnastics courses. It is 14 x 9m and 6m high. The Bedford House gymnastics classes have been recognized as outstanding and Camden Council has awarded Bedford House Beacon Club status. If the centre becomes fully accessible the gymnastics team will be able to expand their services to work with disabled children and adults for which they already have British Gymnastics accredited training and coaching skills. Proposals have been developed in accordance with the British Gymnastics Facilities Strategy, and Sport England Guidance.

The proposal includes the addition of a second 40 sqm studio at basement level. It is envisaged that this would also be used for physical activity such as dance and yoga classes.

Spaces for Art

The club rooms are available for messy play, and crafts classes. They will also be able to accommodate the workshops in visual arts like photography, ceramics, drawing and painting, as well as workshops in the performing arts.

Improved spaces for social activity

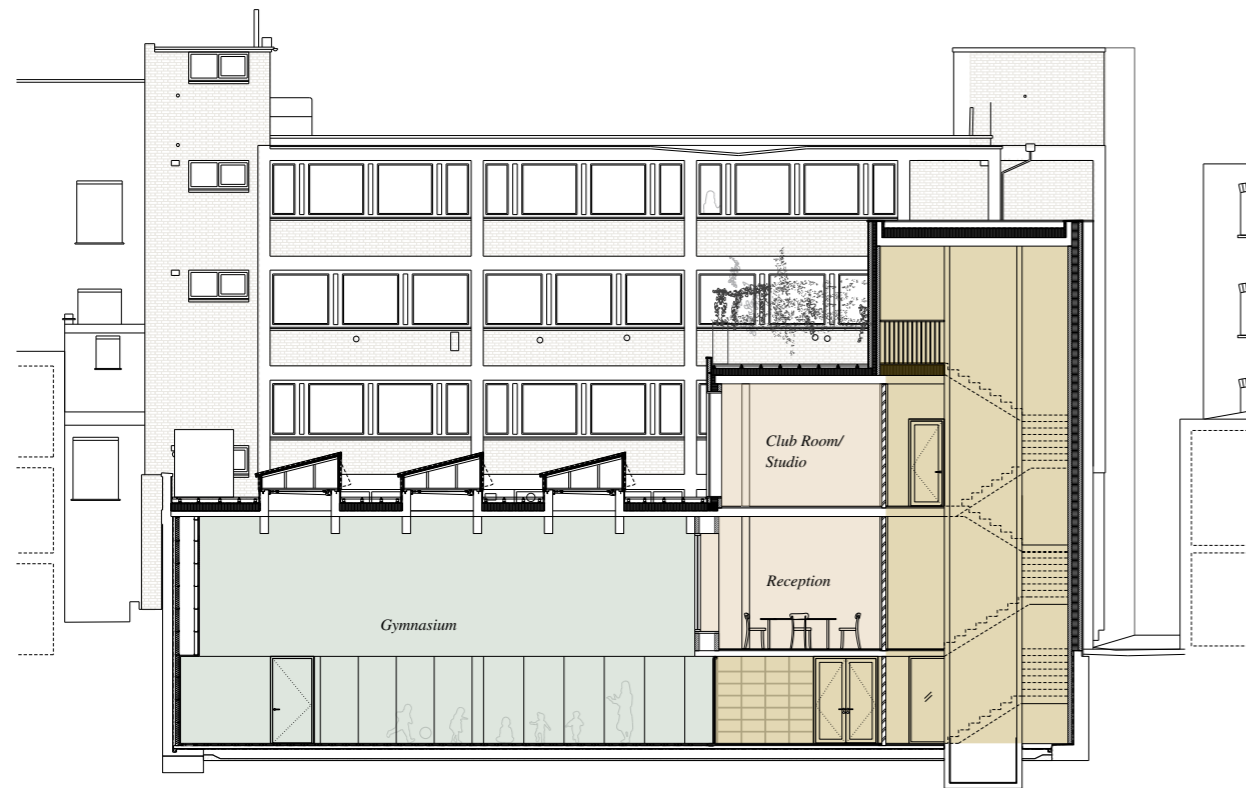
The centre hosts a number of community activities, such as local meetings, classes and playschemes, and is a site of informal social gathering. It is a place where local people of all ages meet as they wait for classes or can simply drop in as they pass by. Additional spaces, in particular the new activities room at first floor level would allow Bedford House to expand its programme, introducing new activities such as those suggested below. The ground floor is currently overcrowded. In the new building, this space is opened up to create a generous 35 sqm reception / communal room. More generous circulation spaces will also allow for informal social interaction.

Generating revenue

Bedford House is located in the heart of the city, amid an active constituency and a network of institutions with varied and overlapping needs. The new centre will include four spaces of different size and character; gym, dance studio, reception room and club room. The general arrangement of the building has been set out to ensure that whilst there is a strong sense of connection and generous shared spaces between them, each of these rooms can operate as independent lettable spaces that will generate revenue for Bedford House.



Proposed Section A
Scale 1: 200



Proposed Section B
Scale 1: 200

2.5 Layout

Bedford House currently operates over basement and ground levels. The proposal demolishes the existing building. It reuses the existing retaining wall and foundations. The basement slab is demolished and lowered to minimize the length and incline of the external ramping to the alleyway. The new building adds an additional floor and a small accessible roof terrace, with lift access to all storeys.

Public Presence & Shared Spaces

A key aspiration of the new building is to give Bedford House a stronger public presence. It should feel part of the wider public realm. In the new building, the ground floor is opened up to create a generous communal room, circulation is recognized as a space that allows for informal social interaction and internal windows create a sense of depth and connection through the building.

Programmed spaces

The proposal seeks not to prescribe a function to each room but to create a series of key spaces of different size and character, distributed throughout the building, that allow it to be used intensively and flexibly. Whilst there is a strong sense of connection and generous shared spaces between them, each of these rooms can operate as independent activities or lettable spaces that will generate revenue for Bedford House.

Improved Function

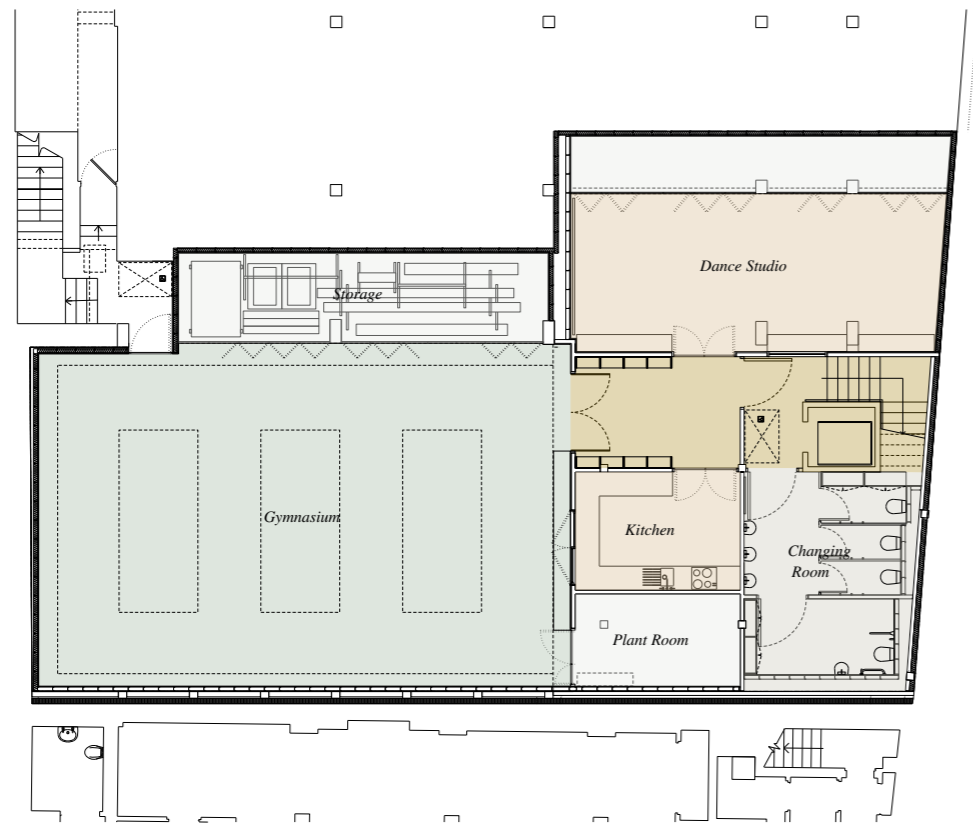
Storage and ancilliary accommodation such as changing rooms, WCs and plant are key to ensuring the improved function of the building. A number of the activities hosted at the centre require specialist equipment and extensive storage. Gymnastics for example comes with more than 50 cubic metres of associated equipment which has been accommodated in the proposals. Much needed, dedicated spaces for changing will also be provided as part of the proposed redevelopment.

Schedule of Existing Areas

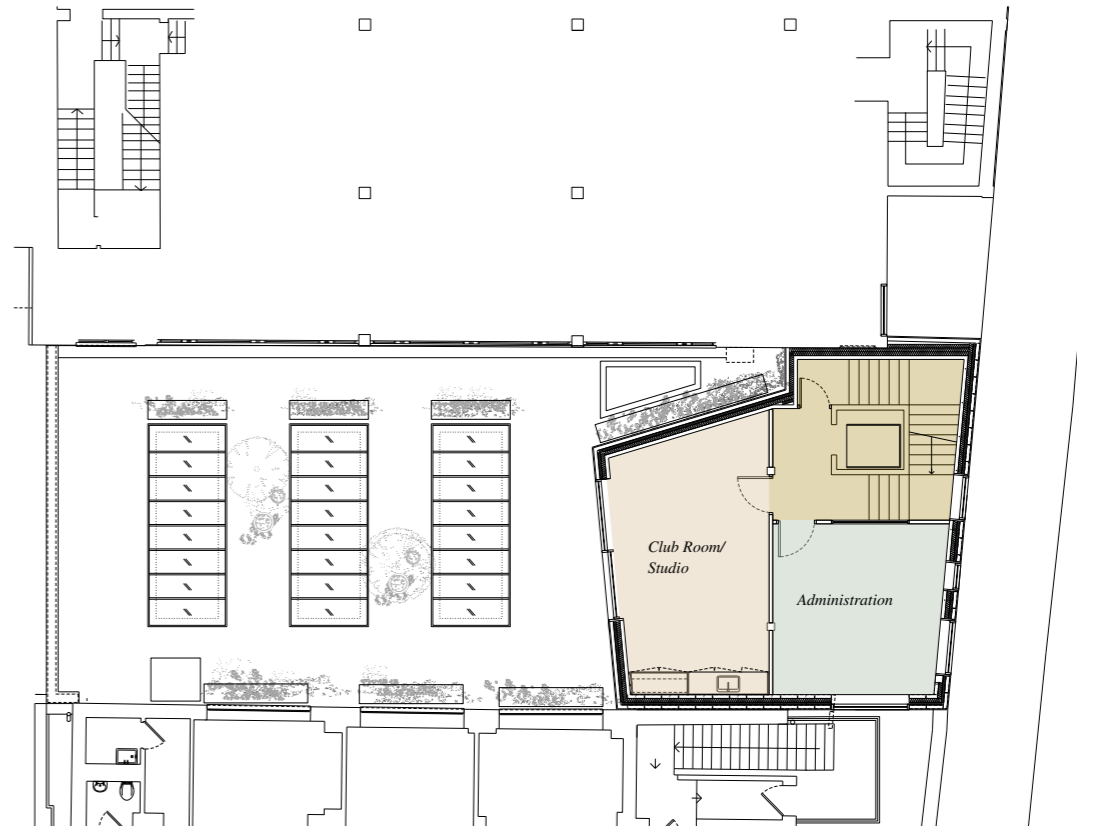
	Use (D2)	Sqm
Basement	Gymnasium	290sqm
	Kitchen	
	Store	
	WCs	
Ground	Reception subdivided into offices	80sqm
Total		370 sqm

Schedule of Proposed Areas

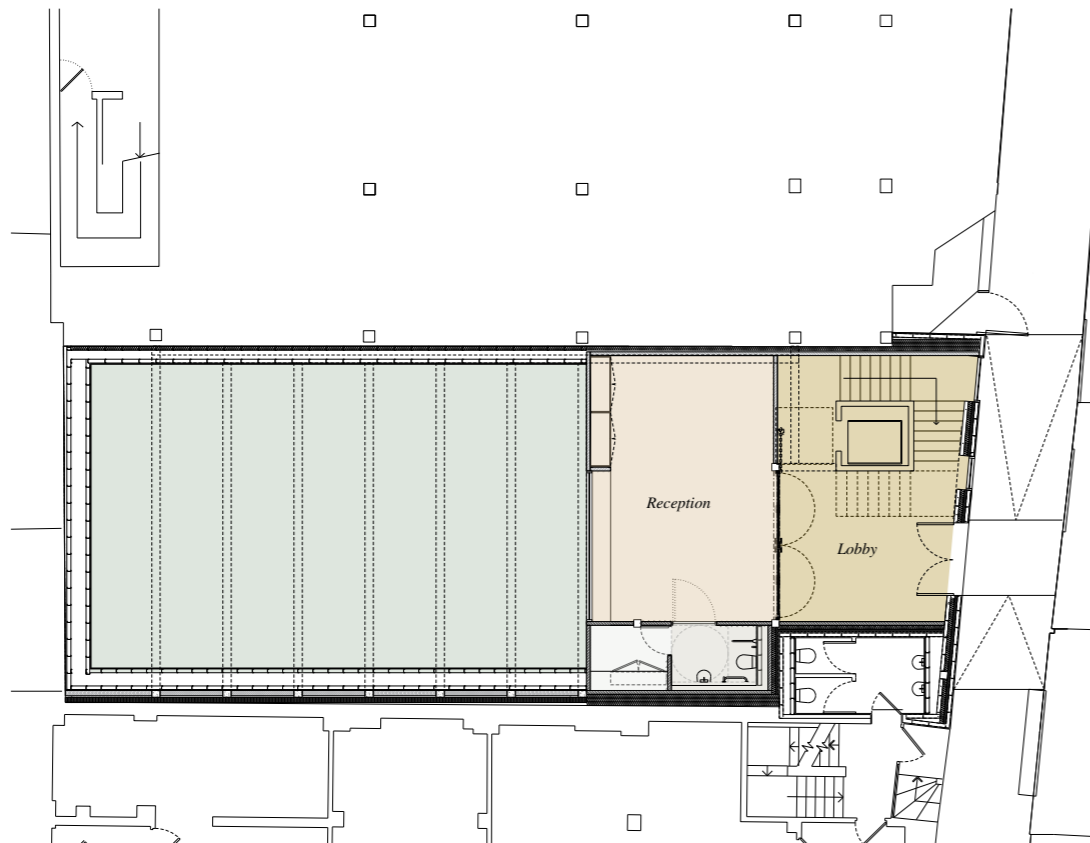
	Use (D2)	Sqm
Basement	Gymnasium	290 sqm
	Dance studio	
	Kitchen	
	Changing	
Ground	Store	
	Plant	
	WCs	
Ground	Reception	75 sqm
	Lobby	
	WC	
First	Club Room	60 sqm
	Centre administration	
Terrace		38 sqm
Total		463 sqm



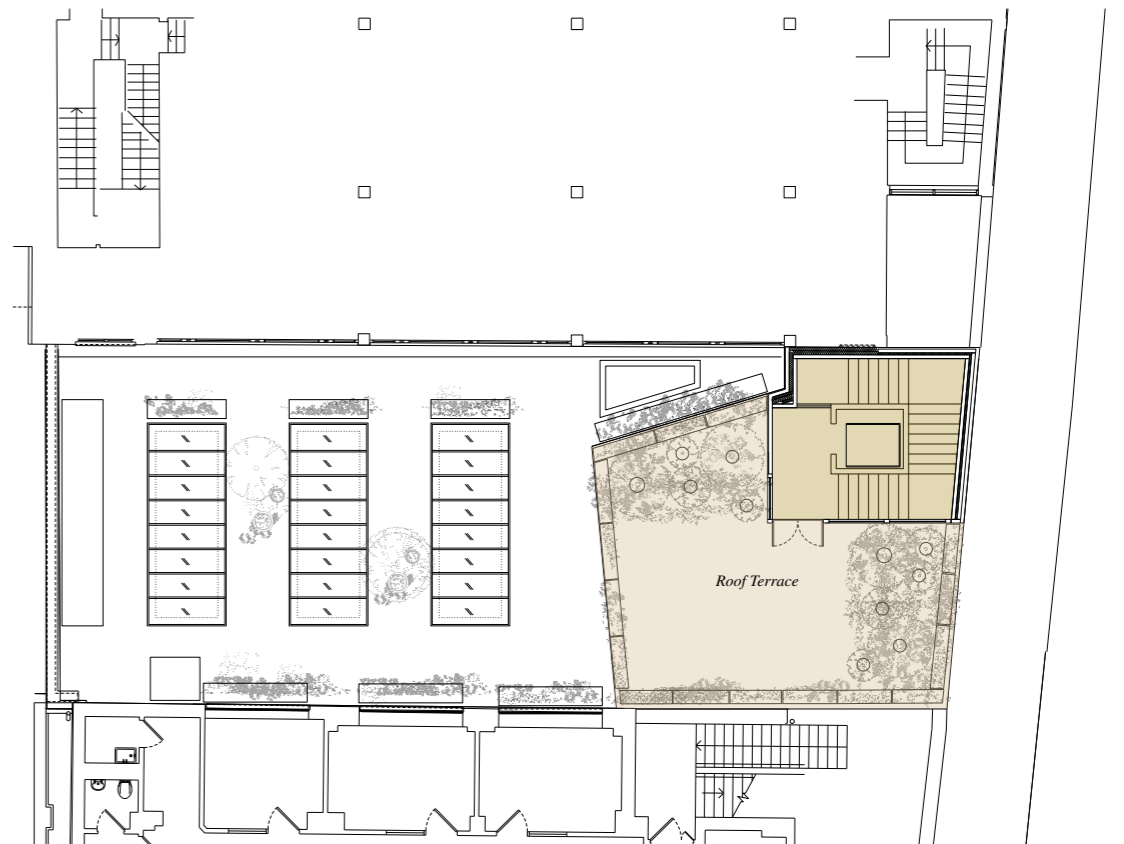
Basement Plan
Scale 1: 200



First Floor Plan
Scale 1: 200



Ground Floor Plan
Scale 1: 200



First Floor Mezzanine Plan
Scale 1: 200