

**278 GRAY'S INN ROAD, WC1**

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT  
May 2017



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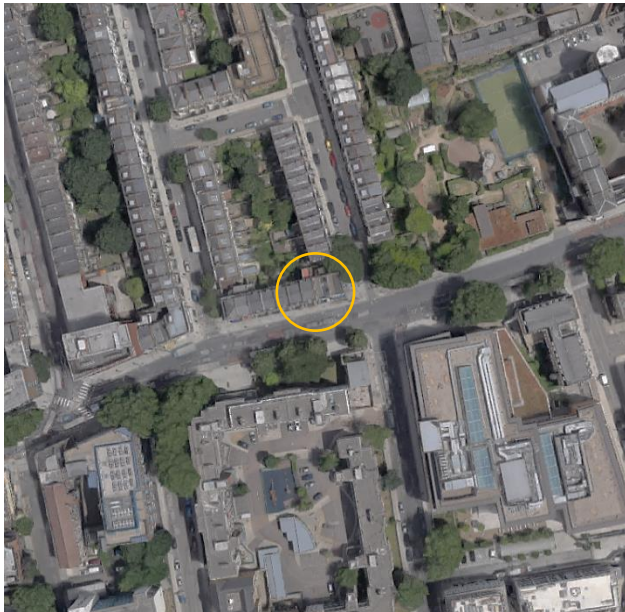
## 1.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access Statement is to be read in conjunction with the existing and proposed drawings, as part of a full planning application. This statement illustrates the design principles, concepts and access issues. We are acting on behalf of our client, to propose extension works to the roof and rear of 278 Gray's Inn Road. The proposals include a new internal layout, allowing for office space to be created at ground and basement level. This requires the change of use of this part of the property, from C3 to B1/C3. The proposals also include a new entrance at ground floor level, alongside the existing doorway.

The property is currently let out as a four-bed HMO at first and second floor, and a separate three-bed dwelling at ground and basement level; throughout this document, the existing dwellings will be called HMO 1 (first and second floor) and three-bed dwelling (ground floor and basement). The proposals extend HMO 1 to the third floor, and reduce the three bed dwelling to a one-bed studio flat, occupying part of the basement level. The office space created at ground and basement level will be referred to as the office, or live-work space.

Oculus Architects have been commissioned to design a scheme that will produce a development of high architectural merit, that integrates well with its environment.



Aerial View of Site



Birds Eye View of Site

## 2.0 SITE ANALYSIS

### 2.1 LOCATION

The site is located on Gray's Inn Road, near the junction with Sidmouth Street, within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The property is noted as a positive building in the conservation area, although not listed.

### 2.2 EXISTING BUILDING

The building forms part of a row of traditional terraced houses, all of a noted merit within the conservation area. No.278 and 276 were originally built as a stand-alone, semi-detached block. No.280 was constructed during the 80's, which connected the block to the rest of the buildings along the terrace. 280 was built to the same scale and materiality as Nos.282-288, with facing brickwork of the same colour and bond, and a mansard roof extension.

No.278 is of three storeys, plus a basement floor. The property is currently let out as two separate dwellings, with a dated layout, and a number of small and awkward sized rooms. A three-bed dwelling occupies the ground and basement level, with a separate four-bed HMO at first and second floor level. Both of these residences are accessed via the front door on Gray's Inn Road. There is direct access to the basement from street level, and there is a small terraced area to the rear of the property, accessible via the basement living area.

The street facing element of the building uses white render, with a grey painted timber shop front and large glazed openings at ground floor level. Due to the current residential use of the ground floor, part of the large glazed shop front has been covered internally, to provide some privacy to the bedroom inside.

### 2.3 LOCAL CONTEXT

The property is located within an area of the street scene containing many similar style buildings, all with a uniform pattern. Buildings are predominately exposed or rendered brickwork, although there are a number of newer constructions, using a more varied material palette.

The conservation area is characterized by three storey residential buildings, many of which with commercial units at ground floor level. Numerous buildings in the area also feature converted roof spaces, as well as live able basement areas.

280-276 Gray's Inn Road



Bloomsbury  
Conservation Area



Grade II listed buildings along Gray's Inn Road

## 2.0 SITE ANALYSIS

### 2.4 PLANNING HISTORY

In terms of planning, the property has been relatively inactive, with just two listed applications on the Camden council website. The shop front was installed following application L15/24/C/34959(R1) dated 27/09/1982, although there is no indication as to whether the site was previously used for commercial purposes.

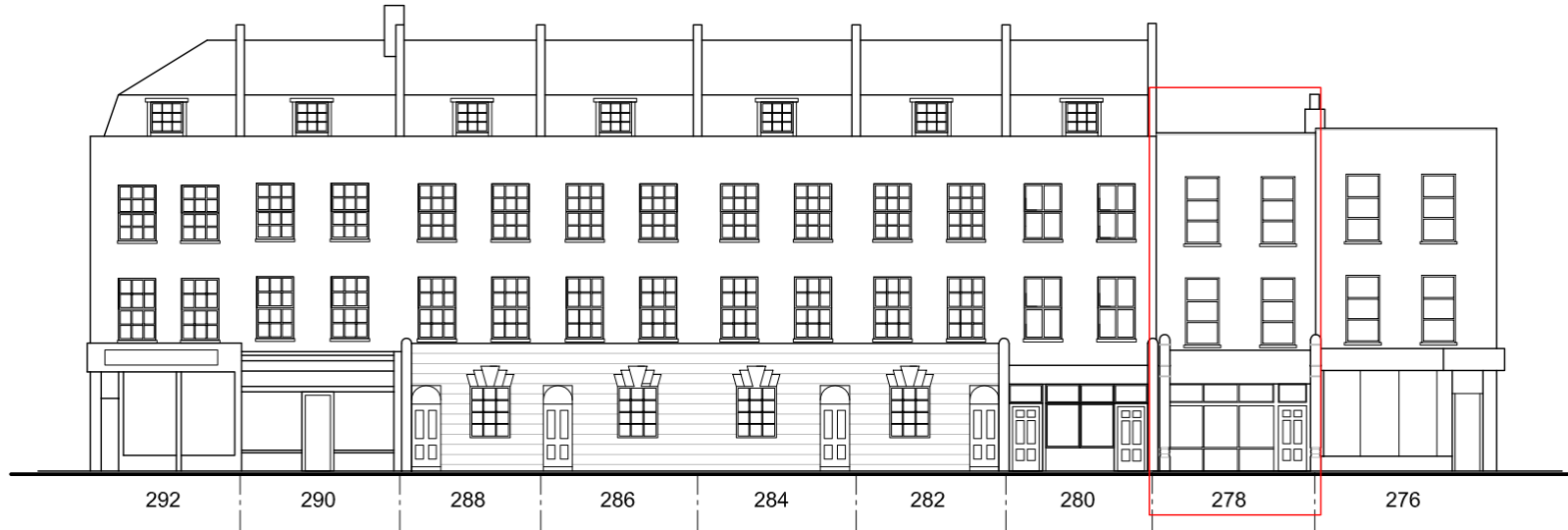
A rear extension was granted and constructed in 1986; this accounts for the half floor elements to the north east of the site, spanning three floors.

Along with no.276, the application property is the only building along its terrace not to feature a mansard roof extension. No.282-288 built these extensions in 1985 (ref 8500090), and shortly after, no.280 was constructed, with a mansard roof to match these properties. There is therefore a strong case for a similar extension to be constructed on the application site, as well as to the

property at 276, should the owners desire. This is consequently an area that this application focuses on, and something that should neither detract from or stand out within its immediate context, or the wider surrounding aesthetic.

Application Number	Site Address	Development Description	Status	Date Registered	Decision
8601207	278 Grays Inn Road WC1	Erection of an extension at the rear of the second floor to provide a shower and WC to existing flat as shown on drawing number 8606/01.	FINAL DECISION	03-07-1986	Grant Full or Outline Perm. with Condit.
L15/24/C/34959(R1)	278 Grays Inn Road, WC1	The installation of a new shopfront and the erection of a shopfront blind.	FINAL DECISION	27-09-1982	Permission

Screenshot from Camden Council website



Existing street elevation, showing the neighbouring mansard roof extensions

### 3.0 DESIGN STATEMENT

#### 3.1 SCALE

The scale of the building shell is to increase slightly; the rear of the building is extended to the same depth as No.280, at ground and first floor level. A mansard roof extension is also proposed, which arguably makes the building more in-keeping with the rest of the properties along the terrace. The amenity space available at basement level will remain unchanged in size, whilst HMO 1 gains a new roof terrace, of 19.2 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### 3.2 AMOUNT

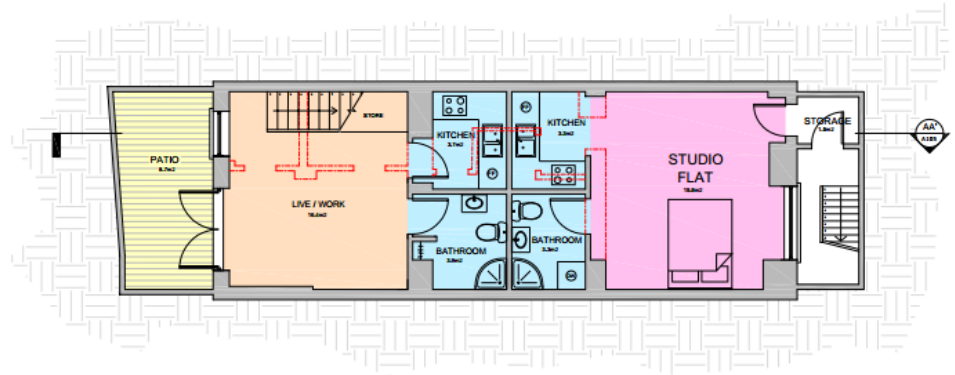
The proposed development will deliver a self-contained studio flat at basement level, with direct access from Gray's Inn Road. The ground floor, and part of the basement can then be transformed into a live-work office space, with the upper floors, including the roof extension, remaining as an HMO, with six bedrooms. Each of these elements will have separate entrances, ensuring all tenants security and privacy. Through a more efficient layout, the number of bedrooms in the building will be the same as before, despite the inclusion of the new office space.

#### 3.3 APPEARANCE

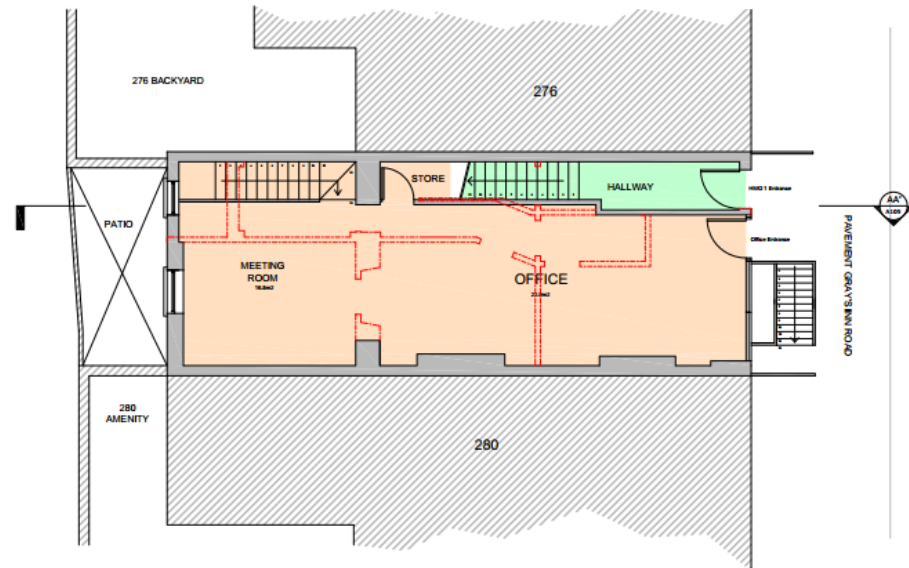
The proposed development will maintain the existing character of the building, and has been designed to complement the existing building form and the surrounding context. The mansard roof extension will be built to match the adjacent properties, in terms of materiality, scale and pitch. The white render to the front façade is to be removed, exposing the brickwork, matching properties 280-292. The new front door into the office space will be of an appropriate size and position, and the slight widening of the pavement to access this door will be subtle and well integrated. The extensions to the rear of the site will match the surroundings in terms of materiality, and are difficult to see from the street.

#### 3.4 LAYOUT

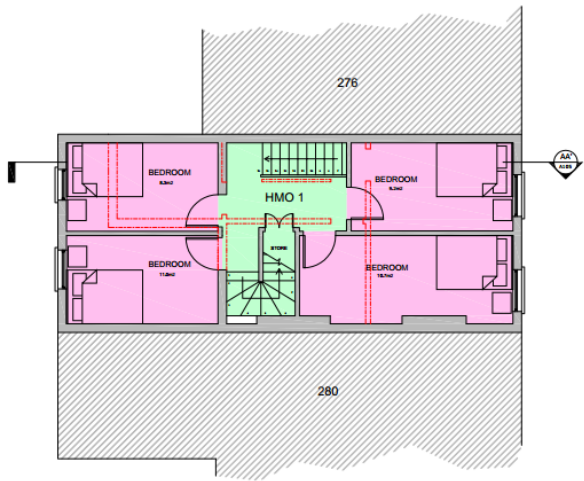
The scheme proposes an improved living and working environment and it is considered that the proposed rooms will provide suitable spaces to live within, as well as house a small local business. The three elements of the property are self contained, with a layout that has been designed to ensure privacy and minimise noise and disturbance. The office space utilises a more open plan layout, which is more suitable for a working environment, as well as making better use of natural lighting in what is a thin and challenging floor plan.



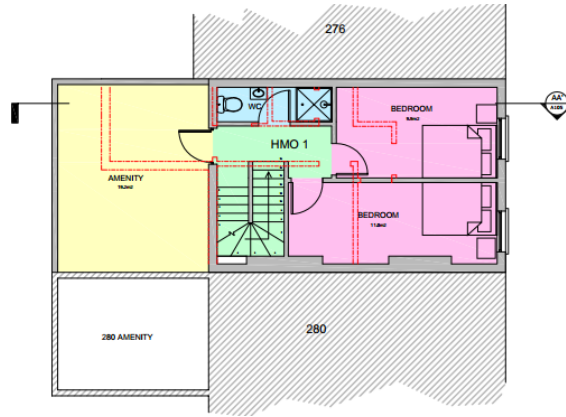
Proposed Basement Plan (not to scale)



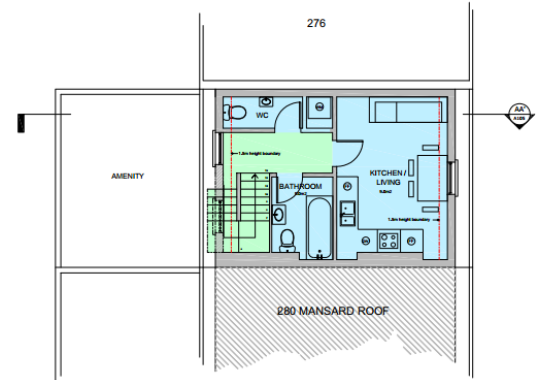
Proposed Ground Floor Plan (not to scale)



First Floor Plan



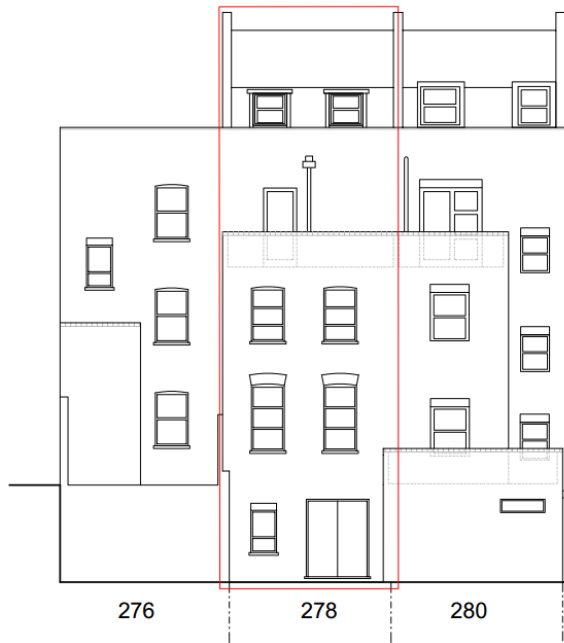
Second Floor Plan



Third Floor Plan



The proposed elevation shows how well the mansard roof extension will fit in within the street scene, and how little it would detract from aesthetic of the conservation area.



Proposed Rear Elevation



Existing Rear View

The biggest change to the building is to the rear of the site; the rear extension provides additional HMO and office space, as well as offering a valuable amenity area to the residents of HMO 1. Currently, there is a small extension area to the rear of the building, which is at half height, accessible via half landings on the stairs. In order for the proposed extension to work, the half levels have been removed, and the staircase moved, allowing for the upper floors to stay level, as with the property at 280. As a result of this, the proposed roof terrace is half a storey lower than the existing roof level at the rear, and effectively a room is lost within HMO 1. This does not however affect the number of bedrooms within house, which remains unchanged, and utilises a more functional and efficient layout. The extension is to line up with 280, in terms of depth and height.



Proposed Rear View



### 3.5 ENTRANCE & SHOPFRONT

The scheme proposed a new entrance to the live-work office space, at ground floor level. The new entrance is to be alongside the existing door. In order to access to this door, the access pavement will have to be slightly widened, so that there is enough space for the two doors. The new door will take up one of the existing glazed panels, therefore from an aesthetic point of view, will not unbalance the proportions of the façade. The door will be glazed, to allow as much natural light as possible deep into the floor plan.

The shop front itself will be retained, so that the heritage of the site is not lost. It will however be refurbished, for a more tidy frontage to the street. The railing will also be reused, and adjusted to fit. There will be signage displayed on the shop front, to be agreed with the council once a tenant has been selected.

The idea of having two doors at street level for a property of this type is not unprecedented within Bloomsbury conservation area: there are numerous examples along Gray's Inn Road, including the neighbouring property, no.280.



Proposed shopfront



Existing shopfront



Neighbouring property, 280 Gray's Inn Road



67 Gray's Inn Road

### 3.6 AREA SCHEDULES

The proposed alterations increase the overall GIA of the building by just 36.8m<sup>2</sup>. Most of the increased floor space is afforded at third floor level, with the proposed roof extension providing 27.2m<sup>2</sup> of additional space for the residents.

	Existing (m <sup>2</sup> )			Proposed (m <sup>2</sup> )			
	HMO 1	3 Bed Flat	Total	HMO 1	Studio	Office	Total
Basement		52	52		26.2	25.8	52
Ground Floor	8.4	42	50.4	8.4		44.1	52.5
First Floor	38.2		38.2	51.0			51.0
Second Floor	38.2		38.2	32.9			32.9
Third floor				27.2			27.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>84.8</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>178.8</b>	<b>119.5</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>69.9</b>	<b>215.6</b>
			<b>Increase</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>-67.8</b>	<b>70.1</b>	<b>36.8</b>

Areas indicated on this schedule are measured to the inside of the external wall. At third floor level, the floor area is calculated where the ceiling height is greater than 1.5m.

### 3.7 CHANGE OF USE

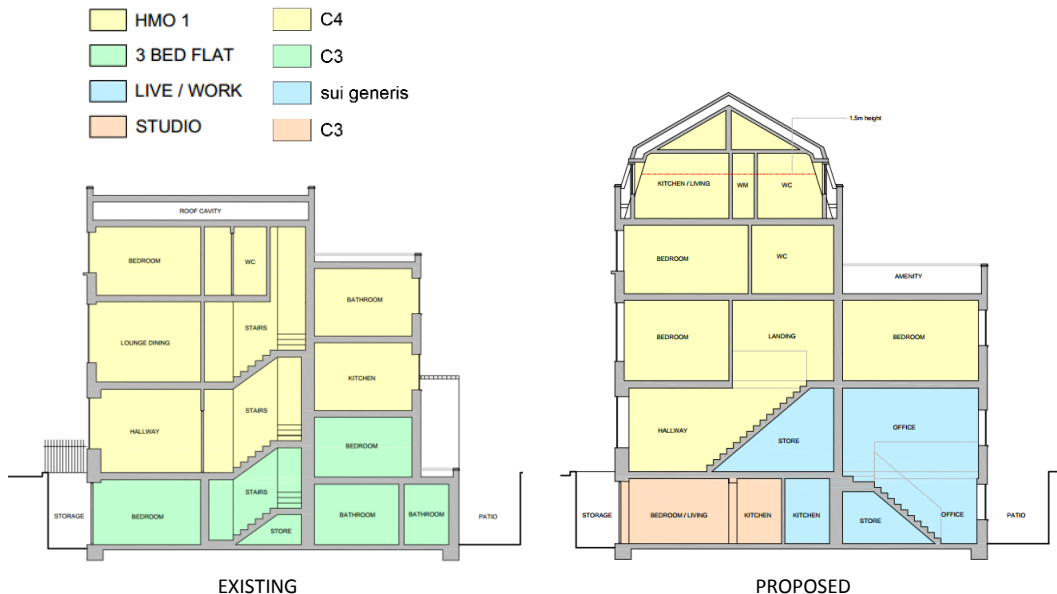
The existing property is classed as C4 Residential at first and second floor level, and C3 Residential at ground and basement level.

The proposals seek to retain the existing C4 Residential space, and extend this to the third floor. The live-work office space is of a sui generis class. This accounts for an area of 69.9m<sup>2</sup>, with a proposed change of use from C3 Residential.

The mansard roof will be part of HMO 1, and is therefore classed as C4 Residential. There is a 27.2m<sup>2</sup> in C4 space to HMO 1.

In full, the proposals will change the property from 178.8m<sup>2</sup> of C3 and C4 space, to 24.4m<sup>2</sup> of C3, 121.3m<sup>2</sup> of C4 and 69.9m<sup>2</sup> of sui generis live-work space.

Given the buildings' location, it is considered a suitable place to introduce a small local business. The change of use will not look out of place within the context of the street scene, with a number of small offices and retail units at ground floor level in many of the surrounding properties.



### 3.8 SUSTAINABILITY

The design aims to improve on the existing thermal performance, and meet the modern sustainable standards. The proposed extension works and internal reconfiguring will make use of sustainable materials, and where possible, will use low energy resources. Coupled with high performance insulating materials and products, the new parts building fabric will meet the sustainability requirements.

The development will be built to a high level of specification to reduce reliance on heating and energy consumption. New windows will feature highly efficient double glazing to improve the thermal insulation of the building and comfort of its inhabitants. The well insulated new partitions and floors will also help to reduce the noise pollution, both from the street, and the three separate divisions within the property. The new roof space will be thermally comfortable, and will also help to maintain heat to the lower floors.

Sustainability and efficiency in terms of space standard and layout is also improved, compared to the dated existing layout.

### 3.9 VEHICULAR & TRANSPORT

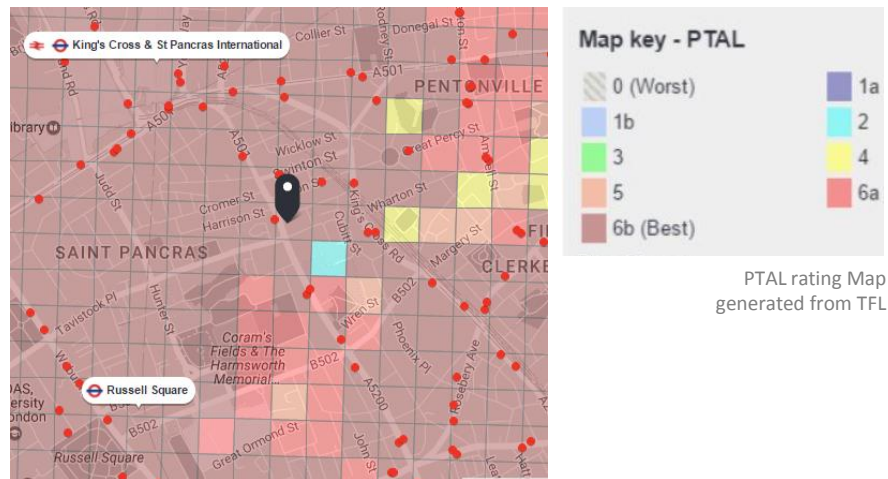
The Site is located in Zone 1, with a PTAL (Public transport accessibility level) of 6b. This means that the site is exceptionally well located, in terms of accessibility to surrounding public transport links.

The property is within a 10 minute walk of both Russell Square and King's Cross St Pancras Underground Stations – these provide access to the Victoria, Northern, Hammersmith & City, Circle, Piccadilly and Metropolitan Lines, which provide fast connections across the Greater London area, King's Cross, Euston, and St Pancras International Rail Stations, which are again all within a short walk, offer links across the UK, as well as internationally.

There are also a huge number of bus routes that pass through the area, which offer cheap journey prices, serving much of the local area.

Off-street parking is not provided for the property, although excellent transport links mean that this is not considered essential. Due to the properties location, it is seen as an appropriate location both to live and work in, and the proposals are seen as a beneficial improvement to the uses on site.

St. Pancras International Rail Station



PTAL rating Map generated from TFL

### 3.10 LOCAL AMENITIES

Given the property's central location, it is understandably served by a huge number of local amenities including bars, restaurants, sports clubs, pubs, markets, London Zoo, high-street brands, theatres and tourist attractions. Other benefits from the district include local access to banks, post offices, convenience stores, local schools, libraries, churches and hospitals. There are a number of green spaces within the area, including Regent's Park, which provides vast expanses of green space. These services are all accessible by foot, and help to meet the variety of needs of the local residents.

With a huge variety of local attractions, the area offers a vibrant environment in the heart of London, ideal for commuting and living.

### 4.0 ACCESSIBILITY & REFUSE STRATEGY

The internal layout is designed to Lifetime Home standards. The corridors and doors are generously proportioned to allow comfortable access inside the house. Bathrooms are dimensioned to be easily reconfigured for wheelchair users.

Regarding the refuse strategy, ample space has been allowed for recycling, general waste and provision of services and cycle storage will be available at basement floor level. The property benefits from a weekly waste collection schedule.

Recycling storage will be provided. All the separate parts of the building will be provided with recycling bins to promote sustainable waste management.

All new kitchens will be designed with waste storage to be provided within the overall design.



St. Pancras International  
Scala Theatre  
The Brunswick

University College London  
Regent's Park  
The British Library



## 5.0 CONCLUSION

Our proposal has taken into account local planning policies, the London Plan and national planning policy. The proposed extension has been developed so as not to burden its neighbours, and is respectful of the scale and materiality of both the existing building, and those surrounding it.

Our proposal will not detract from the aesthetic of the conservation area; we consider that the development will contribute to the overall language of the street scene, and will add to and enhance the heritage of the area.

The internal layout makes much more efficient use of space, and a number of the existing rooms will be improved in conjunction with modern standards.

We conclude that the surrounding area will benefit from the introduction of this development and the quality of the urban realm will be enhanced.

We look forward to developing this scheme with Camden Council, and creating a design which subtly improves an historical building, both for future tenants and for the general public.