

27<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Planning and Development  
London Borough of Camden  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 5 Pancras Square  
London  
N1C 4AG

**Your ref: 2017/1827/P**

Dear Sir/Madam

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**  
**294-295 High Holborn London WC1V 7JG, Planning Application Ref: 2017/1827/P**

1. Aberdeen Asset Management act on behalf of Maizelands Limited & Arringford Limited, the freehold owners of Lincoln House, 296-302 High Holborn. We write to register an objection in respect of the current proposals (Reference 2017/1827/P) relating to 294-295 High Holborn.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. No. 294-295 High Holborn is immediately to the west of Lincoln House, on the south side of High Holborn. Planning permission is sought to construct an office and residential building. We object to the development as currently proposed, for the following reasons:
  - a. The proposed residential units would not enjoy an acceptable standard of residential amenity, in terms of privacy, overlooking and sense of enclosure, contrary to adopted Core Strategy Policy CS5 and emerging Local Plan Policy A1 ('Managing the impact of development'). Planning permission was originally granted for a building that extended to the boundary with Lincoln House on the basis that commercial, rather than residential, use was proposed;
  - b. The daylight that the proposed residential units would receive would not meet minimum standards. The submitted daylight and sunlight report does not take into account the extensive louvers proposed to attempt to mitigate overlooking. Placing residential windows directly along the site boundary will place an unfair burden upon future development proposals on Lincoln House, contrary to BRE guidance;
  - c. The proposed development would have a prejudicial effect upon the development capacity of the wider area and would prevent this from being optimised, contrary to adopted Core Strategy Policy CS2 ('Growth Areas') and emerging Local Plan Policy G1

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(Delivery and location of growth). An alternative development could deliver similar benefits without adversely affected the wider planning of the area; and

- d. The proposed layouts are impractical and will not secure the long term delivery of good quality office and residential space.
3. This letter sets out the background of Lincoln House and the adjacent site (294-295 High Holborn), before turning to the objections in respect of the current application and its proposals.

### **Lincoln House – Background**

#### Application Proposals

4. Application Reference 2017/1827/P seeks planning permission for:

**Erection of a 9 storey building comprising retail use (Classes A1-A3) at basement and ground floor levels, office use (Class B1) at first and second floor levels and 10 residential units (2 x 1-bed and 8 x 2-bed) (use class C3) above including plant and associated works.**

5. The application promotes a mixed-use commercial and residential development which will create approximately 400sqm GIA of office (Use Class B1), 250sqm GIA of flexible retail (Use Class A1-A3), and 10 residential units (approximately 1,000sqm).

#### Site Context

6. Lincoln House is a nine storey mixed use building currently providing approximately 4,800sqm GIA of office (Use Class B1) and 420sqm GIA of shop-type accommodation over the lower ground and ground. The two units are currently occupied by a bank (Use Class A2) and a café (Use Class A1).
7. The building currently holds a 'T' shape form sitting on a broadly rectangular site, with the building presenting a full width frontage to High Holborn. The upper floors step in at various elevations reflecting its incremental extension over time.
8. The building on site is not listed but does sit within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and backs onto the open space of Lincoln Inn Field (Grade II Listed). The Grade I Listed 'Stone Buildings' (nos. 1-7) of Lincolns Inn sits in close proximity.

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### Pre-Application Engagement

9. The will building fall vacant in early 2018 at which point it is the intention of Aberdeen Asset Management to pursue a comprehensive refurbishment including part re-cladding and extension of the existing premises to create a new modern flexible workspace and enhanced retail offer on High Holborn.
10. EPR Architects and a professional team have been commissioned to develop the proposals and extensive feasibility has been undertaken. It is envisioned that the extended building would comprise approximately 6,900sqm GIA of office (Use Class B1) and approximately 200sqm GIA of flexible retail uses. The overall uplift in office accommodation would therefore be approximately 2,000sqm GIA.
11. Aberdeen Asset Management is currently actively engaging with the London Borough of Camden to progress the development of Lincoln House. A pre-planning application enquiry (Reference 2016/52224/PRE) was initially submitted, on 23 September 2016, almost 9 months ago. Two pre-application meetings have been held with Planning (Gideon Whittingham) and Conservation (Charles Rose) Officers at the London Borough of Camden, on 17 November 2016 and 23 February 2017.
12. A formal pre-application response was received from the London Borough of Camden on 16 May 2017. The response documents the following key points:
  - a. The provision of new and refurbished existing office floorspace is supported as it will increase employment levels within the borough and promote economic growth in accordance with planning policy.
  - b. The scale of the new accommodation towards the rear would not noticeably extend beyond the established rear building line or height and should therefore be acceptable.
  - c. The proposed scheme design was considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and unlikely to harm the setting of adjoining listed buildings.
13. Following receipt of the response EPR Architects and the professional team have been refining the proposals in advance of a formal planning submission.

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## 294-295 High Holborn – Background

### Site Context

14. 294-295 High Holborn is a cleared narrow rectangular site approximately 324sqm in size located immediately adjacent (west) to Lincoln House. The site also sits within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is surrounded to the rear by a number of Grade I and II statutory listed heritage assets.

### Planning History

15. From review of the planning history, it is relevant to note that planning permission (Reference PSX0304010) was granted on the site in September 2003 for the following:

**Redevelopment to provide basement, ground and 8 upper storeys with mixed retail (Class A1) and professional services (Class A2) use at ground floor and part basement and offices (Class B1) above.**

16. There have been a number of amendments to the 2003 planning permission.
  - **Ref 2006/5250/P** – The inclusion of windows at the east elevation and the introduction of a 1m setback on the east elevation and flank wall at 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> floor levels, approved May 2007.
  - **Ref 2007/3660/P** – To change the basement level from retail into plant room to serve the retail/office space on upper floors, approved January 2008.
  - **Ref 2007/3661/P** – To provide 400mm set back of the east elevation on 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> floor levels, approved January 2008.
  - **Ref 2007/3659/P** – To provide an enlarged and reconfigured roof plant enclosure and other alterations to roof level, approved January 2008.

### **Planning Policy Context**

17. The statutory development plan for the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is the London Plan (2016) and LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies (2010). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) and supplementary guidance are also material considerations for this application.
18. Camden Local Plan has been through public examination by a Planning Inspector. The Inspector's Report confirms that the Plan has passed examination and can proceed to adoption by the Council. Adoption of the Camden Local Plan is due to take place a full Council on 3 July 2017 (following consideration at Cabinet on 22 June 2017).

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19. At adoption the Local Plan will:

- a. Become the key element of Camden's statutory development plan; and
- b. Fully supersede the Core Strategy and Development Policies.

20. Both sites are designated within the Camden Proposals Map (2010) as:

- a. Central London Frontage;
- b. Central London Area;
- c. Holborn Growth Area;
- d. Archaeological Priority Area; and
- e. Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

21. Holborn is recognised as an area for intensification within the London Plan. The sites are also located within the background of Protected Vista 5A.2 (Greenwich Park to St Paul Cathedral) as identified within the London View Management Framework SPG (2012).

### **Planning Considerations**

22. In the context of the above, we object to this application on the following material planning considerations:

- a. Privacy and Overlooking;
- b. Daylight and Sunlight;
- c. Prejudice Future Development; and
- d. Proposed Residential and Office Layouts.

### **Privacy and Overlooking**

23. The set back at the rear between the proposed development at nos. 294-295 and the existing built form at Lincoln House is between 5.5metres and 6.5metres. A separation distance of 6 metres was approved under the 2003 planning permission. The separation distance was subsequently increased by 1 metre and 5 additional windows were permitted on the east elevation for levels 1-6 under application reference 2006/5250/P. A further application then reduced the separation distance by 400mm under application reference 2007/3661/P.

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24. The Officer's Report in respect of application reference 2006/5250/P stated that although the windows would directly face Lincoln House it was considered acceptable on the basis that **“both buildings were in commercial use and this is not as sensitive an issue as it would be if one of the buildings were in residential use.”**
25. The current application at 294-295 High Holborn is now proposing a sensitive use. Residential accommodation is proposed from 3rd floor level and above, with a series of windows located along the boundary with Lincoln House causing direct overlooking and loss of privacy. The fact that planning permission has been granted for non-residential development in close proximity to Lincoln House does not mean that the principle of residential development is also acceptable in the same location. We enclose drawing DR-A-0203 Rev 1 which illustrates this.
26. Camden Planning Guidance 6 relating to “Amenity” states that good practice and to ensure privacy there should normally be a minimum distance of 18m between the windows of habitable rooms of different units that directly face each other.
27. We therefore consider that **the proposed development will not provide an adequate standard of amenity to future residential occupiers, due to overlooking, privacy and a sense of enclosure.** Thus it does not accord with adopted Camden Policies - Core Strategy CS5 ('Managing the impact of growth and development') and Development Management Policy DP26 ('Managing the impact of development on occupiers and neighbours'), or emerging Local Plan Policy A1 ('Managing the impact of development) which seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours.

### Sunlight and Daylight

28. From review of the submitted Sunlight and Daylight Report (dated 21 March 2017) we consider that **the proposed residential accommodation at 294-295 High Holborn will not achieve the recommended internal daylight targets even in the context of the existing separation distance.**
29. It is clear from the results that **the assessment has not taken into account any louvers on the windows on the east facing elevation which have been introduced to partially address the overlooking.** The inclusion of such louvers will further worsen the daylight received to the habitable rooms behind those windows, further below the minimum standards.
30. A redevelopment of Lincoln House is likely to come forwards in the short to medium term, as demonstrated by the pre-application advice that has been sought. The fact that Lincoln House is likely to be redeveloped is a material consideration that should be given significant weight.

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31. Specifically, the submitted Sunlight and Daylight report demonstrates that, even in the existing condition, the residential units will not receive an acceptable standard of daylight. The likelihood of the adjacent building being redeveloped, which could exacerbate this problem further, should be taken into account as a material consideration in determining whether Development Management Policy DP26 and emerging Local Plan Policy A1, relating to amenity standards, has been satisfied by the current proposals.
32. Paragraph 2.3.1 of the BRE Guidelines states that “..it is possible to reduce the quality of adjoining development land by building too close to the boundary. A well designed building will stand a reasonable distance back from the boundaries so as to enable future nearby developments to enjoy a similar access to daylight.”
33. It is evident that if any redevelopment of Lincoln House were required to adhere to the BRE Guideline targets, then the extent of additional massing achievable along the western boundary of the site will be severely limited by the existence of the proposed habitable windows within 294-295 High Holborn.
34. This demonstrates the fact that placing habitable windows directly on the boundary will place an unfair burden upon the future development potential of Lincoln House, and furthermore the bedrooms located on the eastern façade of the current proposals for the 294-295 High Holborn site will rely solely on natural light being received from across the Lincoln House site by virtue of the existing set back at the rear of the current Lincoln House building.

### **Prejudice Future Development**

35. The application scheme at 294-295 High Holborn is considered to prejudice the development proposals at Lincoln House of which the key principals have been discussed and agreed at pre-application stage.
36. If this development were to come forward it would restrict future development of Lincoln House due to the sensitive residential use. It has already been demonstrated that the proposed application would cause direct overlooking and loss of privacy due to the position of residential windows within 6.5metres. Further, if both schemes were brought forward in their current form the separation distance would reduce to approximately 1.7metres.
37. **The current application scheme at 294-295 High Holborn fails to embrace the adjoining land in order to support the wider comprehensive redevelopment of the High Holborn city block.** As previously mentioned both sites are designated within Holborn Growth Area adopted Core Strategy Policy CS2 ('Growth Areas') expects development to maximise site opportunities. Further, emerging Local Plan Policy G1 ('Delivery and location of growth) which seeks to promote the most efficient use of land and buildings. Mixed use redevelopments are promoted providing a substantial amount of new business floor space in the period 2024-2025. Growth in Holborn continues to be promoted within the emerging Local Plan.

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38. In addition, Holborn is identified on Map 2.4 of the London Plan as an Area of Intensification. Policy 2.3 (Opportunity Areas and Intensification Areas) seeks to optimise residential and non-residential output and densities, realise scope for intensification and support the wider regeneration of development proposals.
39. The applicants seek to support the proposal on the basis that it will maximise the development potential of their site (see, for example, paragraph 2.4 of the applicant's Planning Statement), but for the reasons set out above, this can only be achieved by compromising other development which would otherwise make a contribution to the good planning and design of the area. This would prevent the public benefits that would arise from the redevelopment of Lincoln House, including additional employment floorspace, improved retail frontage and other land use and financial benefits, from being delivered.
40. These facts are material planning considerations which the Council must take into account in its assessment and determination of the application. It should also be noted in this regard that an alternative scheme, of a more appropriate scale and design, would continue to deliver the benefits which the applicants cite in support of the current application.

#### **Proposed residential and office layouts**

41. We are concerned that the layouts proposed within the accommodation are impractical. Specifically, both office and residential uses are accessed by a single, shared, core. Cycle parking and refuse facilities in the basement are also entirely shared.
42. Aberdeen is concerned that this will naturally limit the attractiveness of the space to both office and residential occupiers, limiting the extent to which it will function effectively. By mixing tenures, we consider that, in practice, there is a significant risk that some, or all, of the residential accommodation will, over the course of time, be used as short stay for employees associated with the office space or entirely converted / used for office purposes without planning permission. This would be contrary to the objectives of mixed use policy.
43. Separate accesses and stair cores should be provided to ensure that both office and residential accommodation is attractive and to minimise the likelihood of residential accommodation being gradually lost to office use because it is unattractive to long-term residential occupiers.

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## Summary

44. For the in-principle reasons set out above, we ask that this application for planning permission be amended by the applicant to address these concerns.
  
45. It would be appreciated if you could provide us with clarification of your intended recommendation and without doubt inform us if this will be determined at planning committee.

Yours faithfully



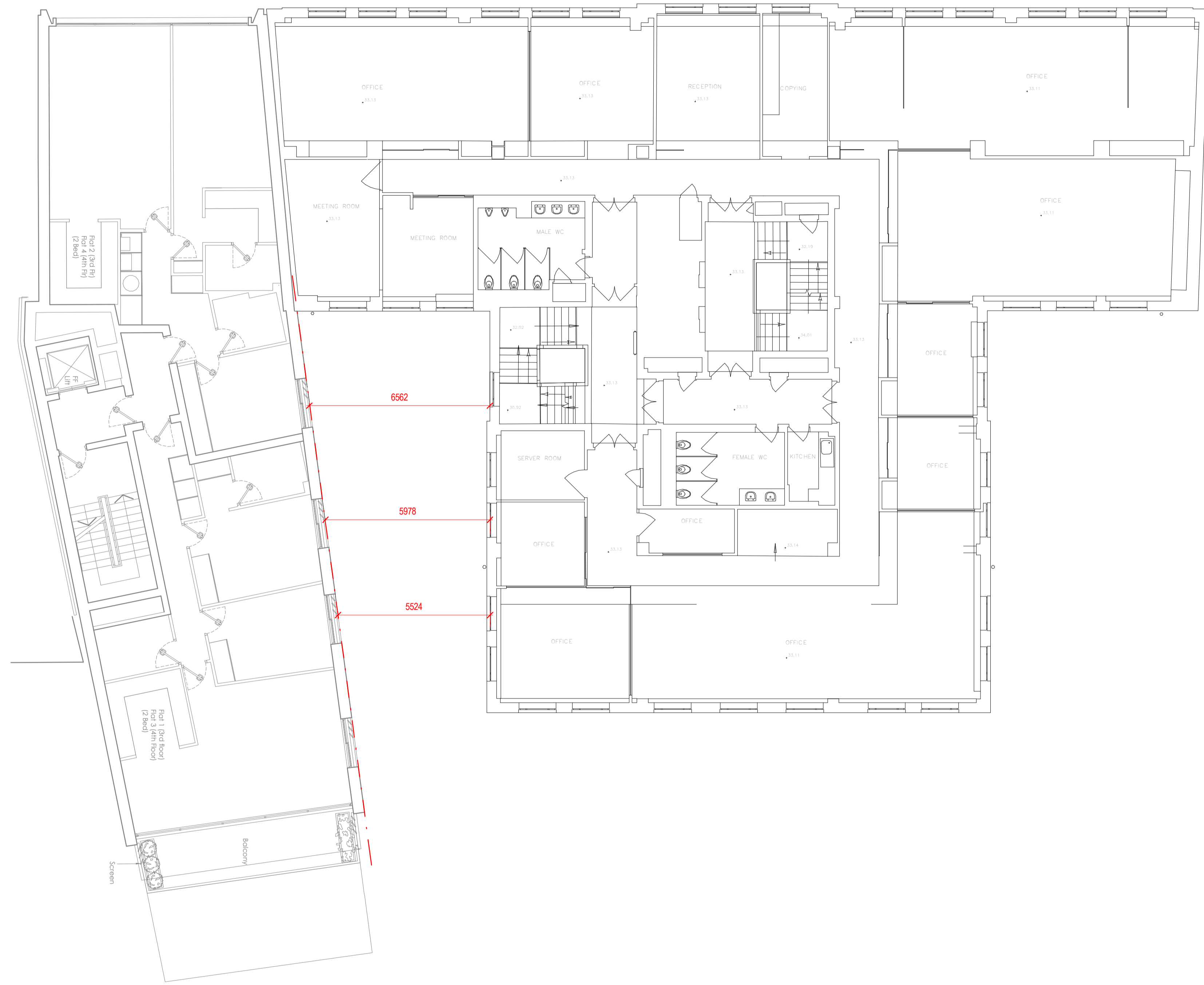
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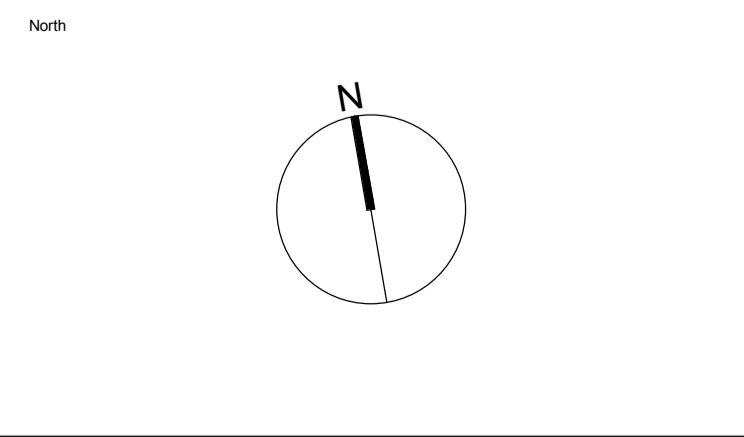
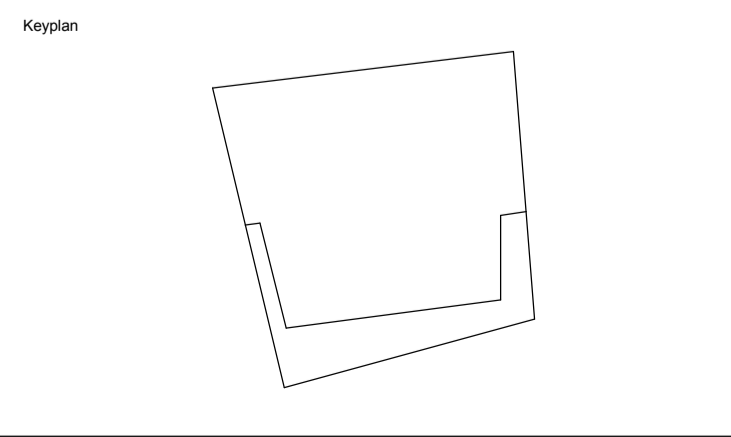
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HIGH HOLBORN



PRELIMINARY



No.	Revision	Date	Initial	Chk'd
1	PRE-APP 2 Issue - WIP	17.02.17	BH	BH
26/05/2017	10:05:14			

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Lincoln House 296-302 High Holborn WC1V-7JH London

Existing Third Floor Plan

Preliminary 1 : 100 @ A1 11/21/16

Project No	Originator	Zone	Level	Type	Rate	Number	Rev
10323-EPR-00-03-DR-A-0203							1