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**Elizabeth House,  
4-7 Fulwood Place,  
London, WC1V 6HG**

**Proposed Roof and rear  
extensions to existing  
office building and  
redesign of front  
entrance.**

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## **Design & Access Statement**

including supporting  
information:

- **Planning Summary**
- **Heritage Statement**

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**December 2017**

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### **Document Control:**

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## Introduction

This statement has been prepared by gcp Chartered Architects on behalf of the applicant Courtenay Investments Limited to support proposals to develop and extend an existing office building in Fulwood Place, London.

This statement has been prepared to record the key design and technical issues that have been considered in developing the proposals, and to provide additional information to support an application for planning approval to Camden Council.

This document should be read in conjunction with drawings and supporting reports referred to, and submitted as part of this application.

## Site description

The application site comprises a four-storey building with basement floor located on the west side of Fulwood Place, a narrow pedestrian thoroughfare running from High Holborn to Gray's Inn Gardens. It is currently in use as offices (B1a use), as are the majority of the surrounding buildings.



Fig 1 – aerial view of site

The existing building was constructed in 1955 on a bomb damage site. The construction is typical of the time, a concrete frame with precast concrete cladding panels to the front façade and brick infill panels to the rear. Windows are steel framed single glazed. Internally the building now appears dated, there is some evidence of limited decorations work in 2004. However, in many locations original finishes are still evident. The building now appears tired both inside and out and requires extensive refurbishment to make it fit for use.

## Brief

The ambition of the project is to refurbish the existing building to bring it up to current expectations for the office market in the area and to maximise the lettable floor area as much as the site permits.

In addition, the existing entrance does not afford level access for wheel chair users. Nor are there any suitable locations for storing bins or bikes on the site. We have been requested to look at the possibilities for amending the front elevation to improve these issues.

## Planning History

The following planning applications for the site are relevant to this application:

- PSX0104003 - The erection of two additional floors for use as offices (Class B1). Granted 18/06/2001.
- 9000513 - The addition of a two-storey roof extension to the existing office building and the extension of the basement enclosure at the rear of the building. Granted 07/02/1991.
- 32614 - Alterations to the existing entrance. Granted 06/08/1981.

## Planning Pre-application advice

Prior to this planning application advice, ref 2017/3418/PRE, was sought from the council for a scheme showing a two-storey roof extension with plant area, 4 storey rear extension (total 405sqm), opening up of front lightwell to provide access to basement floor, alterations to the entrance and rear lightwell.

The advice sought centred on the principle of increasing the size of the building and what supporting evidence would be required to support a full application. A summary of the response is as follows:

*The principle planning considerations are considered to be the following:*

- *Land use.*
- *Design (the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and wider Bloomsbury Conservation Area).*
- *Amenity (the impact that the proposal may have on the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of outlook, daylight, privacy and noise).*
- *The impact of the proposal on the local transport infrastructure.*

*In general, the principle of the proposals can be accepted; however, further detail is required to ensure a convincing and quality design which incorporates sensitive materials and detailing. The proposal should preserve or enhance the character, appearance and setting of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.*

In addition, the following reports were requested to support a full planning application.

- *Noise Impact Assessment*
- *Construction Management Plan*

- *Heritage Statement*
- *Details of proposed materials and balustrades*
- *Daylight impact assessment.*
- *Land use statement* justifying the inclusion of no residential accommodation on site.

## **Policy & Guidance**

The design proposals included in this application have been developed to respond to the aims of the following policy and guidance:

- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- The London Plan March 2016
- Camden Local Plan 2017
- Camden Planning Guidance

The following notes summarise the development proposed and include information to demonstrate compliance with Local Plan policies.



## Context

Prior to developing proposals, an analysis of the site and local context affecting the proposed development was carried out.

The building is located on the west side of Fulwood Place a narrow pedestrian lane linking High Holborn to the south with Gray's Inn Gardens and Law School to the north. The site is a five minute walk from Chancery Lane Tube to the east and Holborn Underground Tube station to the west.



Fig 2 – birds eye view of site from south east

Fulwood Place and the surrounding area is predominantly characterized by four and five storey terraced office buildings of varied appearance and materials. The existing building is four storeys tall and finished in white render to the ground floor and painted pre-cast concrete panels above. The building dates from the 1950s when it was constructed following bomb damage.

Adjoining the site to the north, part of the terrace that survived bomb damage is no. 8 Fulwood Place, a narrow five storey brick faced building. The top floor is a recent extension set back from the parapet finished in white render.

To the south is a 1980's building over six storeys. The first four storeys are finished in brick with two storeys of slate finished mansard behind the parapet above. A plant enclosure is sited on the roof.

Behind, Elizabeth House abuts original structures on Warwick Court. As with all the surrounding properties the ground floor extends to completely cover the site. Other more modern extensions extend across the original gardens and lightwells. The predominant material is brick.

Facing Elizabeth House across Fulwood place is Fairfax House a six-storey building. A ground floor of stone with brick above up to the parapet with a mansard and roof extension behind.

All of the immediately surrounding properties are believed to have commercial accommodation. The closest residential properties are in 31-33 High Holborn to the south east of the site and 7 & 8 Warwick Court to the north west.

The site is within Bloomsbury Conservation Area and to the north sits Gray's Inn, the Inns of Court and a registered Grade II\* park and garden, which also contains numerous listed buildings. There are glimpses of Fulwood Place and the buildings upon it from the south end of Gray's Inn.

## **Constraints**

The nature of the site creates a number of constraints on development. These can be summarised as follows:

### **Conservation area:**

The site is within Bloomsbury Conservation Area and to the north sits Gray's Inn, the Inns of Court and a registered Grade II\* park and garden, which also contains numerous listed buildings. There are glimpses of Fulwood Place and the buildings upon it from the south end of Gray's Inn. Consideration has been made in the design of the proposals of any impact they may have on the character of the conservation area.

### **Access:**

The only access to the site is via Fulwood Place, there is no vehicular access. The closest option for loading and unloading of building materials is High Holborn. Hence consideration of building methods and size of components is critical.

### **Neighbouring amenity**

The site is in a densely occupied area of London with buildings closely packed together. Policy A1 of the Camden local plan seeks to protect the amenity of Camden's residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered and would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents. This includes privacy, outlook, noise, daylight and sunlight.

### **Party Walls**

Since the site directly abuts three of the neighbouring properties any works along these boundaries will require party wall consents.

### **Existing Structure**

The existing building will create limitations on the amount of additional building and structural load that can be added. A structural analysis of the existing building has been undertaken. This shows that the current structure will support an additional two storeys on the roof. Any more than that and additional works to strengthen the existing frame and foundations would likely be required.

## Proposals

### Scale of development

These proposals are for a two-storey roof extension and a further four storey extension to the rear. In addition, the front entrance will be remodelled to include a ramp from pavement level to accommodate wheel chair users and new steps will be formed down into the basement. These steps will improve the fire escape and allow the provision of bin and bike stores in the basement. Currently there is no provision for the storage of either.

The resulting change in floor area is an increase from 1,118.6m<sup>2</sup> to 1,551.1m<sup>2</sup> an increase of 432.5m<sup>2</sup>.

The roof extension has been designed to sit between the existing flank walls of no.3 and no. 8 Fulwood Place. No. 3 Fulwood Place is the tallest of the neighbouring buildings with three storeys of built form above the shared parapet line. No. 8 Fulwood Place has only a single storey roof extension hence our proposals form a step between the two.

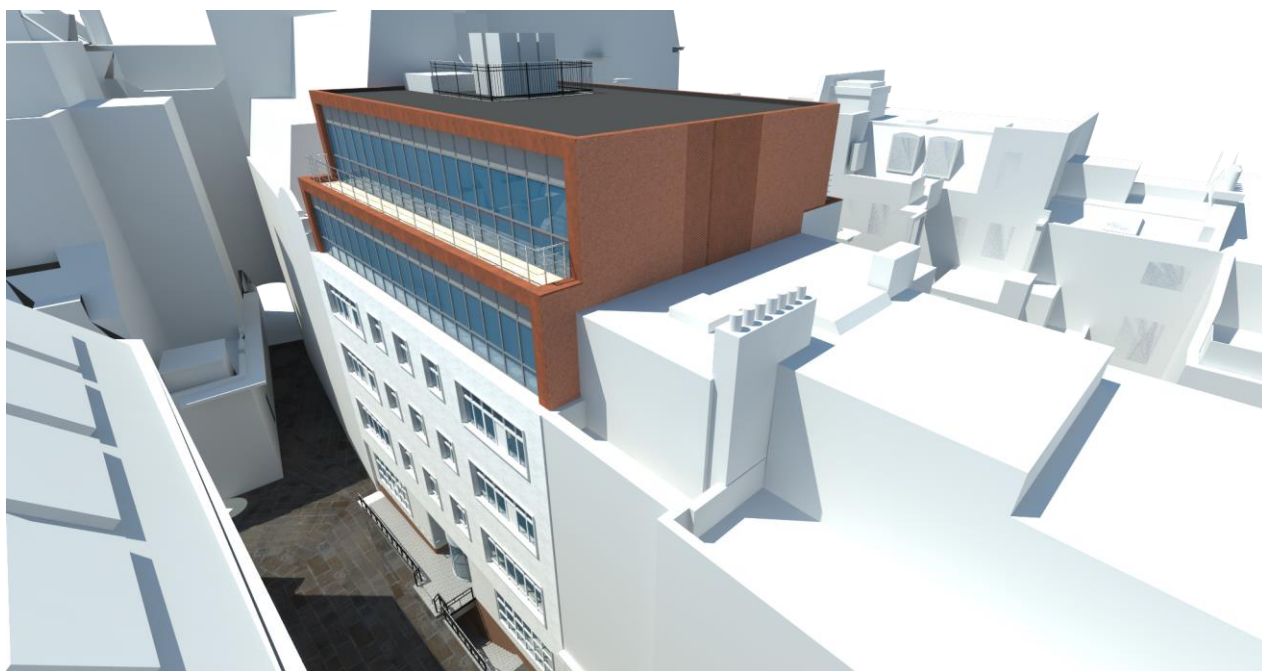


Fig 3 – CGI – north east birds eye view

To the rear the proposed extensions aim to maximise the lettable floor area for the site. There is an existing extension from no.6 Warwick Court which will be built against by these proposals. A result of building out to the rear boundary is that the windows and outlook from the rear are turned to the north and south to look along the terrace. The result is to significantly reduce any overlooking and improve the privacy between buildings.

### Form

To minimise the massing, the proposals are all designed with flat roofs. To further reduce their impact on the surroundings a series of setbacks are proposed. On the front elevation the 4<sup>th</sup> floor is set back behind the existing parapet line. This enables the existing form of the building and existing parapet line which continues for much of the length of Fulwood Place to remain intact. The 5<sup>th</sup> floor is set back by an additional 1.2m. These setbacks mean the 5<sup>th</sup> floor will be



hidden from street level with only the 4<sup>th</sup> floor poking out from behind the parapet. At the rear, only the 5<sup>th</sup> floor is set back.

The reduced footprint of the 5<sup>th</sup> floor allows for a terrace to both elevations. This will create additional amenity space for the building as there is currently no outdoor space available.



Fig 4 – CGI – north west birds eye view



Fig 5 – CGI – south west birds eye view



## Materials

New extensions – it is proposed to wrap the new roof extension in brass panels. Contrast is created by using a perforated panel on the flank walls. A flat panel is proposed to frame openings for windows and curtain walling.

Brass has been selected as a complimentary colour to the existing brick, slate and rendered facades that will sit next to the new extensions. Metal cladding also helps to signify a modern contemporary addition to the original building.

The rear extension is to mimic the existing rear façade by creating a frame in insulated render around infill brick panels. Brick to be selected to match the existing.



Figure 6 – proposed brass cladding to roof extension

Windows into the extensions will be formed in curtain wall to allow full height glazing to flood the new spaces with light.

The existing rear façade will be over-clad with insulated white render. This will match similar interventions on no.8 Fulwood Place. The over-cladding is required not just to improve the insulation on the building but to protect the existing exposed concrete frame which is showing signs of decay in some places.

The front façade is currently clad with pre-cast concrete panels which have been painted. The result is what appears to be a rendered building with cracks along board joints behind the render. The condition of these panels is believed to be poor and they are approaching the end of their life. We propose to replace this cladding with a new insulated render system. This also affords the opportunity to make minor adjustments to the window pattern to improve natural daylighting.

The existing windows are the original single glazed Crittal windows now in poor condition and requiring replacing. We propose to replace with slim aluminium framed double glazed windows. This will match the adjoining buildings which all have modern aluminium windows.

Balustrades to the 5th floor will be a simple stainless steel design as drawing 17008\_221. These have been designed to be as light as possible to minimise visual impact.

## Access

The entrance to the building is from Fulwood Place with ground floor level approximately 300mm above pavement level. A new access ramp is proposed along with a new landing that will project over the basement below. In addition, the entrance doors are to be replaced with a new set of curved sliding doors creating a modern entrance lobby into the building.

For people wishing to cycle to the building a new cycle store is proposed in the basement. Access to this is via a new set of steps cut into the existing basement below the pavement.



Figure 7 – GCI proposed entrance.

The new ramp and steps will be finished with a light coloured stone effect tile. Balustrading and handrails design is drawn from the typical black railings that are insitu elsewhere on Fulwood Place topped off with a stainless steel handrail.

Once inside the building a new lift and stair core enables vertical circulation. All designed to meet current DDA standards will be a big improvement on the current situation.

## Transport

The site's sole access is via Fulwood Place, a pedestrian street. Fulwood Place in turn can be accessed via High Holborn at one end and Gray's Inn at the other. The Honourable Society which manages Gray's Inn do not permit deliveries via their property hence all access for construction has to come from High Holborn.

The design of these proposals has had to take into account the constraints imposed by the access difficulties. A contractor has been consulted at all stages to review the practicalities of construction. The result of this is a draft Construction Stage Management Plan which is attached as part of this application.

## Waste

The proposed new steps to the basement enables the creation of a bin store. Waste can be segregated and stored here ready to be brought out and collected as usual by the local authority. Currently there are no bin storage facilities on site.



## Heritage Statement

Elizabeth House sits within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It is part of a terrace of buildings facing Fulwood Place, one of the narrow passageways running between High Holborn and Gray's Inn Gardens.

Fulwood Place is typical of the southern part of the Conservation area which is made up of large number of narrower streets and alleyways which are intimate spaces with a particular charm and sense of history.

Although the area is strongly influenced by a formal pattern of streets and spaces it was not planned to create distinctive formal vistas to architectural set pieces such as churches. The relatively flat topography also means that views are not created by changing levels. The visual characteristics of the Conservation Area therefore derive from the experience of moving between streets, squares and other spaces, and the contrast created between enclosure and open spaces.

No key vistas are identified in the conservation area appraisal around Fulwood Place. Similarly, there are no listed buildings in the street although Fairfax House and 31-33 High Holborn which backs onto the place are listed in the appraisal as buildings providing a Positive Nature.

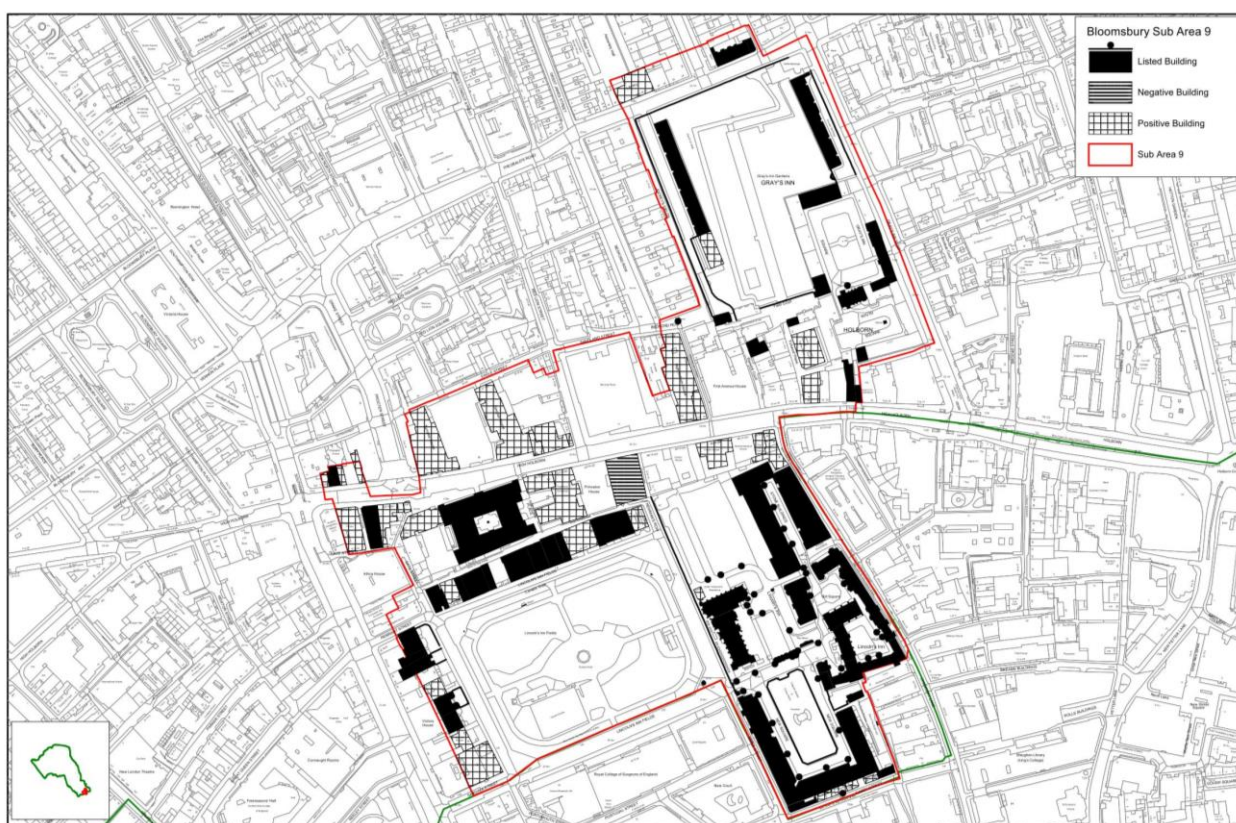


Figure 8 – Bloomsbury Conservation area

Elizabeth House itself is of limited architectural merit. The building was constructed in the 1950's on a site cleared following bomb damage. The building is likely to have been speculative, at the lower end of the scale for the period of construction. The street facing façade is finished in render and painted concrete panels providing a utilitarian appearance. Crittal windows are showing signs of disrepair and need replacing.



Figure 9 – Elizabeth House

To the south side of Elizabeth House is 1-3 Fulwood Place a 1980's construction, again of limited architectural merit. The façade is brick with a three-storey slate mansard from the fourth floor. This mansard forms an unappealing flank wall against the boundary with Elizabeth House and is visible to views down Fulwood Place from Gray's Inn Court.

To the north side is no. 8 Fulwood Place a typical terraced town house that is now used as offices. The original brick façade is intact however the windows are replaced with modern frames.

Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy 'Promoting High Quality Places and Conserving our Heritage' highlights the need to preserve and enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings.



The proposals contained within this application are viewed as having minimal impact on the setting of the conservation area. The proposed roof extension is set behind the existing parapet and will be hardly visible from pavement level. Only one view of the proposals will be afforded from the public realm looking southwards down Fulwood Place from Gray's Inn. The impact on this view is illustrated by the following images showing before and after views.

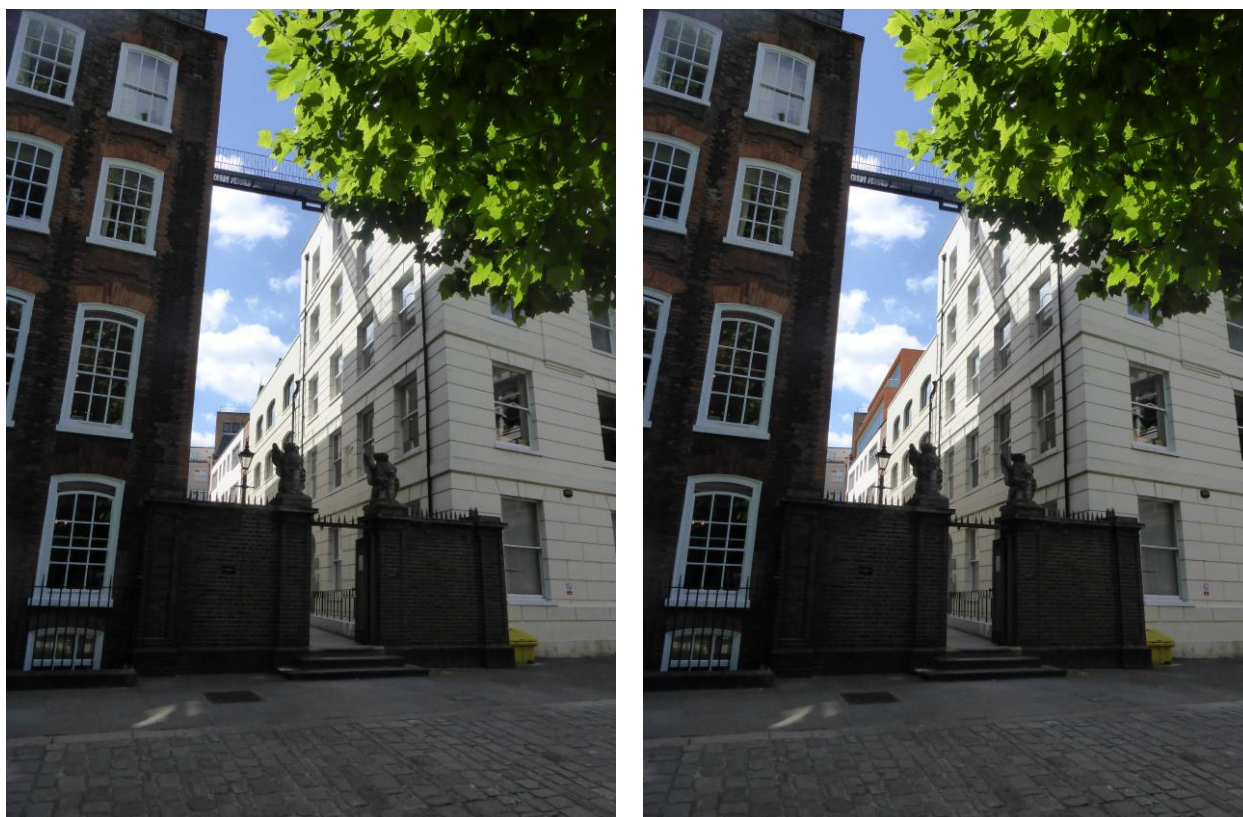


Figure 10 – existing and proposed views from Gray's Inn

The other aspect of the proposals to have an affect are the proposed amendments to the entrance to Elizabeth House. The introduction of the new access to the basement and provision of level access into the building is essential for the operation of the building and to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The proposed amendments have been designed to be in keeping with the conservation area. Other buildings along Fulwood Place have open lightwells surrounded by black railings. The proposed amendments mimic these existing arrangements and hence will blend in.

In conclusion the proposed changes to Elizabeth House are not significant or are considered to be detrimental to the preservation or character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

## Land Use

Policy H2 of the Camden local plan applies to all proposals for new build non-residential development and extensions involving a significant floorspace increase. It specifically seeks provision of self-contained houses and flats (Use Class C3), rather than other forms of housing, in line with the priority land-use of the Plan as set out in “Policy H1 Maximising housing supply”.

In the Central London Area where more than 200 sqm (gross) additional floorspace is provided, we will require up to 50% of all additional floorspace to be self-contained housing, subject to the following considerations:

- a) the character of the development, the site and the area;
- b) site size, and any constraints on developing the site for a mix of uses;
- c) the priority the Local Plan gives to the jewellery sector in the Hatton Garden area;
- d) whether self-contained housing would be compatible with the character and operational requirements of the proposed non-residential use and other nearby uses; and
- e) whether the development is publicly funded or serves a public purpose.

Where the Council is satisfied that providing on-site housing is not practical or housing would more appropriately be provided off-site, we will seek provision of housing on an alternative site nearby, or exceptionally a payment-in-lieu.

The proposals result in a gross uplift of 432sqm. Under DP1, a total of 216 sqm of on-site residential would be required.

The project team have investigated the possibility of including residential accommodation at Elizabeth House. For the following reasons it has been concluded that it is not viable in this instance:

- There is limited capacity to accommodate additional residential development on the site. The proposed development is a refurbishment and extension of an existing office building, accordingly, the opportunity to provide any additional floorspace, to accommodate residential floorspace, is limited.
- Practically the only location for residential accommodation would be penthouse apartments. The site however is constrained with a small footprint. The building has only one access core. The introduction of a second core is not viable due to the amount of lettable floor area that would be lost.
- The advice received is that for a building of this size it is most likely to be let on a whole building basis. If separate residential accommodation were to be included in a single access core scenario, it would not be attractive to tenants making the project unviable.

Policy H2 states that if it is not possible to provide housing on site, options on alternative sites nearby may be explored. Our client does not own any additional sites in Camden hence is unable to offer the provision of additional off-site housing.

Policy H2 states that in exceptional circumstances, the Council may accept a Payment in Lieu. The Applicant is willing to pay a Payment in Lieu of £151,200 (216m<sup>2</sup> x £700) which is the policy compliant amount having regard to the formula contained in CPG8. This is a payment in lieu which can be used towards the provision of affordable housing

## **Amenity**

Policy A1 seeks to protect the amenity of Camden's residents by ensuring the impact of development is fully considered and would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents.

## **Daylighting**

A daylighting assessment of the impact of the proposals on neighbouring residential properties at 7 & 8 Warwick Court and 31 High Holborn has been conducted. The results show that there are no significant impacts. A full copy of the report is attached to this application.

## **Noise**

A noise impact assessment has been undertaken by MLM group to support this application. the report outlines the constraints and maximum noise levels that will be permissible by the final detailed design solution for any plant to be installed as part of these works.

## **Resource Efficiency**

The proposals forming this application are part of a complete building refurbishment. These works will transform the fabric efficiency of the building. In addition, the heating and lighting systems will all be replaced with modern efficient versions. The result will be a low energy efficient building unrecognisable from the existing structure.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed refurbishment and extension of Elizabeth House will transform this tired building into a modern contemporary space. The proposals have been designed with all appropriate guidance in mind and are sensitive to the nature of their surroundings. They will create additional employment space adding to the vibrancy of the local area.

We trust that you find these proposals acceptable and look forward to discussing them further in due course.