



# Design & Access Statement

*84-86 Abbey Road*  
*NW8 0QA*

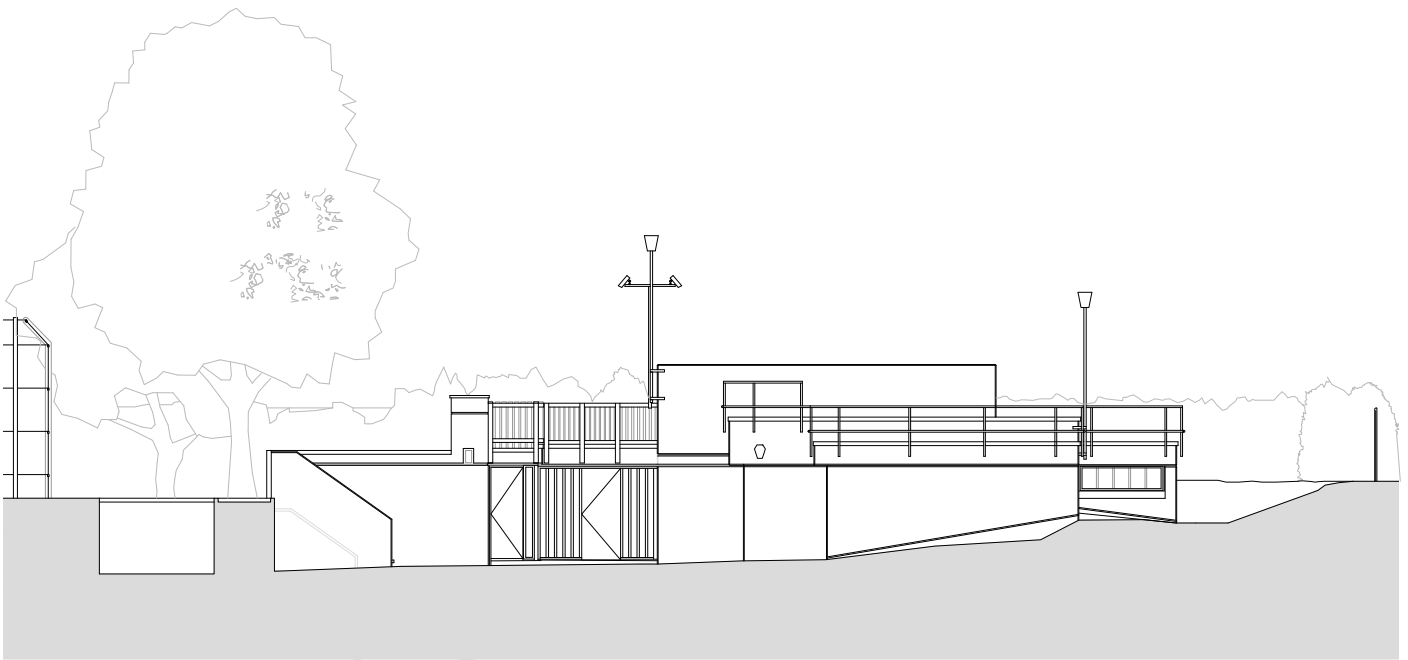


Fig. 1. 84-86 Abbey Road - Existing north elevation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Our proposal seeks to convert an existing building into a children's nursery which caters for children aged approximately 1 to 4 years. The building is situated within the Alexandra Road Conservation Area. Designed by Japanese architect Kisa Kawakami in 1981, the building has served several purposes such as a community childrens' centre, an Afro-Caribbean elders centre and a consultation centre for area regeneration consultations. However, the building is currently in a run-down state, having been unused and derelict since at least 2009.

Bearing in mind the long history of community activity associated with the property, this project is a fitting opportunity to restore it, again benefitting local people. Situated at the entrance to the Alexandra Road Estate's park, when in full use the renovated nursery will inject life into the park and attract people from the adjacent Abbey Road.

The proposal takes into account the guidance set out by Camden Council and is compliant with all planning stipulations.



Fig. 2. Alexandra Road Estate Conservation Area.



Fig. 3. Alexandra Road Estate.



Fig. 4. Glazed doors to rear garden.



Fig. 5. Ironmongery detail.

## **SITE CONTEXT**

The property in question is not listed, however it is situated within the Alexandra Road Conservation Area, which was designated by the council on 12th March 1996 (fig 2). Designed by architect Neave Brown, the estate is a 1970s high density mixed-use development, including housing for 1660 people in 520 dwellings (fig 3) along with a tenants' hall, underground parking and shops.

The proposed nursery building is located within the landscaped area adjacent to the housing estate, which forms part of the conservation area. In a style reflective of the neighbouring estate, the building is designed as a series of interlocking cubes set into its landscape with mounds of earth backed up against retaining walls. The building and its retaining walls are made of white painted in-situ concrete, now in poor condition. There are two sets of multiple narrow glazed doors with unique ironmongery (fig 4, 5) on the Abbey Road side of the building. The building is currently being renovated by the council as a shell, so will be in better condition when this work begins.



Fig. 6. 84-86 Abbey Road - Proposed north elevation.

## **DESIGN PROPOSAL**

Our design seeks to reinvigorate the redundant building, using minimum alterations to appropriate it for use as a nursery for children aged 1-4. Currently serving no purpose, the re-appropriated building will add life to the estate entrance and become a focal point of the surrounding community. The building lends itself to its proposed use as a nursery, standing only one storey high and comprising of large open spaces with a lot of garden space, all of which can be utilised by the nursery.

The main intervention within our proposal is a new entrance structure to be constructed at the front of the nursery. Made out of timber, with large glazed doors, the structure acts as an intermediate entrance lobby providing shelter and security. The two glazed doors can be fully opened in the morning and at break times, also providing a space to store prams securely. The triangulated rooflight structures contrast with the horizontality of the existing building, drawing attention to the entrance of the nursery and bringing daylight into the entrance lobby. A simple system of water running down the sloping rooflights can be used by the children to collect or measure rainfall.

In the rear garden of the building, the steeply sloping ground towards the Abbey Road fence will be replaced with a stepped landscape. These steps will be used by children to climb, sit and play. A slide is built up on a mound spanning the new landscape.

Inside the nursery, the front room will be converted into a staff room. Similarly, a section of the main space will be converted into an open office with a door looking out to the nursery entrance. The larger of the two sets of narrow glazed doors to the Abbey Road side of the nursery is to be re-hung, forming two functioning sets of French doors opening fully inwards.

Part of the existing kitchen area is to be split off to form a cloakroom. The existing toilets are to be reorganised, allowing for four children's toilet cubicles, one separate adult cubicle and once disabled WC. Curtains will be installed over the large existing sliding doors to form temporary boundaries between the different areas of the nursery and aid acoustics within the space. We are however aware that these interior changes are not necessarily planning concerns.

The existing planting covering the roof and surrounding the nursery will be maximised; an edible garden, bug hotels and green roofs will be created and maintained on the stepped roof of the property. Circular timber platform a seating is proposed to wrap around the existing trees on the site.

Black painted timber fencing will be added at the front of the nursery to match existing nearby fencing (fig. 8).

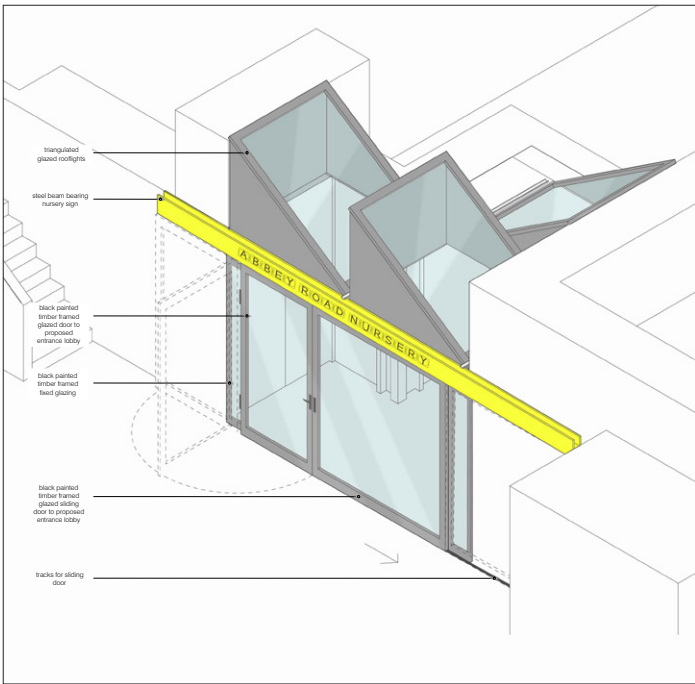


Fig. 7. 84-86 Abbey Road - Proposed entrance structure.



Fig. 8. Existing fencing on-site.

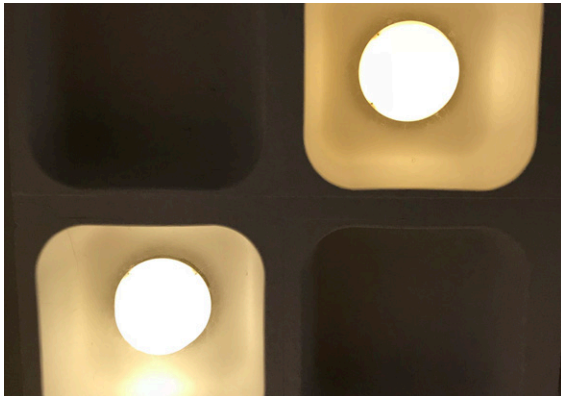


Fig. 9. Lights and shaped ceiling.



Fig. 10. Inside the main space

## **DESIGN PROPOSAL (CONT'D)**

Existing features throughout the nursery building will be maintained; for example the waffle slab ceiling housing the lights in the main space (fig.9) and the large sliding doors with porthole style openings.

## **MATERIALS**

Throughout the project, a limited palette of high-quality materials will be used, selected for their robustness and ability to compliment the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding structures.

## **ACCESS**

The property is perfect for adaptation into a nursery, being one storey with plenty of open space and garden areas. The new entrance structure will attract visitors into the nursery, whilst the re-hung glazed doors will provide easy access from the nursery interior to the rear garden, and the garden itself will be made safer and more accessible through the stepping of its sloped edges and two sets of stairs allowing access to the slide in the rear garden.