

**DESIGN & ACCESS
STATEMENT**

152 Royal College Street



**HENNING
STUMMEL**
ARCHITECTS Ltd

LOCATION

Planning Reference 2015/4396/P

This prominent corner site on the Royal College Street overlooks the canal and marks the entry point into the Camden Broadway conservation area.

According to OS information the site has been empty since the early seventies. A Victorian shop house stood in this place. This will have been similar to the two historic buildings immediately north of the site, with a basement, a ground floor shop and two upper floors. The flank facing the canal will have been a blank wall.

Royal College Street was set out about 1850. It's straight and the street level is made up from the spoils generated by rapid development along both sides. Many original buildings have survived. These inform the character and scale of the street and define the urban space. Post-war development has, by and large, been inferior and includes a Parcel-force warehouse, a car repair centre and a small industrial estate.

A new town house at 83 is an exception. This modest intervention with a translucent blue stone veneer façade set within uniform terraced houses is an enriching addition.



83 Royal College Street



Site location



Existing Corner Site

IMMEDIATE CONTEXT

Another interesting development, immediately east of our site along Baynes Street, is Bruges Place. These buildings from the late eighties by Jestico and Whiles reflect influences of James Stirling and Aldo Rossi's theory (The City and the House). This scheme is made up of two long blocks, separated by narrow cobbled streets. The levels have distinct functions: There is open car parking at ground level. The capacious first floor sits on concrete columns and is reserved for office use. Above this floor and set back from the façade, maisonettes with roof gardens occupy the two top floors. Each residential unit has a quaint gabled roof.

The blocks have long glazed gallerias as circulation spines. The built volumes are clad in two tones of brick, set out in equidistant horizontal 'candy' stripes.

Bruges Place is immediately adjacent to our site, and its scale and materiality are relevant to our proposed intervention.

The other buildings that greatly impact our site are the two shop houses on neighbouring sites 154 and 156 Royal College Street. The attractive and presumably original shop front of 154 is worth noting. Both buildings have no railings separating pavement and shop-front. The front basement rooms are lit via gratings allowing pedestrians to step right up to the window display.



Bruges Place from Baynes Street



158, 156 & 154 Royal College Street

TAKING CUES FROM THE SITE

The conservation area appraisal highlights our empty plot as a space that detracts from the neighbourhood. The proposed redevelopment is an opportunity to address this shortcoming.

This corner is highly visible, particularly when you come up Royal College Street. The prominent flank elevation overlooks the canal. It can address the public realm and take advantage of the view.

Royal College Street and Baynes Street define this corner. There is a hierarchy between the two. Royal College Street is long and wide with generous pavements and shop fronts. Baynes Street on the other hand is a narrower subservient street, with traffic frequently waiting to turn into Royal College Street.

The new building is like a hinge on this corner.

Our point of departure was to pick up the geometry of horizontal lines and the rectangular geometry of the buildings adjacent to our site.



Existing Propotions



Proposal Alignment

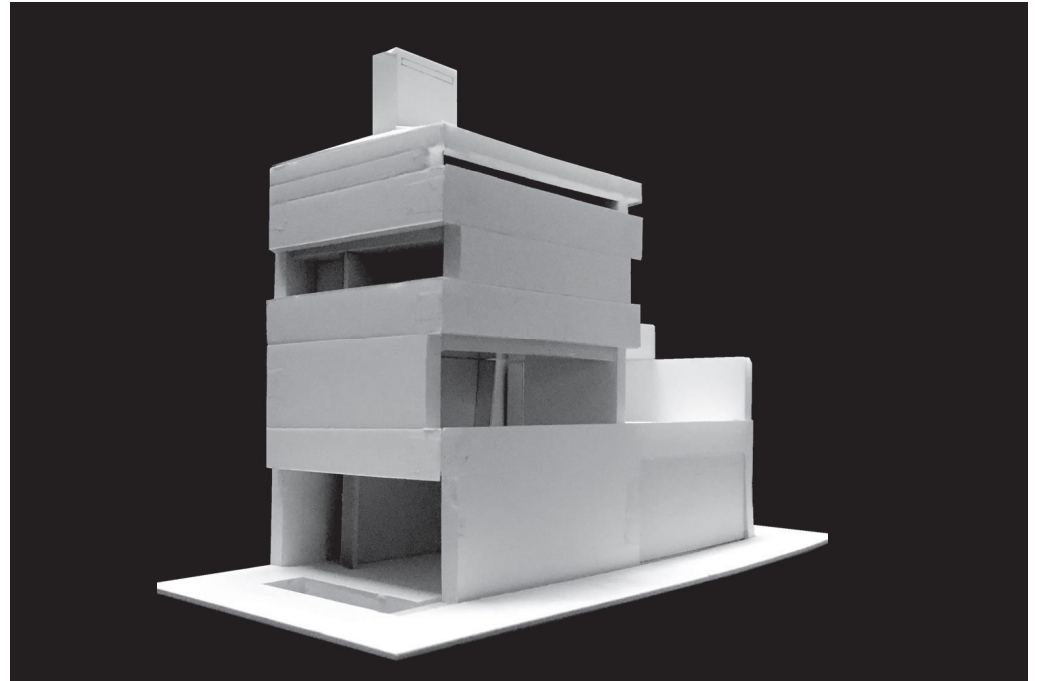
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

At Ground level we wanted a shop front on Royal College Street – this replicates the adjacent buildings. Baynes Street on the other hand is a side street offering less space. It is frequently congested, so having a solid wall at ground level seems appropriate.

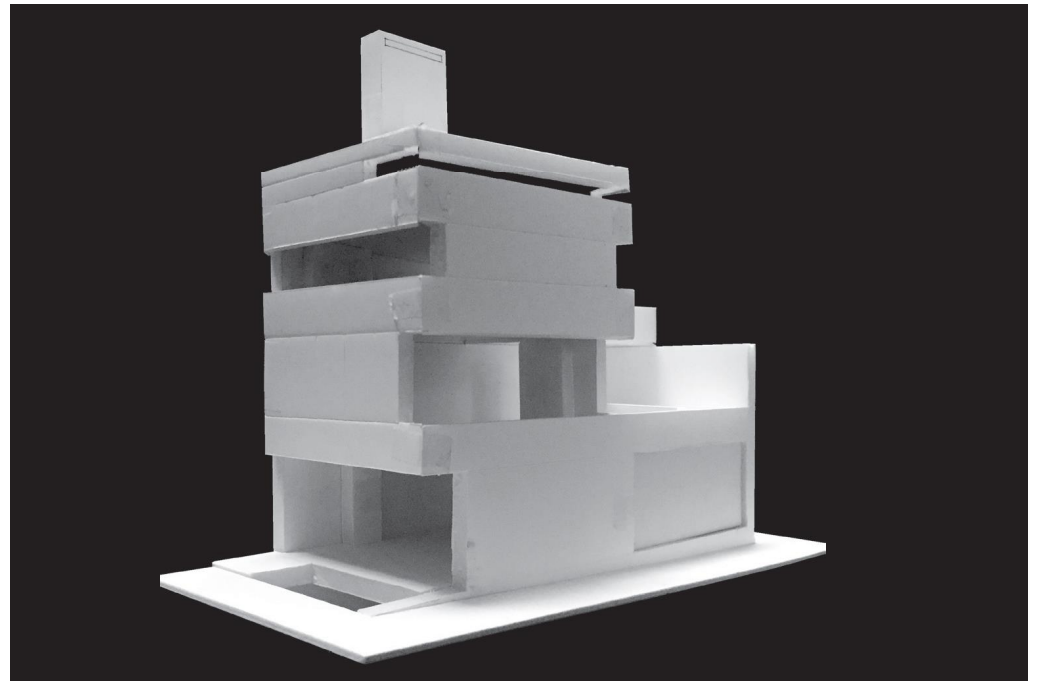
At first floor level we wanted the inverse, a living room with a panoramic view at a level that overlooks the canal.

The idea of alternating the fenestration from floor to floor developed.

Working with a sequence of scale models we developed our scheme.



Working model 1:100



Working model 1:100 - playing with glazing turning the corner

TECTONIC IDEAS

The design of the historic shop houses next door was determined by their brick construction. The buildings have distinctive, well-executed arches and fanned lintels above the windows. The choice of material and the design are inextricably linked.

We wanted a contemporary material. We envisage panoramic slot-shaped cut outs, that span the entire width of the building and concluded that monolithic concrete allows this. The physical and sculptural presence of this cast monolithic material would work well on this exposed corner.

We reduced our design to a composition of vertical and horizontal lines, which pick up on the neighbouring buildings, both the two old shop houses and the candy stripes of Bruges Place.

The horizontal and vertical lines in our façade are shadow gaps set in the concrete. This can be achieved during the shuttering of this cast material.

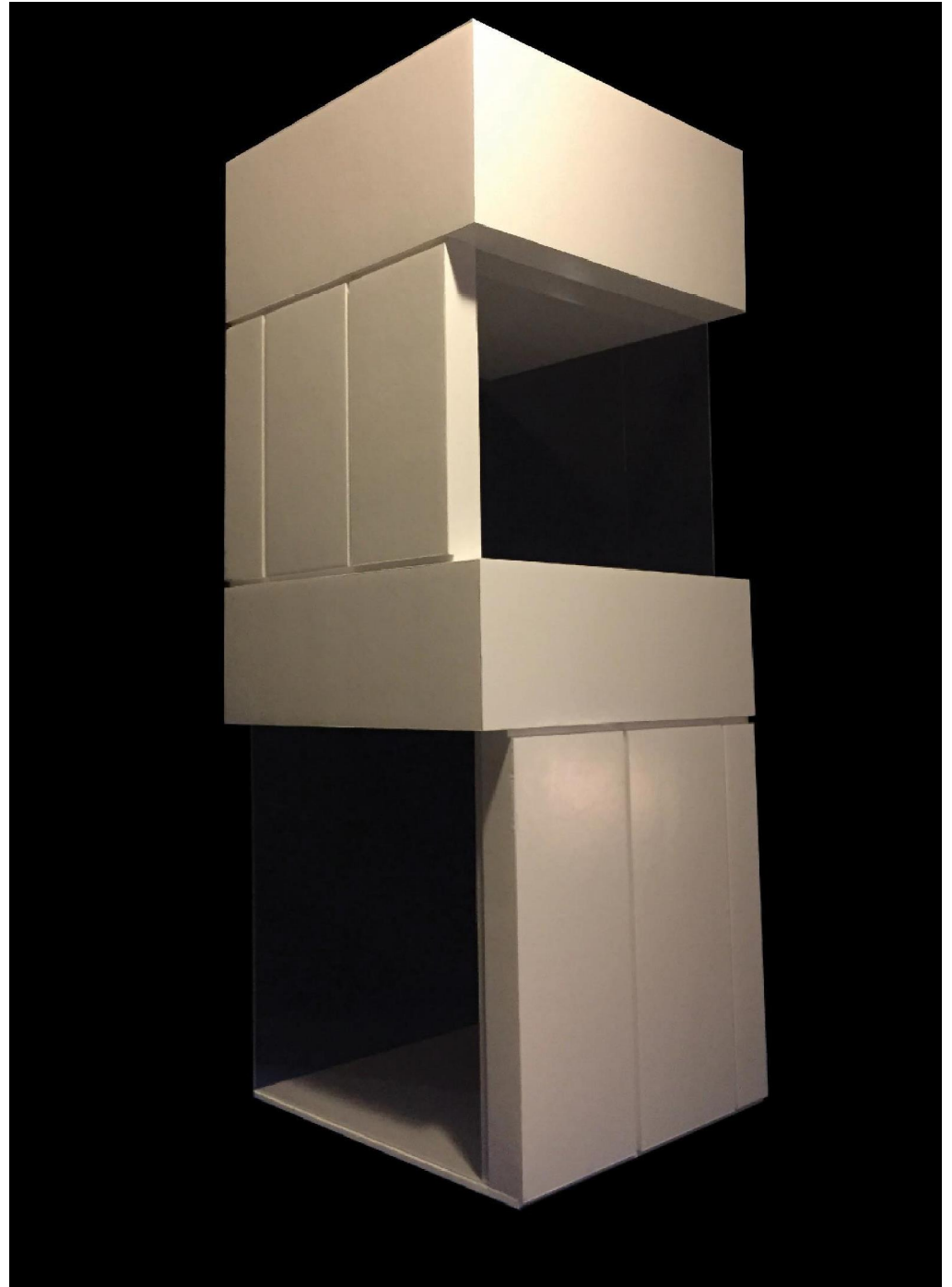
In this revised proposal we have added an additional horizontal stripe that exceeds the parapet line of the two adjacent shop houses. This additional half a meter gives us a much needed internal space and, because it sits above the boundary wall of the adjacent house, it reinforces the idea of the hinge.



Working model 1:25



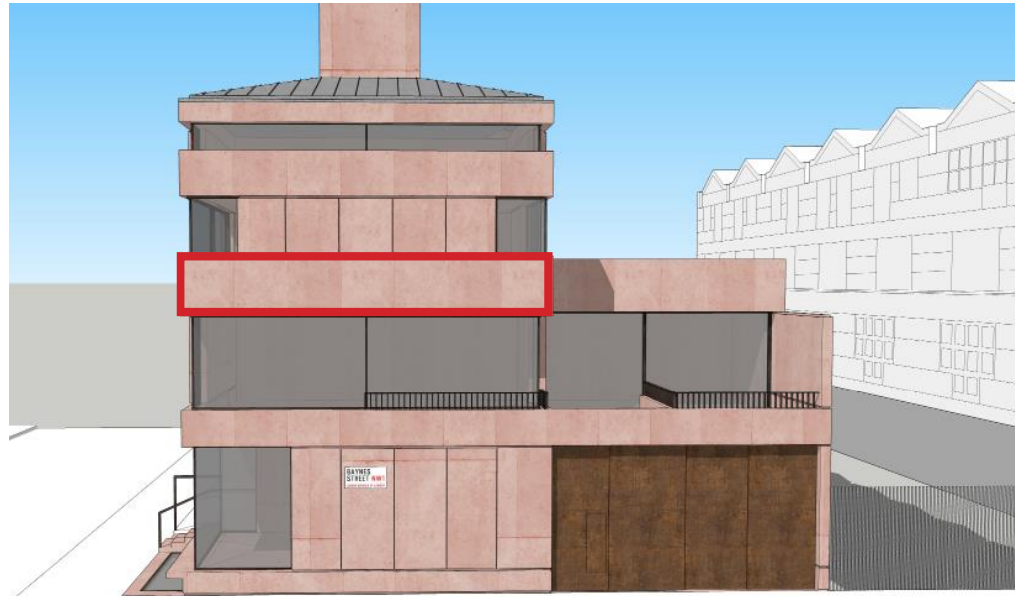
3D model of proposal



Corner detail model 1:10 - investigating shadow gaps

This architectural device, delineating horizontal and vertical lines is inspired by Sir Denys Lasdun's Royal College of Physicians. The horizontal bands read as strong load bearing beams, so we avoided vertical joints, which would create the illusion of structural weakness.

An extra wide shadow gap between new and old along Royal College Street and a further shadow gap at the base of the building along Baynes Street neatly delineate the new intervention.



Load Bearing horizontal band



Royal College of Physicians by Sir Denys Lasdun



Front Elevation



Relation between 154 & 152 Royal College St.

EXTERNAL FINISH

With adjacent buildings being clad in brick we suggest that our concrete be tinted in a rusty tone. As an example, I enclose images of a museum recently completed by Architect Souto de Moura in Cascais, Portugal. This building appears to be made from the local ground. Relevant, in that the bricks of the neighbouring historic buildings were made using local clay.

The exact colour should pick up cues from 154, 156, 158 etc and Bruges Place. We experimented with various dyes. We believe that the dye should be solid and homogenous so that the material quality and variation of the concrete remain visible. We have found that reddish tones had a fresher and more vibrant appearance than green browns.



Casa de Histórias Paula Rego by Eduardo Souto de Moura

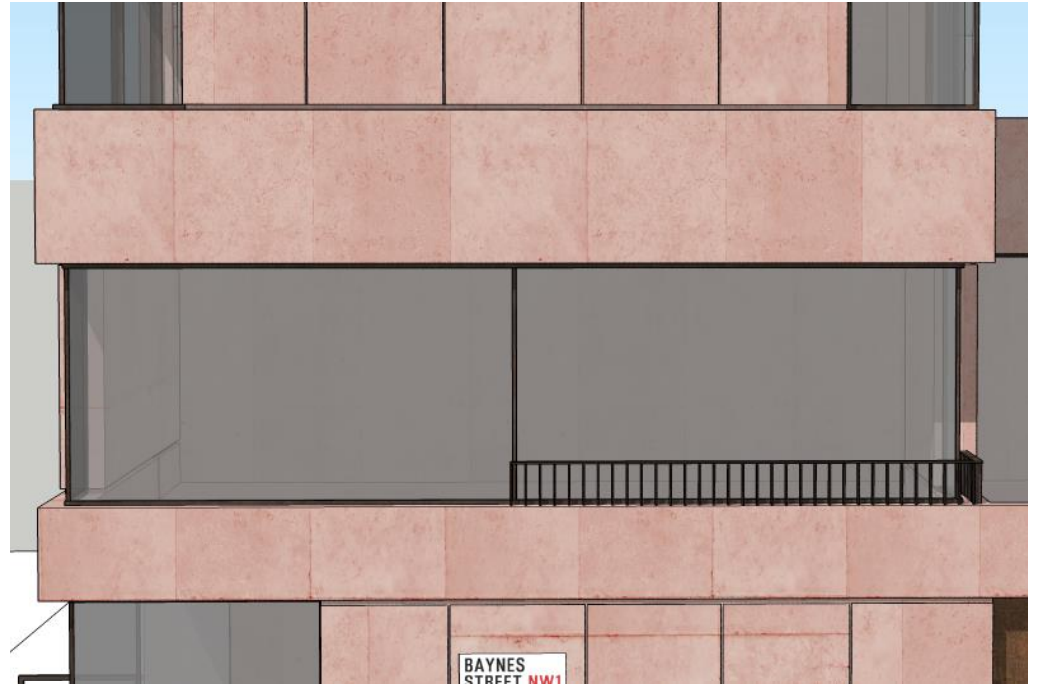


Red Concrete & Pre-patinated bornze samples

WINDOWS & OPENINGS

The openings carved into the concrete should not detract from the overall simplicity. This is best achieved with minimal frame detailing and a new generation of extra slim sliding glass will suit this purpose.

Ground level gates and doors are to be robust and solid. These and the external handrails at first floor are to be made in pre-patinated bronze. The surface variation of this resilient and beautiful material relates to the proposed concrete. (Sample can be supplied).



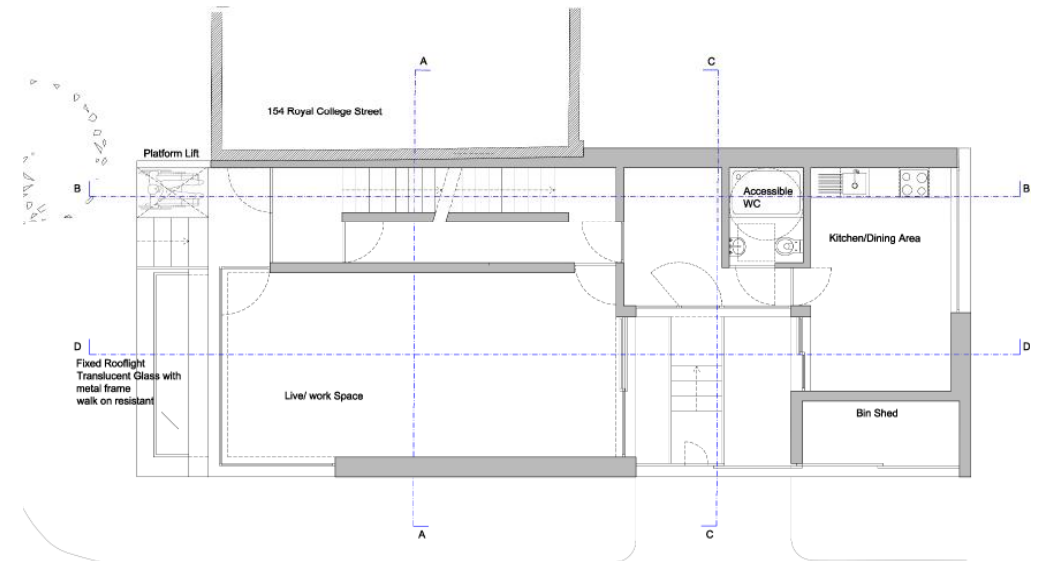
PLANS

At ground and lower ground level we're now propose a live/work unit. We're keen to use the entire site footprint. The front of the ground floor will be dedicated to retail or business use. A courtyard separates this area from the back of the building where a second generous room can be used either for business or residential use.

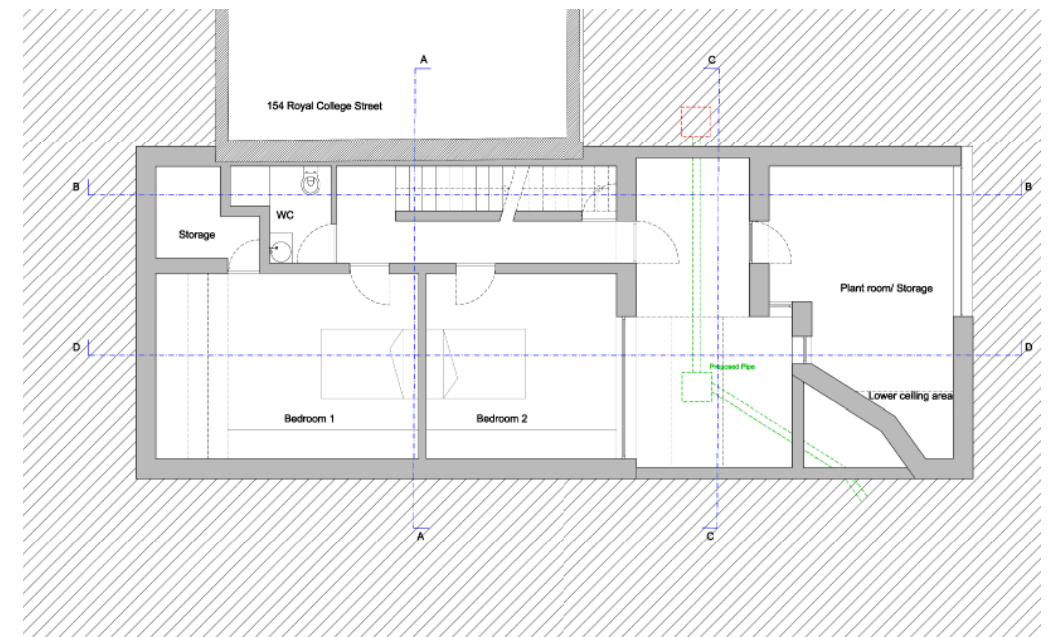
The proposed lower ground floor would re-instate a basement and will offer additional habitable or business space. The basement under the rear of the house serves as plant room.

A side access gate offers a second access for the live work unit. The other half of the sliding gate conceals bins and bicycle storage.

The recessed bronze sliding gates offer protection from the elements and allows for discreet top light.



Ground Floor Plan



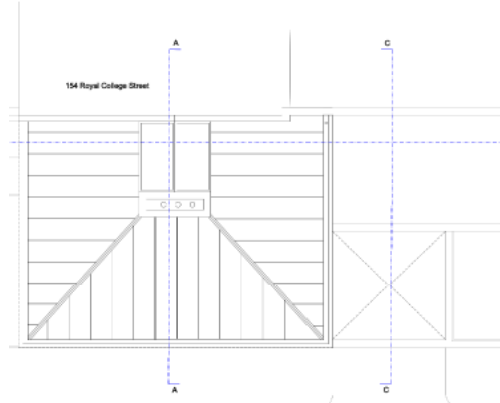
Lower Ground Floor Plan

UPPER FLOORS

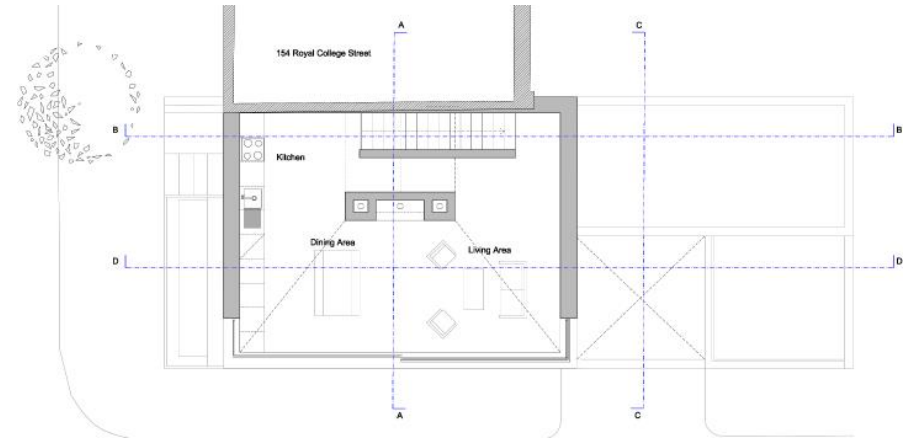
On the first floor we have a one bedroom flat and on the upper floors we have a two-bedroom maisonette, overlooking the canal.

For these floor plans the volume is reduced in size. The rear of the first-floor steps back, allowing for a long and narrow kitchen volume and a private roof terrace. The second and third floor take up the smaller rectangular plan on the corner.

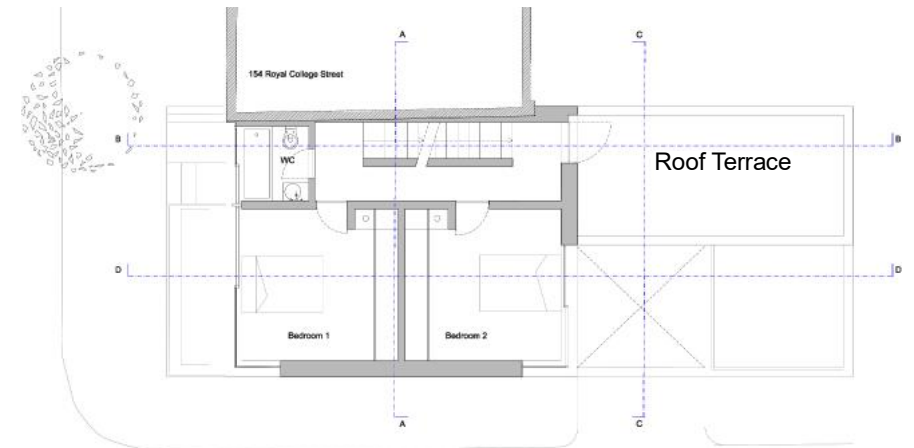
The old shop houses have a high front parapet wall, concealing a slate butterfly roofs. We propose to use this additional height to accommodate an extra floor behind the parapet. A shallow pyramidal roof is not noticeable from the street but offers the required spatial volume. Pre-patinated standing seam zinc relates to adjacent slate roofs.



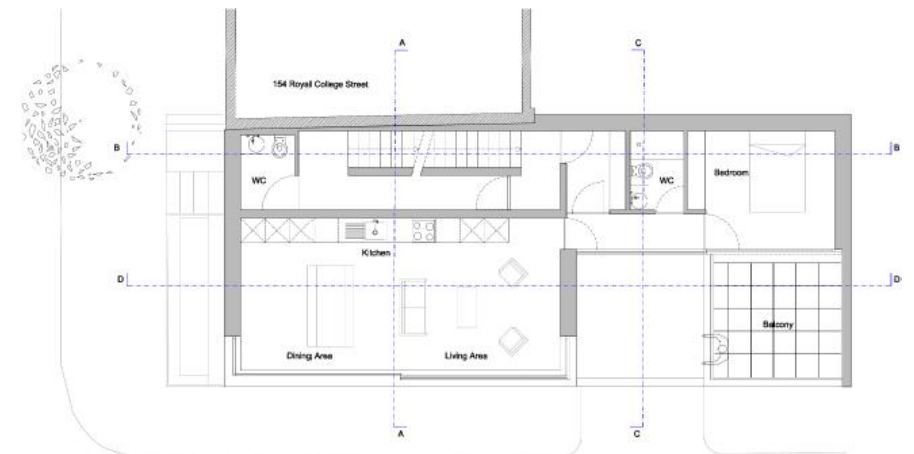
Roof Plan



Third Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Close up Front - View from Southeast

LIFE TIME HOMES

The building will be compliant with the standards for lifetime homes. At ground and basement level the WCs are suited for wheel chair users. Stairs are 900mm wide and allow retrospective installation of chairlifts. Internal Doors have minimum 800mm width.

SUSTAINABILITY

The building will be highly insulated and airtight. We propose installing photovoltaic panels on the green roof.

CONSULTATION

We consulted neighbours and made two presentations to the local residents' association. The spirit of these meetings was positive and collaborative. The feedback has informed and helped refine the design and we're grateful for the pointers and suggestions.

PRECEDANTS

There are fine examples of innovative modernism in sensitive dialogue with historic context – the Royal College of Physicians by Lasdun, the Economist Building by the Smithsons or 42 Albermarle Street by Peter Moro are examples that are much appreciated.

Our firm has succeeded in realising exciting designs in and around London and I attach some information (Appendix). This work illustrates our commitment to quality.

Valuable opportunities to enrich and reinvigorate our cities are not often seized. London is a centre for ideas. 'Creativity' is an important part of our economy – and for this to remain so we must be willing to let creativity and innovation thrive.

CONCLUSION

In summary this proposal offers an exciting opportunity to build a contemporary but sensitive landmark building on a prominent Camden site.



The Economist Building



42 Albermarle Street