



# Design and Access Statement

51 Calthorpe Street  
London  
WC1X 0HH

February 2018

BROOKSMURRAY ARCHITECTS

## Part 1- Design

### 1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support a planning application to convert the building at 51 Calthorpe Street, London, which is currently used as offices, into a mixed use property, comprising offices in the basement, lower ground floor and part of the ground floor, together with 8 apartments in the remainder of the ground floor and the upper floors. A mansard roof storey at the front, a rear extension and a new basement will be incorporated into the building. At the same time, the façade will be repaired and cleaned, the forecourt landscaped and the semi-industrial railings at the boundary of the site replaced with a low-level brick garden wall.

### A. Site Context



The existing building on the site is not listed but sits within the Bloomsbury Conservation area. The immediate area is of a mixed character, primarily comprising housing and offices, with some warehouse and commercial buildings along Pakenham Street. To the east of the site is a nine storey hotel (the Crowne Plaza), which dominates the street scene due to its scale and height, together with its strong red brick colour and post-modern detailing. To the west is a group of three storey Grade II listed Georgian houses, while to the immediate north is a nursery/children's play centre. Further north lies King's Cross, an area with mixed a townscape of large blocks and some uniform terraced streets.



**Existing view from the corner of Calthorpe Street and Phoenix Place**  
 (Left to right: Nos. 45-49 Calthorpe Street, the proposed site and the 9-storey Crowne Plaza hotel)



**View from the Mount Pleasant Sorting Office showing the dominance of the hotel**

Directly opposite the site is the Royal Mail's Mount Pleasant Sorting Office site, which, together with the adjacent Phoenix Place site, is scheduled for a comprehensive redevelopment programme. On 30 March 2015, the Mayor of London granted planning permission for a mixed use scheme on these

sites, consisting of 681 residential units, 4,260 m<sup>2</sup> of office space and 2,250 m<sup>2</sup> of retail and community space, in buildings of up to 15 storeys. The buildings facing Calthorpe Street will step up from four storeys at the junction of Phoenix Place to eight storeys at the junction of Farringdon Road (each excluding the basement). The building immediately opposite 51 Calthorpe Street will be six storeys high (excluding the basement)



**Aerial photograph of the site, fronting Calthorpe Street**

## B. Historical Context

The following description is an extract from the Heritage Statement prepared by Andrew Derrick of the Architectural History Practice.

*“The property now known as 51 Calthorpe Street was originally built as a school of the British and Foreign School Society (BFSS). The precise date of construction is not certain... In 1980 51 Calthorpe Street underwent major internal alterations, from plans prepared by Duffy Eley Giffone Worthington Architects... These alterations appear to have involved the gutting of much of the internal structure, although the outer walls, roof structures and staircases were retained.*

*The front elevation is a design of some architectural sophistication, suggesting the hand of an architect. While this research has not produced a definitive attribution, a tentative one may be made on stylistic and circumstantial grounds to the London practice of Roumieu & Gough, in partnership from 1836-48. They designed a number of schools, including those at Paradise Street in St Pancras (1842; neo-Tudor)... [and] were responsible for the idiosyncratic design of Milner Square in Islington, built about the same time as the Calthorpe School (in 1840-43) and sharing with it features such as*

*subtly modulated surfaces, widespread use of recessed pilasters and the combined use of round and flat arches...*

*The flank and rear elevations are much plainer in character. There is a disused side entrance on the east elevation with a panelled door, over which is a cornice supported by scrolled brackets... The rear ranges are clad in stock brick, with areas of rebuilding. There are large double-height horned sash windows to the first floor ... and on the west side wide ... sash windows at basement level with cambered brick arches (in part replaced with concrete lintels)...*

*The building is of historical interest as a former school, built towards the middle of the nineteenth century for the British and Foreign School Society, providing a cheap education for the children of the poor at a time when free universal education was not available. From the late nineteenth century it served a quasi-military use as a drill hall, and more recently it has been used as workshops by a number of small businesses."*



**Milner Square** (Roumieu & Gough)

## 2. Planning History

On 10 August 2017, Camden's Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission for a redevelopment of the Site. The approved scheme would involve a change of use from offices to residential (involving 13 flats). The principal differences between the approved scheme and the current scheme are:

- In place of the residential accommodation, in the basement, lower ground floor and most of the ground floor, offices will be provided.
- An existing structure in the north-east corner, which would be demolished under the approved scheme, will be retained (although the current pitched roof of the structure will be replaced by a flat roof). This structure, believed to date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, provides part of the existing office space and will continue to do so under the proposed scheme.
- The ground floor flat (Flat 1 in the proposed scheme) will be slightly smaller than in the case of the approved scheme, although under both schemes it will be a two bedroom flat.
- Residential cycle storage is provided at ground floor level in the proposed scheme, rather than in the basement. Cycle storage for the offices will be provided by means of a cycle lift, as discussed further below.

- Air source heat pumps will be used to heat and cool the office accommodation, and individual gas boilers will be used for the residential units, in place of the CHP plant in the approved scheme.

### 3. The Proposed Scheme

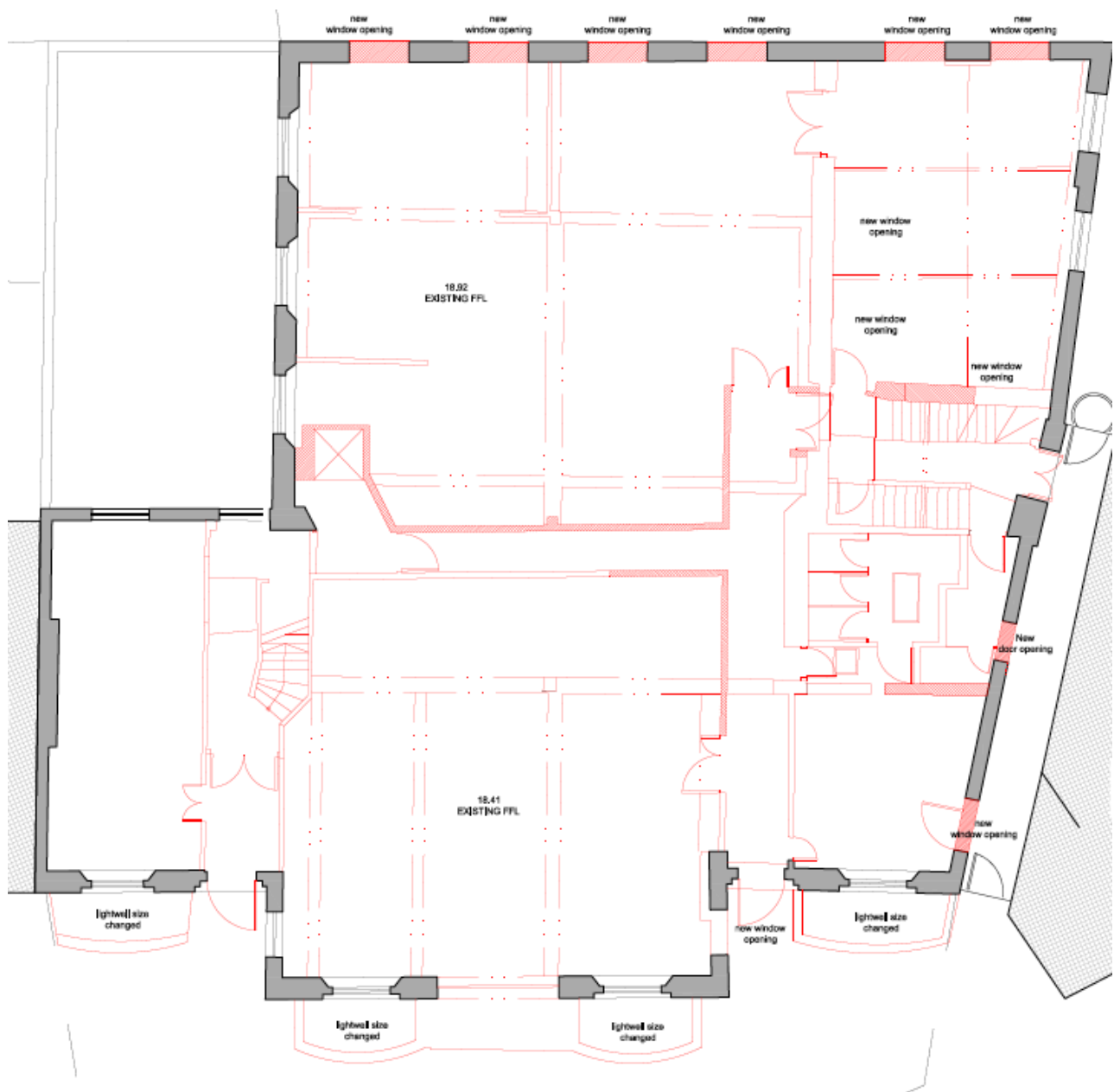
#### A. Conversion Concept



**CGI of the scheme  
Showing view from the street**

The conversion will retain virtually all the historic fabric of the building. The façade and the other external walls of the building will be retained and only a late twentieth century extension (in the north-west corner of the site) will be removed. At the same time, any elements added in the conversion, although responding to the architectural character of the existing building, will be visually distinct. The original building will therefore be able to be readily identified.

None of the internal fabric of the building is original and so the internal walls and floors will be demolished to enable a new internal configuration to occur. This will allow the development to maximise the internal space while achieving the required floor to ceiling heights and the most efficient flat layouts.



**Example of Demolition Plan - Ground Floor**

As in the case of the approved scheme, at the front of the building, a single mansard storey, clad at the front with slate and at the rear and sides in zinc, will be added to complement the detailing of the existing building and the adjacent terrace. The top of the mansard will be level with the roof line of the adjacent terrace and set back, behind the parapet and decorative banding of the existing building, from the building line of the terrace. This will enable the original form and proportions of the building to be appreciated and preserve its strong horizontal emphasis. At the same time, the building's presence against the adjoining hotel will be improved.



**CGI of the scheme  
Showing side view from the street**

The semi-industrial type fencing in front of the building will be replaced with a low-level brick garden wall to match the adjacent residential properties, with brick pillars, a black painted metal railing and gates.

At the rear of the building, an additional floor, together with a flat roof, will be added (the top of the roof being aligned with the top of the rear gable, which will be retained). The extension (which is also identical to that of the approved scheme) will therefore be subordinate to the original building, while enabling the latter to be readily identified. The separation between the front and the rear parts of the building that is reflected in the design of the original building will also be preserved. Windows will be inserted into the rear elevation to increase the natural light available.

At the back of the building, the lowest floor is currently at ground floor level (i.e. it is on the same level as the adjacent playground), as the terrain slopes downwards from front to back. Beneath this floor, a basement will be excavated to provide additional office accommodation. Extensive ground investigations were undertaken in connection with the approved scheme and a top-down construction method proposed to protect the neighbouring buildings. This was independently audited by Campbell Reith, who confirmed that the excavation will not harm these buildings. The same construction method will be used in connection with the proposed scheme and so there will be no change to the damage calculations, which fall within Category 1 (very slight) on the Burland scale..



**CGI of the scheme  
Showing view of the rear elevation**

The development will enhance the relationship that the building has with the listed terrace to the west and respond sympathetically to the surrounding conservation area. The building has no architectural relationship with the hotel to the east and, due to the hotel's height and bulk, together with its post-modern styling, it would not be feasible to create one. The proposed extension will, however, give the building more presence against the hotel and reduce the latter's dominance of the street scene. Together with the improvements to the forecourt and the repairs that will be made to the façade of the building, the overall result will be to enhance the amenity of the surrounding area significantly.



**CGI of the scheme**  
**Showing view of the side elevation**

## **B. Residential Units**

The proposed development comprises 8 new residential dwellings in a range of unit sizes. The proposed mix is of 2 one-bedroom, 5 two-bedroom (including the mezzanine floor) and 1 three-bedroom flats. Policy H7 in Camden's Local Plan (Large and Small Homes) gives two and three-bedroom market housing a high priority and so this is consistent with the policy.

All the units will be well lit and have access to natural daylight and ventilation. They will all exceed the minimum standards set out in The Mayor's London Plan and the Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (2016), in terms of overall floor area as well as internal room sizes.

## Schedule of areas for the residential units

| UNIT                | TYPE                | HABITABLE ROOMS | PERSONS   | GIA [square m] | GIA [square ft.] | BIKES     | REFUSE m3  |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|------------------|-----------|------------|
| <u>Basement</u>     | -                   | -               | -         | -              | -                | -         | -          |
| <u>Lower Ground</u> | -                   | -               | -         | -              | -                | -         | -          |
| <u>Ground Floor</u> |                     |                 |           |                |                  |           |            |
| 1                   | 2 bed               | 3               | 4         | 70.0           | 753              | 2         | 0.4        |
| <u>First Floor</u>  |                     |                 |           |                |                  |           |            |
| 2                   | 1 bed+<br>Mezzanine | 2               | 2         | 91.0           | 980              | 2         | 0.2        |
| 3                   | 1 bed+<br>Mezzanine | 2               | 2         | 95.0           | 1023             | 2         | 0.2        |
| 4                   | 2 bed+<br>Mezzanine | 3               | 4         | 100.0          | 1076             | 2         | 0.4        |
| 5                   | 2bed                | 3               | 4         | 76.0           | 818              | 2         | 0.4        |
| <u>Second Floor</u> |                     |                 |           |                |                  |           |            |
| 6                   | 1bed                | 2               | 2         | 52.0           | 560              | 1         | 0.2        |
| 7                   | 1bed                | 2               | 2         | 63.0           | 678              | 1         | 0.2        |
| <u>Third Floor</u>  |                     |                 |           |                |                  |           |            |
| 8                   | 3 bed               | 4               | 6         | 137.0          | 1475             | 2         | 0.6        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        |                     | <b>21</b>       | <b>26</b> | <b>684</b>     | <b>7363</b>      | <b>14</b> | <b>2.6</b> |

## C. Office Accommodation

The building currently provides 870m<sup>2</sup> of office accommodation (NIA). Due to a more efficient layout and the construction of a basement, it will provide 977.9m<sup>2</sup> of accommodation (NIA). The quality of the accommodation will also be greatly improved, with showers, more toilets and additional storage space.

Schedule of areas for the office accommodation

| <div> <div>schedule of areas</div> <div>brooks murray</div> </div>   |                |         |                |                  |       |           |
|--|----------------|---------|----------------|------------------|-------|-----------|
| <div> <div>JOB NO. 939M</div> <div>DATE 01.01.2018</div> <div>ISSUE 002</div> <div>SUBJECT 51 Calthorpe Street, London WC1X 0HH</div> </div> |                |         |                |                  |       |           |
| FLOOR  | Unit           | PERSONS | NIA (square m) | NIA (square ft.) | BIKES | REFUSE m3 |
| BASEMENT   |                |         |                |                  |       |           |
| 493 m2   | Office Space   | -       | 305.0          | 3282.99          | 3.7   |           |
|  | Meeting Room 1 | -       | 33.0           | 355.21           |       |           |
|  | Meeting Room 2 | -       | 54.7           | 588.79           |       |           |
|  | Meeting Room 3 | -       | 20.9           | 224.97           |       |           |
|  | WCs            | -       | 28.9           | 311.08           |       |           |
| LOWER GF   |                |         |                |                  |       |           |
| 426 m2   | Office Space   | -       | 350.0          | 3767.37          | 3.8   |           |
|  | Meeting Room 1 | -       | 24.0           | 258.33           |       |           |
|  | Meeting Room 2 | -       | 15.0           | 161.46           |       |           |
|  | WC's           | -       | 14.0           | 150.69           |       |           |
| GROUND   |                |         |                |                  |       |           |
| 234 m2   | Office Space   | -       | 171.0          | 1840.63          | 1.8   |           |
|  | Meeting Space  | -       | 20.4           | 219.58           |       |           |
|  | Reception      | -       | 27.5           | 296.01           |       |           |
| TOTAL GIA 1068 m2  |                |         |                |                  |       |           |
|  |                | -       | 1064.4         | 11457.1          | 9.3   |           |

As in the case of the approved scheme, the light wells at the front of the building will incorporate a bespoke solution called Mirror Shaft. This allows light and colour into the office accommodation in the basement but does not show anything other than a shadow from any objects above.

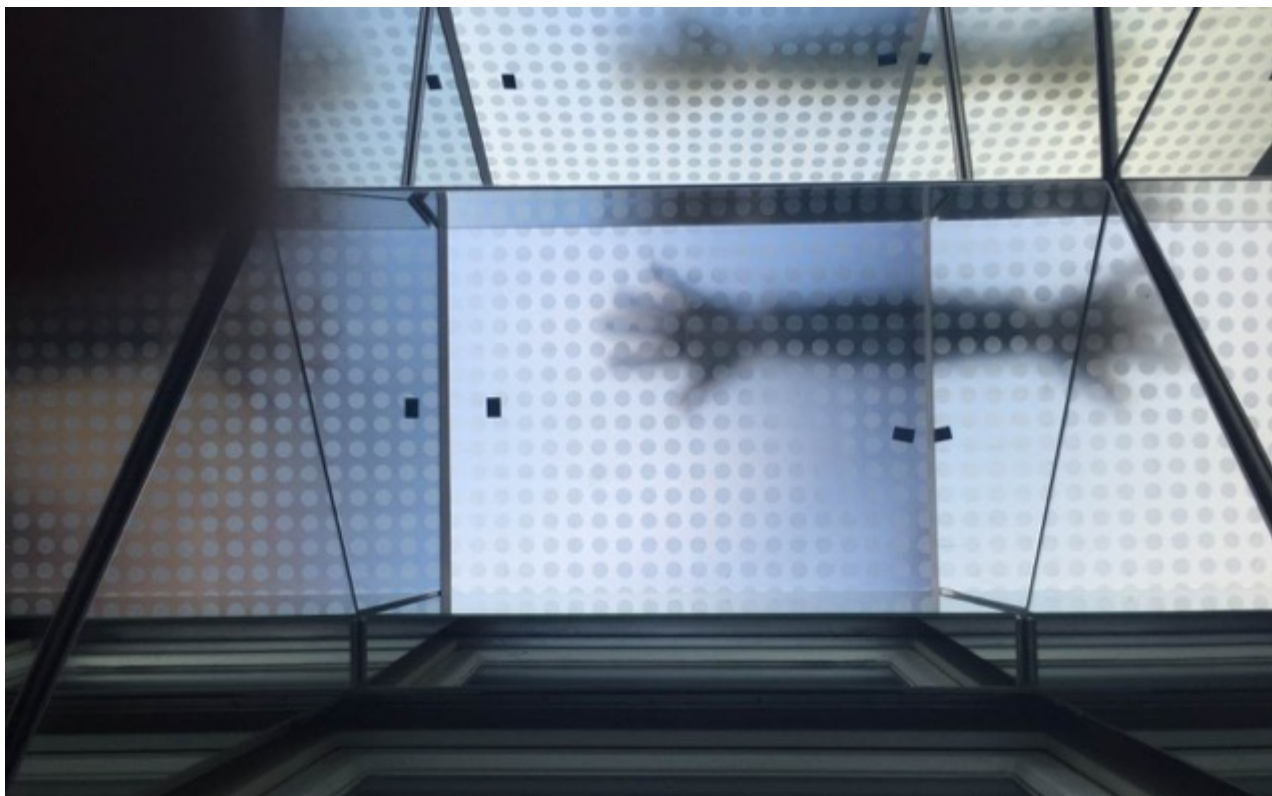


Image of Mirror Shaft technology with obscured glazing panel and objects in front.



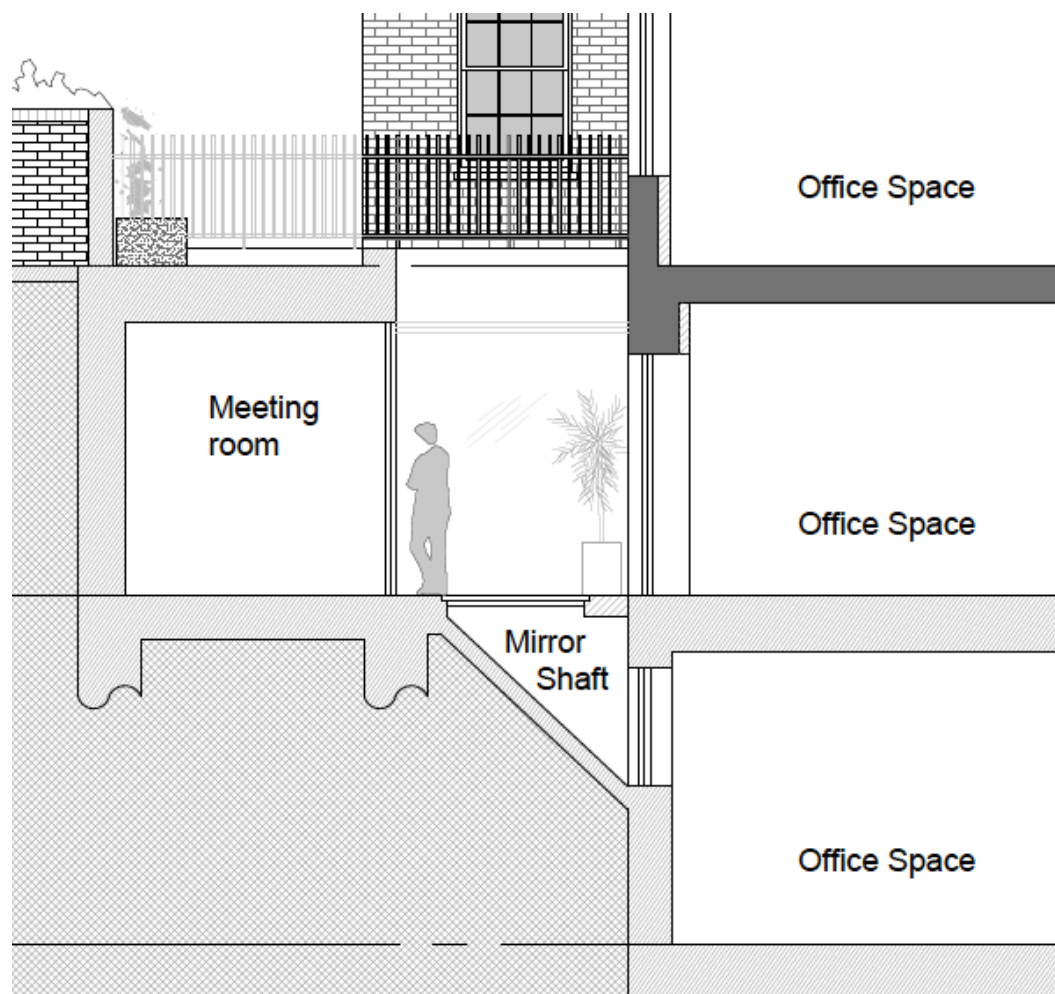


**Before Mirror Shaft – standard light well**



**After Mirror Shaft**





**Mirror Shaft solution - section of proposed development**

## D. Access

Access to the building will be directly from Calthorpe Street via a communal, landscaped forecourt. Flat 1 will have its own private entrance door and will be accessed directly from the forecourt through an existing opening to the left of the main residential entrance. Access to all other residential units will be via the main, centrally located, entrance and then off the main circulation space within the building. All residential units will provide self-contained accommodation. The office accommodation will have a separate entrance, also accessed from the front forecourt. There is a fire escape access to the side, which will be retained.

## E. Privacy and Overlooking

There are no concerns relating to privacy or overlooking at the front of the building as the site faces a public highway. Similarly, at the rear, the nearest building (the nursery/play centre) is more than the required 18 metres away (in fact it is over 40 metres away). To the west, none of the rooms of the houses directly facing the building above the level of the building's ground floor are habitable. There is one kitchen that directly faces the building's ground floor windows but these windows will serve offices, as at present. At first floor level, there are oblique views into that kitchen but this issue can be addressed by obscure glazing to the two windows that directly face the Pakenham Street houses. At second floor level, the view is obstructed by the parapet wall of the existing building, which mitigates any overlooking that would otherwise exist.

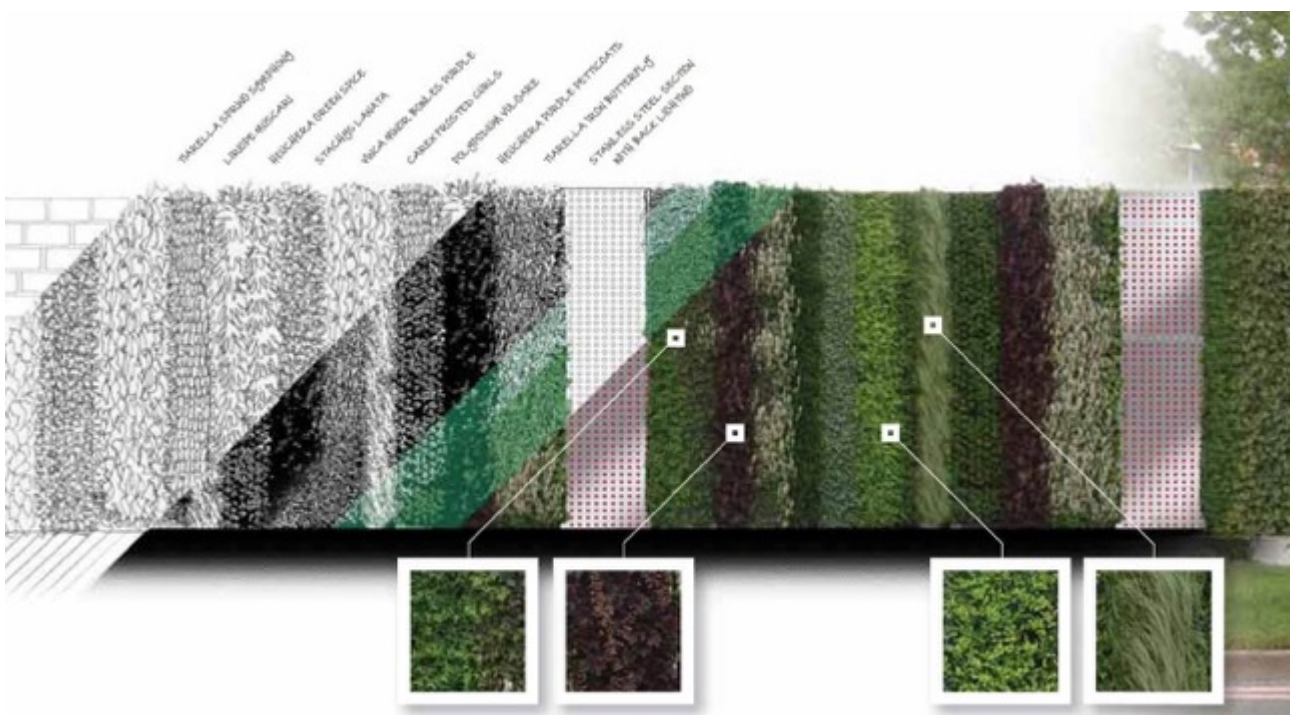
To the east of the building, the hotel has two rows of windows facing the building. One of these looks onto a stairwell and the other to a series of hotel rooms. To protect the privacy of future occupants of both the building and the hotel, a panel with obscure glazing will be constructed at the end of the garden of Flat 5. There will be a privacy screen between the gardens of Flats 4 and 5, which will also prevent any overlooking to or from the hotel.

## F. Environmental Improvements

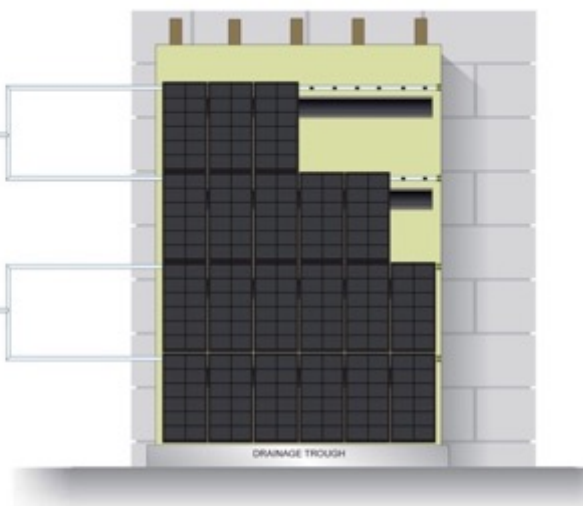
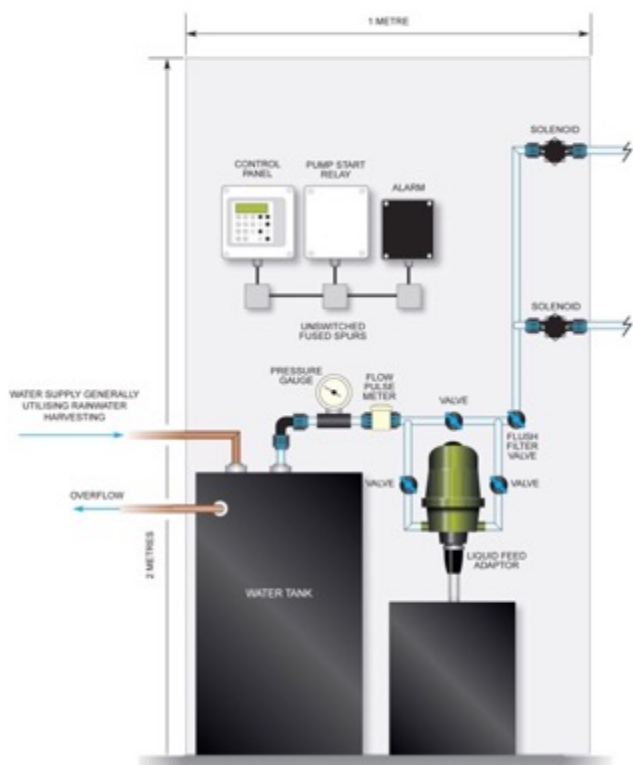
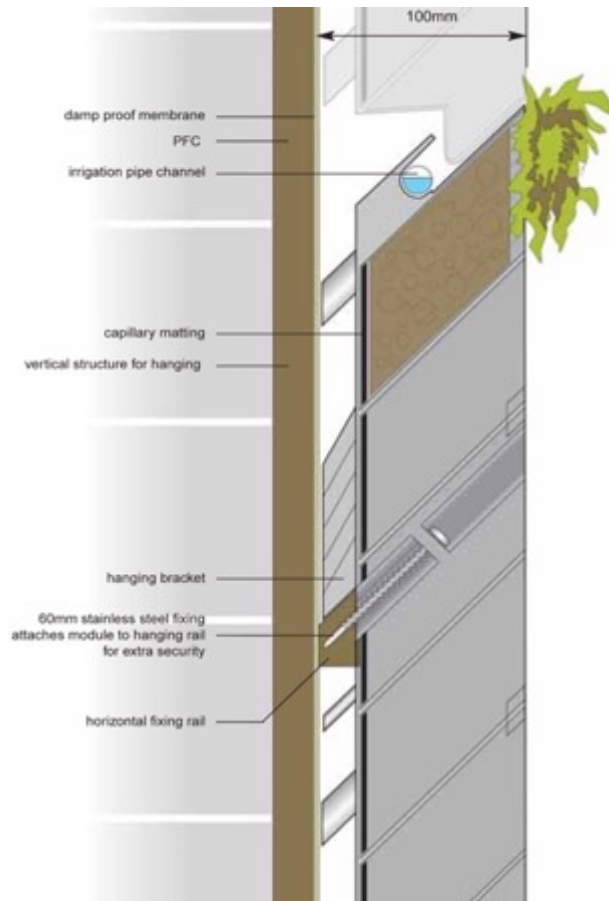


One of the notable features of the new design is a green wall. This will improve the appearance of the retaining brick structure at the rear of the building, create a garden within the building's urban setting and improve air quality and noise insulation.

The benefits of a green wall are that it can be maintained easily and needs only a small water tank and pump system to ensure that it is at its best all year round. This design solution provides an opportunity to promote ecological diversity and green space in an otherwise built up area of central London.



## Example of green wall design



The approved scheme incorporated a CHP plant beneath the forecourt. Under the proposed scheme, the residential units will have individual gas-powered boilers and the office space will be heated and cooled by air source heat pumps. This is considered to represent an improvement on the approved scheme as:

- The offices require air conditioning and the same plant can be used for heating purposes, avoiding the need for gas boilers
- By using a renewable energy source, the carbon footprint of the building will be reduced
- The NOx emissions for the building will be reduced
- The emissions generated by the gas boilers will be discharged at a high level, rather than at street level

## G. Living Conditions

### Daylight, sunlight and outlook

Generous fenestration and the design of the layouts ensure that each flat will benefit from multiple views. The most significant factor affecting daylight and sunlight levels is the adjacent nine storey hotel. The windows on the eastern side of the building, facing the hotel, are large and centrally located on the walls of the rooms to maximise their efficiency. The rooms in the development have been tested to confirm that daylight levels are satisfactory and meet the current guidelines.

As noted above, the surrounding land slopes downwards towards the back of the building. The floor which is marked as the lower ground floor on the plans is therefore at ground floor level at the back of the building. As with the approved scheme, new windows at the back will introduce additional light at that level. The mirror shaft solution discussed above can also be used to draw light from those windows into the office space in the floor below.

### Impact of the extension on adjacent residents

At both the front and the rear of the building, the change in sky view angle enjoyed by the occupants of any facing buildings will be minimal. Any change will have only a minimal impact on daylight levels and will therefore not adversely affect the adjacent residents.

### Noise and air quality

Reports prepared for this application show that levels of noise and air quality are such that the site is deemed suitable for residential use.

## H. Waste Storage

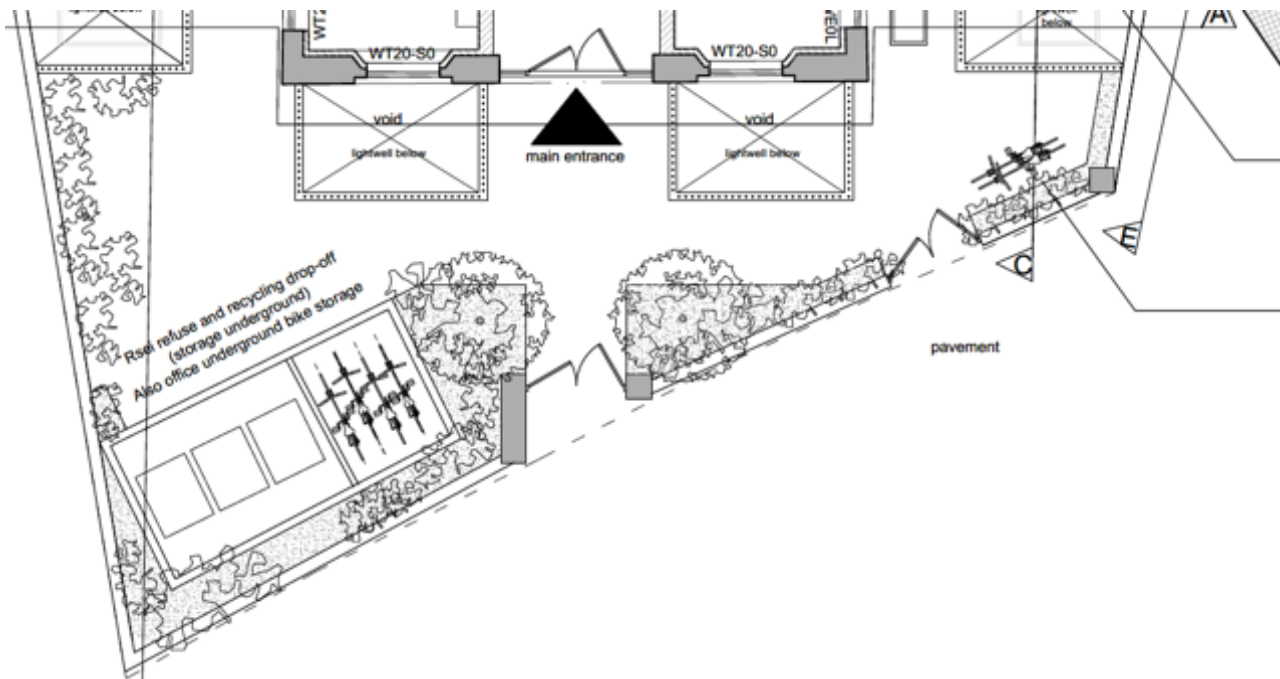
The residential waste storage requirements have been calculated in line with Camden's policy for residential dwellings of seven or more, as shown in the table in paragraph B above.

To reduce the visual impact of the waste storage facilities, a buried system with a hydraulic lifting mechanism will be adopted. Standard Eurobins will be placed below much smaller receptacles, which protrude above ground. When waste collectors attend the site, they raise the plate and the bins are wheeled to the refuse truck in the usual way. For the residential waste, provision has been made for 2 x 1280 Eurobins (one dedicated to recycling). A further 1280 Eurobin will be dedicated to office waste – daily collections are anticipated for this. There will also be provision for the storage of office waste within the building pending its collection from the site.



**Example of concealed storage on a hydraulic lifting mechanism**

The bins will be located in the front forecourt and will be surrounded by landscaping to reduce the visual impact of the facilities further.



**Location of bins in the forecourt**

## I. Security

The main entrance will be secured via fob entry. The private entrances to the new units will be specified to meet the criteria in the Secured by Design New Homes 2014 guide and will be discussed further with a crime prevention officer at the construction stage if required.

## Part 2- Access

### A. Public Transport

The site is located 0.6 miles from Russell Square Underground Station, 0.6 miles from Farringdon Station and 0.6 miles from Kings Cross/St Pancras Station. There are numerous bus routes going from Gray's Inn Road, which is within 100 metres of the building. All buses provide a service for wheelchair users. The site is therefore very well connected in terms of reliable and flexible transport.

### B. Vehicular Access

No parking spaces will be provided with the flats and the development will be car-free. However the site sits within an accessibility corridor and has excellent transport links. As mentioned above, there are a number of train stations, bus stops and underground stations within 10 minutes of the site.

### C. Bicycle Storage

Cycle storage for the flats will be at ground floor level, with access off the main corridor. A "Josta" two-tier cycle parking system will be installed in accordance with Camden Planning Guidance CPG 7. The floor to ceiling height exceeds 2700mm and so the stands can be placed 400 mm apart. There will be 2500 mm clearance in front of the stands, which complies with the guidance in CPG 7.

Cycle storage for the office accommodation will be beneath the front forecourt, but accessible from the forecourt itself. An underground storage system, similar to the system for the storage of waste (see Section H above) will be used for this purpose. There will be two tiers of bicycle racks on a plinth attached to a hydraulic lifting system. On the press of a button, the plinth will be raised to the appropriate level, enabling a bicycle to be inserted or removed. The plinth will then be lowered back to its original position. The bicycles can be locked into the bicycle racks but, in addition, the button that raises or lowers the plinth will be fitted with a security device so that only authorised personnel may use it. The lifting system will be independent from the lifting system used for the waste receptacles to ensure separate access.