

18 - 23 Hand Court | High Holborn Estate | London

SRG Holborn Ltd | Buckley Gray Yeoman
Design and Access Statement

BuckleyGrayYeoman

26th September 2018

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1.0 Introduction

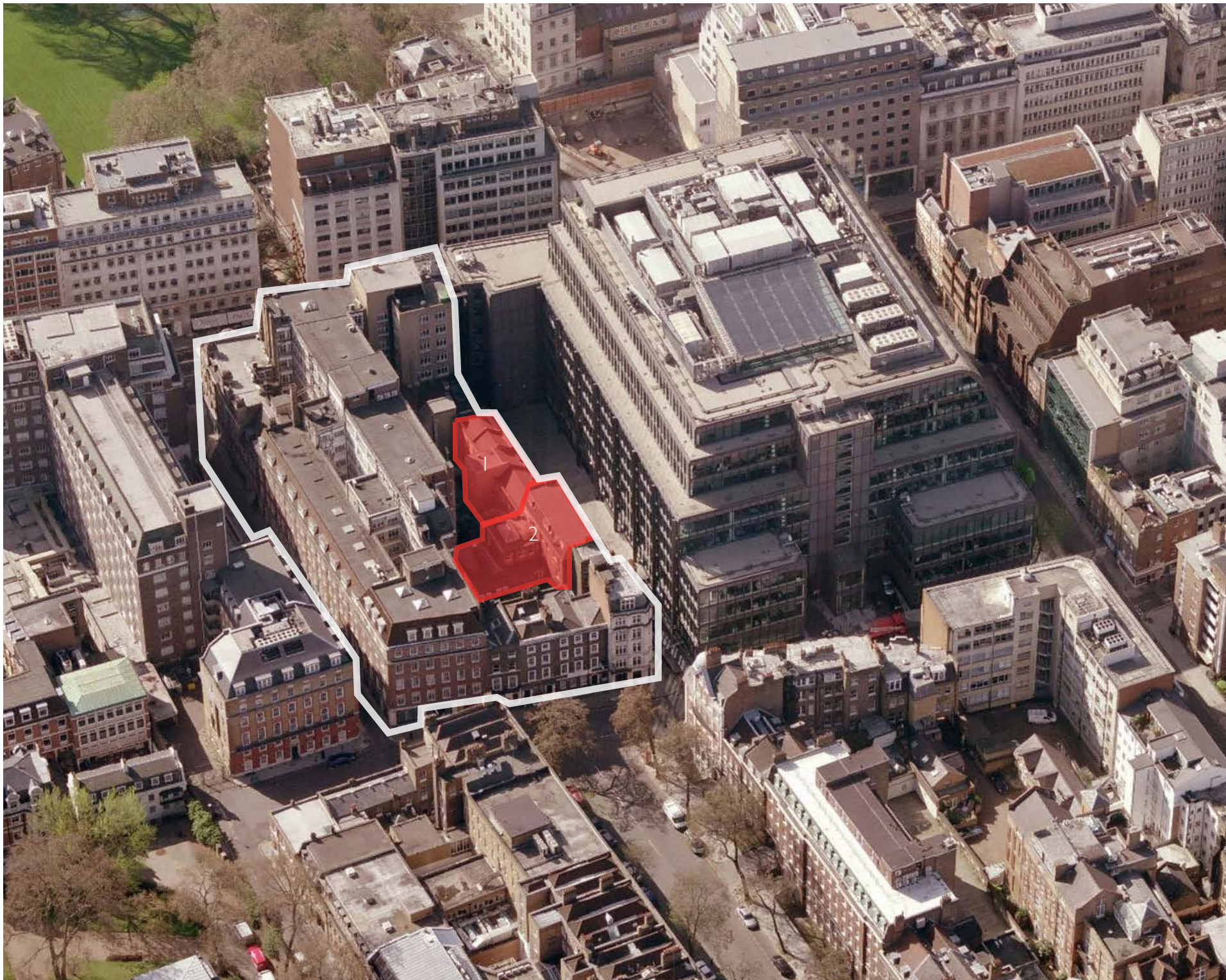
1.1 Purpose of Report

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by BuckleyGrayYeoman on behalf of SRG Holborn Ltd in support of the redevelopment proposals for the High Holborn Estate (HHE), London.

The individual works proposed relate to the following HHE buildings:

1. 18-21 Hand Court
The proposal for 18-21 Hand Court seeks to replace the existing 3 storey office building with a new modern office building over ground, basement plus 4 upper levels.
2. 22-23 Hand Court
The proposal for 22-23 Hand Court seeks to change the existing use from office (B1) to retail (A1/A3) at ground and basement level only, in addition to some modifications to the front elevation along Hand Court to improve the frontage for retail and provide independent access for the existing first floor office unit.

Together the proposals seek to re-activate the underused pedestrian through route that is Hand Court. To this end, the development team have worked alongside Camden's planning team extensively over the course of the pre-application period. Several Pre-App meetings and 2 Design Review Panels have helped to refine the current proposal. The development team therefore consider this process has resulted in a high quality development that justifies the redevelopment of the existing poor quality building fabric along Hand Court.



High Holborn Estate - Existing Site Photo

1. 18-21 Hand Court
2. 22-23 Hand Court

1.2 Project Team

BuckleyGrayYeoman



exigere



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1.3 Planning History in Brief



Previous proposal granted permission, not implemented and with consent now expired.

There have been several planning and listed building applications dating back to 2007 which have not been implemented but have set the boundaries as to what may be acceptable in relation to:

- Uses
- Height & massing of buildings
- Acceptable impact on the Conservation Area

The proposals take into account the planning history and respond to the current site criteria.

The following text is prepared by DP9:

The site has an extensive planning history associated with proposals for comprehensive redevelopment dating back to 2007 when two schemes were dismissed at appeal. Although the appeal schemes were dismissed, they set the boundaries as to what would be acceptable in planning terms, mainly in relation to uses, height and massing of buildings, buildings which were of significance in heritage terms and the acceptable impact on the Conservation Area. The appeal schemes resulted in a successful planning permission for a comprehensive office-led development being granted in July 2009. That application was subject to minor material amendments which were approved in October 2011 (reference: 2010/5725/P).

Planning permission was sought in 2012 for the renewal of planning permission granted in July 2009. The application was the subject of a resolution to grant planning permission in February 2013, but the applicant decided not to complete the S106 Agreement and therefore the planning application was formally withdrawn.

More recently, planning permission and listed building consent was granted for the change of use at 46, 47, 47a & 48 Bedford Row from office to residential to provide 5 units and the demolition of rear extensions.

The development team worked with Camden's planning team in the evolution of the scheme through a pre-planning assessment. The design has developed over the course of a series of Pre-Application meetings and Design Review Panels that are summarised as follows:

Pre-application meeting #1: 08th July 2016

This meeting discussed the site wide scheme which at that time included Brownlow House, High Holborn House, 46-48 Bedford Row and 45 Bedford Row. Following this pre-application meeting the delivery strategy was amended to separate the site into phases.

Camden advised the mix of uses on the site is welcomed in principle, however further justification was required for any loss of office space.

Pre-application meeting #2: 02nd February 2017

DP9 & BGY attended a meeting with officers on site. The discussion centred around the design principles on height, scale, massing and land uses. The response from officers was in general very positive.

Site Visit: 03rd March 2017

DP9, BGY & KM Heritage attended a site visit with officers to review the investigative works required in the listed buildings 46-48 Bedford Row.

Pre-application meeting #3: 09th June 2017

DP9, BGY & KMH attended a meeting with officers at Camden to review the proposals at 18-21 Hand Court in further detail. Officers felt that the increased building height was harmful to the Conservation Area and preferred the original red brick proposal, citing that there was no precedent for a grey brick in the area.

Pre-application meeting #4: 01st August 2017

DP9, BGY & KM Heritage attended a meeting with officers at Camden. Officers were encouraged by the architectural development of 18-21 Hand Court but remained concerned about the height and scale.

1.4 Summary of Pre-App Discussions to Date



Pre-App 1



Pre-App 2



Pre-App 2



Pre-App 4

1.4 Summary of Pre-App Discussions to Date

Design Review Panel #1: 04th August 2017

DP9 & BGY presented the design of 18-21 Hand Court. It was agreed that the development of the site has potential to be of benefit to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and Hand Court. However, the panel felt that the proposed height was too tall for the pedestrian thoroughfare and recommended a reduction of 3 storeys. It was also felt the north facade was lacking enough architectural detail to justify the intrusion to the long views from Bedford Row.

Pre-application meeting #5: 29th May 2018

BGY & DP9 attended a meeting with officers at Camden. The Council's comments are noted as below:

- Officers were supportive of the revised height and massing of 18-21 Hand Court.
- Officers questioned whether further detail could be added to the bays of 18-21 Hand Court to emphasise depth and framing at this level.
- Officers asked whether a feature could be made of the corner of 18-21 Hand Court that protrudes into the walkway.
- Officers asked to readdress solid to void ratio of facade.
- Officers asked to test alternative materials for 18-21 Hand Court.

Design Review Panel #2: 06th July 2018

- BGY & DP9 presented a further iteration of the design for 18-21 Hand Court to Camden's Design Review Panel. The panel were supportive of the design concept for the site but felt that the detail of the elevations required more work in the following areas:
 - Lack of cornice line.
 - Choice of material, the building should be predominantly brick OR stone.
 - Fenestration proportions.
 - Facade articulation/depth of reveals.
 - The panel supported the reduced massing and scale as proposed.
 - Reconsider revolving door to office entrance.

Pre-application meeting #6: 10th August 2018

BGY & DP9 had a meeting with the Design and Case Officer at Camden.

Officers were supportive of the design direction and suggested the following design input:

- Introduce a pronounced horizontal band along the ground/first floor spandrel.
- Give more weight to granite feet to base of piers.
- Consider introducing metal framing to upper floor windows.

It was noted that detailed drawings would be required to accompany the planning application, and a bay study model with samples recommended for committee.



DRP 1



Pre-App 5



DRP 2



Pre-App 6

1.5 Public relations Summary

The full report from Four, including appendices, has been submitted alongside this report.

The following text has been provided by Four Communications.

Executive summary

Four Communications, a specialist community engagement agency, was appointed to undertake consultation and engagement activities in support of the proposals for 18-21 and 22-23 Hand Court. The brief was to inform key stakeholders and neighbours about the proposals, answer any questions, and receive feedback. This was felt to be the appropriate level of consultation given the scale of the development. In summary, consultation activity for this site has consisted of:

- A stakeholder audit was undertaken to gain an understanding of key political and community stakeholders in the area.
- Stakeholder letters were sent to ward councillors and key local groups, offering one-to-one briefings.
- Letters to neighbours were sent to c.200 properties in the area immediately around the site.
- Stakeholder and resident enquiries were responded to in a timely manner.

Introduction

Consultation activities for this application were undertaken by Four Communications on behalf of SRG Holborn Ltd (the Applicant). All activities were carried out in conjunction with the Applicant's project team and parallel to their pre-application engagement with the London Borough of Camden. Formal consultation and engagement started in April 2018. After this time, a number of communication methods were used to inform stakeholders and neighbours about the development of the proposals. Details of this consultation activity are set out below.

Consultation activity and outcomes

Stakeholder audit

At the outset of the project Four Communications undertook a detailed audit of the key politicians and active local community groups and organisations in the local area to inform their stakeholder engagement. The political and community stakeholders who were contacted about the application are as follows:

- Cllr Julian Fulbrook, ward councillor for Holborn & Covent Garden
- Cllr Awale Olad, ward councillor for Holborn & Covent Garden
- Cllr Sue Vincent, ward councillor for Holborn & Covent Garden
- Bloomsbury Association
- Bloomsbury Conservation Area Advisory Committee (BCAAC)

Stakeholder letters

Formal letters were issued to all the stakeholders identified in the audit by Royal Mail and by email. These letters contained details about the proposals and made the offer of a face-to-face briefing. A telephone number and email address was provided for stakeholders to contact Four Communications to arrange a briefing or to ask any questions about the proposals. A copy of the stakeholder letter is included in the Statement of Community Involvement.

Letters to neighbours

A letter was sent by Royal Mail to c.200 residents and businesses in an area around the site. Copies of both the distribution area and the letter to neighbours are included in the Statement of Community Involvement.

These letters explained the proposals and provided a telephone number and project e-mail address, where neighbours were invited to direct their questions and feedback about the proposals.

A small number of people got in touch to request further information about the scheme. All enquiries were managed by Four Communications, who responded to these requests in a timely manner and liaised with the wider project team to provide detailed answers to questions and images where relevant. These conversations were generally positive, with neighbours welcoming the proposed changes.

Conclusion

In bringing forward redevelopment proposals for 18-21 and 22-23 Hand Court, the Applicant has pro-actively sought to engage with elected representatives, neighbouring businesses, residents and local community groups.

Stakeholders and neighbours were informed about the proposals by letter. A small number of conversations were had with neighbours, and the limited feedback received was positive.

The project team is committed to ongoing engagement with local politicians, residents, businesses and groups. The dedicated telephone number and email address will remain in operation should any members of the local community have any questions or concerns.

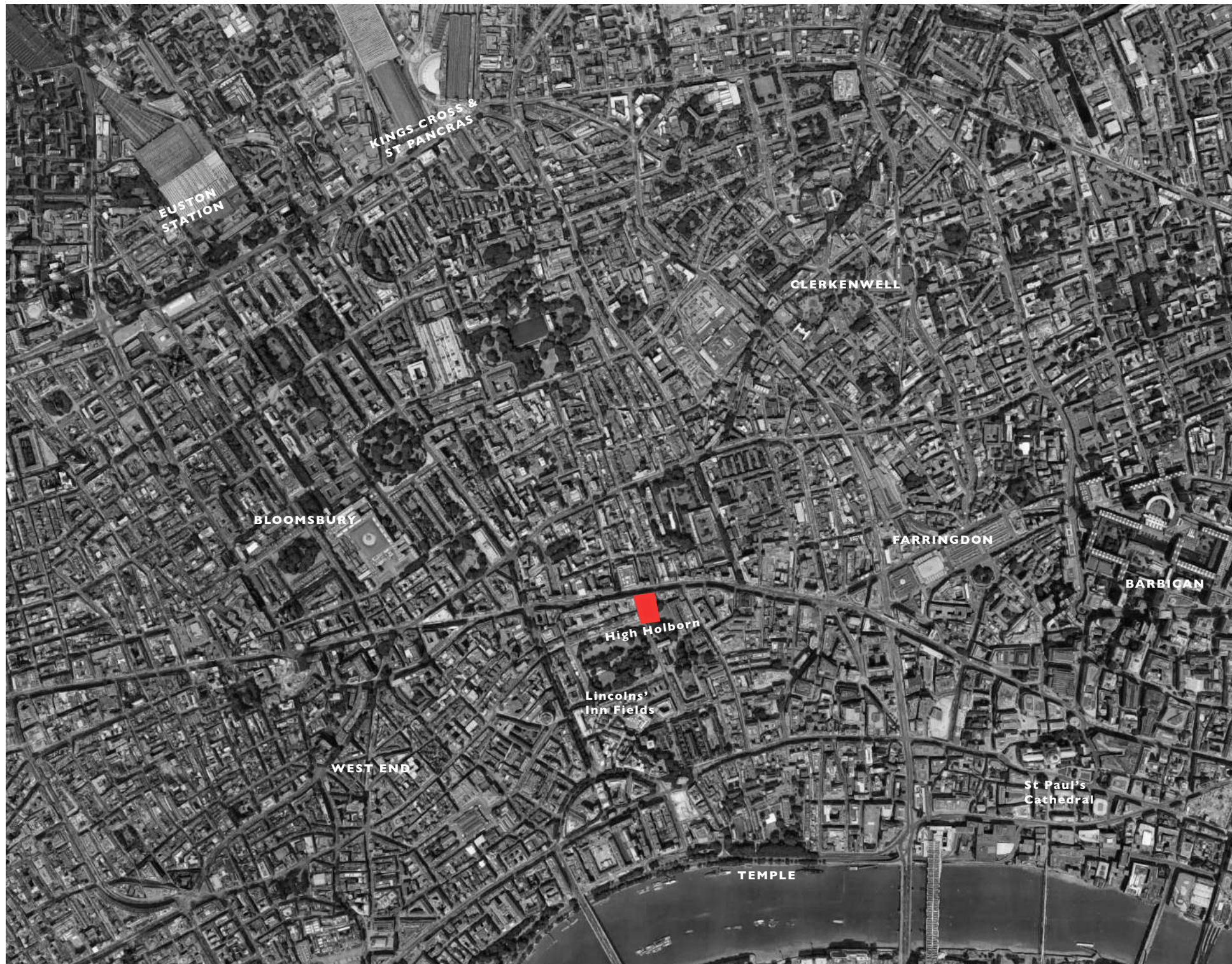
2.0 Site

BuckleyGrayYeoman

2.1 Location Plan

The High Holborn Estate is located in the heart of the city centre, close to the City of London, lively theatre district and nearby local amenities.

The area is distinguished by the retail facilities of Hatton Gardens, Holborn Circus that links High Holborn to the West End retail hub and Holborn Viaduct that links Holborn to the city financial district.



Aerial view showing transport links

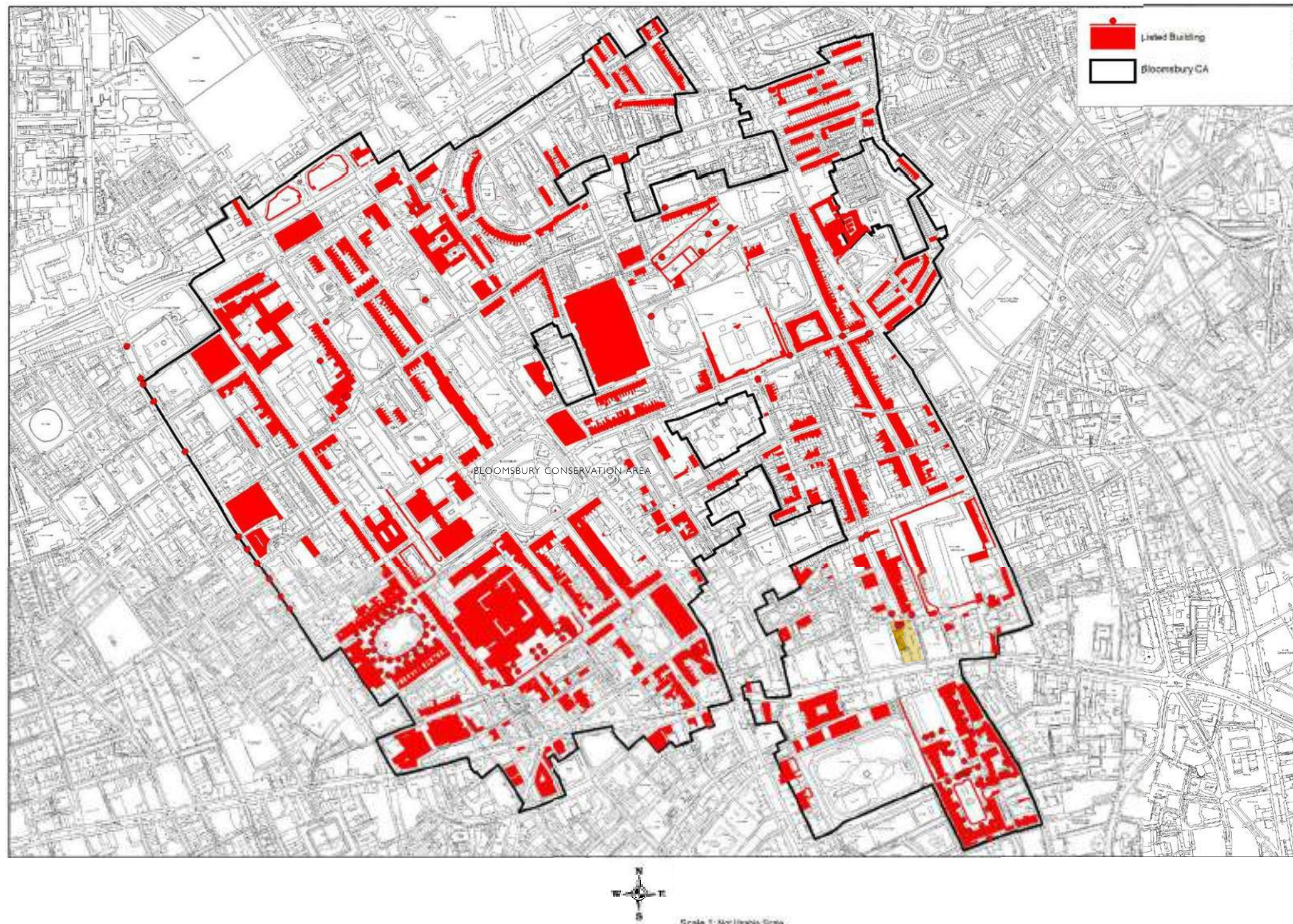
2.2 Conservation Area

The following text is prepared by Heritage & Townscape Consultants KMH, their full report can be found with this submission.

The buildings of the High Holborn Estate are located in Bloomsbury Conservation Area (CA). This CA was first designated in 1968 and subsequently extended. The current Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) was adopted in April 2011.⁴³ Within the Bloomsbury CA there are in excess of 1000 buildings and structures on the statutory list of buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest. Of all listed buildings 4% are Grade II* and 2% Grade I highlighting the historic and architectural significance of the area. A large number of squares are protected under the 1931 London Squares Act and a number of gardens and squares within the area are on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Figure 18 illustrates the location of the Bloomsbury CA within the Borough of Camden.

53 The Bloomsbury CA is large, covering 160 ha, and so is subdivided into smaller areas.

The High Holborn Estate has elements located in both Sub-area 9: Lincoln's Inn Fields/Inns of Court/High Holborn; and Sub-area 10: Great James Street/Bedford Row.



Bloomsbury Conservation Area

- High Holborn Estate (HHE)
- 18-21 and 22-23 Hand Court



2.3 Brief History of Site

The site forms an important city block in this part of the London. Buildings of different ages sit together forming elevations on High Holborn to the South, Hand Court to the West, Bedford Row to the North and Brownlow Street to the East.

The adjacent images show historical views of the site and illustrate the way the streetscape is made up of different architectural styles.

The Bedford Row townhouses terminate an impressive Georgian Street which runs North of the site.

Hand Court has always been a pedestrianised thoroughfare where the Wheatsheaf Tavern once stood. High Holborn and Brownlow Street comprise of more formal elevations made up largely of office buildings.



Clockwise from left: Hand Court street sketch 1886, 46-48 Bedford Row 1956, Hand Court inter-war photograph

The following extract has been prepared by MOLA.

Executive Summary

SRG Holborn Ltd has commissioned MOLA to carry out a historic environment assessment in advance of proposed development at 18–21 Hand Court in the London Borough of Camden. The scheme comprises the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new multi-storey mixed use office and retail building. The existing basement would be enlarged to cover the site’s footprint. The site forms a part of the wider High Holborn Estate development. This report covers issues relating to the redevelopment of the named site only, and not the wider scheme.

This desk-based study assesses the impact on buried heritage assets (archaeological remains). Although above ground heritage assets (historic structures) are not discussed in detail, they have been noted where they assist in the archaeological interpretation of the site. Buried heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals comprise:

- Post-medieval structural remains including those of the former public house on the site in the late-19th century. This may include footings and a possible barrel cellar (high potential), these remains will have likely truncated earlier deposits on the site;
- Roman remains including later agricultural features and possible funerary remains. The site lies on the periphery of the Roman western cemetery. Funerary evidence including cremation urns and an inhumation have been recorded nearby and may extend into the site. In the later Roman period, the extent of the cemetery appears to have shrunk, and was likely given to agricultural land. There is moderate potential for remains such as pits and ditches which would be of medium significance. Remains of burials are considered less likely but would be of high significance.
- Later medieval remains. During this period High Holborn, to the south of the site, was probably developed in a ribbon fashion. There is a low to moderate potential for remains of garden features or possible truncated structural remains. Such remains would be of low significance.

The area around the site was increasingly developed in the later medieval period, as settlement spread towards Westminster, possibly drawn by the growing number of institutions in the Holborn area. The site likely lay in open garden for much of this period, with remains being heavily truncated by later development. There is little evidence in the vicinity of the site to suggest occupation in the prehistoric or early medieval periods.

There is an associated basement level occupying approximately 45% of the site’s footprint. This comprises a main basement along the western extent of the site, and a smaller, deeper basement courtyard in the south-east corner. The building’s basement will have severely truncated any remains within its footprint. The basement courtyard will have entirely removed any remains within its footprint and likely extend to natural gravel. The remainder of the site is considered to have a generally high survival potential for archaeological remains. Impacts from the earlier post-medieval buildings would have removed earlier remains from within their footprints, but are considered to be heritage assets in their own right.

The construction of a new basement across the entire site’s footprint would entirely remove any archaeological remains and possibly extend into natural gravels. There is not anticipated to be any further impact by new piles as any remains would have been removed by the basement level. The demolition and site preparation, including removal of the basement slab would likely truncate any surviving remains in the west of the site; in the east of the site this would likely be contained by modern made ground levels.

Owing to the site’s location within an archaeological priority area and the potential for significant remains, it is likely that the LPA’s archaeological advisor will request further investigation of the site’s archaeological potential be carried out. This could entail an archaeological evaluation, which could comprise trial trenches, to confirm the presence of archaeological remains across the site and would inform the LPA of an appropriate mitigation strategy. It is possible that any such work could be carried out as part of an archaeological condition. An appropriate mitigation strategy might comprise targeted archaeological excavation in advance of construction, and/or a watching brief during ground works for remains of lesser significance. This would ensure that significant archaeological assets are not removed without record. Any archaeological work would be carried out under an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI).

2.4 Archaeology Executive Summary








The full Archaeology Report from Mola has been submitted alongside this report.

2.5 Local Land Use



Aerial view showing transport links

Existing Uses

	18-23 Hand Court
	Educational
	Retail + residential
	Residential
	Commercial (Office/retail)
	Public House
	Diplomatic

2.6 Transport Links

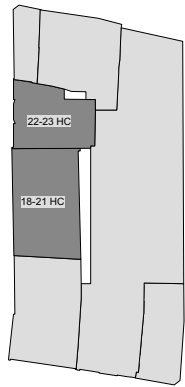
The site also has excellent transport links and achieves a PTAL rating of 6B. Buses and taxis are available on the street and Chancery Lane and Holborn underground stations are just a short walk from the site.

The full transport assessment by Motion has been submitted alongside this report.



Aerial view showing transport links

3.0 Hand Court as Existing



3.1 The Existing Buildings

The uses as existing are listed below:

18-21 HAND COURT

- Existing use: office (B1)
- Basement, ground, level 01 and 02: office

This building no longer meets today's standards for office use. The existing building fails on a number of levels, including:

- Poor circulation
- No DDA facilities
- No lift provision
- Poor street presence
- Disjointed floor arrangement
- Defunct services
- Poor thermal fabric

It is no longer fit for purpose and is ready for replacement.

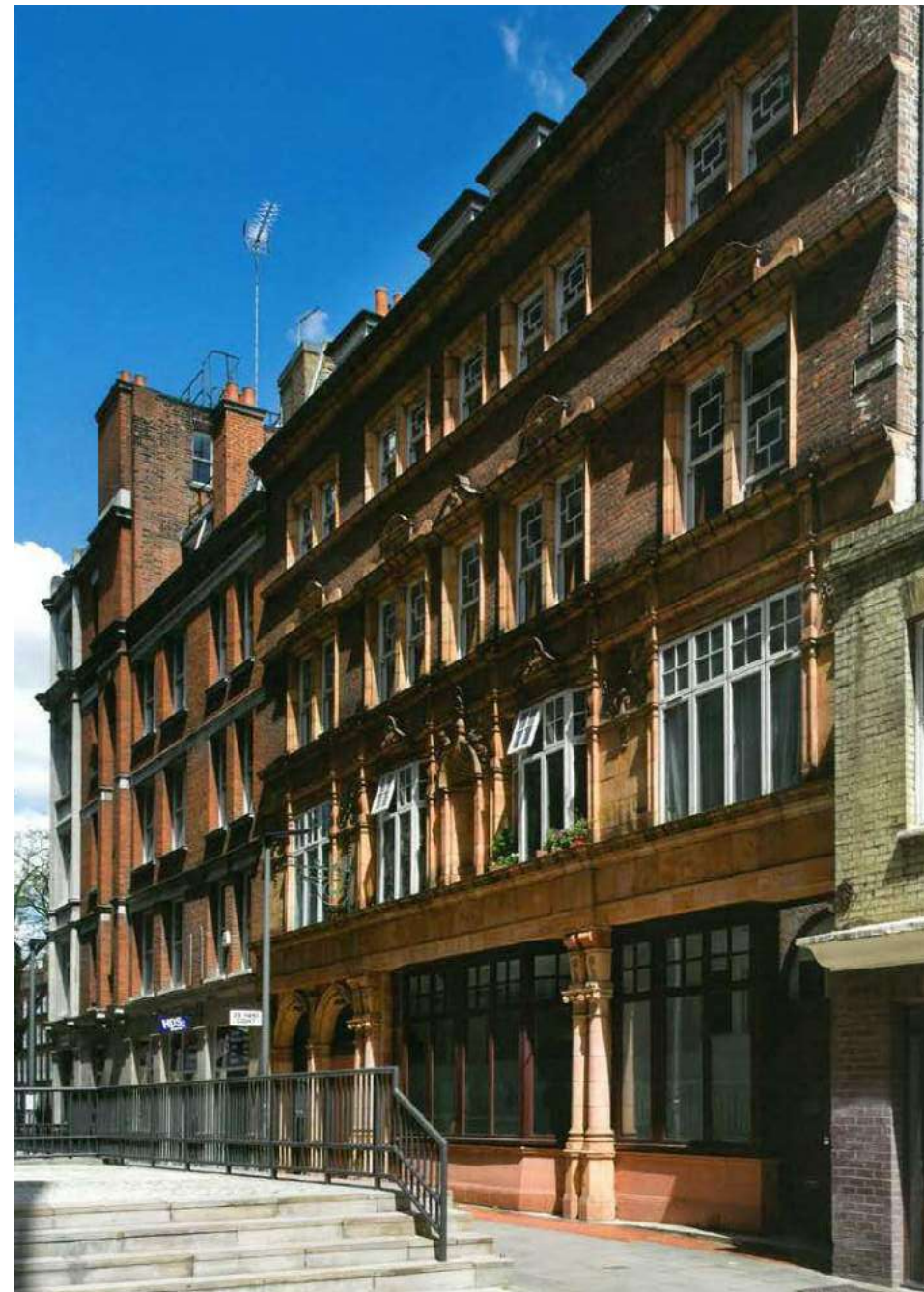
22-23 HAND COURT

- Existing use: office and residential (B1 & C3)
- Basement, ground, level 01 rear: office
- Level 01 front, level 02-04: residential

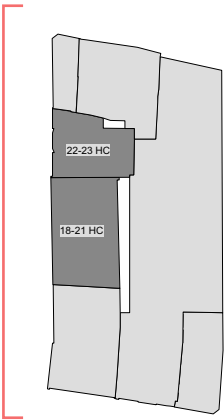
This is currently unoccupied. The proposal seeks to retain the building with a change of use at ground and basement from office to retail, and with some minor modifications to 'shopfronts' at ground level.



1. 18-21 Hand Court



2. 22-23 Hand Court

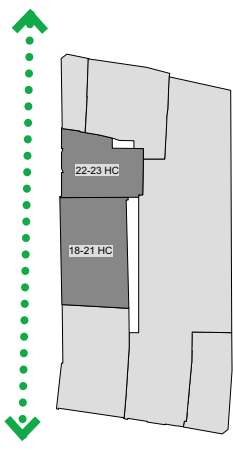


3.2 Existing Hand Court Elevation



Existing Hand Court Elevation





3.3 Existing Photographs

The photographs below illustrate several issues with the existing condition of Hand Court:

- No activity along Hand Court
- Poor street lighting
- Used by neighbouring office tenants as a smoking area
- No green landscaping, all hard landscaping
- Refuse collection area
- Lack of street signage



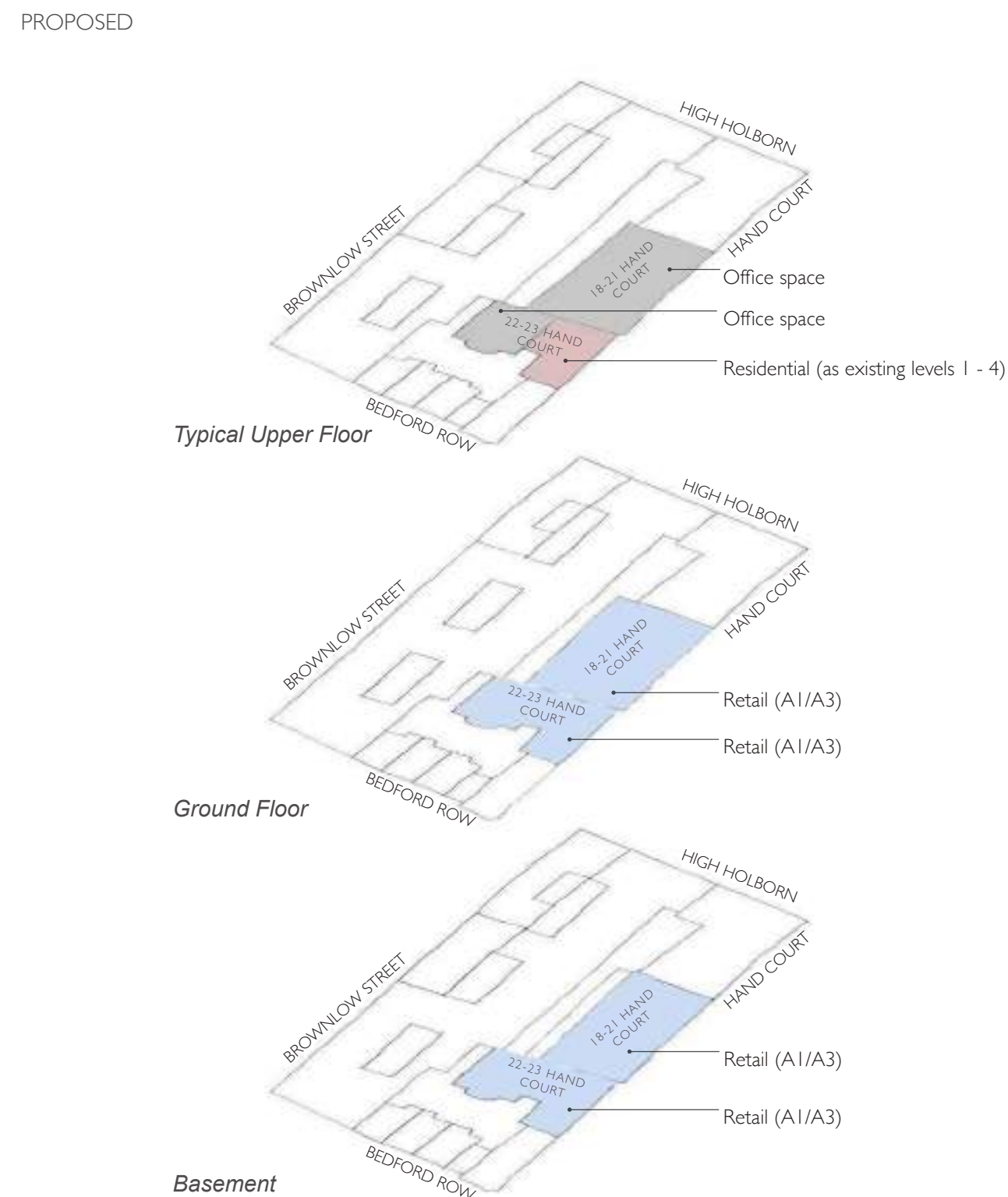
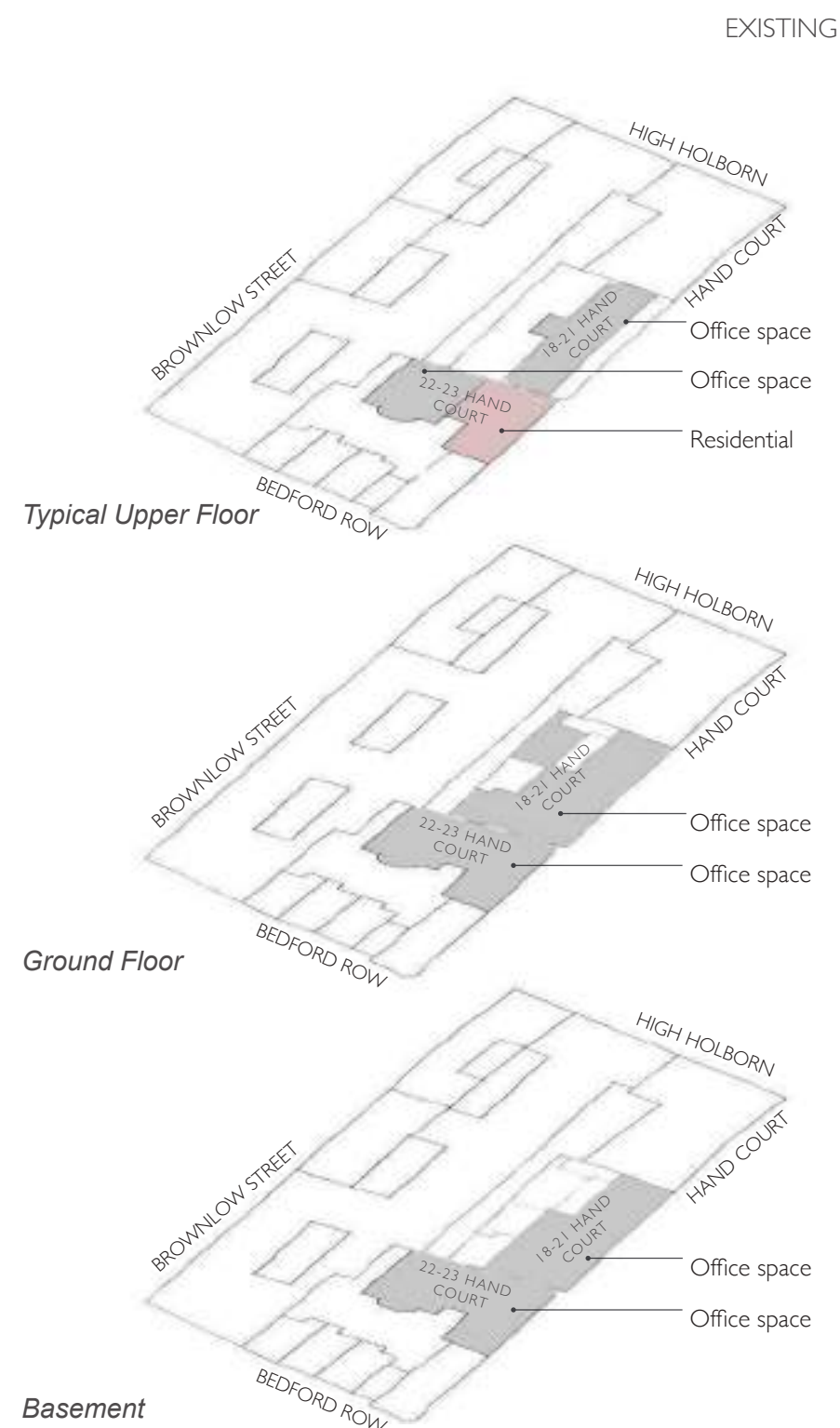
4.0 Project Uses

RESIDENTIAL C3

OFFICE B1

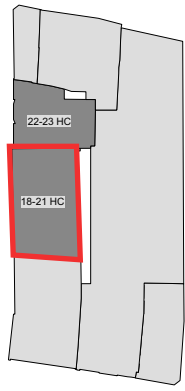
RETAIL A1/A2/A3

4.1 Uses Overview



5.0 Existing Building - 18-21 Hand Court

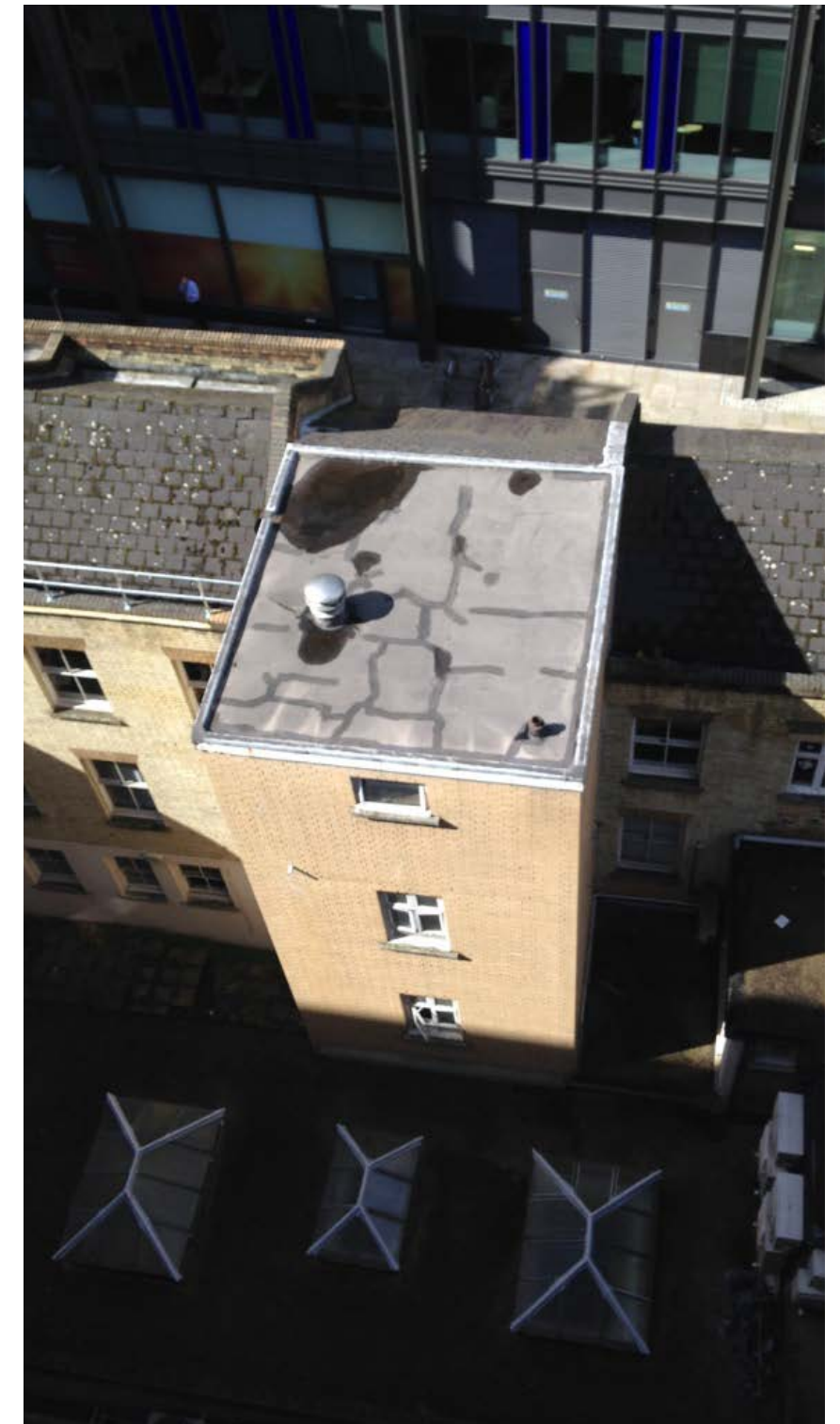
BuckleyGrayYeoman



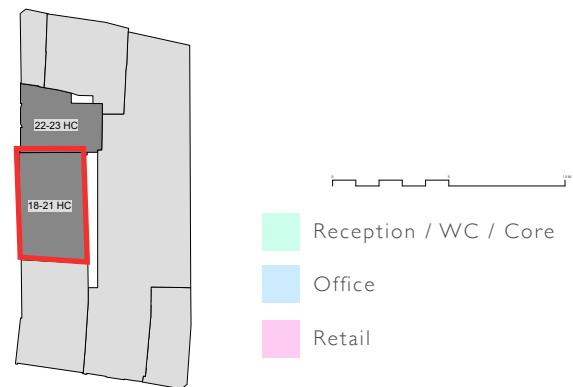
5.1 Existing Building Images



18-21 Hand Court - As Existing



18-21 Hand Court Rear Facade- As Existing



5.2 Existing Building Plans

18-21 Hand Court is an existing 3 storey brick office building: basement, first and a mansard.

The applicant is seeking to demolish the existing building and construct an 8 storey office building that includes 6 upper levels plus ground and basement.

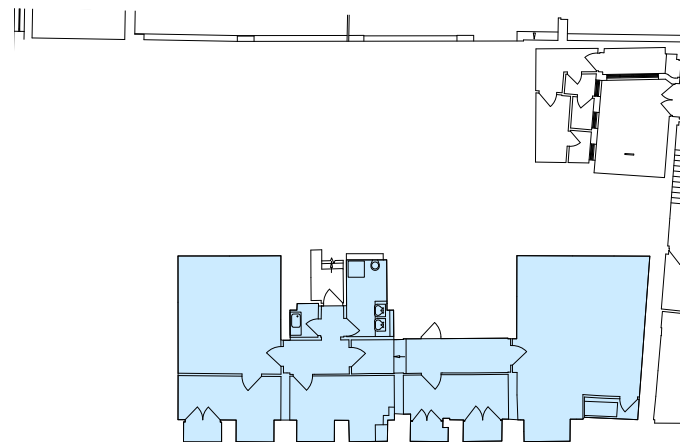
18-21 HAND COURT

- Existing use: office (B1)
- Basement, ground, level 01 and 02: office

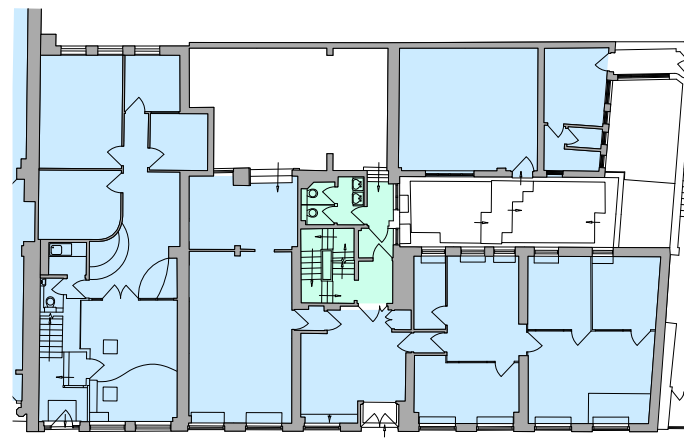
This building no longer meets today's standards for office use. The existing building fails on a number of levels, including:

- Poor circulation
- No DDA facilities
- No lift provision
- Poor street presence
- Disjointed floor arrangement
- Defunct services
- Poor thermal fabric

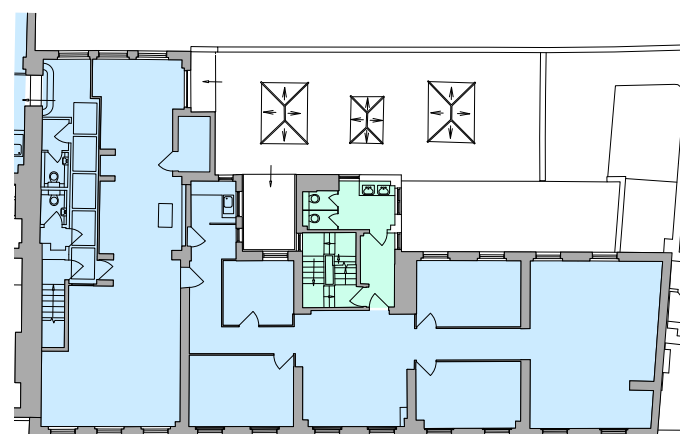
It is no longer fit for purpose and is ready for replacement.



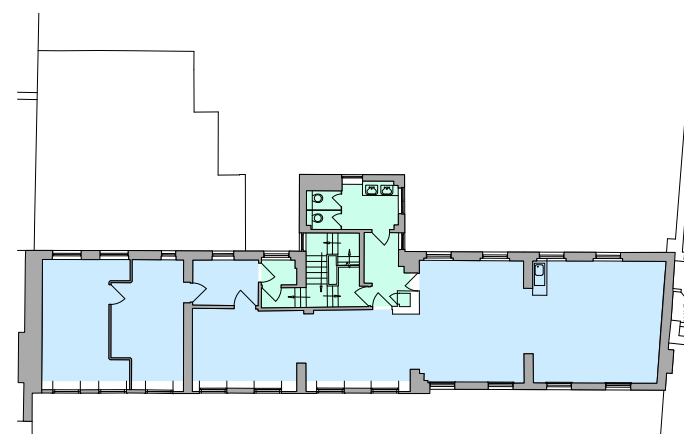
Existing Basement Plan



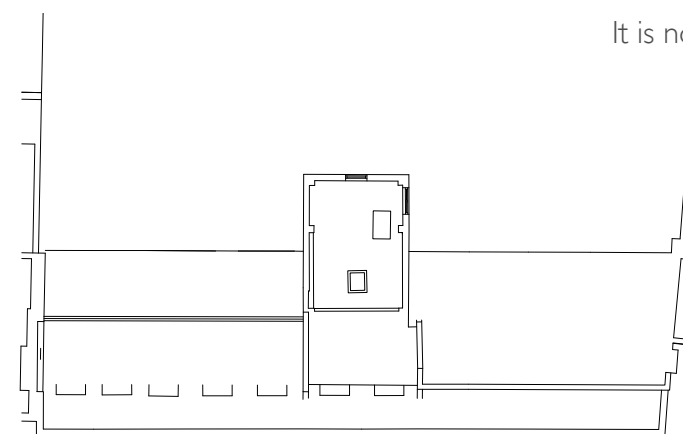
Existing Ground Floor Plan



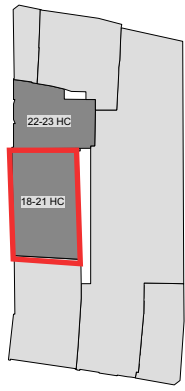
Existing First Floor Plan



Existing Second Floor Plan



Existing Roof Floor Plan



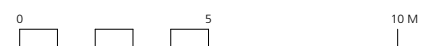
5.3 Existing Building Primary Elevation

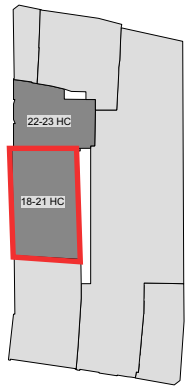


22-23 HAND COURT
Existing 18-21 Hand Court Elevation

18-21 HAND COURT

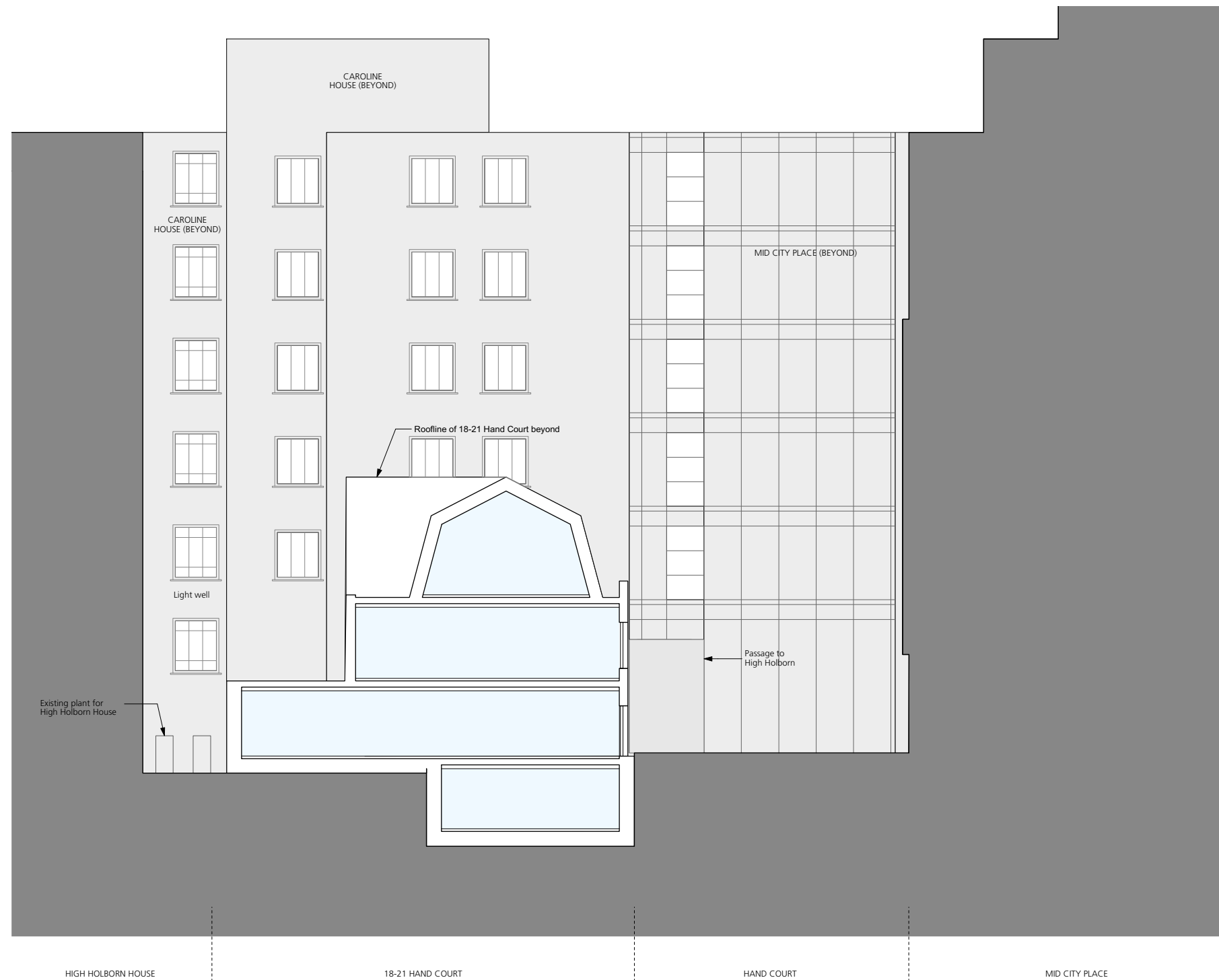
CAROLINE HOUSE





5.4 Existing Building Section

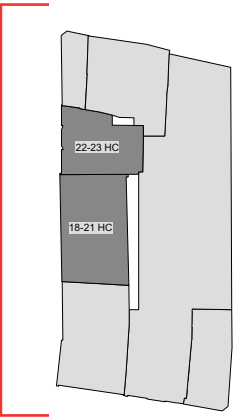
The existing building comprises of ground floor, plus 2 upper levels and a part basement. Level 2 sits within the mansard.



Existing 18-21 Hand Court Elevation



6.0 Design Development & Evolution - 18-21 Hand Court

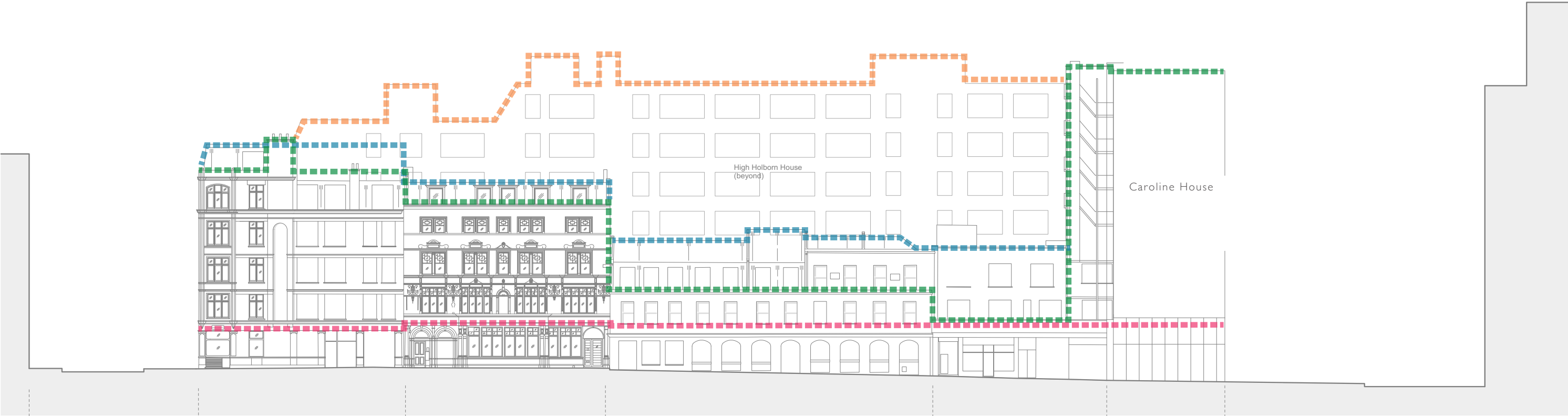


- High Holborn House building datum
- Upper building datum
- Parapet datum
- Street level datum
- Mid-City Place

6.1 Design Development - Building Datums

The existing datum lines reveal a lot about the general heights of the surrounding buildings. The existing building at 18-21 Hand Court is much smaller than the neighbouring buildings and is dwarfed by Mid-City Place which stands opposite.

Mid-City Place (in front)



- High Holborn House building datum
- Upper building datum
- Parapet datum
- Street level datum

Existing Hand Court Elevation