# **CLARIDGEARCHITECTS**

# 22 Tower Street

Design & Access Statement 13.12.2018

For:

British Retail Consortium



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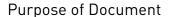
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#### 01 Introduction





This document has been prepared by Claridge Architects on behalf of British Retail Consortium in order to support the planning application in relation to the proposed development of 22 Tower Street (the 'site'), located in the London Borough of Camden.

The document explains the thinking and design rationale behind the proposed reconfiguration and extensions to the existing property (the 'proposals') within the physical and cultural context of the site.

This includes analysis of the local constraints & opportunities and how they informed the final design proposals, including layout, scale, massing and facade design.

This planning application has been prepared through a process of collaboration with the professional design team as listed below:

Planning Consultant
Architect
Project Manager
Heritage Consultant
Structural & Civil Engineer
MEP Consultant Engineer
Cost Consultants & QS
Arboricultural Consultant
Acoustics Consultant
Daylight / Sunlight Consultant

DWD
Claridge Architects
Colliers International
EDP
Heyne Tillet Steel
MEP Pro
Colliers International
Hallwood associates
KP Acoustics
Colliers International



#### **Project Brief**

The aim of the project is to create a unique working environment within the area by transforming the existing Grade II Listed building, where the headquarters of the British Retail Consortium (BRC) will be located.

The proposal involves the removal of harmful 1980s interventions alongside careful internal reconfigurations, and the addition of sensitive contemporary extensions. The proposals seek to safeguard the usefulness and heritage of this architecturally significant building.

The BRC is the trade association for the majority of UK retailers, promoting the story of retail, shaping debates and influencing the issues that matter to the industry.



#### Context

22 Tower Street is situated in a heavily urbanised environment of mixed-use buildings of varying age, type and scale. The area surrounding the site is not dominated by one particular building type or style, but is instead characterised by their variety.

The site is bound to the south-west by Tower Street, and to the north-east by a pedestrianised alley, Tower Court. The site is located just metres away from Seven Dials and it falls within the Seven Dials Conservation Area.







# Site description

The main property forming 22 Tower Street comprises a ground floor plus 4 storeys above and a basement, considerably taller than the surrounding buildings, with a varied roof-scape.

At the rear of the site, the courtyard houses a large conservatory, added in the 1980s, after the conversion of the school to office accommodation in the 1960s.

The site also includes a single storey wing to the North facing Tower Street extending to the rear and a separate three storey house (2 Tower Court), also part of the Listed designation, but not part of this application.



1 - Buildings fronting Seven Dials



3 - Red brick buildings on Earlham Street

# Local architectural character

The local area is characterised by well established street frontages, with ground floor shop-fronts and commercial or residential uses above. The buildings that immediately surround to the site are mostly 3-4 storey, predominantly made of red and brown stock brick, with highly articulated detailing and varied fenestration types. Further from the site, taller buildings are present and the style becomes less consistent.



2 - View of site and Tower Street



4 - View along Earlham Street





# Local transport & public amenities

The site has an excellent PTAL rating of 6b. The building located is within a triangle created by Covent Garden, Leicester Square and Tottenham Court Road Underground Stations, giving easy access to the Piccadilly, Northern and Central Lines, all within a 10 minute walking distance. Bus routes along Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road also serve the site.

London Underground Station

Future Crossrail Station

Bus Ston





# Site History

The area was developed into what is now known as Seven Dials by Thomas Neale. There was a substantial financial commitment, and it influenced Neale to settle upon a street layout which had the potential to maximise active shop fronts. The imaginative solution was the unique layout of Seven Dials – in using a star-shaped plan with radiating streets, the number of houses which could be built on the site was dramatically increased.

Neale's development created mainly domestic terraced buildings, of which a few have survived. In areas where these properties have been demolished, the plot-width, scale and depth of the original buildings are still evident.

By the middle of 18th century the area had begun to decline, and by the 19th century the character of Seven Dials had changed significantly. The area had become part of the rookery of St Giles – one of the most notorious slums in Britain. It was shortly afterwards in 1874 that the current building on the site, the Tower Street Board School, was constructed.





The school was set up by the London School Board – a local government institution set up in 1870 to build and run schools where there were insufficient places within voluntary establishments.



View along Tower Court, from Tower Street



- View of Earlham Street





4 - View along Tower Court

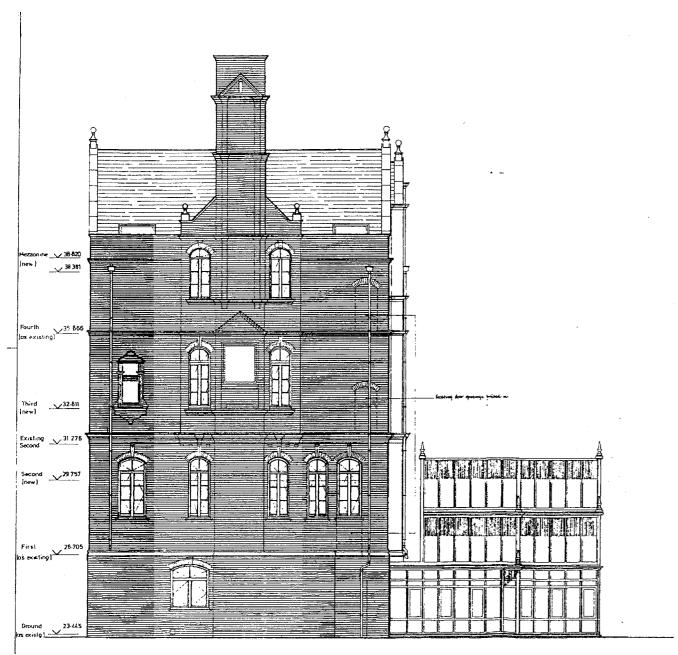
## Seven Dials Conservation Area Appraisal

Extract from Camden Conservation area appraisal statement:

"The distinct layout around the Seven Dials is the legacy of an ambitious building plan devised by Thomas Neale, at the end of the 17th century. The plan was unique, the only one of the 17th and 18th century developments in the West End which departs from a grid plan. Instead a radiating plan of streets was formed around a small central polygonal circus with a Doric column at the centre surmounted by sundials

The special character of the Conservation Area is found in the range and mix of building types and uses and the street layout. The character is not dominated by one particular period or style of building but rather it is their combination that is of special interest. Most buildings appear to spring from the footway without physical front boundaries or basement areas. In this tightly contained streetscape, changes of road width, building form and land-use give dramatic character variation."





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Drawing submitted as part of the 1987 application, showing existing and proposed floor levels

#### Relevant Planning History

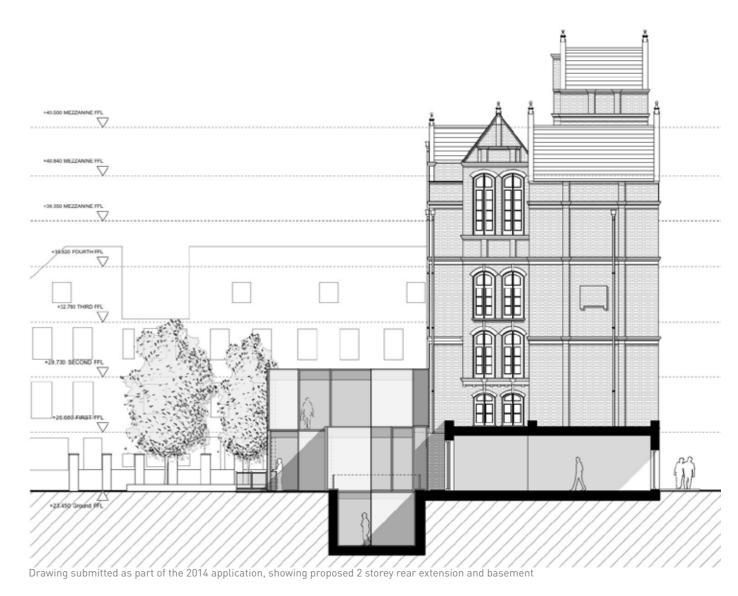
A number of historic planning applications relating to the site were found, although by far the most extensive of these were confined to the years 1987-1990. During this period the building was divided up internally into office space, and nearly all of the internal heritage features were removed. The key alterations are as follows:

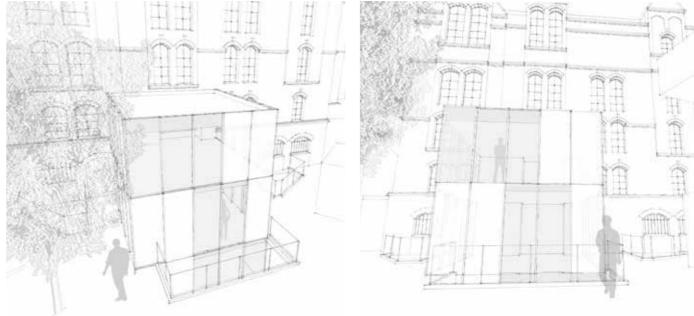
- Removal of the 2nd floor in its entirety and the installation of new 2nd and 3rd floors in its place
- Insertion of new mezzanine floor within the pitched roof
- Insertion of new partition walls on all floors
- Addition of large rear conservatory and a 'winter garden'
- Extension to the front elevation at third floor level
- Changes to the fenestration Addition of external railings to the front facade
- Replacement of windows

Claridge Architects previously gained planning & listed building approval on the site for the full refurbishment and alterations of the existing building, including change of use from B1 to form 22 high quality residential apartments.

2014/3431/L - Alterations associated with change of use from offices (B1) to 22 residential units (C3) and removal of existing orangery and replacement with new two storey structure.

The 2014 consent establishes the principle of replacing the existing rear conservatory with a contemporary two-storey extension and the loss of office floorspace.





Visualisations of approved glazed rear extension



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#### Site Constraints

- Listed building designation
- Possible overlooking from nearby residential units
- High sense of enclosure, due to dense surrounding context, as well as existing conservatory structures within the courtyard
- Currently unsightly rear end walls of 10-14 Earlham Street
- Rear courtyard is dominated by orangery and various external light-wells
- Existing trees protected within conservation area
- Site orientation main block overshadows most of rear countyard
- The current parking area, to the front of the building, has been identified by the police authority as an opportunity for anti-social behaviour



#### Site Opportunities

- Creating a continuous street scape along Tower StreetOpportunity to provide further commercial frontage and
- Upportunity to provide further commercial frontage and cater to local needs
- Removal of glass orangery & infill of light-wells provide the possibility for a new landmark extension to better engage with both the existing building and the surrounding courtyard
- New gate to parking space will provide secure entrance and prevent anti-social behaviour
- New access from Tower Court will increase natural surveillance along the underutilised pathways and increase security



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# Existing Building

The interior of 22 Tower Street has been substantially altered on every floor, with very few original features remaining. A number of new partitions, floors and suspended ceilings have been inserted throughout, and most of the heritage features have been removed.

The current PVC conservatory extension on the Tower Street facade is of low quality and detrimental to the character of the area. It is currently in a state of disrepair and the clear plastic, used as a cheap alternative to glass, has become clouded.









#### Pre-Application Proposal

Claridge Architects have previously submitted pre-application proposals for this site, meeting with officers on 10.10.18.

The proposed works can be summarised as follows:

- Full refurbishment of the main block to house the new BRC headquarters
- Front single storey extension
- Rear replacement orangery
- Full refurbishment and change of use of 2 Tower Court to residential (Now part of separate application)







# **Pre-Application Comments**

General Verbal Feedback:

The principle of development and extent of extension was considered acceptable in principle with the remounsympathetic additions installed in the constant of the constant of

Specific Feedback on the 1st F

- 1. It was requested that the is lowered slightly by a si extension sits below the course detailing
- 2. Windows on the upper flo
- The pigmented stone clace preference for a creamy/y explored

# Design Response

Height of proposed extension lowered to sit below existing adjacent string course. As per the section above, the mechanical plant equipment located on the new roof, will tobstruct the view of the existing building features, nor the buildings and sky beyond (concealed by the parapet)

rious window frame & panes sizes and proportions

ere tested. Ground floor openings, with Crittal-style
eel glazing, referencing the neighbouring commercial
pntage, with a strong geomet
penings reflect the vertical pr
ilst maintaining a consisten
por steel framed windows, re
t site specific design respons

e have proposed an 'off white sually engage with the white ndow frames found on Tower th the aspiration to create a temporary architectural int

-18









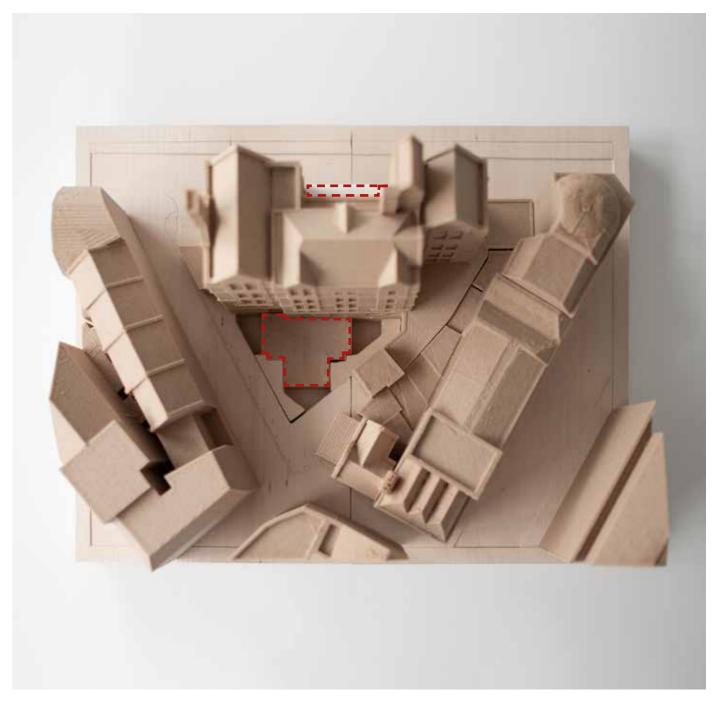
#### Demolition works

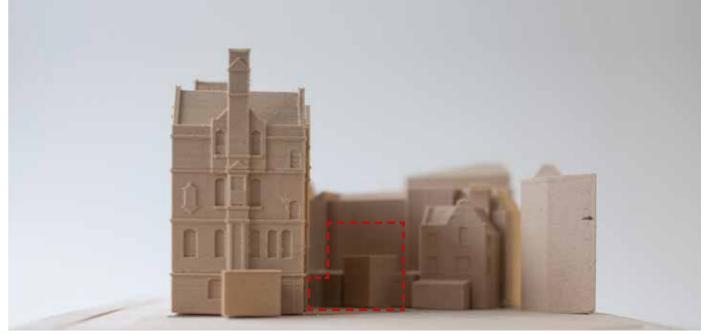
As illustrated in the images above, the current condition of the 1980s extensions, especially the large orangery, is poor and unsuitable for modern high quality office space.

We propose to carefully remove these additions and reinstate the 3rd floor terrace as an outdoor amenity for the offices and re-establish the original building form. To the rear of the building the replacement for the orangery will allow the rear facade of the existing building to be enjoyed from the courtyard.

Internally, the 1980's internal fit out will be removed entirely, to create high quality working spaces and enhance the existing building features wherever possible, that are currently concealed.

An application for the soft-stripping of the buildings internal non-orginal finishes has already been approved.







Horizontal Alignment



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Vertical Alignment & Proportions

#### Massing Development - Front extension

On the main facade, the proposal is to replace the existing doors at ground floor, remove the poor quality conservatory at 3F level to provide a communal terrace.

To the side a first floor extension is proposed which will house a coffee shop, which will benefit from a new GF entrance, and enlarged window openings. The extension will act as an urban repair tool, obscuring the view of the rear of the buildings on Earlham Street, which are clearly detrimental to the character of the Conservation area. The proportions, rhythm, and character of the new elevation will be in keeping with the existing building, whilst implementing a contemporary architectural language which will enhance its legibility within the context. The use of a light material palette will ensure the strong symmetry of the listed building is visually retained.

The proposed extension has been tested for BRE Daylight/ Sunlight requirements and it has confirmed any small losses to neighbouring windows are within BRE guidelines.





Pitch roof & impact to existing building



Pitch roof analysis

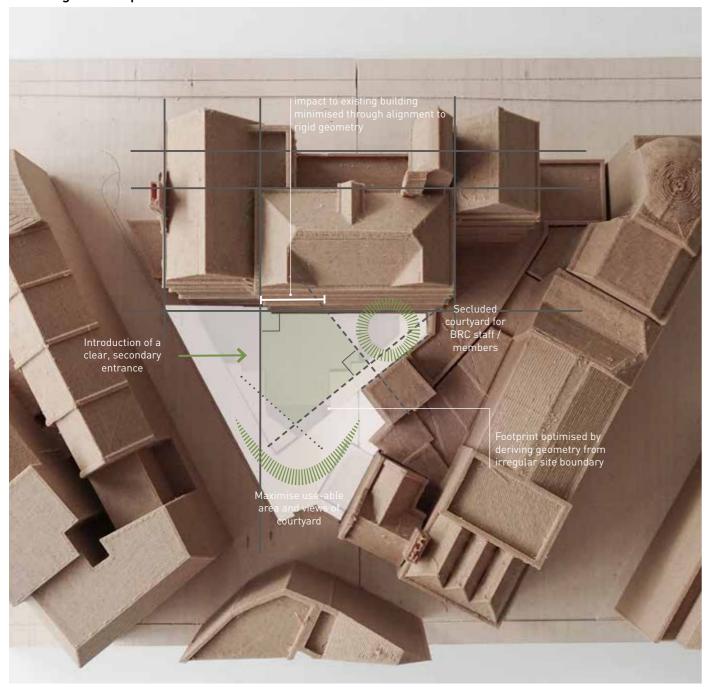
#### Massing Development - Rear extension

The new replacement orangery has been designed to create high quality, uplifting office and meeting space for the BRC; it's reduced footprint, bulk, scale and massing compared to the existing conservatory will also minimise the visual impact on the school building.

The proposed geometry will be a single storey structure with a generous ceiling height, folding down towards the existing rear facade to minimise the impact to the 1st and 2nd floor windows, and offer a more interesting & varied outlook.

The pitch of the proposed orangery roof seeks to echo and engage with the distinct pitched roof forms seen in the existing school building.





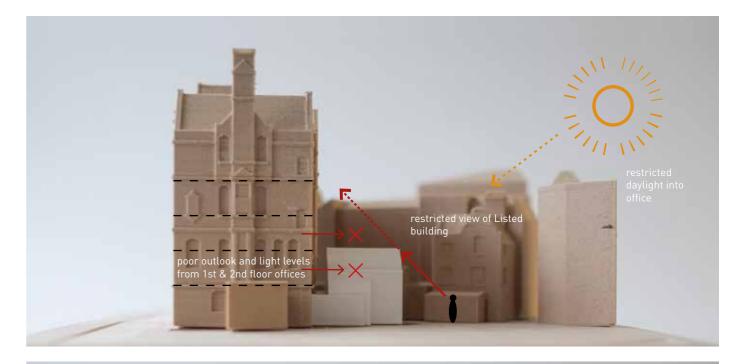
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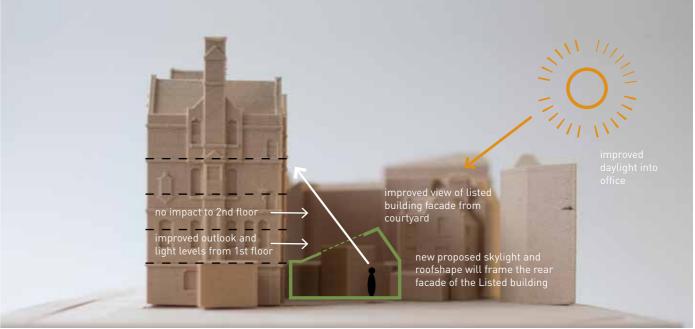
#### Site Response

In plan, the new orangery has been tailored to reflect the geometry found on site, creating a balance between optimising its footprint and improving the external courtyard space. By meeting the strong site lines, the geometry minimises the impact on the rear facade of the existing building.

Secondly, by extending orthogonally away from this facade, it provides a clear entrance point from the courtyard and newly proposed garden entrance. At the rear of the site the sharp angle allows varied and interesting views of the new structure whilst successfully integrating with the landscaped area.

Lastly, through both the site responsive geometry and the enclosure of the light-well, the proposal creates a second smaller external space, at ground floor level, for BRC members and staff, with a natural level of separation and privacy.





In section, the diagrams above illustrate the adverse impact of the existing orangery to both light levels and outlook from the ground, 1st & 2nd floor levels of the main property. It also prevents views of the rear facade of the Listed building from many locations within the courtyard and lanes, further interrupted by the three existing light-wells.

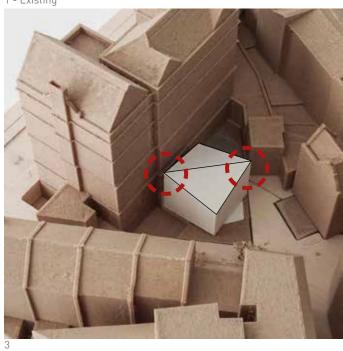
The proposed geometry would be a single, generous storey, folding down towards the existing rear facade to minimise the impact to the 1st and 2nd floor windows, and offer a more interesting & varied outlook.

The geometry of the proposed roof form recalls the character of the pitches found on the Listed buildings roof, taking inspiration from the context. Through the implementation of a skylight, this will also allow occupants to appreciate the view of the rear facade, currently obscured by the structure of the existing conservatory.





2 - Consented (2 Storey)



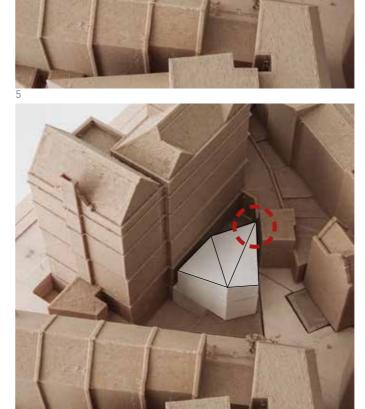


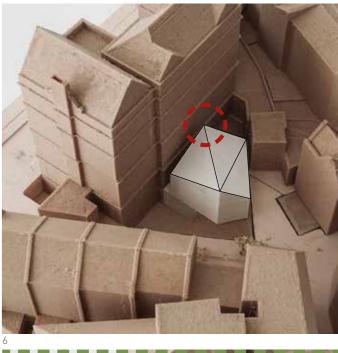
#### Massing Development Summary

A number of design iterations have been considered in order to respond to both the site context, and also achieve the aforementioned improvements to the quality of the spaces within the main property and the courtyard.

- 1 Existing 2 storey 1980s uPVC conservatory in poor state of repair and detrimental to both the existing building and the external space
- 2 Approved two storey volume in 2014, with reduced footprint compared to the existing conservatory (establishing the principle of a modern extension)
- 3 Roof geometry begins to respond to site constraints, but multiple pitches create odd junctions to both the existing building and the neighbours
- 4 Single pitch direction and highest point set furthest from existing building allows view framing, however tall square facade does not engage with other courtyard geometry

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8 - Proposed

- 5 Pitch location overshadows small courtyard and ground floor, whilst also creating an unsuccessful relationship to the neighbouring buildings
- 6 Pitch location does not improve light levels or enjoyment of the existing building rear facade. Plan geometry responds well to context
- 7 Pitch location overshadows small courtyard and ground floor
- 8 A truly site specific, bespoke solution tailored to the context; alleviating the previously identified constraints, as well as maximising the opportunity for views across the courtyard and, the daylight levels within the existing building.



#### **Proposed Extensions**

The proposed external works, after the already outlined demolitions, can be summarised as follows:

- Tower Street: Single storey 'infill' extension
  This will house the new coffee shop seating area, as well
  as provide roof space to house the new plant. The vertically
  proportioned windows recall the existing building, whilst
  retaining the symmetry of the front facade.
- Rear Courtyard: Replacement orangery
  The proposal will replace the large 1980s PVC orangery
  structure with a high quality sensitively designed contemporary
  structure to enhance the school buildings connection with the
  courtyard and provide space for BRC staff and guests to enjoy.
  The newly proposed space will create an uplifting space for
  BRC to welcome members, whilst enhancing the relationship
  between the existing building and the courtyard.

Both proposed extensions will have strong geometry and will be clearly expressed as contemporary additions but which have been carefully designed in response to the context. Their design has been fully tailored to the setting - from the massing design and window proportions down to the material palette used.









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Aerial view of courtyard looking south



Proposed front elevation

## **Proposed Elevations**

The images above and opposite illustrate the proposed materiality of the extensions, within their context. The materials were carefully selected to engage with the listed school and site setting (off-white stone used to relate to the white stucco entrance on Tower Street and soft pink/red stone at the rear to engage with the red brick banding) which will be executed with clean contemporary detailing.

The front elevation has been specifically devised, in its material, fenestration and detailing to create a distinct character, confident yet set back and sub-ordinate from the main property. The ground floor openings, with Crittal-style glazing, directly reference the neighbouring commercial frontage, with strong geometric design & horizontal banding.

First floor openings reflect the vertically proportioned windows of 22 Tower Street on the upper levels whilst maintaining an honest contemporary appearance.

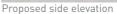


Detail - Front elevation of first floor extension

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Detail - Rear elevation of orangery extension





3 -Dark Crittall glazing - adjoining retail unit

#### Local Materials & Architectural Character

The above images are local precedents which have directly informed the design of the proposal in terms of materiality and detailing. Local shop-fronts such as 'ace&tate' and 'Another\_ Space' make use of Crittal-style glazing, which we propose to incorporate in the new cafe frontage. Moreover, these local precedents also strongly define stores and ground floor through the implementation of banding, which was similarly incorporated into the design of both front and rear facades.

Lastly, red brick has been identified as the predominant building material around Tower Street and along Tower Court, the tone of which we have reinterpreted in the contemporary orangery design, through the use of pigmented composite stone, with light grey details.



- Red brick building facing Tower Court



4 -Minimal framed glazing - nearby shopfront





#### Example material palette

As the previous page illustrates, the proposed material palette draw inspiration from the context, carefully selected to both engage with and enhance the current setting.

The proposed materials also aim to enhance the legibility and visual enjoyment of the existing listed property.

- 1 Painted hardwood doors entrance & front facade (Colour: Black)
  2 Steel Crittal Style Glazing with Slim Profiles
- (Colour: Black)
- 3 Existing stock brickwork
  4 Technical Stone Cladding (Colour: Light Red/Pink)
  5 Technical Stone Cladding (Colour: Light Grey)
  6 Technical Stone Cladding (Colour: Off-White)

Street View



Street View











#### Precedents - Contemporary extensions

The precedents above represent a selection of contemporary architectural interventions - all located in urban settings - constructed from a restrained palette of high quality materials, and with a high level of articulation. A similar approach is proposed here, to create a quiet, contemporary piece of architecture which would improve the immediate setting and complement the existing building.

- 1 Grey composite stone rainscreen cladding, by David Chipperfield Architects
- 2 Light-coloured stone rainscreen cladding, by Claridge Architects

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- 3 Coffee shop + house entrances Crittall glazing
- 4 Extension glazing minimal framed glazing, by Claridge Architects













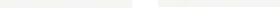
#### Precedents - Internal works & landscape

The interior alterations proposed will aim to work with the existing building historic features, an approach taken by the precedents above. The use of natural materials and a simple palette, together with the maximisation of daylight will be provided throughout the new office spaces.

Landscaping is proposed to be a highly geometric design, responsive to the intricate site boundaries. This will then be translated in the careful selection of paving materials to enhance the link between internal spaces and the external courtyard.

1-2-3. Co-working office in Grade I Listed Building, King's Cross, by dMFK architectsdMFK 4-5-6. Examples of restrained simple hard landscaping schemes and virbant planting schemes within fixed planters (Uncon Storrs Campus; Nigel Dunnet planting at the Barbican; Coal Drops Yard, Kings Cross)





# Proposed internal changes

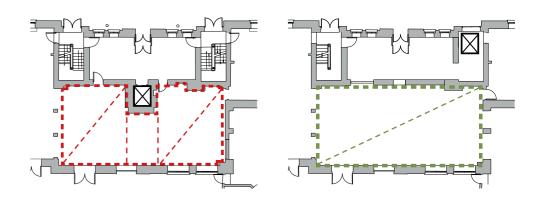
The proposed internal changes aim to reconfigure some of 1980s alterations to the interior of the Listed building, to enhance the quantity of natural light enjoyed by the building to create successful modern workspace.

During the 1980s series of alterations, the new installed floor clashed with windows on the front and side elevations. This was mediated at the time through the implementation of 'glass boxes', as shown in the image on the right. We propose the removal of the unsightly boxes, which do not allow for good lighting levels on the second floor. The proposal ir 'pulling back' the whole floor, to avoid the windows and installing floor-to-ceiling height glass screens. These we ensure the highest levels of daylight for the second floor ensuring acoustic separation with the first floor office s



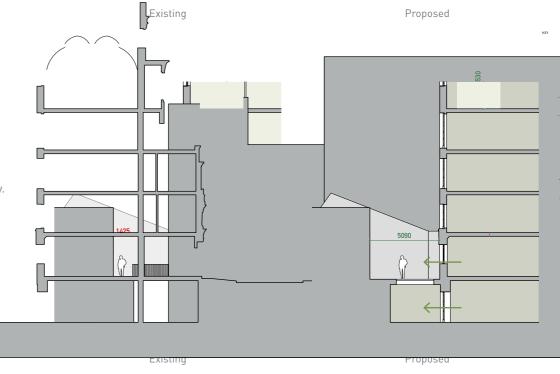
#### Lift repositioning

The current lift & lift shaft was installed during the 1980s, and it separates the largest part of the floor plate into two small areas. By repositioning the lift within one of the existing stair cores, the central part of the building can be re-established as a single generous and well-lit space. This strategy has been developed in accordance with a specialist fire engineer, to ensure continued compliance with Building Regulations.

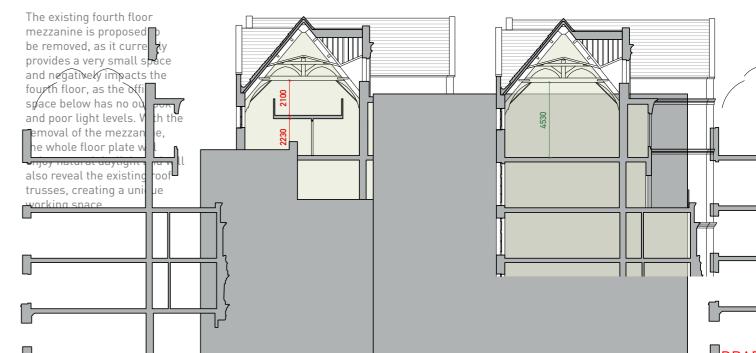


#### Lightwell enclosure

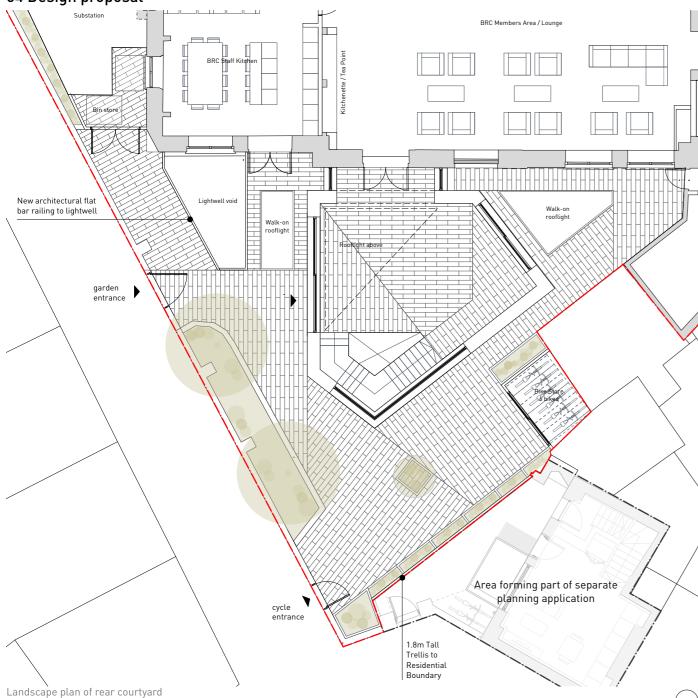
The lightwell to the west is proposed to be covered by a walk on rooflight, to increase the area of the basement, as allow enjoyment courtyard, which will be more generous, and inpass the new orangery.



#### Mezzanine removal



# 04 Design proposal BRC Members Area / Lounge



Landscape Strategy

The proposed landscape for the rear courtyard aims to reconcile the many differing geometries and elements, and create a successful, calm setting for the new orangery. At the same time the design carefully incorporates the functional constraints of the site, such as cycle and bin storage, while allowing areas for inhabitation and to take advantage of this unique courtyard in the heart of central London. The design provides subtle variety, by using the paving to encourage movement through the courtyard. Moreover, a similar geometry is proposed to 'spill' within the new rear extension, in order to reinforce the connection between external and internal spaces, further cemented by the two newly proposed walk-on rooflights to the basement.

The new side gates on Tower Court are proposed together with the refurbishment and repainting of the late 20th century railings, to improve both visual amenity and security around the site.







#### 05 Access & Technical information



# Secure by Design Consultation

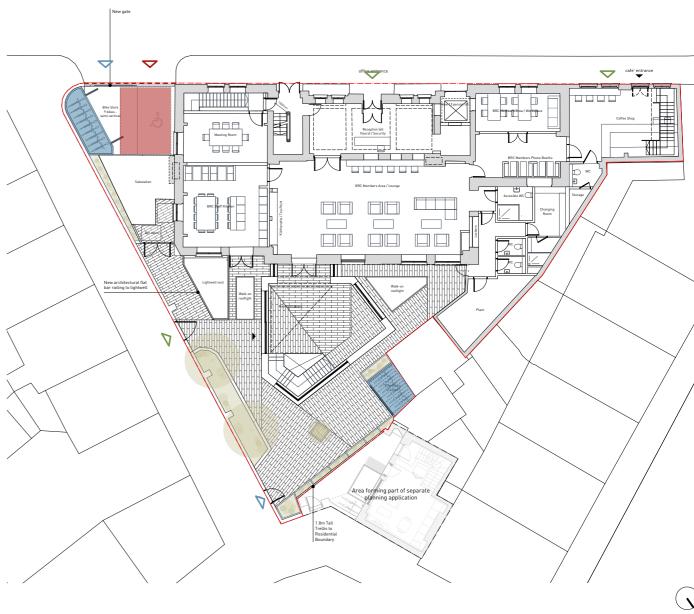
Secure by Design consultation was undertaken on 21.11.18, with the participation of 'Design Out Crime Officer' Jim Cope. The main design comments raised are as follows:

- The parking spaces in front of the substation are often a
  place for antisocial behaviour. It was suggested that a gate
  be installed across the front, on Tower Street. If this is not
  possible the distinction between public and private land
  should be made clearer.
- The recessed entrance through the Tower Court fence could become a place for rough sleepers. It was suggested the entrance to be made flush to the wall, or to be less than 600mm deep.
- If replacement of the external railing was proposed horizontal bars should be avoided, as they provide a foothold for anyone trying to climb over. The step created by the wall is also something for people to climb on.
   Further improvement could be achieved by also moving the

railings to sit towards the outside of the wall.

- Fence should be 1800 above anything you can climb on, although the officer acknowledged that 1800 above the wall might be excessively tall.
- Concerns were raised about the planter behind the new bike store. It would be preferable to build up to the fence or to use defensive planting.

Many comments have been addressed through the design development of the rear landscape, especially the redesign of the garden entrance which now avoids creating a recess, and the recommendations will be further incorporated during the detailed design phase.



#### Access & Parking

The proposal provides 1No. accessible parking bay, with a new secure gate, accessed from Tower Street, as well as 9No. cycle storage spaces in the same location, for the occupants of the building. A new pedestrian entrance will be formed on Tower Street to access the cafe.

The main pedestrian entrance to the office will remain the current entrance. At the rear, together with the new orangery and landscape proposal, pedestrian access to the courtyard is provided from Tower Court, as well as a separate cycle entrance for BRC staff members (which provides an additional 6 cycle spaces).

A new 1.8m high screen will be installed to separate and create visual privacy for 2 Tower Court, which will be accessed from the public highway.

Car parking

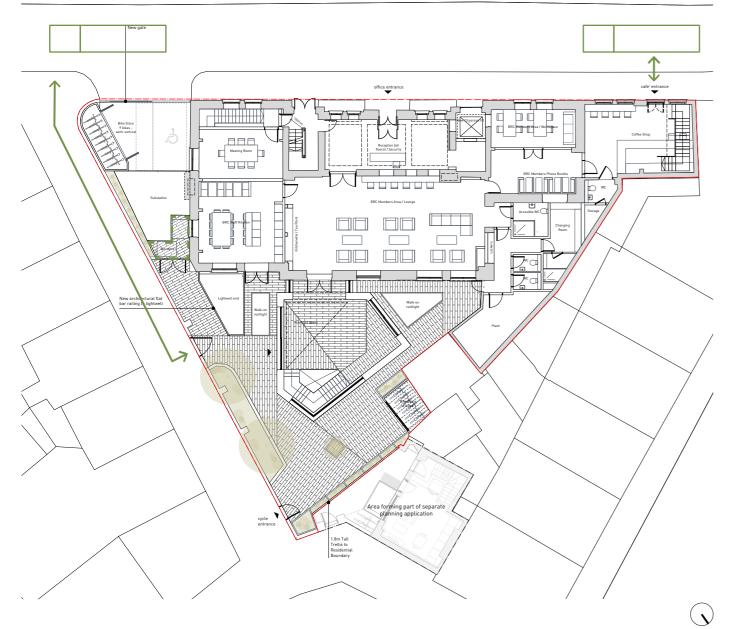
Cycle parking

Car access

Cycle access

Pedestrian access





# Refuse Strategy

Refuse storage has been located away from the front facade of the building, to avoid any visual impact. Bin provision is in line with Camden recommendations for non-residential developments (Camden Planning Guidance 1 - Design).

The development has assumed a daily refuse collection off Tower Street for both the office and the cafe'.

### Area Schedule

	Existing Office GIA				
	sqm	sqft			
BS	398	4,281			
GF	445	4,788			
1F	267	2,875			
2F	261	2,806			
3F	262	2,819			
4F	250	2,695			
Mezz.	21	228			
Mezz.	21	228			

1,904

20,492

1,815

19,534

Proposed	Proposed Office GIA		Proposed Commercial GIA		Total Proposed GIA	
sqm	sqft	sqm	sqft	sqm	sqft	
420	4,524	-	-	420	4,524	
380	4,086	45	479	424	4,565	
267	2,875	31	334	298	3,209	
256	2,750	-	-	256	2,750	
242	2,604	-	-	242	2,604	
250	2,695	-	-	250	2,695	
-	-	-	-	-	-	

76

813

1,890

20,347

# Specialist reports

Total

This document is to be read in conjunction with the following specialist reports:

- Planning statementHeritage report
- Acoustic report
- Arboricultural reportDaylight/sunlight report

