

Planning Statement

3-7 Frederick Street



Boyer

Report Control

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support planning and listed building consent application made on behalf of One Housing Group. This application seeks permission for the change of use of the building from young offenders sheltered accommodation, bedsit units and a general needs maisonette (Use Class C2) to 7 residential units for affordable rent (Use Class C3). The sheltered accommodation is currently vacant following LB Camden’s cancellation of the care contract in 2018.
- 1.2 To facilitate the conversion to affordable housing, minor external and internal alterations are proposed which will also reinstate the original plan and features of the Grade II listed properties.
- 1.3 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the planning drawings, Design and Access Statement, Heritage Statement, Energy Statement and Sustainability Statement, submitted with the Planning Application.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement assesses the proposals against policies in the Development Plan and other material considerations, which are relevant to the determination of the application. The statement is structured as follows:

Section 2 – describes the site;

Section 3 – details the relevant planning history and considers pre-application consultation;

Section 4 – describes the proposal;

Section 5 – provides an overview of the principal national, regional and local planning policy and guidance relevant to the assessment of the proposed development;

Section 6 – provides an assessment of the proposal against the provisions of the Development Plan and other material considerations;

Section 7 – concludes the findings of the assessment of the proposed development.

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2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site contains three adjacent properties, which form part of a 3 storey, plus basement, level terrace building, constructed during the first half of the 19th Century (c.1830).
- 2.2 The properties are all Grade II listed and situated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The properties have been substantially modified over time and much of their original plan form and internal period features have been lost. Nos.5-7 are internally linked at first and second floor level and No.3 maintains the original internal walls and as such is separated.
- 2.3 The site was previously used to provide bedsit accommodation for young offenders with Nos.5-7 Frederick Street providing 17 bedsit units. No.3 Frederick Street contains two further bedsits and a general needs affordable rent maisonette. The young offenders' accommodation was closed following consultation with LB Camden in 2018 and the properties have since remained vacant.
- 2.4 Frederick Street is characterised by large three/four storey Grade II listed terraces, many of which have been converted into flats. Beyond Frederick Street, the surrounding area is predominantly residential in character but is also within close proximity to Grays Inn Road and Euston Road which function as high streets and offer a range of services.
- 2.5 The Site has a PTAL rating of 6b and as such is considered to be in a highly accessible location. The Site is within close walking distance to Kings Cross and St Pancras Rail and Underground Stations. There are also numerous bus routes within close proximity.
- 2.6 The Site also lies within Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk of flooding).

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3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The site and neighbouring area have a limited planning history, mainly involving applications for minor external and internal works to the listed properties.
- 3.2 This includes a planning application and listed building consent at 3 Frederick Street which was granted in April 2018 for the replacement of windows and internal works (planning reference: 2017/6798/P)

Pre-application discussions

- 3.3 A pre-application meeting was held with Planning, Heritage and Housing officers in May 2018 to gain initial advice regarding the proposed change of use scheme.
- 3.4 LB Camden provided comment on the design, standard of residential accommodation and impact of the proposed development on the listed building and Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 3.5 The pre-application feedback was positive and it was confirmed that the principle of change of use would be acceptable and that the future units would benefit from an acceptable standard of accommodation. It was also considered that the proposed alteration works would result in a significant benefit to the listed buildings.
- 3.6 The pre-application feedback has informed the proposals for which planning permission is now sought. The changes are described in detail within Section 4.
- 3.7 A meeting was held with a Design Out Crime Officer on 10th June 2019 to obtain guidance on how to create a safe and secure environment for future residents to live. The proposals have since been amended to include numerous recommendations which were discussed during the meeting.

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4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposals involve the reinstatement of the listed properties and internal conversion of the buildings to provide 7 new residential units (Class C3) which will all be designated for affordable rent for which there is significant local need. The proposed mix of units is 1 x 1 bed, 5 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed affordable homes.
- 4.2 The basement and ground floor levels will provide 3 self-contained 2 bedroom maisonettes. The primary living areas, including kitchen and living room will be located at ground floor level and bedrooms at lower ground level. Entrances into No. 3 and No. 7 Frederick Street will open into communal hall areas and communal staircase to the upper floor flats.
- 4.3 The residential units are all dual aspect, well-proportioned and will meet the space standards set out in the London Plan. The lower ground units will also benefit from private amenity space.
- 4.4 The proposed external alterations include the removal of a modern external staircase; installation of a new steel access stair within the front lightwell of No. 5; rebuilding of the rear parapet above No. 5's closet wing; installation of new velux conservation rooflights on the front and side roof pitches; the replacement of windows and doors with new timber replacements (only where necessary); and the replacement of modern downpipes with cast iron.
- 4.5 The internal alterations relate to reconfiguration works, which will help reinstate the buildings' original plan form and period features. It is also proposed to install secondary glazing throughout the properties except from where there are shutters.

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5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act States that application must be determined in accordance with the relevant development plan, unless material consideration indicate otherwise. This section outlines the relevant national and local planning policy against which the application should be assessed.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

- 5.2 The NPPF acknowledges that the purpose of planning is to achieve sustainable growth. At the very heart of this is the acknowledgment that growth is necessary to enable the country and our communities to support themselves. Growth and development must happen in order to accommodate the needs of a growing population.
- 5.3 The presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision-taking, involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built environment, including replacing poor design with better design, improving the conditions in which people live, and the widening the choice of high quality homes.
- 5.4 The NPPF, under its Core Planning Principles, places weight on the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed. It states that planning should promote mixed-use developments and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban areas. Patterns of growth should be actively managed to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations, which are sustainable.

Regional Planning Policy

London Plan (MALP 2016)

- 5.5 The London Plan provides the strategic policy context for all of London and seeks to provide an integrated framework for its development. It is a spatial development strategy up to 2036 and its main themes are economic development and wealth creation, social development and improvement of the urban environment.
- 5.6 The Mayor's strategic policies aim to provide more homes, promote opportunity and provide a choice of homes for all Londoners that meet their needs at a price they can afford. There is particular impetus placed on maximising affordable housing provision, in particular social and affordable rent tenures.

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- 5.7 There is a recognised need for all housing types and Policy 3.3 of the London Plan seeks to increase housing supply. Policy 3.4 seeks to optimise housing potential and Policy 3.5 seeks housing developments to be of the highest quality.
- 5.8 Paragraph 3.1 and Policy 3.3 of the London Plan recognise the “desperate need for more homes in London” and sets an annual housing target for Camden to deliver 858 net new homes per year.
- 5.9 The London Plan at Policy 7.8 also places great significance on the re-use and restoration of heritage assets to ensure they are put into suitable and viable use.

Draft London Plan (November 2017)

- 5.10 In November 2017, the Greater London Authority published their Draft London Plan. The consultation period ended on 2nd March 2018. Consultation comments have been reviewed by the independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to carry out the Examination in Public for which the final session was held on Wednesday 22nd May.
- 5.11 The final London Plan is expected to be formally adopted in 2020. Once adopted the new London Plan will replace the policies of the current London Plan (2016) and will become the new regional Spatial Development Strategy.
- 5.12 Whilst the plan is still within the stages of preparation, the policies within it carry limited material weight.

Local Planning Policy

Camden Development Plan

- 5.13 The Development Plan for Camden comprises a number of documents. The main document forming the Plan, in conjunction with the London Plan (2016) is the Camden Local Plan (2017).
- 5.14 Other relevant Development Plan documents are provided in the way of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy as well as Supplementary Planning Guidance including CPG 2 Housing and CPG Design.

Adopted Camden Local Plan (2017)

- 5.15 The Camden Local Plan sets out the Councils planning policies for the period 2016-2031.
- 5.16 Policy G1 relates to ‘Delivery and Location of Growth’ and states that the Council will deliver growth by securing high quality development and promoting the most efficient use of land and buildings in Camden.
- 5.17 Policy H4 relates to ‘Maximising the Supply of Affordable Housing’ and states that the Council will aim to maximise the supply of affordable housing and exceed the borough wide target of 5,300 additional affordable homes from 2016/17 – 2030/31.

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- 5.18 Policy H6 relates to 'Housing Choice and Mix' and states that the Council will seek to secure high quality accessible homes in all developments that include housing.
- 5.19 Policy H7 relates to 'Large and Small Homes' and states that the Council will aim to secure a range of homes of different sizes.
- 5.20 Policy A1 relates to 'Managing the Impact of Development' and states that the Council will seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours, granting permission for development unless this causes unacceptable harm to amenity.
- 5.21 Policy D1 relates to 'Design' and states that the Council will seek to secure a high quality design in development; development should respect its local context and character, be sustainable in construction and integrate well with surrounding streets and open spaces.
- 5.22 Policy D2 relates to 'Heritage' and states that the Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including within Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.
- 5.23 Policy CC2 relates to 'Adapting to Climate Change' and states that all developments should adopt appropriate climate change adaption measures such as not increasing, and wherever possible, reducing surface water run-off through increasing permeable surfaces and use of Sustainable Drainage Systems.
- 5.24 Policy CC3 relates to 'Water and Flooding' and states that the Council will seek to ensure that development does not increase flood risk and reduces the risk of flooding where possible.
- 5.25 Policy CC4 relates to 'Air Quality' and states that the Council will take into account the impact of air quality when assessing development proposals, through the consideration of both the exposure of occupants to air pollution and the effect of the development on air quality.
- 5.26 Policy T2 relates to 'Parking and Car-Free Development' and states that the Council will limit the availability of parking and require all new developments in the borough to be car free.

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6. PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

- 6.1 Previously, the majority of the buildings were used to provide residential accommodation for young offenders, falling within Use Class C2 (residential institution). The residents had access to their own bedroom but shared communal kitchen facilities and living areas.
- 6.2 Local Plan policy H8 (Housing for older people, homeless people and vulnerable people) protects against proposals which would involve a net loss of housing floorspace for vulnerable people. The young offenders' accommodation falls within the Council's definition of housing for vulnerable people.
- 6.3 However, policy H8 outlines exceptions where the loss of this type of accommodation may be acceptable. For instance, where the existing housing is surplus to requirements within the borough, where the quality of accommodation is sub-standard or where the development will enable the provision of an alternative form of housing that meets the objectives of Camden's local planning policies.
- 6.4 There were a number of issues, which contributed to the termination of the young offenders' accommodation care contract. Single Homeless Project (SHP), who were the managing agent felt that the building was not fit for purpose and that it was poorly located to be able to deliver a service to the young people accommodated in the property. SHP made contact with LB Camden's Commissioner for the scheme and LB Camden's Head of service, who were involved with the decision to cease the service.
- 6.5 The young offenders' accommodation has been empty since 2018, as a result of a careful decision making process which LB Camden have been involved in. It is clear that the accommodation was not fit for purpose, and in accordance with the criteria set by policy H8, this played a role in the vacation of the sheltered accommodation use.
- 6.6 Policy H8 also requires, that where sheltered accommodation is lost, the proposed development will enable the provision of an alternative form of housing that meets the objectives of Camden's local planning policies. In this instance, the proposal will provide 7 new affordable housing units. By providing 100% social- affordable housing, this scheme would contribute towards LB Camden's strategic target of 5,300 additional affordable homes during the period of 2016/17- 2030/31.

Residential Unit Mix

- 6.7 Policy H7 (Large and small homes) seeks to secure a range of homes of different sizes and to ensure that housing development contributes to meeting the priorities set out in the Dwelling Size Priorities Table and would include a mix of large and small homes.
- 6.8 The proposed scheme would provide 7 units, the mix of which comprises 1 x 1 bed, 5 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed affordable homes. The scheme therefore offers a range of unit sizes and would comply with Policy H7.

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- 6.9 In terms of social-affordable rented properties, Policy H7 identifies a higher priority for two and three bedroom units. The scheme offers 6 units out of 7 as either 2 bed or 3 bed units and therefore would meet this target.
- 6.10 It is acknowledged that Policy H6 (Housing choice and mix) seeks to encourage the provision of accessible and adaptable homes. In order to be able to comply with Building Regulations M4(2) and M4(3) the internal layout of the building would need to be significantly changed, including the removal of original walls which would have unacceptable impact on the heritage of building.
- 6.11 The scheme, by virtue of protecting and reinstating the original plan and features, is unable to comply with Building Regulations and provide adaptable and accessible homes.

Standard of residential accommodation

- 6.12 Policy A1 (Managing the impact of development) seeks to protect the quality of life for future occupiers and neighbours of a development.
- 6.13 The existing building layout will be enhanced to provide high quality residential units that have been designed to meet National Space Standards.
- 6.14 The proposals will also benefit from suitable levels of daylight, sunlight, outlook and privacy. The lower ground level will only accommodate bedrooms however windows exist at the front and rear of the property on all levels which will ensure all habitable rooms including bedrooms will receive sufficient natural light.
- 6.15 All of the units will receive good outlook by being dual aspect including the basement level and as such it is considered that all units will offer a high quality living environment for future residents. Upper level units will also benefit from additional rooflights.
- 6.16 Overall, the proposals have been carefully designed to ensure that the standard of accommodation provided will be of a high quality, offering light and spacious living areas.

Impact of the proposals on neighbouring amenity

- 6.17 As the scheme primarily involves the conversion of the existing building, there are only limited minor external alterations proposed. In view of this, there will be no demonstrable impact on surrounding neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light or privacy.

Amenity space

- 6.18 Policy A2 (Open Space) seeks to ensure that all developments seek opportunities for providing private amenity space.
- 6.19 The site contains a rear garden which will be used to offer private amenity space for the three, 2 bedroom maisonettes at lower ground and ground floor levels.

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- 6.20 A brick garden wall will be reinstated between 5 and 7 Frederick Street to section off private garden areas. These areas will be cleared and seeded to provide grass areas.
- 6.21 Due to the constraints of the building being listed and within a conservation area, the provision of balconies or terraces would not be sympathetic or in keeping with the architectural design of the building or the immediate area. For this reason, there is no opportunity to create additional outdoor space for the units on upper floors.
- 6.22 It is key to note that the Site is in close proximity (less than 5-minute walk) to various green spaces including Granville Square, Regent Square Gardens and St George Gardens.

Design and Impact on the Conservation Area and Grade II Listed Building

- 6.23 Local Plan Policy D1 (Design) seeks to secure a high quality design in development, and through this seeks to ensure that design respects the local context and enhances heritage assets.
- 6.24 Local Plan Policy D2 (Heritage) seeks to resist development or alterations which would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of Listed buildings. It is also required that development within conservation areas should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.
- 6.25 A Heritage Statement has been prepared by Bidwells and supports this application. The statement includes a Significance Assessment which identifies the value of the Grade II listed properties. An Impact Assessment has also been conducted which considers the potential impact of the proposed alterations.
- 6.26 Since 1980, when the buildings were internally converted into bedsit units, there have been numerous modifications, many of which have been harmful to the original layout of the building. The proposals seek to convert the buildings back to their original residential use. Through this the proposals will reinstate numerous period features within the property and repair the buildings historic plan form.
- 6.27 The main internal changes involve alterations to the existing confined bed-sit layout to create open plan spacious living areas for upper flats. It is important to note that No.5 and No.7 are already internally linked and there are no further works needed to laterally convert the properties.
- 6.28 The existing doors, windows, cornices and skirting's will be maintained where possible. The basement level non-original doors leading to the front lightwell area will be replaced with new timber 'stable' doors.
- 6.29 The external changes include the removal of the external spiral staircase and third floor exit door which is located at the rear No. 7. The staircase is a harmful modern addition which is unsympathetic to the architectural design of the property and its removal would be an enhancement to the Grade II Listed building and the Conservation Area.

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- 6.30 It is proposed to introduce new steel access stairs into the lightwell in front of No.5, which will be accessed via a new gate inserted into the existing boundary railings. It is important to note that there are many examples of similar stairways along Frederick Street, including directly opposite at Nos. 14-20 where such staircases were original features of the buildings. In view of this, it is considered the proposal would be sympathetic to the character of the period properties and of the Conservation Area.

- 6.31 The scheme seeks to retain all cast iron downpipes at the front of the property. To the rear, it is proposed to remove modern downpipes and replace new pipes with cast iron. At first floor level, it is also proposed to extend the existing parapet at No.5 to match the slated pitched roof which exists at No.7. The gas flue at the top right hand side of the front parapet will also be removed.

- 6.32 Where non-original timber casement windows are found to be in a state of poor repair, they are proposed to be replaced to match the design with new double glazing windows. This includes the ground floor rear windows and attic dormer windows with double glazing.

- 6.33 The scheme will also include new conservation rooflights on the front of Nos.3, 5 and 7 Frederick Street. These will not be seen from street level and as such will not have a harmful impact on the listed buildings or conservation area. There are also numerous examples of front rooflights on other properties along Frederick Street.

- 6.34 Overall, it is considered that that the proposed alterations will have sensitive regard to preserving the setting of the listed building and Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It is further considered that through reinstating the building, the alterations will have significant beneficial impact upon the heritage of Nos. 3-7 Frederick Street.

Access

- 6.35 The existing front doors will be retained and will continue to provide the primary access to all proposed units. The access into No. 3 will lead onto a communal entrance hallway which will provide access to one three bedroom and one two bedroom maisonette.

- 6.36 No.7 Frederick Street will similarly lead to a communal entrance hall, providing access to a two bedroom maisonette at ground and basement level and 1 x one bedroom, 2 x two bedroom flat on upper floors.

- 6.37 The front door to No.5 Frederick Street will provide private access to a two bedroom maisonette.

- 6.38 The units which encompass the basement level floor will have access to a further front door leading to the front lightwell as well as rear doors providing direct access to the garden.

Secure By Design

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- 6.39 Local Plan Policy D1 (Design) seeks to ensure that design creates safe and attractive places and ensure developments are designed to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 6.40 A meeting with architect, agent and Design Out Crime Officer on 10th June 2019 to obtain guidance on how to create a safe and secure environment for future residents to live.
- 6.41 The design was updated following discussions and the recommendations such as compliant door locks and reinforced window glazing have been adapted into the scheme. The Design and Access Statement prepared by Project 5 Architects provides specific details of the security measures, which will be incorporated to reduce crime opportunity and improve security on site.

Transport and Waste

- 6.42 Local Plan Policy T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport) seeks to promote sustainable transport in the borough, whilst Local Plan Policy T2 (Parking) encourages car-free developments.
- 6.43 The Site is located in a highly accessible and central location, situated in proximity to a range of town centre services and public transport.
- 6.44 It is also considered that given the small-scale nature of the development in relation to the location and access to public transport that there will not be a demonstrable impact upon transport capacity and the local network.
- 6.45 The internal configuration and listed building status prevent the scheme being able to provide external covered cycle storage. However, 5 secure locking points will be provided in the front lightwells with wall-mounted Sheffield cycle stands to enable three-point locking. A further six cycle parking spaces will be designated in the rear gardens.
- 6.46 Refuse bins will be incorporated independently within each unit which will include internal storage areas. Residents will be informed of the weekly collection day and will take refuse to street level the night before collection. The Design and Access Statement identifies the refuse capacity to be provided in accordance with CPG Design. External Wheelie Bins and recycling boxes will be stored at ground level on metal platforms next to the entrance of the properties.

Energy and Sustainability

- 6.47 London Plan Policy 5.2 (Minimising Carbon Dioxide Emissions) states that development proposals should make the fullest contribution to minimising carbon dioxide emission in accordance with the 'be lean, be clean, be green' energy hierarchy.
- 6.48 London Plan Policy 5.3 (Sustainable Design and Construction) of the London Plan states that development proposals should demonstrate that sustainable design standards are integral to the proposal. This should include:

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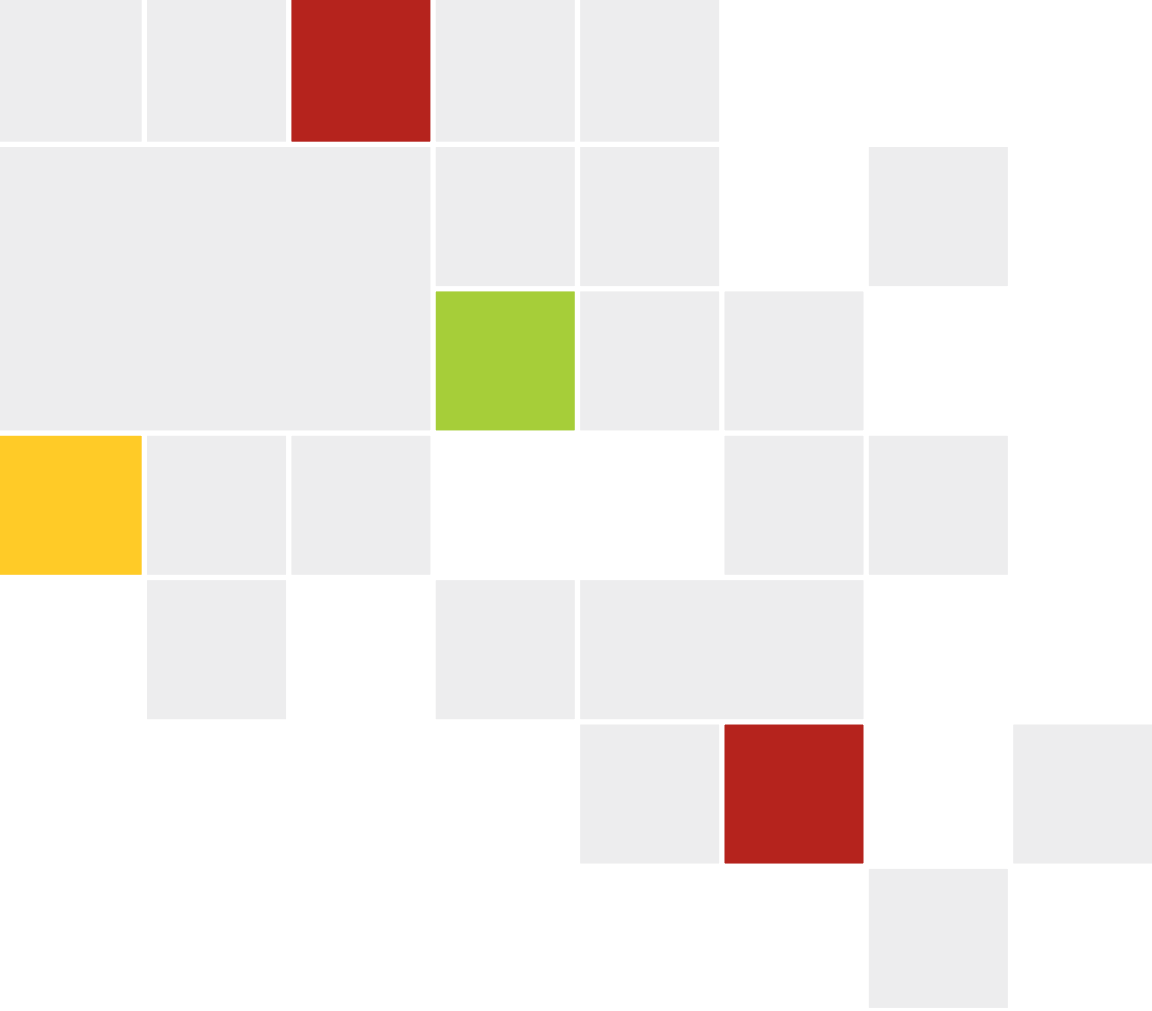
- Minimising carbon dioxide emissions across the Site, including the building and services (such as heating and cooling).
- Avoid internal overheating and contributing to the urban heat and island effect.
- Promoting and protecting biodiversity and green infrastructure.
- Design features such as green roofs which can enhance biodiversity, absorb rainfall, improve the performance of the building, reduce the urban heat island effect and improve the appearance of a development.

- 6.49 XCO2 have developed an energy strategy for the scheme, which details the predicted energy performance and carbon dioxide emissions of the proposed development. In line with London Plan Policy 5.2, the three-step Energy Hierarchy will be implemented. As a result, the estimated regulated carbon dioxide savings on site are 25.7% against a Part L1B compliant scheme. This is a greater achievement than the 19% reduction required by LB Camden’s Sustainability Plan.
- 6.50 The energy strategy has been designed with important consideration for the Grade II listed building as well as its location within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area to ensure that no unacceptable harm would come to the properties. As a result, it is not considered acceptable to implement certain energy saving technologies such as photovoltaics, which would create harmful visual impact to the heritage contribution and character of the site.
- 6.51 XCO2 have also prepared a sustainability statement to support the application. The proposed development is expected to achieve a BREEAM rating of ‘Good’. It is acknowledged that Local Plan Policy CC2 (Adapting to climate change) encourages a BREEAM of ‘Excellent’ to be met in residential conversions of more than 5 dwellings. As previously discussed, the scheme is limited in the energy improvement measures that can be adopted, in order to not risk undue impact to the heritage significance of the site.
- 6.52 Despite these limitations, the scheme has been designed to be as sustainable as possible under the circumstances. Further details of such design measures are provided within the Sustainability Statement.

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7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This planning application seeks permission for the change of use of the existing building from young offenders bedsit accommodation (Use Class C2) to 7 desperately needed affordable housing units (Use Class C3).
- 7.2 The young offenders' accommodation has ceased operation, as a result of a careful decision making process which involved LB Camden. It was clear that the accommodation was not practical or suitable for continued use.
- 7.3 The proposals will provide an 100% affordable housing scheme, comprising 7 much needed affordable rented homes. The proposal has been carefully designed to ensure it will provide a high standard of residential accommodation for future occupiers.
- 7.4 The scheme will also upgrade the existing confined internal layout to provide high quality new homes, which are compliant with National Space Standards. The conversion works have been carefully designed to ensure the original internal layout and features of the Grade II listed buildings are restored as far as possible.
- 7.5 The external works include the removal of a modern staircase at the rear of the site and installation of a new conservative staircase to the basement level at the front of the site. Overall, the alterations are considered beneficial to the heritage significance of the listed properties.
- 7.6 Accordingly, it is considered appropriate that planning permission and listed building consent is granted.



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