

30 Leighton Road

Planning and Heritage Statement

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30 Leighton Road
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WSP | Indigo

wsp indigo.

Aldermay House
10-15 Queen Street
London EC4N 1TX

T 020 3848 2500
E info@indigoplanning.com
W indigoplanning.com

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Pre-Application Consultation Letters

1. Introduction

- 1.1 WSP | Indigo has prepared this statement on behalf of our client, Trustees of W David & Sons Ltd Retirement Trust 1991 (“the Applicant”), in support of an application submitted to the London Borough of Camden (“the Council”) for full planning and listed building consent at 30 Leighton Road, London, NW5.
- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to identify and address the main planning issues associated with the proposed development. The statement demonstrates how the proposal is acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy and guidance and identifies other material planning considerations that support the development.
- 1.3 This Planning Statement comprises the following sections:
- Section 2 outlines the site context and planning history of the application site;
 - Section 3 provides a summary of the proposed development;
 - Section 4 summarises the pre-application engagement that has been undertaken in respect of the proposals;
 - Section 5 contains an overview of the relevant planning policies;
 - Section 6 assesses the proposed development against the relevant planning context;
 - Section 7 provides the Heritage Statement for the application, looking at the impact of the development on nearby heritage assets; and
 - Section 8 sets out the statement’s conclusions.
- 1.4 The following supporting documents are provided alongside this statement, as part of the application:
- Completed application and CIL forms;
 - Location Plan;
 - Existing and Proposed Plans, Elevations and Sections;
 - Photographs cross-referenced to the drawings;
 - Design and Access Statement (incl. Accessibility Statement and Transport Note);
 - Agent Letter;
 - Sustainability Statement (incl. BREEAM assessment);
 - Draft Construction Management Plan; and
 - Environmental Noise Survey.

2. Site Context

The Site

- 2.1. The site is located to the south of Leighton Road and currently comprises a three-part building, connected via a central core. The building with frontage onto Leighton Road is the Grade II listed Kentish Town Sorting Office, known as 'Postmens Office' and hereafter referred to as such, a red brick and stone building with a hipped slate roof dated 1903. It is a one double height storey building containing an internal mezzanine level. The two single storey buildings to the rear of the Kentish Town Sorting Office were constructed between 1998-2005 and are not listed. There is an area of amenity space located in the rear of the plot, between the two non-listed buildings which is currently paved with areas of planting.

Figure 1 Outline of application site



- 2.2. To the west, the site is a five minute walk from the amenities of Kentish Town Road and Kentish Town Station which provides access to the London Underground Northern Line and Thameslink services. The site has a PTAL rating of 5. The site is located within Kentish Town Conservation Area. There are no flooding or ecological issues affecting the site. The houses to the west of the site, and their railings, are all Grade II listed (Number 20-22, 24, 26 and 28). The front courtyard is currently used as a driveway with a dropped kerb from Leighton Road, providing parking for a maximum of two cars. Bordering the site to the rear is a service area and railway line. The site is served by the 393 bus route which is within reasonable walking distance.

Planning History

- 2.3. The site has a previous planning permission (Ref. 2015/4778/P) and listed building consent (Ref. 2015/4856/L, varied by 2016/6361/L). These applications were granted approval in 2016 for the refurbishment of and alterations to the Postmens Office to continue its use as offices (Class B1a) and the demolition of the two rear 'additions' buildings to provide three two-storey buildings containing two/ live work units (Sui Generis) and seven residential units (Class C3).
- 2.4. Whilst now extant, the applications provide a useful precedent as to what could be

considered acceptable development on the site in the context of the listed building and conservation area. The planning permission and listed building consent secured approval for:

- A part two, part three storey building to the rear of the Postmens Office;
- Installation of a communal access corridor formed through the Postmens Office;
- Residential use with balconies facing both the railways and rear of properties to the west of the site; and
- Replacement of mezzanine floor within the Postmens Office.

2.5. The key applications in the sites planning history are therefore:

- 2015/4778/P – *“Refurbishment with alteration of the Postmens Office to provide offices (Class B1a) and a communal access corridor, and redevelopment of the rear of the site to provide three 2-3 storey blocks for 2 live/work units (Sui Generis) and 7 residential units (Class C3), with associated landscaping, cycle and refuse stores.”*
- 2015/4856/L – *“Internal and external alterations to the Postmens Office, and associated demolition of rear additions, to provide B1a offices and communal access corridor to residential redevelopment at rear of site.”*
- 2016/6361/L – *“Internal and external alterations to the Old Postmens Office, to provide an accessible WC/ shower and kitchen within existing rear office room and two dog-legged stairs to each end of the mezzanine floor, as a variation to listed building consent dated 4.7.16 ref 2015/4856/L (for internal and external alterations to the Postmens Office, and associated demolition or rear additions, to provide B1a offices and communal access corridor to residential redevelopment at rear of site wall).”*

3. Proposed Development

3.1. This application seeks approval for:

“Refurbishment and minor alterations to listed building, demolition of rear buildings and construction of a two-storey replacement building to the rear to be used as offices (B1).”

The Proposals

3.2. The proposed development will not result in a change of use as the site is currently in use as offices. The scheme comprises of the erection of a two storey office building, separated into two blocks, to the rear of the listed building. The new structure will be joined to the Postmens Office via a central circulation core, which includes a lift to take any impaired mobility users to the second floor. The proposed building will have a pitched roof, with fenestration providing variance and detail to the facades. This enables the creation of two new rear courtyards, one between the Postmens Office and the eastern block and one between the Postmens Office, site boundary and the western block. An area of amenity space is retained to the rear of the new building and both blocks provide terraced amenity space to the rear, facing the railway.

Figure 2 Visualisation of the proposals



3.3. With regards to the Postmens Office, the key changes internally are the replacement of the mezzanine with a slightly larger structure and the forming of a ramped access route through the building to the rear. Externally, the key proposal is to enlarge the existing windows by lowering their sills to allow further light into the buildings. These would be replaced with bespoke materials and details to replicate the existing provision.

3.4. The proposed development also includes a schedule of refurbishment works that will protect the Grade II listed Postmens Office against future damage. These are summarised as follows:

- Careful assessment and refurbishment of the front façade including cleaning and re-

painting of masonry, repairs to chips on façade, replacement of unsympathetic brick repairs;

- Removal of security grilles, sanding and re-painting of window frames and new security glass installed to front and back windows;
- New railing installed on the eastern façade to respond to the existing railing to the west;
- Make the existing slate roof watertight by removing the slates and installing new breather and waterproofing membranes, with the slates then re-laid over;
- Installation of insulation/plasterboard internally, in the gap between the trusses and the ceiling, leaving trusses on display;
- Installation of passive ventilation ducts within existing ventilation cowls;
- Repairs and redecoration of the internal finishes where needed;
- Cleaning of masonry walls and where needed, repaired;
- Replacement of existing rainwater goods with cast-iron goods with a black finish to respond to the buildings aesthetic;
- Removal of modern render on rear façade of the building if it is possible to do so without harming the structure, so the façade can be refurbished to its original form; and
- Repairs and restoration of the existing herringbone floor.

3.5. Necessary services for the building will be fed through the eastern wall of the Postmens Office, enclosed in plasterboard boxing.

3.6. New plant is proposed in various locations across the site comprising of new condenser units to serve the offices and extractor fans for the WC facilities. The condenser units are located in two of the rear courtyards and will be provided within an acoustic enclosure. The extract fans are located next to the proposed toilet facilities and sensitively placed to ensure they are not unsightly or impact on the Postmens Office.

3.7. A total of 26 cycle parking spaces will be provided, with 4 short stay spaces to the front of the Postmens Office, within the site boundary and 22 long stay spaces in the rear courtyards.

Area schedule

3.8. In summary, the application proposes the following:

	Existing (GIA)	Demolished (GIA)	Retained/Proposed (GIA)
Postmens Office (Ground Floor)	338sqm	N/A	338sqm
Postmens Office (Mezzanine)	65 sqm	65 sqm	89sqm
Postmens Office (Basement)	14sqm	N/A	14sqm
Rear office buildings	282sqm	282sqm	793sqm
Total	699sqm	347sqm	1,234sqm

3.9. This amounts to 794of existing GEA floorspace, 565 proposed net additional GEA floorspace and 981 proposed gross additional GEA floorspace.

Continuation of office use

- 3.10. Since the previous planning permission was submitted in 2015, residential development of the quality previously envisaged is no longer a viable investment for the long term landowners of the site. The residential market has changed whereby prices have reached such a level, that combined with the increase in stamp duty, the units would be generally inaccessible for first time buyers whilst also being less desirable to investors who were historically happy to buy flats due to the strong rental market. On the contrary, Kentish Town as an office location remains highly sought after as prices are less than places such as Clerkenwell and Shoreditch but still desirable to creative occupiers due to the local amenities. In order to be assured of the best use for the site, a local agent was contacted and confirmed that the location was highly desirable for high quality office floorspace and that recent lettings and availability evidence show that there are a lack of good quality offices in Kentish Town. This is partly as a result of the rise of prior approval applications making use of permitted development rights for offices to residential. The Council's own evidence base accords with this view, with the latest Employment Land Study (2015) noting that Kentish Town ward has been particularly affected by the loss of offices to residential. The Camden Local Plan also notes this trend at Paragraph 5.27. Therefore, rather than implement the previous permission for residential, the decision was made to focus on the improving and expanding the existing use of the site.
- 3.11. Adding to this, the long-term owners of the site have made the decision to retain the site as an asset and therefore is keen to secure permission for this scheme of enhancements and future-proofing. This is now more preferable than managing a residential development of the previous applications nature as it is the business with which they are familiar and is considered to carry less risk as they will maintain their ownership of the site as a long-term investment. The proposed development would offer flexible accommodation for small to medium sized businesses and is an opportunity to modernise the owners asset to provide an appropriate solution for the listed building and site more generally. The continuation of office use on the site is in line with local policy that protects employment uses on existing employment sites, the reasoning for this is given in the planning assessment of the scheme in Section 6.

4. Pre-Application Engagement

Pre-Application Discussions

- 4.1. The applicant has undergone the formal pre-application process. A site visit was held on 9 September 2019, with the written advice issued on 3 October 2019. No formal meeting was considered necessary to give a view on the proposals, however there were follow up discussions with the case officer in December 2019 and January 2020 to address the validation requirements for the application and key points raised in the Council's response.
- 4.2. In the Council's response, the following key issues were raised.

Design and conservation

- 4.3. The Conservation Officer responded to the pre-application submission stating that a degree of additional building to the rear is acceptable but that the extensions needed to be differentiated from the historic fabric and plan form. More detailed comments were also given on the refurbishments and works to the Postmens Office. Various design changes were made in response to these points and this is set out in the 'Pre-Application Comments' section of the Design and Access Statement.

Land use

- 4.4. The Council required that justification was given for why the applicant had chosen to apply to continue the office use on the site, given the planning history with a permission for residential and live work units, seeking reassurance that the site can support office use. This has been set out in Paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8. A letter from the agent that has been consulted on the application is also included with the application submission. The applicant is confident that the provision of offices on the site is feasible and the best long-term solution for the site.

Affordable workspace

- 4.5. The topic of affordable workspace was raised during pre-application discussions as Camden Local Plan Policy E2 requires the consideration of affordable workspace on major schemes and the Draft New London Plan also has an emerging policy on the provision of affordable workspace, Draft Policy E3. The site will be providing 535sqm of net additional floorspace and 882sqm of gross new floorspace (GIA). It is therefore not a major scheme and does not meet the 1,000sqm floorspace threshold that is set out in the Camden Local Plan at paragraph 5.44 and the Camden Planning Guidance on Employment Sites and Business Premises. The Draft London Plan requires affordable workspace to be considered where there is exiting affordable provision on site or if a site is identified as needed to provide affordable workspace in the local Development Plan. Neither of these provisions apply to the site. This was communicated to the Case Officer who agreed that the requirement would not apply to the site.

Construction

- 4.6. It was noted in the Council's response that the site has the potential to be challenging to manage during the construction period due to its location and access constraints. It was also raised that the construction process would need to adhere to Camden's requirements with regards to local employment during construction. In response to these comments, a Draft Construction Management Plan was prepared in support of the application and the applicant will seek to work with the Council as the application/scheme progresses to ensure that these concerns are addressed. A more detailed Construction Management Plan is

expected to be secured through condition.

Cycle Parking

- 4.7. The pre-application response required the development to provide appropriate cycle parking and that the proposed office floorspace be car free. The scheme is proposing full cycle parking provision for the entire floorspace, including the existing and proposed, and will be eliminating all vehicular access to the site. The site currently operates with almost all users travelling using sustainable transport modes so this will continue and increase to all journeys through the proposed development.

Amenity

- 4.8. The Council noted that the proposed building would not be closer to the residential properties to the north of the site but a plan was requested to confirm that the separation distance was not changing. This plan has been provided as part of the Design and Access Statement submitted alongside this application.

Sustainability

- 4.9. The Council requested that a Sustainability Statement be submitted, which included a BREEAM Pre-Assessment and complied with the London Plan requirements on energy and cooling. A corresponding Sustainability Statement and BREEAM Pre-Assessment has been submitted with this application.

Public Consultation

- 4.10. The applicant has engaged with local residents and the local Neighbourhood Forum for Kentish Town in the lead up to submitting the application. Between 17-19 December, letters were delivered to residents close to the site on Leighton Road through a letter drop exercise and a version of the letter was also issued to the Chair of the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum. A copy of both letters is included at **Appendix 1**. The letter sought to notify the residents and Neighbourhood Forum of the upcoming submission of this application and provided a brief summary of the proposals and how they could engage with the application once formally submitted. Contact details were also given if any stakeholders wanted to discuss the application before submission. No responses were received.

5. Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

- 5.1. This section identifies the relevant planning policies and guidance at a national and local development plan level. The proposals are then assessed against these policies in Section 5, which follows.
- 5.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) sets out that, provided that policies in the development plan are relevant, decisions on planning applications must be taken in accordance with the development plan, unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.3. The updated NPPF was published on 19 February 2019 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 5.4. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 5.5. Paragraph 185 states that plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats.

Statutory Development Plan

- 5.6. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that where an adopted development plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permissions shall be determined in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.7. The statutory development plan for this site comprises:
- London Plan (2016); and
 - The Camden Local Plan (2017).

The London Plan

- 5.8. The London Plan is the overall strategic plan for London, setting out an integrated economic, environmental, transport and social framework for the development of London. The latest adopted version is referred to as the 'Minor Alterations to' the London Plan (MALP) and was adopted in March 2016. The main relevant policies for this application are:
- Policy 2.9 (Inner London);
 - Policy 4.1 (Developing London's Economy);
 - Policy 4.2 (Offices);
 - Policy 7.4 (Local Character);
 - Policy 7.6 (Architecture);
 - Policy 7.8 (Heritage Assets and Archaeology); and
 - Policy 7.9 (Heritage-led regeneration).

The Camden Local Plan

5.9. The Camden Local Plan was adopted in 2017 and covers the period from 2016 – 2031. It plans to create the conditions for harnessing the benefits of economic growth, reducing inequality and securing sustainable neighbourhoods. The relevant policies to this application are as follows:

- Policy G1 (Delivery and location of growth)
- Policy E1 (Economic Development);
- Policy E2 (Employment Premises and Sites);
- Policy A1 (Managing the impact of development);
- Policy A2 (Open Space);
- Policy A4 (Noise and vibration)
- Policy D1 (Design);
- Policy D2 (Heritage);
- Policy T1 (Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport);
- Policy T2 (Parking and car-free development);
- Policy CC1 Climate change mitigation; and
- Policy CC2 Adapting to climate change.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

5.10. The Council has adopted multiple supplementary planning documents, called 'Camden Planning Guidance' on multiple topics to aid the interpretation of its planning policies. The most relevant of these are set out below:

- Access for All (March 2019);
- Amenity (March 2018);
- Design CPG (2019);
- Employment site and business premises (March 2018);
- Energy efficiency and adaptation (March 2019); and
- Transport (March 2019).

The Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan

5.11. The Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan (KTNP) was adopted in 2016 and covers the period from 2016 – 2031. The plan aims to foster positive and innovative developments over the next fifteen years that will enhance the well-being of individuals living and working there. The relevant policies to this application are as follows:

- Policy SW1 (Supporting Small Business); and
- Policy D3 (Design Principles).

The Plan should be read alongside three supporting documents:

- Statement of Basic Conditions;
- Consultation Statement; and
- Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Emerging Plans

The Draft New London Plan

5.12. The Draft New London Plan has undergone examination in 2019, with the Mayor publishing

his 'Intend to Publish' version of the London Plan on 9 December 2019. This is now with the Secretary of State, with the lay before London Assembly scheduled for February 2020. Given the late stage of preparation the Plan is a material consideration in planning decisions and may become adopted policy whilst the application is being determined. The relevant policies to this application are as follows:

- Policy GG5 (Growing a good economy);
- Policy HC1 (Heritage conservation and growth);
- Policy SD10 (Strategic and local regeneration);
- Policy D4 (Delivering good design);
- Policy D5 (Inclusive design);
- Policy E1 (Offices);
- Policy E2 (Providing suitable business space);
- Policy E3 (Affordable Workspace);
- Policy SI 2 (Minimising greenhouse gas emissions);
- Policy SI 3 (Energy infrastructure);
- Policy SI 4 (Managing heat risk);
- Policy T5 (Cycling); and
- Policy T6 (Car Parking).

Kentish Town Planning Framework

- 5.13. The Kentish Town Planning Framework is a planning guidance document that is being prepared by the Council to provide a vision for the future development of Kentish Town. It underwent a six week public consultation period from 4 December 2019 to 29 January 2020. The Council intend to adopt it as an SPD in early 2020.
- 5.14. The Framework provides key principles for the development of Kentish Town including supporting a strong local economy, providing new employment space and ensuring high quality design and integration with sustainable transport modes.

6. Planning Assessment

Enhancing the provision of offices on the site

- 6.1. The focus of all levels of policy is to build a strong competitive economy, particularly supporting smaller local businesses. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF supports the economic growth and productivity of local businesses and the wider opportunities for development. Protecting and ensuring the provision of high quality, flexible office space is a key policy direction in local and regional policy effective to the site.
- 6.2. The principle of office use on the site is established through its existing use as office premises for a single tenant. The driving force behind the refurbishment and enhancement of the offices on the site, through further provision and improvements to the current buildings and layout, is to address existing issues of building decline, ensure the long term sustainability of the site as business premises and ensure that the site appeals to a much wider range of potential occupiers.
- 6.3. The current three-part building does not make best use of the site's potential not does it form coherent space that responds to the site's context and the Postmens Office. The buildings to the rear will be demolished as they do not provide sufficiently flexible or high quality space. The proposal for a new two-storey building to the rear not only expands the site's use and increases the available office floorspace on the site but also gives the option to let the space to multiple occupiers therefore enabling a wider range of businesses of different sizes to consider locating on the site. The proposed development would result in a larger pool of office floorspace that has associated facilities so that up to five occupiers could occupy the site at any one time, whereas currently the entire site is let out to a single occupant.
- 6.4. The proposals align with the principles of Policy E1 of the Camden Local Plan, which seeks to retain a suitable stock of office premises for a variety of business activities and Policy E2, which seeks to protect business premises from change of use and encourages higher intensity where appropriate. Policy SW1 of the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan also states that the retention and increase of floorspace for the use of small businesses should be promoted. The site is not changing in use and will continue to provide office floorspace to the local area, with this application improving its ability to serve a range of businesses, by providing access to smaller 'units', in line with local policy.
- 6.5. The emerging Draft London Plan (Draft Policy E1) continues the adopted London Plan's (Policy 4.2) support of economic opportunities in inner London and promotes improvements to the flexibility and adaptability of office space of different sizes supported through refurbishments and new floorspace. The proposed development clearly accords with this policy aspiration as it will be supporting the enhancement and expansion of office floorspace on the site.
- 6.6. The site's location in Kentish Town is highly sustainable, located within walking distance to key public transport connections and the amenities of Kentish Town itself, centred on Kentish Town Road to the west. The Camden Local Plan identifies Kentish Town as a highly accessible location for growth in Policy G1. The Plan further notes it to have an important role in providing space for businesses, at Paragraph 5.27, therefore requiring the protection of existing business premises in the Kentish Town area. Securing the site so that it continues to be in office use is therefore policy compliant and will contribute to the continued employment offer of Kentish Town for local businesses. An agent has been consulted during the preparation of the application that support the expansion of offices in this location. Further details are set out in Section 3.9.
- 6.7. The application would contribute to economic growth and would continue to create jobs and

prosperity in line with the key principles of the NPPF. The site is clearly suitable for continued office use, especially in the context of permitted development rights leading to the decline of suitable office premises in the local area, further set out in Section 3.9.

- 6.8. In summary, the proposal to maintain the site in office use and provide improvements and a reasonable extension to the amount of floorspace on the site is compliant with local, regional and national policy and presents a sustainable long-term option for the site and the continued use of a valued listed building.

High quality and sensitive design

- 6.9. The key principles guiding the proposed design of the scheme are:
- Conserving and enhancing the heritage significance of the Postmens Office, Grade II listed building;
 - Ensuring high architectural quality of any new buildings and integration into the site and local context;
 - Upholding existing and future occupier amenity both on the site and in neighbouring buildings; and
 - Maintaining the provision of external amenity space for users.
- 6.10. In short, the proposed design has aimed to define an architectural expression that will sit within the historic context and local character of the site and surrounding area, whilst retaining the clarity and integrity of a contemporary approach.
- 6.11. The full scope of works and relationship of the proposed design to the Grade II listed Postmens Office is set out in Section 3.3-3.4 which contains a full Heritage Statement in support of the application. This responds to the key priority of local design policies Policy D1 and Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan which require development to ensure the protection of heritage assets.
- 6.12. The application is proposing to demolish the existing single storey office buildings located on the southern section of the site and construct a new, two storey, office building in its place. This realises the site's potential to provide a more articulate design for the existing use and enable the expanded provision of floorspace in the form of the two storey office building. This is typical of the surrounding area where buildings commonly range from two to three storeys, although taller buildings of four or five storeys can be found in the immediate vicinity of the site along Leighton Road. This has been designed sensitively to take into account its close proximity to the Postmens Office in terms of scale and form, with the upper storeys pushed back at the rear to mirror the building's front entrance and fenestration pattern adding complexity to the design.
- 6.13. A single circulation core would link the existing Postmens Office with the new building at the back, which is split into two blocks that step back from the front of the site from west to east. The two blocks are rectangular in nature and provided with pitched roofs and appropriate fenestration. Two courtyards are provided, separating the Postmens office from either block, and an area of amenity space is kept to the rear. The proposed site layout has responded to the site context by ensuring separation between the listed building and the new buildings; and breaking up the massing of the new structure through the selection of pitched roofs and by having two distinct blocks to break up the massing of the proposed extension. The coherence of the site is retained through the new building's shared amenity space and a central core, linking the two elements and via the new courtyards and access paths that link to the new access corridor in the Postmens Office.
- 6.14. The facades of the proposed buildings will be constructed with a panel system using fibre cement panelling, with a plinth of blue staffordshire brick. The choice of material was

balanced between providing the right aesthetic for the site and ensuring that durable and practical options were chosen to give the building the best lifespan possible. The fenestration to the facades provides pleasing variance and structure to the visual amenity of the building. Façade openings have been designed to maximise views over the rear courtyard and London to maintain the outlook of neighbouring properties.

- 6.15. The roof is clad with seam natural zinc. Aluminium windows and door fittings and steel balustrades comprise the other key finishes for the building. The set of materials used is responsive both to the on site and local context, choosing materials that work well operationally as well as upholding high standards of architectural design and melting with the existing site aesthetic.
- 6.16. As set out above, the design of the new buildings on the site has responded to the on site context of the Postmens Office through its form, layout and material choices, but also the surrounding area. The proposed design allows the site to reach its potential to provide an improved and expanded office use.

Amenity

- 6.17. In line with Policy A1 of the Camden Local Plan, the design has sought to protect the quality of life for both occupiers and neighbours. The buildings will be set back from the boundary with Nos 26 and 28 Leighton Road to ensure privacy, maintaining the existing separation distances between the buildings. There are no windows of habitable rooms in Nos 26 and 28 facing the site at the ground floor, only at the first floor. The separation distances between the proposed office building and the existing office building remain unchanged to the existing gap by following the existing building line, measuring 16.8m to No. 26 and 20.2 to No. 28. In order to further preserve visual privacy and eliminate any risk of overlooking, the rooms along this northern façade of the western block are for use as toilet facilities or ancillary meetings rooms. All windows will be partially or fully obscured. This is a significant improvement on the previously consented scheme which had balconies on this façade. The site's highly urbanised location mean that it will not contribute to unacceptable levels of artificial lighting.
- 6.18. The proposed development retains an area of outdoor amenity space to the rear of the proposed office building, as well as two ground floor courtyard that separate the proposed building from the Postmens Office and the adjacent residential units fronting onto Leighton Road. These ground floor spaces amount to 274sqm. At the first floor, balcony terraces are provided that supply a further 38sqm of amenity space for the offices. The provision of amenity space provides a high quality working environment for the users of the site and is laid out so that each office, if rented to multiple occupiers, would have an element of amenity space provision. and complies with Camden Local Plan Policy A2 which seeks the provision of private amenity space on all sites, where possible.

Accessibility

- 6.19. Ensuring that the site is accessible to all users is an important priority and is enshrined in local policy. Policy C6 of the Camden Local Plan requires all developments to include the highest practical standards of accessible and inclusive design. With this in mind, the proposed development has set out to improve the current accessibility of the site. This is primarily done through the installation of a new access corridor through the Postmens Office which has ramped entrances either side. The external side access that runs from the front of the site to the rear courtyard is also ramped. The level access to the site from the public highway of Leighton Road will be retained. A lift is provided in the central core to ensure access to the top floor of the new office building. Accessible WC facilities are provided both off the lobby to the Postmens Office and within the new office building. Level access is provided at key changeover points such as between the courtyards and entrances to buildings and to the external amenity areas. The only areas of the site that have restricted access are the mezzanine, basement and overseers oriel window. It has not been possible to provide access to these areas due to design constraints within the listed building. Overall,

the site demonstrates commitment to the principles of inclusive design and will provide dignified, safe access for all users to its facilities.

Security

- 6.20. Policy C5 of the Camden Local Plan requires development to integrate design principles that contribute to safety and security. An assessment of the current security weaknesses was undertaken by the design team. The application proposes that the existing boundary conditions will be maintained and gates/door fitted with higher security locks. As noted previously, the windows will be re-glazed with security rated glass. Modern CCTV cameras and motion detecting lighting will be installed. There is a high level of natural surveillance on the site from the proposed fenestration. The design has therefore incorporated appropriate security measures to ensure the safety of the buildings and future occupants.

Landscape

- 6.21. There is a Tree Preservation Order on the tree to the front of 30 Leighton Road, on the public highway. This is not within the site boundary and will not be affected by the proposed development, however its protection during construction will be prioritised and this will be dealt with in the Construction Management Plan. The existing landscaping on the site does not include any significant trees. Outdoor space and planting is important to the contribution of a high quality environment. The proposed development would include the provision of medium sized trees and a planting scheme for the courtyards and amenity areas. Low maintenance species will be preferred and will aim to provide colour to the spaces. High quality cobblers and setts are proposed for the exterior hardscaping, with timber and metal benches providing seating areas. Further detail on this is set out in the Landscaping Statement in the Design and Access Statement.

Access, connectivity and sustainable transport

- 6.22. The site is currently accessible both via foot and vehicle through its front entrance onto Leighton Road. There is no other access to the site as the car park and potential access to the back is restricted through an access agreement between the NHS and the landowner. The applicant has had multiple previous discussions with both the landowner and the NHS however access of any form cannot be secured through the rear of the site. Therefore, the sole means of access to the site will remain the front entrance.
- 6.23. There is a dropped kerb and small area to the front of the building that can be used as car parking for a maximum of two vehicles. However, given this limited access using vehicular transport, almost all trips to the site at present will be made through sustainable transport modes. The application is proposing to abolish all vehicular access to the site, paving the area at the front and providing a new railing on the eastern half of the frontage. The proposed development is therefore 'car-free' and aligns with the Camden Local Plan Policy T2 which requires developments in the Borough to be car-free, if possible.
- 6.24. The site is well connected to public transport modes, scoring a PTAL level of 5, with multiple bus stops and Kentish Town train station within 250 metres of its entrance. The site is also highly accessible via foot, given its location in relation to local amenities and ingress point directly from the pavement, or cycle, with dedicated cycle lanes on Leighton Road that link to cycleways on larger arterial roads. Future employees or visitors working from the site would be able to benefit from the use of these excellent sustainable transport links to travel to and from the site.
- 6.25. A 'Transport Note' has been provided as part of the Design and Access Statement, in line with local requirements as set out in the Camden Planning Guidance on Transport. This provides further detail to the access strategy outlined above.
- 6.26. Paragraphs 108 and 110 of the NPPF require developments to prioritise sustainable transport modes. The removal of car parking further ensures that the site will be wholly

reliant on sustainable transport modes, which is reflective of its highly sustainable location and the wealth of transport options available to users.

- 6.27. Whilst the site will not be providing vehicle parking, there is still the need to provide cycle parking spaces and facilities so that users are able to travel to the site by bike. There is currently no formal cycle parking provision on the site. Taking this into account, although not required through policy, the cycle parking provision has been calculated using the entirety of the floorspace, including the existing Postmens Office, to ensure that appropriate provision is supplied. The cycle parking requirements set out in Camden Local Plan Policy T1 and the Camden Planning Guidance on Transport requires a minimum provision of the London Plan target and seeks a 20% increase on this figure where possible. Using the Draft New London Plan cycle parking standards, which are higher than the adopted London Plan standards, the proposed development would require 18 long stay cycle parking spaces and 3 short stay cycle parking spaces. This rises to 22 long stay spaces and 4 short stay spaces, taking into account Camden's local requirement. This is based on an overall GEA floorspace of 1,326sqm. The application is proposing a total provision of 26 spaces, 22 long stay and 4 short stay, so complies with the latest published standards. All spaces are within the site boundary and off the public highway. Showers and lockers are provided within the offices so there are suitable facilities for cyclists, and the cycle parking itself has been designed taking into account ease of use, location and security. Further information on the provision and design of cycle parking is set out in the Transport Note.
- 6.28. There is minimal change to the transport arrangements for the site at present, with the removal of the limited vehicular access and parking reinforcing its use of sustainable transport modes. The application will significantly improve the users of the site's ability to travel sustainably through the provision of cycle parking spaces for the development as a whole, recognising the previous lack of provision. There are no other necessary improvements or changes to the transport network required to accommodate this application and it complies with local, regional and national policy.

Sustainability and BREEAM

- 6.29. A key driver of the design has been to ensure the highest level of energy and sustainability performance, including delivering improvements to the Postmens Office. The accompanying Energy and Sustainability Strategy, prepared by JAW Sustainability to support this planning application, details how the proposal is in line with regional and local policy requirements with regards to energy and sustainability.
- 6.30. The proposal incorporates both passive and active energy efficient and sustainable measures, in line with the energy hierarchy set out in the adopted London Plan (Policy 5.2, 5.3 and 5.6) and upheld in the emerging London Plan (Policy SI 2 and Policy SI 4). This is also in line with the Camden Local Plan requirement to consider the energy hierarchy and deliver energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings (Policy CC1 and CC2).
- 6.31. As the existing Postmens Office development is a Grade II listed building, there is no requirement to deliver set energy targets, however energy efficiency measures have been prioritised so that they do not alter the character or appearance of the development. New thermal elements will be installed and upgraded in order to be compliant with the guidance of Part L2B. Natural ventilation has been reinstalled into existing passive ventilation ducts in the building. The development will improve the sustainability performance of the existing listed building significantly.
- 6.32. In the new building to the rear, this is classed as a new development and therefore follows the energy hierarchy, incorporating passive design measures, energy efficient equipment and low or zero carbon technology, in order to be compliant with policies from both the London Plan and Camden Local Plan. The development employs an efficient building fabric and efficient systems to maximise carbon savings for the site, resulting in a 45% improvement over the baseline. It is not possible to connect to heat networks or community heating on the site. The building has been designed in order to allow all occupied spaces to

maximise natural daylight and natural ventilation. Natural ventilation systems will impact less on the environment. An efficient thermal envelope has also been designed in order to reduce the need for space heating and cooling.

- 6.33. In order to be energy efficient, heat and hot water is supplied by a gas boiler with an efficiency of 91%. New glazing throughout the development has been incorporated in order to limit overheating without compromising light transmittance.
- 6.34. The site is not of significant ecological value. The proposal will however attempt to increase biodiversity through the provision of green roof sections within the development.
- 6.35. Therefore, measures have been incorporated to ensure that sustainability is considered throughout the construction and design process in order for the proposal to meet sustainability requirements within the adopted and emerging London Plan and the Camden Local Plan.

BREEAM

- 6.36. A full BREEAM Pre-Assessment has been undertaken by appropriate consultants to assess the proposed development for its sustainability performance. The design has responded to aim to secure the highest level of BREEAM credits possible, with a predicted score of 'Very Good', with a score of 62.59%. The Council does seek a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent' in new developments, as set out in Part H of Policy CC2 of the Camden Local Plan, however the existing site constraints, namely the presence of the Postmens Office listed building, mean this has not been possible. The site is in a constrained location, surrounded by other buildings and close to the railway line. All reasonable measures have been endeavoured in order to achieve the highest possible rating and the scheme will deliver significant improvements compared to the existing buildings and uphold high standards of environmental sustainability.

Noise

- 6.37. As part of the scheme, it is proposed that a number of items of mechanical plant will be implemented within the site. Accordingly, a noise assessment was undertaken on the site to ensure that any future plant is of an appropriate specification and does not impact the existing noise environment and the amenity of future occupiers and existing neighbours. In accordance with Policy A4 of the Camden Local Plan, the development has had regard to Camden's noise thresholds.
- 6.38. The new plant will comprise of a number of air-cooled condensers, the exact specification of these is set out in the Environmental Noise Survey, as well as a number of toilet extract fans. The plant will operate during the daytime office hours and will be located within the middle of the site to limit noise impacts. An Environmental Noise Survey has been prepared by Paragon Acoustic Consultants Ltd as part of this planning application to support the proposed development. The report uses the appropriate external criteria for noise emissions (10dB less than measured noise levels) as identified in Appendix 3 of the Camden Local Plan.
- 6.39. The report noted that for the affected third party noise sensitive properties, the proposed plant will not maintain the derived noise limits due to the plant being located within the middle of the site. Therefore, an approach to noise mitigation is proposed including housing plant in acoustic casing and installation of attenuators. Taking into account this proposed mitigation, it is predicted that the plants noise emissions will meet the exiting noise policy of the London Borough of Camden. The application will therefore not cause unacceptable harm with regards to noise and vibration.

7. Heritage Statement

Introduction

- 7.1. This Heritage Statement has been prepared by WSP | Indigo to assess the potential heritage impacts of proposals for the full planning permission and listed building consent application for 30 Leighton Road.
- 7.2. This Heritage Statement provides an assessment of those heritage assets likely to be affected by the proposals and an assessment of significance. It progresses to provide an overview of the Proposed Development and an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the identified heritage assets.

Identifying heritage assets

Postmens Office

- 7.3. The site contains the Grade II listed 'Postmens Office'. As a Royal Mail Sorting Office, the building was part of the Post Office operation since the early nineteenth century. After the introduction of Parcel Post in 1883, sorting offices became increasingly large with the need to accommodate extra equipment and volume of post. Throughout the Edwardian period, the architecture of these offices varied, often responding to local context with common styles being baroque, free or domestic revival styles. The Postmens Office at 30 Leighton Road ceased to be in use in c.1995. Since then, its use as a commercial building has left the original building largely in tact.
- 7.4. The building is red brick with stone dressings and a hipped slate roof. The front façade of the building is of particular architectural interest. It has a central tall panelled brick chimney-stack set above a segmental pediment and flanked by brick pediments with ball finials above Diocletian windows with keystones. Beneath these Diocletian windows, the façade projects forward to give a segmental-arched entrance with pilasters. Above the main entrance is a frieze with "Postmens Office" inscribed below a pediment with a carved royal coat of arms. The bays either side of the entrance and central inscription have central segmental headed plaques carved with royal "ER" monograms. At the far end of the left-hand bay, the original rainwater head and pipe remain. To the front of the right-hand bay, a set of wrought-iron railings frame a Royal Mail post box. Above the post box, a royal "ER", crown and the year 1904 have been cut out. There are also railings marking the boundary between the site of the listed building and 32 Leighton Road to the left.
- 7.5. The rear of the building is not visible from the street and is architecturally utilitarian. The main former sorting office hall has timber sash windows along its western elevation. Internally, the plan layout of the building as a single space with an overseer's oriel window located at the front of the building reflects its historic use as a post sorting centre. Exposed steel trusses support a slate roof and the floor of the hall is finished with parquet woodblock. It is a fairly utilitarian space, lit by skylights and its Diocletian windows. A modern mezzanine has been inserted along one of the sides of the long hall.

Kentish Town Conservation Area

- 7.6. The site is also within the Kentish Town Conservation Area, with the boundary of the Conservation Area running along the edge of the railway line and the southern boundary of the site. The Conservation Area is located to the north and east of the Kentish Town shopping area and consists of three sub-areas linked by Leighton Road. The site has been part of the Conservation Area since its creation in 1995. The Kentish Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy was adopted by the Council in March 2011 and

provides a summary of the character, key assets and issues and actions for the management of the Conservation Area. Leighton Road is identified as a character area, within which the site is located.

- 7.7. Leighton Road is a residential road that links Kentish Town Road with Torriano Avenue and is lined with early nineteenth century houses, two to three storeys in height, typically in stucco with some brick. The individual designs of housing reflect its historic piecemeal development. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes that the origins of Leighton Road began when landowner Joshua Prole Torriano sold small plots of land freehold to private individuals for houses. This resulted in development initially known as Evans Place, then Gloucester Place before linking to Torriano Avenue and becoming Leighton Road. By 1875, Leighton Road was lined with development. The Postmens Office is noted to be a local landmark. The Appraisal notes that views along Leighton Road are defined by the variety of nineteenth century domestic architecture, twentieth century infill and street trees.
- 7.8. The character zone of Leighton Road is described to be defined by piecemeal plots for houses. The south side of Leighton Road is dominated by two and three storey houses in brick of very late Georgian style. The Postmens Office is an exception with the extent of metalwork and ornamentation that it boasts. Roofs are predominantly natural slate, with walls a brown buff stock brick or stucco.
- 7.9. There are five listed buildings within close proximity to the site on Leighton Road: Nos 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 and their attached area railings to the front of the properties, which are on the south side of Leighton Road; and 27 and 37 Leighton Road on the north side. These have been identified as heritage assets due to their architecture reflecting the historical time when they were built. The stucco on brick and slate roofs are typical of the early to mid nineteenth century. No 37 Leighton Road is a late Georgian house that is particularly well preserved and was likely used for patrons of the Assembly House inn located at the corner of Kentish Town Road. The house retains much of its original plan and fabric.
- 7.10. The Postmens Office is therefore not a typical or contextual building in the area but is a quiet and high quality neighbour.

Planning Policy and Statute

- 7.11. The Act sets out the principal statutory provisions which must be considered in the determination of any application affecting either listed buildings or conservation areas.
- 7.12. The statutory test remains the starting point for consideration of proposals affecting Conservation Areas. Section 72 states:

“In the exercise [of planning functions], with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 7.13. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, including:
- Making the effective use of land;
 - Fostering a well-designed and safe built environment; and
 - Ensuring that there is a sufficient number and range of homes provide to meet the needs

of present and future generations.

- 7.14. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF is explicit in its advice on the presumption in favour of sustainable development and decision making. This states that, where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 7.15. Paragraph 192 of the NPPF explains that, in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities; and
 - The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 7.16. Paragraph 193 explains that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
- 7.17. Paragraph 19 explains that, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 7.18. The NPPF appendices defines 'setting of a heritage asset' as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 7.19. The National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) (2014) provides guidance to support the NPPF.
- 7.20. In respect of decision taking, the historic environment section states:

Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals. (Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 18a-009-20140306).

Historic England Guidance

- 7.21. Historic England has published a series of Good Practice Advice (GPA) of which the one with the most relevance to this appraisal is GPA2 Managing Significance in Decision-taking (March 2015).
- 7.22. GPA2 emphasises the importance of having a knowledge and understanding of the significance of heritage assets likely to be affected by the development and that the 'first

step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant, the contribution of its setting to its significance' (paragraph 4).

Local Planning Policy

Development Plan

- 7.23. The Camden Local Plan (2017) forms the key strategic documents in Camden's Development Plan. Policy D2 covers heritage and the treatment of designated heritage assets. The policy states that the Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and listed buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss or if there are specific circumstances that mean the building cannot be used or renovations funded. It also requires development to take account of the character of conservation areas and the relevant appraisal and management strategy.

Understanding significance

- 7.24. The NPPF defines significance as being:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

- 7.25. Archaeological interest is defined in the NPPF if an asset holds, or potentially holds evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

- 7.26. Architectural, artistic and historic interests are not defined in the NPPF, however, definitions of architectural and historic interest can be found set out in the Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings, published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DDCMS) (2018).

- 7.27. Historic Interest is defined as:

To be able to justify special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's history and / or have closely substantiated historical associations with nationally important individuals, groups or events; and the building itself in its current form will afford a strong connection with the valued aspect of history.

- 7.28. A wider definition of historic interest, beyond buildings, is set out in the preamble to Historic England Understanding Place, Historic Area Assessments, April 2017:

Understanding how the past is encapsulated in today's landscape... and how and why a place has come to look as it does.

Effect of the proposed development

Impact on Grade II listed Postmens Office

- 7.29. The refurbishments proposed to the Postmens Office are solely for the purpose of its long term health to support its active use as a commercial premises. There are elements of the building that have declined, dirtied or weathered and this application will provide a welcome investment in maintaining the architectural and historic interest of the building. Regard has been had to the significance of the heritage asset when assessing the impact of the proposals.

- 7.30. The frontage of the Postmens Office is central to its significance, providing a marker for the area and a clear demonstration of the site's historical use. The decorative design elements reflect the care that was taken during the Edwardian period when constructing buildings for public use. A thorough and high quality restoration of this façade is proposed that focuses on cleaning, replacing and enhancing the architectural features.
- 7.31. The layout of the building and the presence of the overseers Oriel window are key features of the buildings historical and architectural significance. The listed building will be kept as one open floorplan, albeit slightly reduced through the creation of the access corridor, with the mezzanine on the western and side of the building, stepped back around the overseers window. This retains the Oriel as a historic expression of how the building's historic activities were managed.
- 7.32. The provision of more sympathetic hardstanding to the front of the building is proposed, alongside restoration works to the existing railings and new railings to replicate the existing on the eastern elevation, presenting a central pedestrian entrance to the site and new paving that will compliment the façade. These improvements will enhance the entrance to the site and respond to the existing features.
- 7.33. On the side façade, the windows on western elevation are proposed to be extended. The extensions to the windows will not interfere with the original distribution and general nature of this western elevation but will add the benefit of providing more light into the building. The majority of existing windows will be retained and refurbished as will the parquet flooring. Existing windows are proposed to be refurbished with toughened single glazing installed. The rear façade is intended to be restored to its original form, reinstating its historic aesthetic by removing the modern render and paint that has been applied over the original brick. This process will be managed by a specialist and will not be taken forward if it is thought that it would cause unacceptable damage to the listed structure.
- 7.34. Internally, the mezzanine will be replaced and extended, a corridor will be put in that runs along the western elevation. Given the existing presence of a mezzanine, the proposal is not significantly changing what is currently in-situ, however the placement will change the size is slightly larger. The replaced mezzanine will be a lightweight structure that will read as a modern intervention which does not detract from the original structure. The re-location of the mezzanine will be designed with a much lower quantity of steelwork so it can be supported on three posts as opposed to the eight frames it currently stands on that have required significant lifting of the building's herringbone floor to accommodate steel spreader plates. The floor itself has a dedicated scheme of restoration to infill any gaps, re-fix loose board and repair areas in need.
- 7.35. There will be a membrane and insulation installed in the roof. This will allow the building to be watertight and provides appropriate insulation for the existing use, allowing the building to be more sustainable. The slate roof will be carefully removed and replaced during installation, salvaging the existing slates as far as possible and prioritising their placement on the street and western facades. Internally, insulation will be put between the trusses and ceiling however the trusses will remain on display and be redecorated, upholding the key design elements of the interior. The provision of services to the building requires them to be fed along the eastern wall of the Postmens Office. These will be boxed to ensure that there is no negative impact to the existing wall and allow ease of access without any risk to the degradation of the listed structure. The chimneys in place on the building will be repaired and kept in-situ as these are a key element of detail to the listed building.
- 7.36. The buildings to the rear of 30 Leighton Road are not noted in its listing or the Conservation Area Appraisal. Therefore, these modern insertions are not considered to be of heritage significance and are proposed to be demolished. As none of these spaces have heritage significance, the impact of the loss of these will not affect the special interest of the listed building. In fact, the contribution of new, high quality buildings will positively enhance the setting of the listed building.

- 7.37. The alterations proposed therefore retain the Postmens Office as a landmark building along Leighton Road, refurbishing the frontage to enhance and sustain its contribution looking forward. In line with Paragraph 192 of the NPPF, these changes ensure the viable use of the heritage asset by allowing it to continue to be in commercial use, providing office floorspace that appeals to the modern market.

Impact upon the Kentish Town Conservation Area

- 7.38. In accordance with the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special attention has been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Kentish Town Conservation Area (KTCA).
- 7.39. In order to preserve or enhance the appearance of the KTCA, the design of the new building should relate well to the existing listed building on the site and be informed by an understanding of the characteristics of the area that give rise to it being designated as one that has special interest that ought to be preserved or enhanced.
- 7.40. The proposed development would remove existing buildings of poor quality which were unsympathetically constructed in a scale and architectural style which is out-of-keeping with the Postmens Office and that of the surrounding area. The new development will not be visible from Leighton Road, so will have no impact on views along Leighton Road that are highlighted in the Conservation Area. As the new buildings are set back from the frontage of the site and are limited to two storeys, they are sympathetic in scale to the neighbouring listed buildings and the large single storey listed building on the site.
- 7.41. The character of the Conservation Area is already varied with different heights, styles and ages. As noted above, the refurbishment of the listed building will enhance its contribution to the KTCA whilst new development will be a high quality addition that relates well to the site's existing urban grain and material palette.
- 7.42. The proposed new building has been designed to reflect the style and detailing of the existing buildings in the Conservation Area and provide a continuity in design to the Postmens Office, through its use of hipped roof and sympathetic materials. The existing urban grain of the plot will be retained.
- 7.43. The building is considered to be in keeping with existing structures and the historic streetscape, and therefore preserves and enhances, the character and appearance of the KTCA.

Conclusion

- 7.44. The proposals preserve the listed building, its setting and the conservation area. Whilst there will be an element of minor harm to the listed building through these alterations, these are necessary to support the long-term vitality and preservation of this heritage asset, on balance it is considered that the harm is 'less than substantial'. There is a clear tangible public benefit to securing the use of the Postmens Office in the future. The proposals will restore and repair the listed building, preventing further damage in the future through better building design and removal of degraded elements. This harm is considered to be outweighed by the public benefit resulting from the survival of this asset and its key features.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This Planning Statement has provided a summary of the reasoning for and development of the proposed scheme for 30 Leighton Road. The applicant is committed to preserving the Postmens Office and providing high quality development on the site that contributes to the vitality and character of the local area. It has been demonstrated that the design has taken into account all relevant considerations and presents a sensitive, sustainable solution to the continuation and expansion of office use on the site.
- 8.2. The principle of providing offices on the site is established through its existing use and supported in local, regional and national policy. The vibrant location of Kentish Town and the reduction in high quality office space provided in the location over recent years highlights the site as an opportunity to support local businesses with the provision of new, high quality and flexible space with appropriate facilities. There is no policy justification or material consideration to prevent the site from enhancing its current provision of office floorspace.
- 8.3. The key consideration for any proposed development on the site is conserving and enhancing the Grade II listed Postmens Office, a distinguished listed building located in the Kentish Town Conservation Area. A Heritage Statement has been provided in Section 7 that addresses the works in the context of the policy tests of significance and harm. It is found that the public benefit of restoring the damage incurred over time to the listed structure and retaining the building in active use is far greater than the minor harm resulting from the proposed works. The proposed works are focused on refurbishing the existing historic fabric of the building and also ensuring that the building is safeguarded against future damage and can be used sustainably.
- 8.4. The proposed development is a coherent, well designed scheme that will enhance the site's current use whilst providing improvements to its performance with regards to sustainability and the provision of new facilities, improved office space and cycle parking facilities. The application would result in a pleasant and well provided work environment for future employees and visitors. It would ensure the continuation of office floorspace to support businesses of a range of sizes that contribute to the local and wider London economy.

Appendix 1

Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum

By post

18 December 2019

let.007.PV.KC.14660012

Dear Committee Members,

**FORMER POSTMENS OFFICE, 30 LEIGHTON ROAD, KENTISH TOWN,
LONDON, NW5 2QE**

We are writing to you on behalf of the owners of the former Postmens Office, at 30 Leighton Road. The Trustees of W David & Sons Ltd Retirement Trust 1991 has owned the property for over 20 years and the family has previously occupied the premises. It is currently in use as offices.

This letter seeks to inform you that an application to the London Borough of Camden for full planning permission and Listed Building consent on the site will be submitted soon and share with you some key details of the proposed scheme.

The owners are seeking approval for a scheme of improvements and refurbishment of the listed building and the replacement of the studio buildings to the rear of the listed building to provide a sympathetic and coherent form and layout.

The Proposals

Accordingly, the planning application and Listed Building consent will seek the following changes:

- Refurbishment of the listed building, the Postmens Office, to make necessary repairs and ensure the long term future of the heritage asset.
- Internal alterations to Postmens Office, including the installation of roof insulation, a new access corridor and removal and replacement of the mezzanine floor.
- Replacement of the existing rear buildings, which are of low architectural value, and construction of two new double height buildings each separated from the Postmens Office by open courtyards.
- As noted, the site is currently in use as offices and this use will continue in the Postmens Office and new buildings to the rear.

The Trustees intend to continue their long term ownership of the site. The above changes will ensure the continued use and long-term future of the Grade II listed Postmens Office. Sympathetic repairs and improvements to the insulation of the building, will allow it to function as a modern workspace whilst conserving the existing fabric.

The buildings to the rear are reaching the end of their economic life and do not provide efficient workspace for the footprint they occupy. The redevelopment and provision of new office space at the rear of the site will allow it to continue to provide space to support modern businesses working in the area.

Timescales for the Application

We are aiming to submit the application in January 2020. Once submitted, the Council is required to consult on the application for a period of 21 days. This is likely to take place early next year, once the Council has processed the application. The Forum will then have an opportunity to comment on the full suite of application material which will be published via the Council's website.

Should you have any questions regarding this application at this stage, please do not hesitate to contact myself, or my colleague, Emily Taylor.

Yours faithfully,



Philip Villars

Neighbours of 30 Leighton Road

By post

18 December 2019

let.006.PV.AS.14660012

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LONDON, NW5 2QE**

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- Replacement of the existing rear buildings, which are of low architectural value, and construction of two new double height buildings each separated from the Postmens Office by open courtyards.
- As noted, the site is currently in use as offices and this use will continue in the Postmens Office and new buildings to the rear.

The Trustees intend to continue their long term ownership of the site. The above changes will ensure the continued use and long-term future of the Grade II listed Postmens Office. Sympathetic repairs and improvements to the insulation of the building, will allow it to function as a modern workspace whilst conserving the existing fabric.

The buildings to the rear are reaching the end of their economic life and do not provide efficient workspace for the footprint they occupy. The redevelopment and provision of new office space at the rear of the site will allow it to continue to provide space to support modern businesses working in the area.

Timescales for the Application

We are aiming to submit the application in January 2020. Once submitted, the Council is required to consult on the application for a period of 21 days. This is likely to take place early next year, once the Council has processed the application. You will then have an opportunity to comment on the full suite of application material which will be published via the Council's website.

Should you have any questions regarding this application at this stage, please do not hesitate to contact myself, or my colleague, Emily Taylor.

Yours faithfully,



Philip Villars

