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DESIGN AND ACCESS / HERITAGE STATEMENT
25a Mornington Crescent, Kings Cross, London, NW1 7RE

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ISSUE

Revision	Date	Comments
-	Feb 2020	Pre App issue
A	May 2020	Planning issue

Introduction:

This application is for the proposed change of use to the existing vacant office unit (A2) to convert the property into residential use (C3).

This document comments on the qualities of the existing building, which sits in the predominantly residential area of Mornington Crescent, within the conservation area of Camden Town in the London Borough of Camden in the demise of Camden Council.

It considers the historical and architectural context of the site, neighbouring buildings, planning policy matters and the proposed change of use itself.

Assessment of physical context:

The demise of no.25a forms a small side return to the end of the listed building crescent of properties along Mornington Crescent and actually fronts onto the adjacent street of Mornington Place.

25a is located over four storeys and is consistent in its style with no.25 Mornington Crescent; albeit that of a subservient nature.

The current condition of the office space (A2) is in a poor state of repair and certain aspects of the property's fabric are in need of remedial works and attention.

There are very few retained period features and the majority of them have been historically removed or lost. Although there are some original sash windows and small secondary windows, these too are in a poor state of repair.

Social/economic context and planning context: 2

The building is Grade II listed and lies within the Camden Conservation Area as designated on 01.11.1986.

The proposals seek to convert the current vacant and unused A2 office unit into a more contextually fitting C3 residential use to allow for options to return and amalgamate the property back into the main block or potentially as a stand-alone residential unit (subject to relevant approvals) in future.

Planning history:

The site has x1 previous planning application and x1 previous Listed Building Consent determined and approved historically (for the same proposals).

The previous applications were applied to construct a single storey extension and were approved in 1988 as follows:

Ref: 8870311
Listed Building Consent
Demolition of a listed building in a conservation area as shown on drawing no.8819/A
Decision date: 26-10-1988
Grant List.Build. or Cons.Area Consent

Ref: 8802104
Full planning inc Councils Own
Redevelopment of the site by construction of a single storey storeroom as shown on drawing no.8819/A.
Decision date: 26-10-1988
Grant List.Build. or Cons.Area Consent

There were no restrictive conditions applied to these approvals and it would appear that the works were implemented as per the approvals.

Relevant Camden planning policies:

Camden Local Plan 2017

Policy A1 Managing the impact of development

Policy A3 Biodiversity

Policy D1 Design

Policy D2 Heritage

Policy D3 Shopfronts

Policy E2 Employment premises and sites

Policy H1 Maximising housing supply

Policy H4 Maximising the supply of affordable housing

Policy H6 Housing choice and mix

Camden Planning Guidance

Design (March 2019)

Amenity (March 2018)

Employment sites and business premises

CPG (March 2018)

Transport (March 2019)

London Plan 2016

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

Camden Town Conservation Area

Statement (October 2007)

Design Principles:

This application seeks to change the use of the proposal site property and extend and convert the existing property into a single self contained dwelling.

This change of use application is sought in order to allow future flexibility/adaptability of conversion of the property in future and also to allow for potential options of sale/lease. A C3 land class use would be more flexible.

Sustainability:

The property currently is unused and the owners are struggling to find a suitable tenant for the office space. By changing the use of the building into C3 residential use, there is a wider target market of tenants and the property can be returned back to provide additional residential accommodation that the Borough requires.

Layout:

The vast majority of the existing fabric of the historic building will remain in situ. The later addition (possibly 1950s) adjacent to 1b Morington Place shall be reconfigured with the vast majority of the major demolition taking place to the rear.

The front out of character canopy porch shall also be removed and the new facade will feature metal balustrades to continue the appearance of no. 25 Morington Crescent.

All other alterations are to the benefit of the existing building will aim to restore or enhance the existing fabric and its context.

Appearance:

The appearance of the property will remain largely unchanged as part of this application with alterations being of restoration or application of similar features to match the existing property at no.25 Morington Crescent.

Car parking:

Car parking is permit controlled within the application site context, however, this application will not contribute to the car parking space(s) requirement and aims to be car free (subject to any Section 106 requirements).

Conclusion:

This application aims to enhance the area and local context with the introduction of a residential use and aims to build upon the neighbouring context with this residential use. This will in turn lead to the additional upkeep of an historic and listed property in the borough.

The design proposals do not impact on the sensitive nature of the conservation area setting as the proposed change of use will not alter the property layout nor the aesthetic of the building.

Response to pre application advice

Principle of change of use:

The proposed change of use was welcomed during the pre-application. As the majority of the surround buildings are residential this type of use would not be out of character.

There is no history of the legal land class use of no.25a Mornington Crescent but the officer's report was supportive of the change of use from either A2 Financial/Professional or B1a Office. Given that the current office space is vacant and is proving difficult to lease demonstrates that there is also a lack of demand for this type of property within this area.

Amenity:

The revised proposals have taken on board the case officer's comments and have looked to address the previous issues raised. The proposals still seek to extend the ground floor rear by approx. 3m but have now been amended to remove the rear patio doors from the bedroom space. Instead the flank wall of the extension is now to be lined with soft landscaping by way of bedding plants and climbers to provide acoustic attenuation i.e. reduce echoing and also to provide a better outlook and enhanced ecology to the neighbouring apartments.

The first floor extension has now been removed to negate the infilling of the 'gaps' between buildings that are common feature within the area. The lack removal of this infill has meant that there is now an option of rooftop terrace which is not only a benefit to the inhabitants that would not be overlooked nor overlook any neighbours.

Transport:

The new dwelling is expected to be secured as car-free in accordance with policy T2. This would be secured through a S106 legal agreement subject to the final planning decision as transport links are very good within the local amenity.

Heritage and design:

Changes to the Front:

The front alterations have been simplified and now negate any extensions. The non original front canopy has been removed and there have been some complimentary fenestration alterations. The inclusion of new heritage cast metal gates and fences have now been included as discussed with the conservation officer and match that of the existing building. All new windows are sash to match the existing building and the non original side wing extension door has been removed to further tie in the facade.

A small increase in parapet height to the front parapet will allow for a discreet roof terrace to be applied, again with further soft landscaping to improve site ecology and reduce visual impact.

Interior Features:

The interior layout remains largely unchanged, minus the first floor bedroom addition. Although there is still access to the upper level of the unit, this is merely a mezzanine/reading space and has been utilised as such as this space is too difficult to reintegrate back into no.25.

There are no historic features of relevance or historical importance that can be salvaged. If any are further discovered as part of the works they shall be preserved and restored where possible.

Changes to the Rear:

The first floor extension has now been removed with the remaining ground floor extension now having little to no impact on its context by way of loss of light or outlook. A small spine wall will remain at the same height as no. 1b to allow privacy to the new roof terrace. The floor levels and increase in parapet level to the front mean that the terrace will have little impact on the rear neighbours or visually.

The rear fenestration has been amended and now includes like for like replacement or repair of the existing windows in lieu of the previously proposed casement window(s).

The side extension aims to demolish the existing non original ground floor external walls to allow for a more thermally efficient wall construction and also to allow the application of a facing brick facade to mimic that of the garden wall beyond. This was mentioned by the case officer within the pre app as it was deemed that the modern plaster finish would not be appropriate. The facing brick would further break up the visual 'mass' of the front elevation. A contrasting material of this nature would be different enough from the render but still in keeping with its context

(See below garden wall to rear of no.25a)



Scheduled ancient monument (SAM):

This site is not listed as a scheduled ancient monument or similar.

Archaeologically Sensitive Area (ASA):

The proposals do not involve any excavation and are confined to the internal envelope of the property. There may be some localised excavation for foundations to ensure structural integrity but this will be kept to a minimum.

Listed Buildings:

The building is Grade II listed as follows:

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II (2)

List Entry Number: 1113140

Date first listed: 14-May-1974

Statutory Address: NUMBERS 25-35 AND
ATTACHED RAILINGS, 25-35,
MORNINGTON CRESCENT

Conservation Area(s):

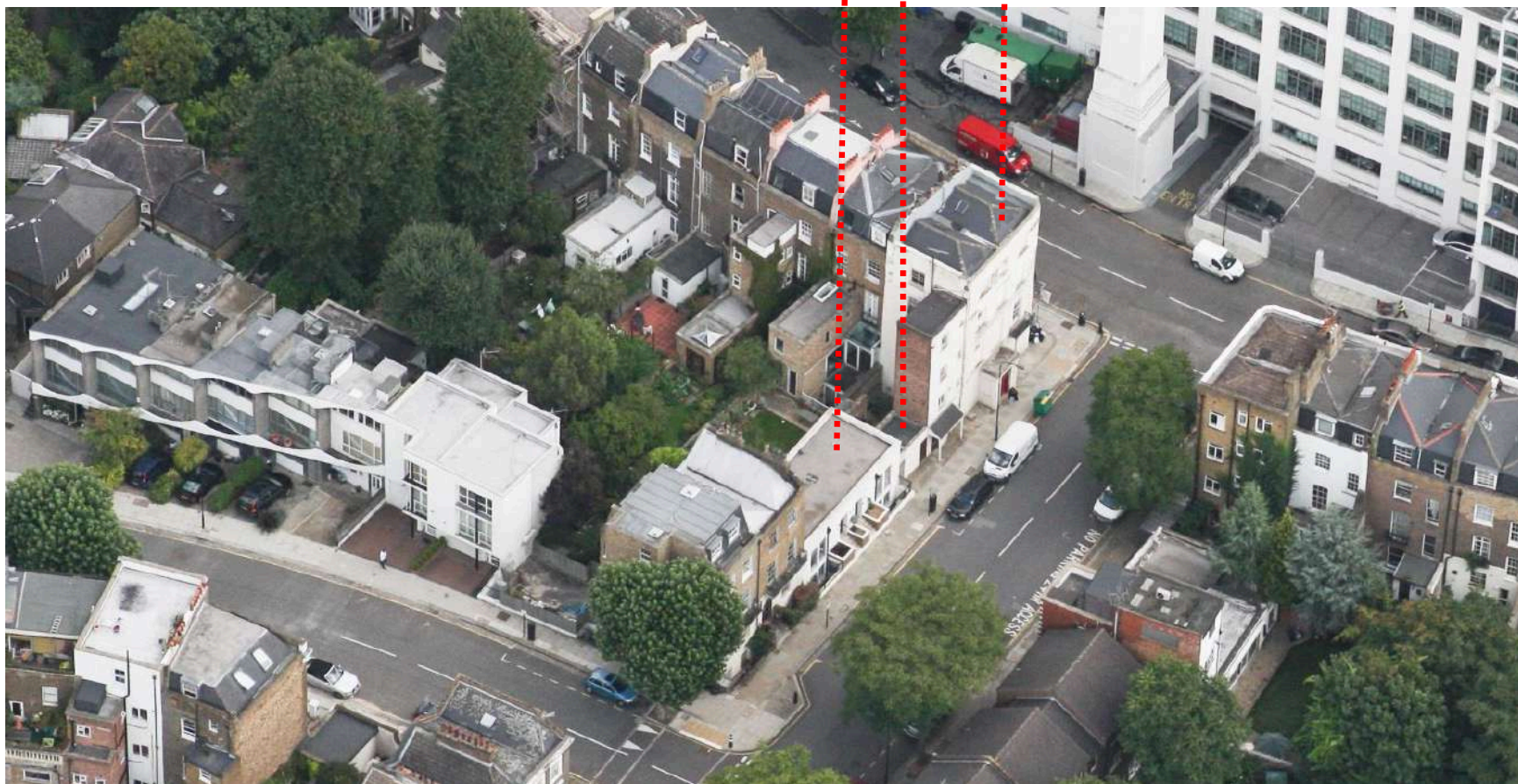
The property is situated within the Camden Town conservation area as designated on 01.11.1986 located in the centre of the borough.

3.0 | Existing building
3.1 | Site photographs

25a Mornington Crescent (application site)

1b Mornington Place

25 Mornington Crescent



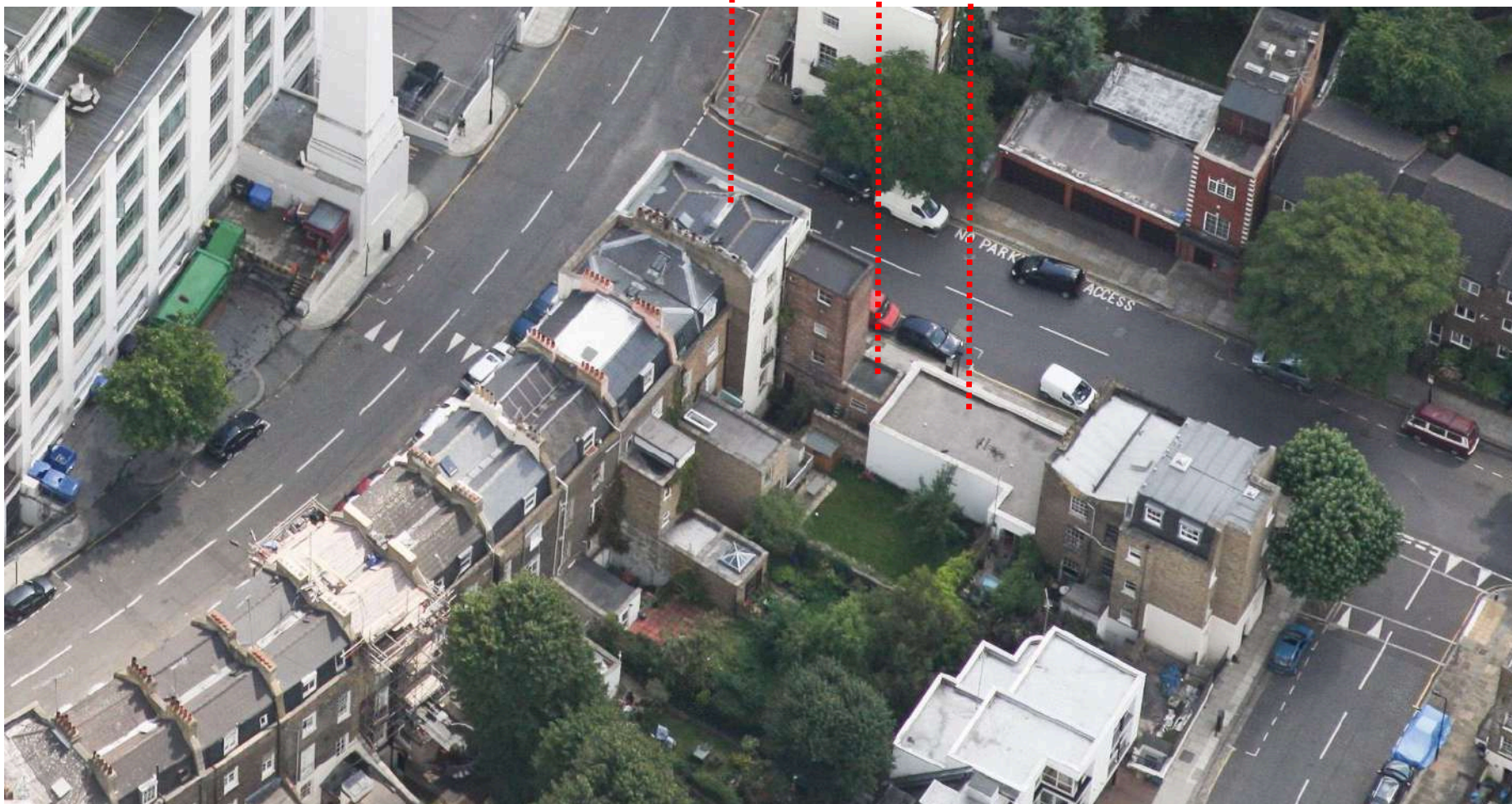
Aerial view to proposal site (front).

3.0 | Existing building
3.1 Site photographs

25 Mornington Crescent

25a Mornington Crescent (application site)

1b Mornington Place



Aerial view to proposal site (rear).

25a Mornington Crescent (application site)



Street scene view to front.



View to currently inaccessible (ladder access only) first floor/mezzanine.

The application seeks to change the land class use of the current vacant property from A2 office space into C3 residential and make use of a dilapidated property in order to create a new studio dwelling.

The proposals aim to be as minimal and as in keeping as possible with the current building externally to both no.25 and its surrounding properties, yet at the same time providing modern and comfortable living accommodation.

The previous use of the site was for administrative/financial offices and has remained vacant now for a number of months.

Given that the application site's neighbouring properties are all predominantly residential. A change of use to C3 (residential) for no.25a (the application site) is a much more fitting class use within the site context and will not be out of character with its neighbours.

There is a high demand for good quality housing in the area and with the fact that the office space is no longer rented a proposal for a well-designed private residential space will be a welcome addition to this run-down part of Mornington Crescent.

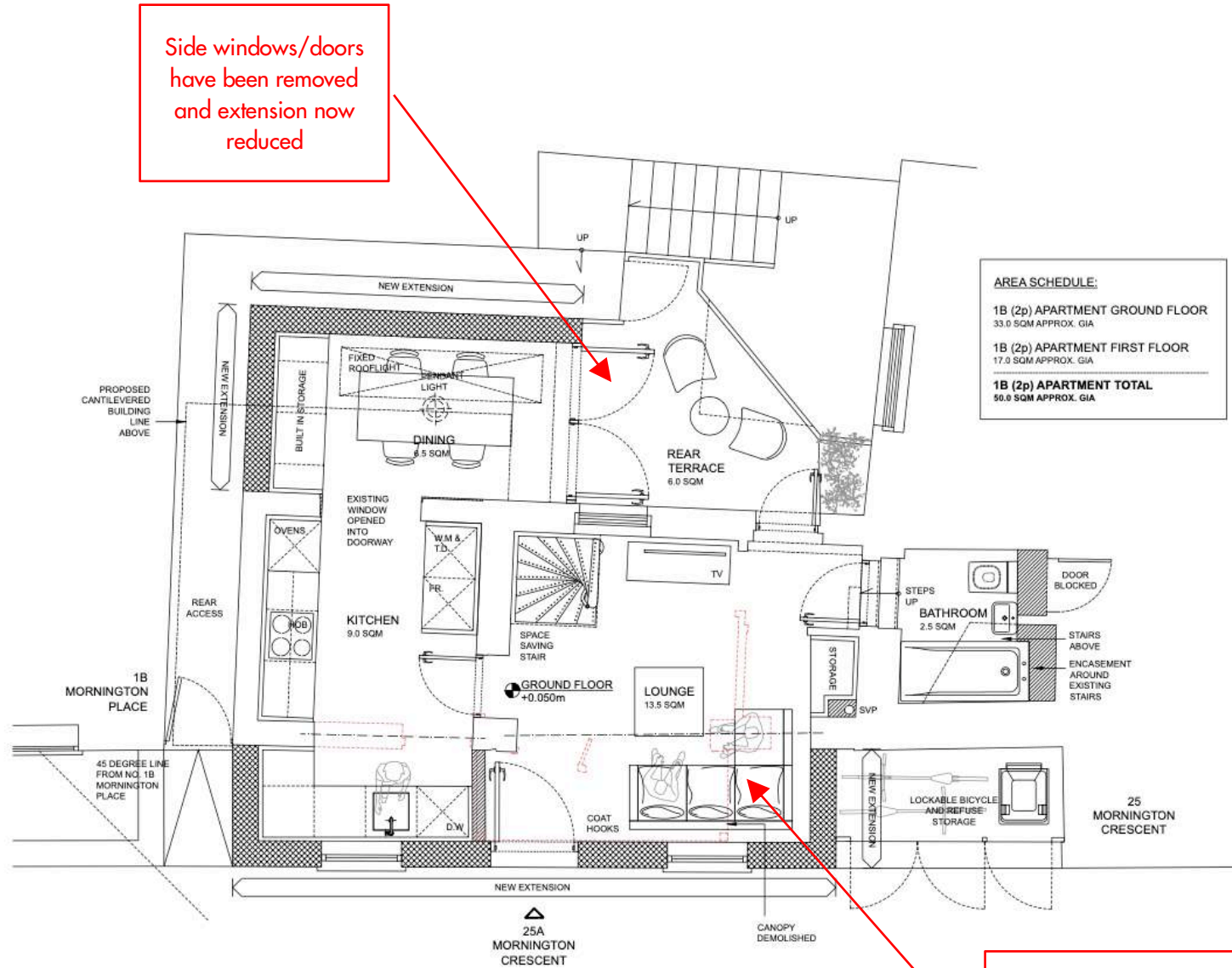
Although the area and footprint of the property will fall slightly short of the requirements for the gross internal area (GIA) measurements, we feel that the proportion and potential external amenity space offer will combat this shortfall.

The proposals will technically fall under the requirements of a 2 storey dwelling. However, the additional sitting area has only been provided owing to the fact that this level is otherwise inaccessible. We therefore feel that this proposal still falls under a single storey 1B 1p studio apartment and in turn only requires a min. GIA of 37 sq.m (as a shower room is provided). Although still short of this target, the additional benefits offered internally and externally mean that this shortfall is negligible in reality.

Built in storage is adequate and will actually exceed the minimum requirement of 1 sq.m.

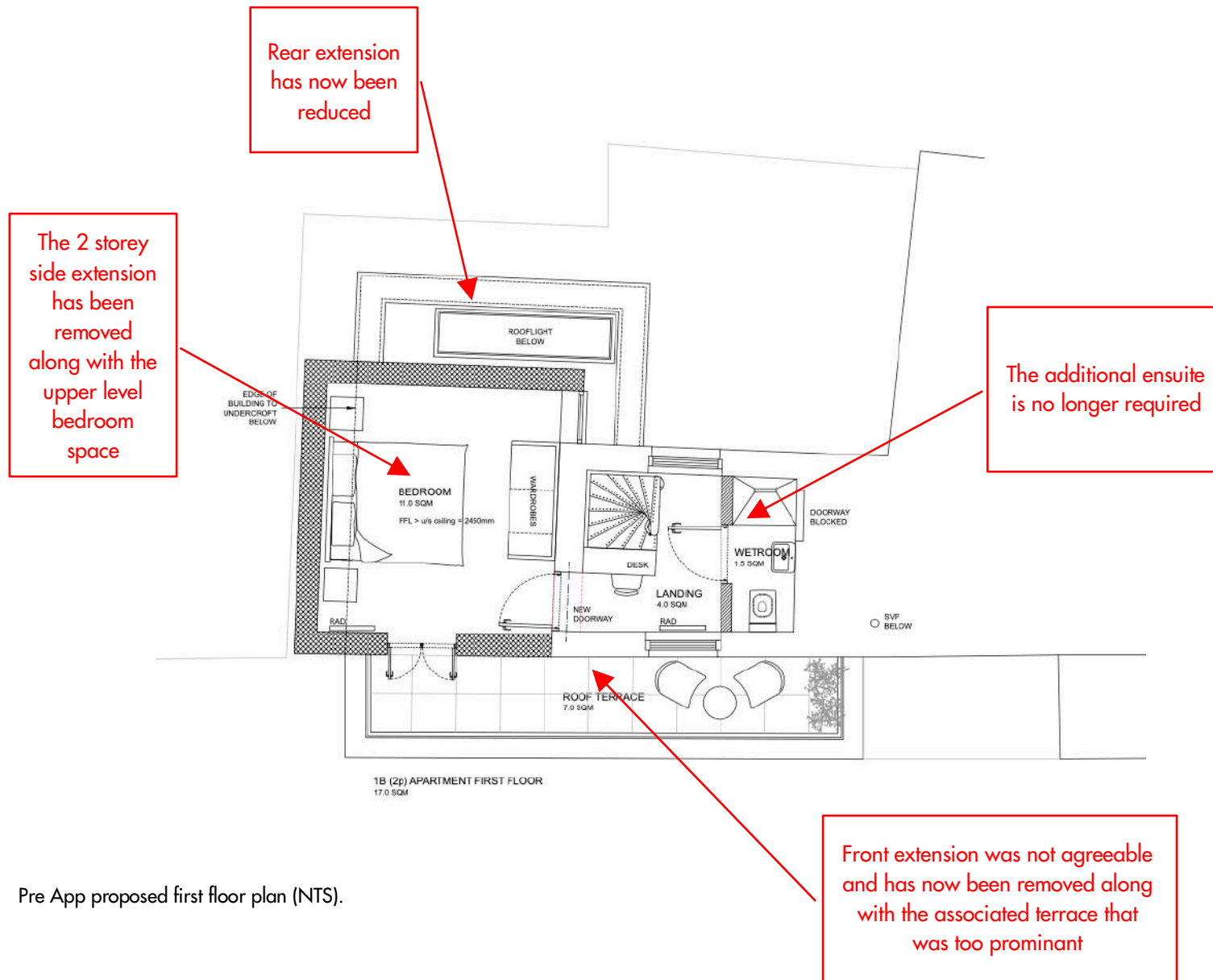
Refuse, cycle and outdoor greenery are also provided where currently there are none. The additional inclusion of rooflights will allow natural light and ventilation into the apartment without causing overlooking or impact to any of its neighbours.

Additional improvements will be made to the structure and general appearance of the Listed Building to ensure that there is no further damage. The historic out of character entrance canopy is to be removed and new windows, render and balustrading is to be applied to match the existing building(s).



Pre App proposed ground floor plan (NTS).

Front extension was not agreeable and has now been removed along with the existing canopy



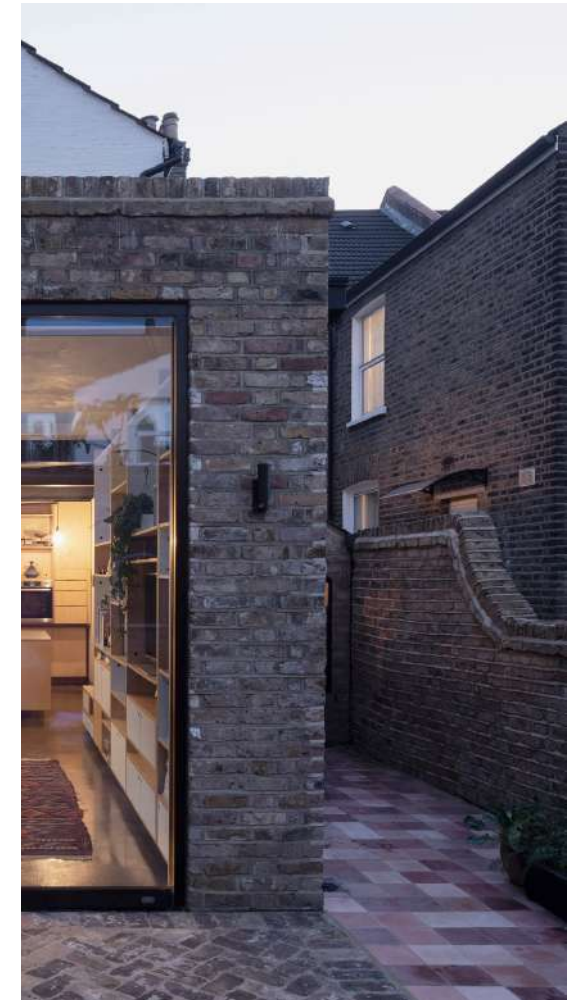
Pre App proposed first floor plan (NTS).

4.0 | Proposals

4.1 Design intentions



- Look and feel (images from top left clockwise)
- interior shower room (image courtesy Fraher Architects)
 - rear hard and soft landscaping (image courtesy Fraher Architects)
 - new extension brickwork details (image courtesy Rise Design Studio)
 - new/old brickwork side extension (image courtesy Matheson Whiteley)
 - high quality interior design ambition (image courtesy Fraher Architects)



The proposals have been carefully considered and although not a traditional dwelling in its location and positioning within the Listed Building, the proportion and usable space for its inhabitants will be a fitting addition to the area of Camden.

Given that the existing building at no.25 is predominantly studio apartments no.25a has been designed to fit in and further enhance its neighbours by way of good quality design and careful design detailing.