







# Refurbishment of 85 Gray's Inn Road

## Planning Application Design & Access Statement

Gray's Property Holdings  
July 2021

**Report Prepared by:** BMJ Architects

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## Contents

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Project
- 1.2 Site Selection
- 1.3 Proposal Summary
- 1.4 Document Scope

### 2.0 Site Context Appraisal

- 2.1 The Site
- 2.2 Site Context & Character
- 2.3 Conservation Area/Listed Buildings
- 2.4 Views
- 2.5 Roofscape

### 3.0 Consultation & Interested Parties

### 4.0 Evaluation & Design Response

- 4.1 Use
- 4.2 The Existing Building
- 4.3 Proposal Overview
- 4.4 Specialist Consultations
- 4.5 Scale & Appearance
- 4.6 Courtyard Infill
- 4.7 Plant Strategy
- 4.8 Perspectives & Street Views

### 5.0 Access

- 5.1 Vehicle & Transport Links
- 5.2 Inclusive Design
- 5.3 Security
- 5.4 Bike & Active Commute Provision
- 5.5 Services, Deliveries & Waste

### 6.0 Sustainability

### 7.0 Conclusion

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.0 Introduction

This information pack has been produced by BMJ Architects together with Savills, Planning Consultant, on behalf of Gray's Property Holdings to inform a planning application with London Borough of Camden, in relation to proposals for the refurbishment of 85 Gray's Inn Road, WC1X 8TX .

The existing 85 Gray's Inn Road is a freehold property recently acquired by Gray's Property Holdings (GPH). The property originally constructed in 1992 is set over 6 storeys from basement to Level 4 with rooftop plant. It was comprehensively refurbished in 2010 to provide a contemporary office building for Warner Bros until they vacated the building in January 2021.

GPH are proposing to refurbish, modernise and reinvigorate 85 Gray's Inn Road in order to re-position the building to meet the growing needs of the life sciences sector. The building is ideally located in close proximity to the Kings Cross Knowledge Quarter and cluster of esteemed bioscience research institutions. The proposals involve a complete internal strip-out and refurbishment of the interior; upgrade of the building fabric; accentuation of the main entrance on Gray's Inn Road; a rear courtyard infill to provide space for the additional building services this building type requires and additional tenant space; the re configuration of the plant enclosure at roof level with consolidated flue stack to service the laboratories; and new provision of a roof terrace for occupants requiring the extension of the East Circulation core up to roof level for access.

## 1.1 The Project

Gray's Property Holdings, along with their specialist market adviser, have considered the market potential for the Life Sciences sector in the vicinity of Gray's Inn Road together with the support for R&D within the Camden Local Plan and decided to re-purpose 85 Gray's Inn Road for Life Sciences. A Design Team has been appointed who have a clear understanding of the complex requirements this building type has and the likely requirements of future tenants from this sector. Key Drivers and aims for the project include:

- To provide offices and dry/wet laboratory accommodation for the Life Sciences Sector. Ensure the labs are appropriate for ACDP Category II research.
- The intention is for the building to be ready for market by Q3 2022 as it is recognised there is a lack of supply in the market.
- To provide appropriate Mechanical and Electrical Services for a R&D Laboratory.
- Provide sufficient flexibility to allow the building to be let on a floor by floor basis.
- Provide a communal terrace at roof level for building occupants.
- Meet the market and Planning demand for cycling and showering facilities.
- Improve the building in terms of environmental and technology performance.

## The Brief

The Client's brief for the project is to provide a flexible building to attract and serve the Life Sciences sector. The following is required:

- Provide CAT 2 lab space with capacity for an incoming tenant to install fume extract if desired.
- Provide sufficient flexibility to allow the building to be let on a floor by floor space.
- Provide toilets, lift provision and on floor services to achieve an occupancy parameter of 1:10.
- Deliver the floors as shell and core with notional 50:50 split between office & lab.
- Provide a co-ordinated servicing strategy.
- Add value and reduce letting void by creating a building which gets the fundamentals right through flexibility of space and ease of use.
- Provide a communal terrace at roof level.
- Provide communal shower / cycle facility.
- Enhance the EPC of the building to achieve a minimum 'B' rating.
- Achieve BREEAM Very Good for the refurbishment.
- Achieve a Wired Score Gold certification for the building.
- Implement Smart building technology through the Smart Spaces App.



## 1.2 Site Selection

Gray's Property Holdings have worked with their specialist market adviser, Creative Places, reviewing market demand and the immediate need for sustainable Life Sciences R&D real estate within the Kings Cross Knowledge Quarter. They have identified the exciting opportunity acquiring 85 Gray's Inn Road and carrying out feasibility studies to test the viability to re-purpose the vacant office building for the Life Sciences Laboratory market.

The location of 85 Gray's Inn Road, within the Kings Cross Knowledge Quarter, is an attractive location for prospective life sciences companies seeking to excel in their field with the large number of esteemed research institutions nearby and 'buzz' from this emerging sector.

## 1.3 Proposal Summary

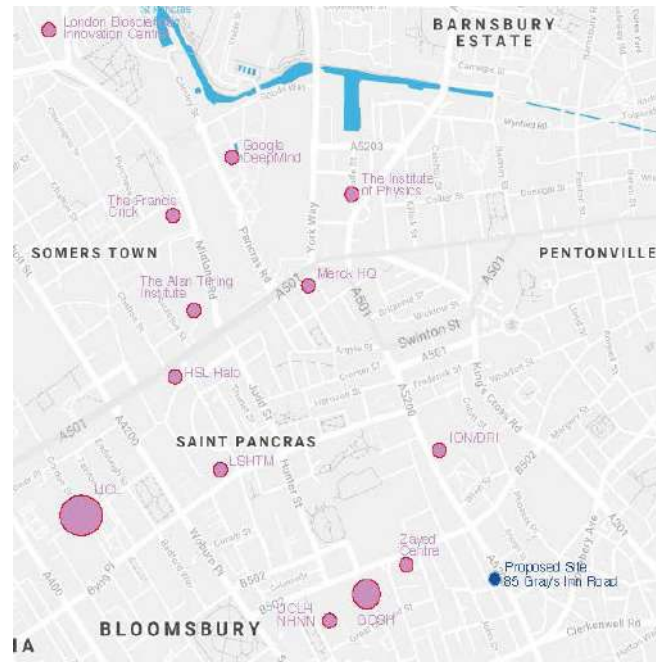
In order to repurpose the building for the life sciences sector a complete internal refurbishment is proposed together with the addition of a courtyard infill to the rear and reconfiguration of the roof area. The primary driver for the additional works is the high demand laboratory buildings have for M&E services plant.

A roof terrace is proposed at roof level to benefit wellbeing of the building users. The east circulation core is to be extended up to roof level for inclusive access.

Architectural interventions at the Main Entrance are proposed to improve the presence of the building at Street Level.

## 1.4 Document Scope

The Design & Access Statement explains the design process and the context and principles that have guided it, which has led to the current proposals for 85 Gray's Inn Road. More detailed references to the various relevant policies and site constraints are set out in the Planning Statement prepared by Savills.



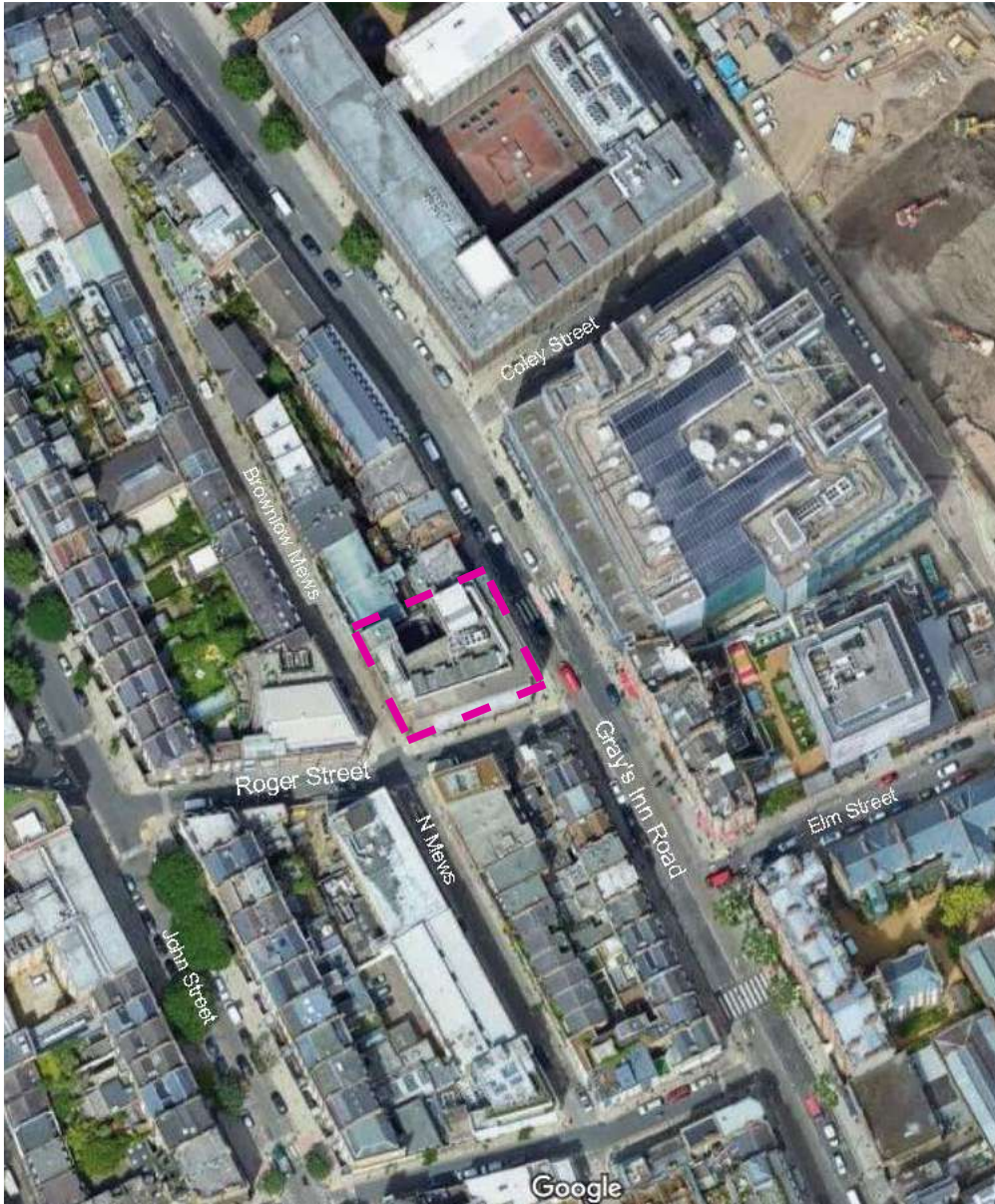
King Cross Knowledge Quarter



## 2.0 Site Context Appraisal



## 2.0 Site Context Appraisal



### 2.1 The Site

The site is surrounded on three sides by Gray's Inn Road (on the East), Roger Street (South) and Brownlow Mews (West); and bounded to the North by Nr 4-6, Brownlow Mews and 91-94 Gray's Inn Road - which both have a boundary/ party wall with 85 Gray's Inn Road.

The site is on the Eastern edge of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in the London Borough of Camden.

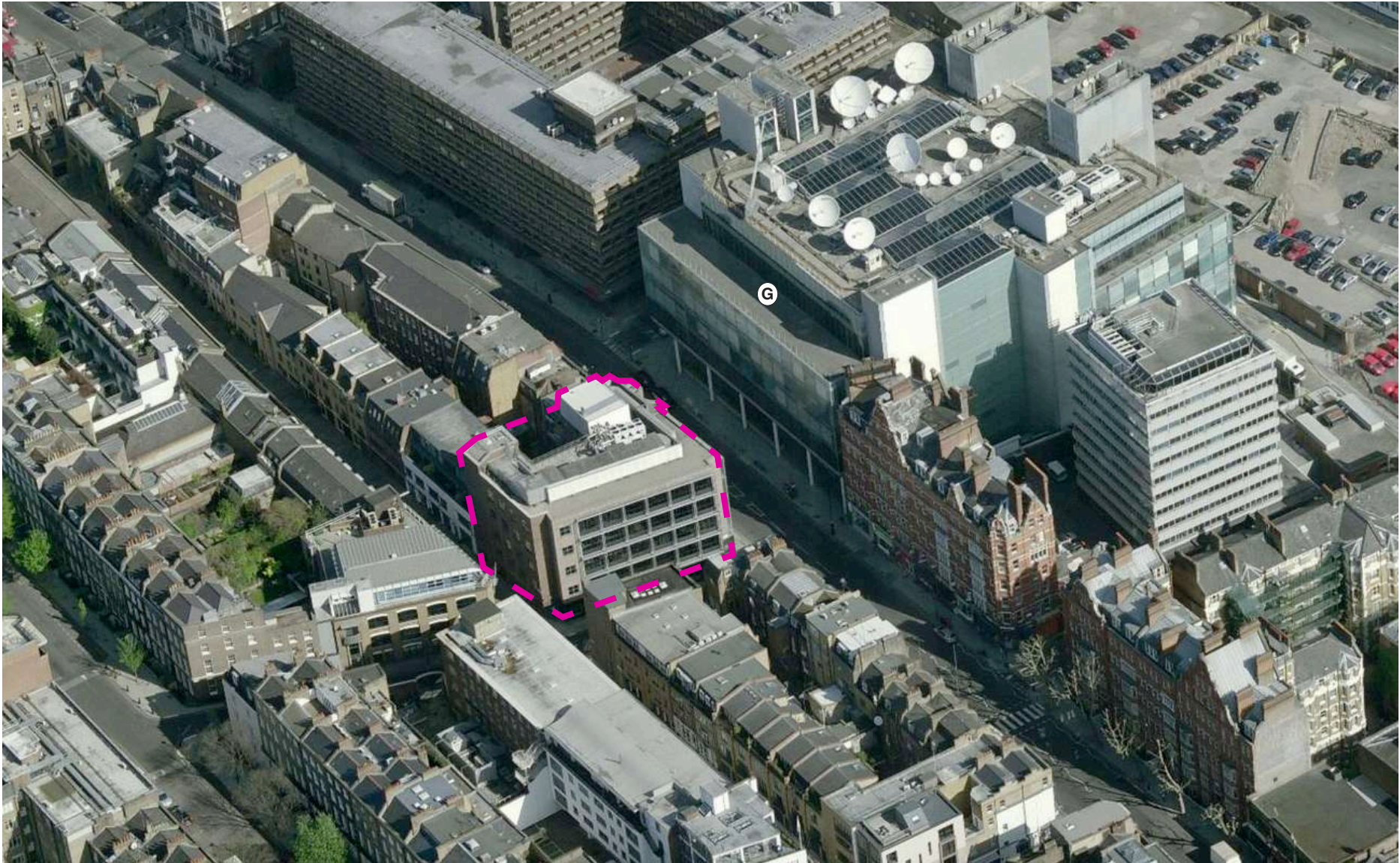
The properties opposite the site on the eastern side of Gray's Inn Road are not in the Conservation Area and there is a noticeable increase in height.

This location is situated not far from Russell Square, Holborn, Chancery Lane, Farringdon tube and cross rail stations, Kings Cross Main Line Station as well as the numerous bus routes along Gray's Inn Road and Theobalds Road.

The Site is directly on the bustling Gray's Inn Road with a variety of building types and uses. Opposite is the Sir Norman Foster Architects designed ITN building. Both Roger Street and Brownlow Mews are quieter side streets with a mix of uses.

The Building was built in 1992 and has had a series of long term full building tenants such as the Legal Aid Commission and most recently Warner Bros. The most recent upgrades to the building were carried out by Warner Bros in 2010 when they moved in.

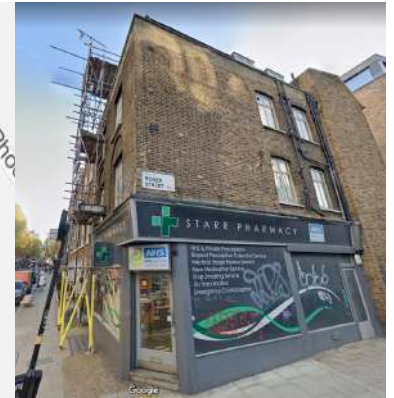
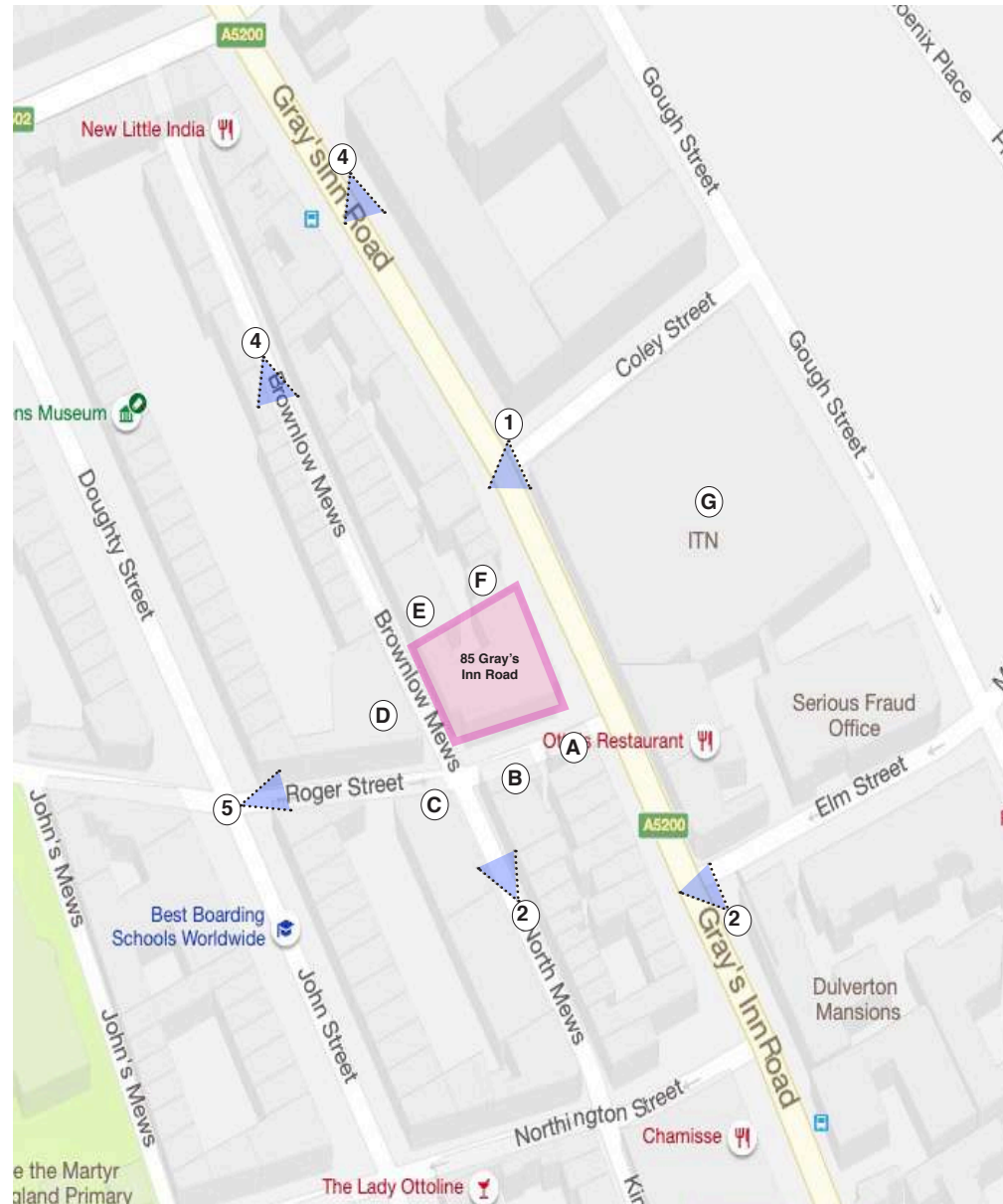






## Surrounding Buildings

- A•** 75-81 Gray's Inn Road is a Grade II Listed Building dating back to the Georgian period. The ground floor of No. 81 (closest to the site) has been converted into a pharmacy with residential above.
- B•** 14-16 Roger Street is a residential building that was recently constructed in 2016.
- C•** Brownlow Yard is a recently refurbished commercial building.
- D•** 4 Roger Street is a late 1800's Works building that was changed to commercial office use in the 1980's with a refurbishment and addition of floor in the early 1990's. It is still for commercial use.
- E•** 4-6 Brownlow Mews is an original mews building that underwent significant refurbishment in the mid 2000's for use as commercial office on lower floors and addition of two storeys at roof level for residential.
- F•** 91 Gray's Inn Road is a 1960's building that was previously fully commercial and was amended in 2014 to retain retail at Ground Floor and change the upper floors to residential units.
- G•** 200 Gray's Inn Road, formerly the site of the Times Newspaper, was rebuilt as a commercial office building with the primary tenant being ITN. The building designed by Sir Norman Fosters was completed in 1991. It has recently underwent a significant refurbishment and addition of roof terrace along Gray's Inn Road.



**A - 81 Gray's Inn Road**



**B - 14-16 Roger Street**



**D - 4 Roger Street**



## 2.2 Street Views



Context Photo Elevation - Gray's Inn Road West Side



Context Photo Elevation - Gray's Inn Road East Side



Looking East down Roger St (85 Gray's Inn & 16 Roger St)



C - Brownlow Yard



E - 4-6 Brownlow Mews



F - 4-6 Brownlow Mews





View 1 - Gray's Inn Rd Looking South 1



View 2 - Gray's Inn Rd Looking South 2



View 3 - North Mews Looking North



View 4 - Gray's Inn Rd Looking North



View 5 - Brownlow Mews Looking South



View 6 - Roger Street Looking East



## 2.3 Site Context & Character

### Massing and Character of the Area

The area surrounding the site includes a range of buildings of varying age, scale and character, with listed properties in the vicinity of the site. The district does not have a consistent architectural style, like other parts of London, and the building types and uses vary between streets and individual properties.

There is a notable change in scale on the East side of this portion of Gray's Inn Road with the ITN Building, 222 Gray's Inn Road, Chuston Mansions and Elm House.

The massing from Gray's Inn Road steps down as it moves westwards, reducing in scale to the mews streets and stepping up again to the prestigious residences of John Street.

The architectural style of 85 Gray's Inn Road adds to the eclectic mix of styles in this portion of Gray's Inn Road.



200 Gray's Inn Road - ITN Building



## 2.4 Conservation Area, Listed Buildings

### Bloomsbury Conservation Area

85 Gray's Inn Road sits on the Eastern Boundary of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area at the junction of Roger Street and Gray's Inn Road.

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area appraisal states of the area in item 5.186:

*The minor cross streets. Northington Street and Roger Street are relatively narrow and varied in character with different building types, styles and ages. Unlike neighbouring streets they have discontinuous building frontages with gaps in the built form and several flank walls rather than principal facades facing the street. This gives a varied sense of enclosure. Building types include townhouses in small groups, mews buildings and later infill. As a result there is an interesting variety of architectural styles, providing a sense of liveliness. Whilst there is variation in heights, there is a general consistency in the use of yellow stock brick with render, red brick or stone detailing, although some buildings are completely faced in red brick. The streets' lesser status in the area is evident in the scale and orientation of buildings and a history of mixed uses such as small shops and public houses. These uses remain with some office and residential uses, giving the area a distinct varied character.*

It also considers:

*The blocks between Gray's Inn Road and Brownlow, North and King's Mews contain a number of terraces, mews properties and a public house that (are) positive contributors*

### Buildings of Merit

Listed Buildings in close proximity:

- 75-81 Gray's Inn Road is a Grade II Listed Building consisting of 4 terraced houses with later shops. c1791, altered.

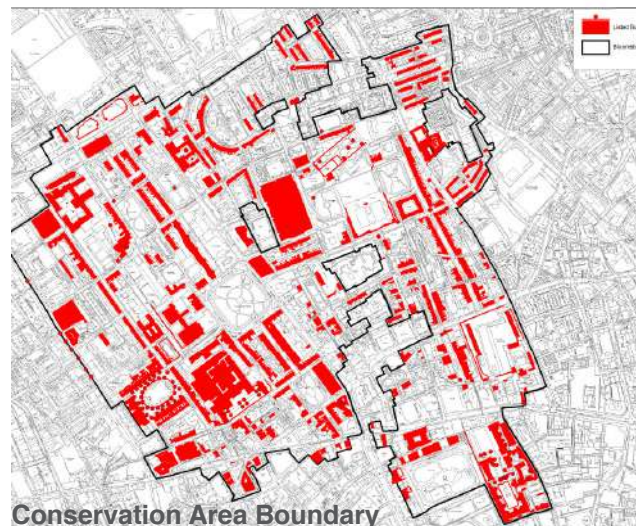
For further consideration of the Conservation Area please refer to the Heritage Statement.

## 2.4 Views

The setting of 85 Gray's Inn Road is very important & it's impact on the Conservation Area and listed buildings in close proximity need to be considered.

Streetscape Views to consider:

- North & south along Gray's Inn Road
- Views north and south from Brownlow & North Mews
- View East along Roger Street



Conservation Area Boundary

## 2.5 Roofscape

There is a wide variety of rooftops, additional floors, plant enclosures, rooftop equipment, maintenance and access equipment, etc in the area.



Looking West over 4 Roger Street



Looking East up to 200 Gray's Inn Road



Looking North over Brownlow Mews

## 3.0 Consultation & Interested Parties



## 3.0 Consultation & Interested Parties

Early in the Design Process the Design Team has engaged with interested parties such as UKPN and Royal Mail. We have also endeavoured to engage with the London Borough of Camden.

### London Borough of Camden

A pre-application pack was submitted to Camden on 18th May 2021. Due to high demands on the planning department they have been unable to offer us feedback on the submission.

Due to programme constraints the Project Team have elected to press ahead with the full planning application and hope to engage in constructive discussion with the Planners during the initial stages of the submission.

### UK Power Networks

Throughout the process, the design team engaged with UKPN to discuss options and procedures to address the existing electrical sub-station and the necessary upgrade for the new lab facilities.

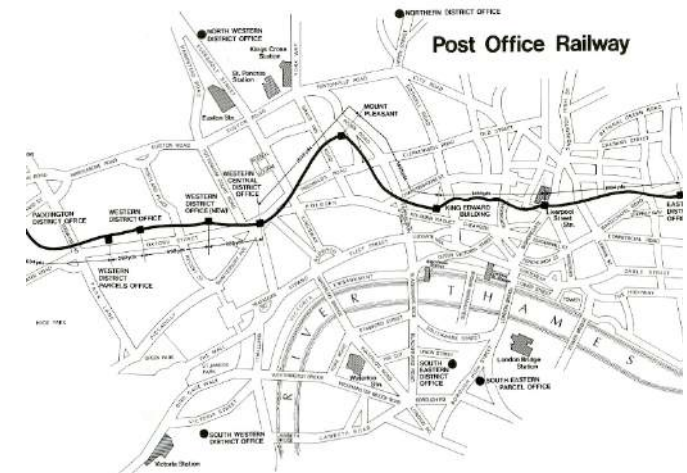
UKPN confirmed in mid May that there is insufficient power capacity in the existing onsite sub-station to cater for the refurbishment project and an additional, second substation, is required to be housed within the building.

Proposals to house the second sub-station in the basement have been discussed and agreed in principle with UKPN and a site meeting took place on 23rd June 2021.

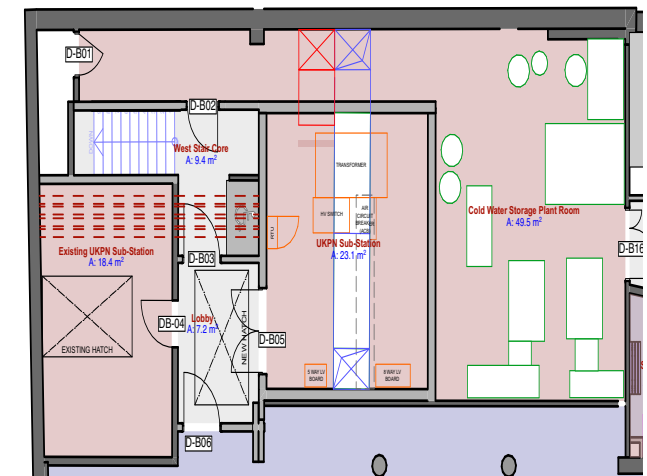
The requirement for the second substation has had impact on net area and also the builderswork ventilation shafts impact on the functional area of the courtyard above.

### Royal Mail Underground Railway

The site runs within very close proximity to the Royal Mail Post Office Tunnels. Jacobs, on behalf of Royal Mail have been mobilised to confirm the exact locations of the tunnels relative to the site. Should it be confirmed that the tunnels are within the zone of influence of 85 Gray's Inn Road, Jacobs will be consulted during design and throughout the construction to avoid disruption to the tunnels.



Post Office Railway



UKPN Second Sub-station

## 4.0 Evaluation & Design Response

# 4.0 Evaluation & Design Response

## 4.1 Use

The site has been used for many varying uses over the years.

In the Late 1890's it appears to be a mix of residential and light workshops. This typology remains until the second world war when it appears the site suffered bomb damage resulting in it being cleared for a number of years

In the 1960's the site was developed as a single storey workshop/car garage remaining as this until the late 1980's when it was demolished and the present speculative office building was constructed. This building use has remained to the present day. It has been vacant since late 2020.

It is proposed to refurbish 85 Gray's Inn Road with minor alterations to rejuvenate the building and repurpose it for flexible speculative laboratory use.



Existing 85 Gray's Inn Road



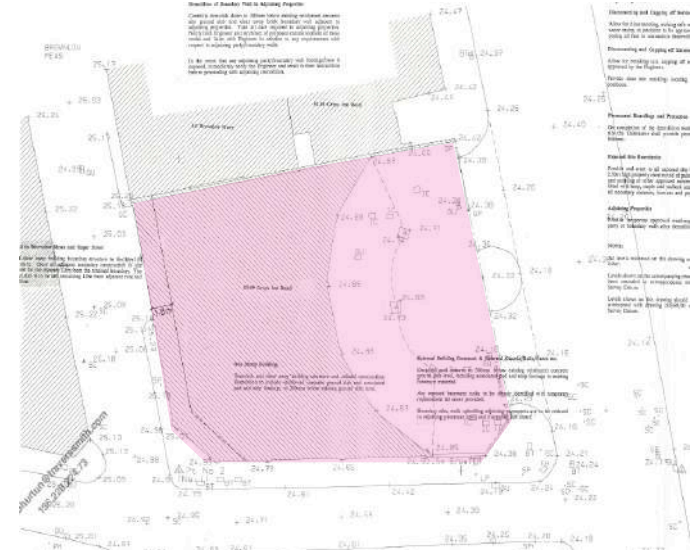
Late 1800's



Bomb Damage Maps indicate significant damage



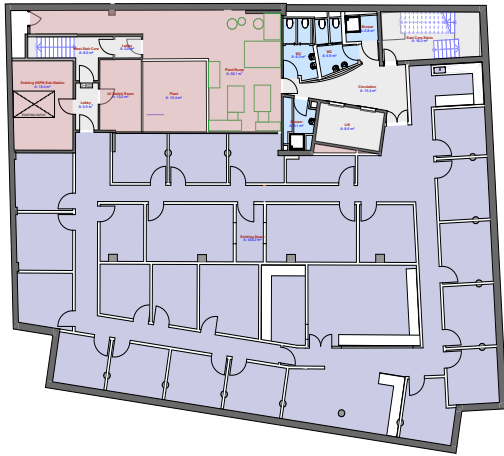
OS Maps 1940-1960's (majority of site cleared)



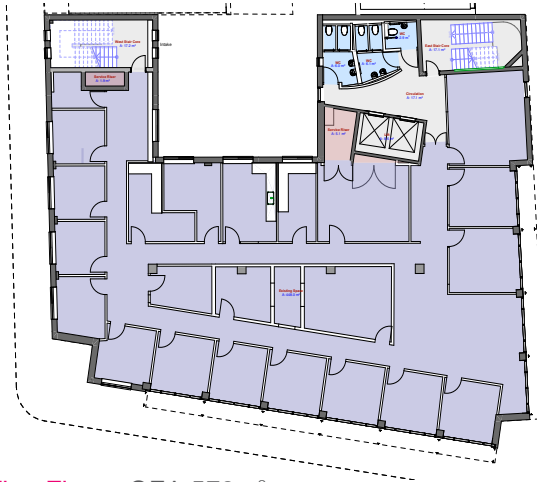
Topographical late 1980's (single storey garage)



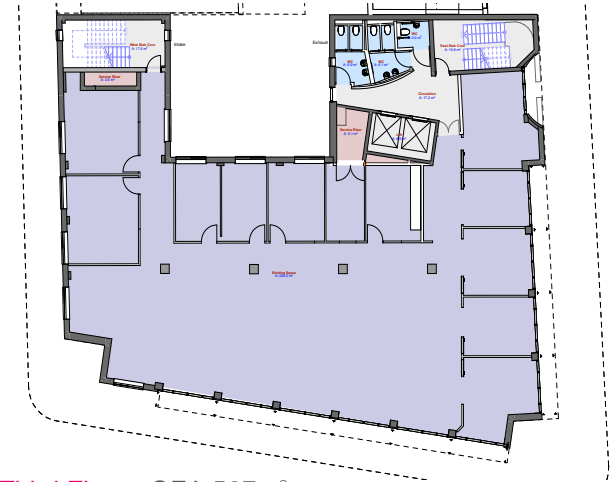
## Existing Layouts



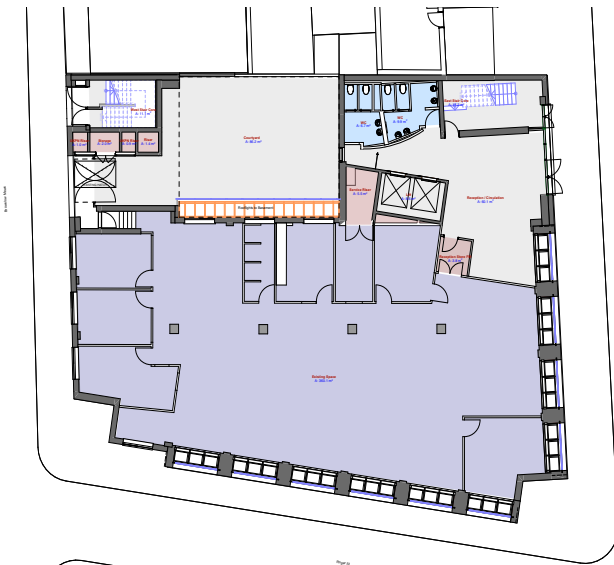
**Basement:** GEA 687m<sup>2</sup>



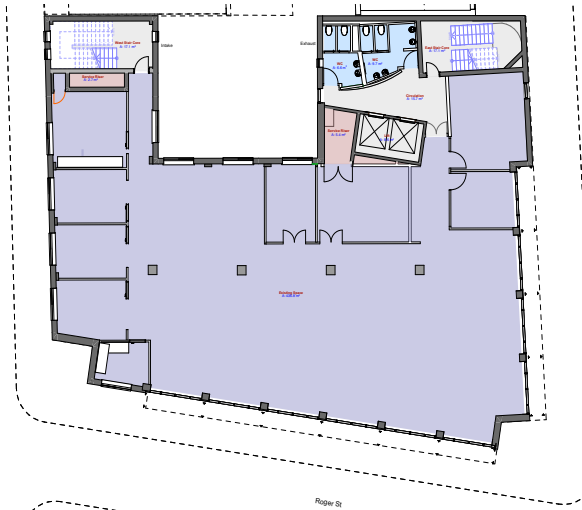
**First Floor:** GEA 570m<sup>2</sup>



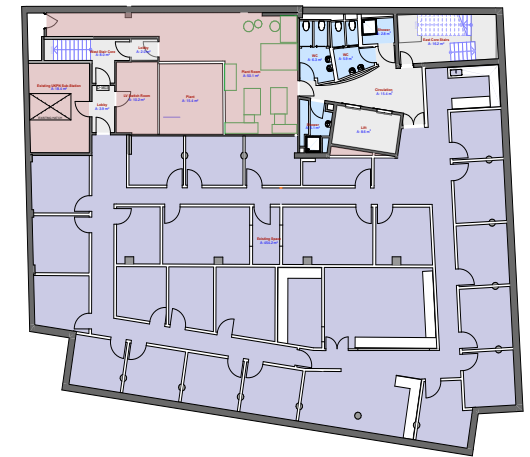
**Third Floor:** GEA 567m<sup>2</sup>



**Ground Floor:** GEA 676m<sup>2</sup>



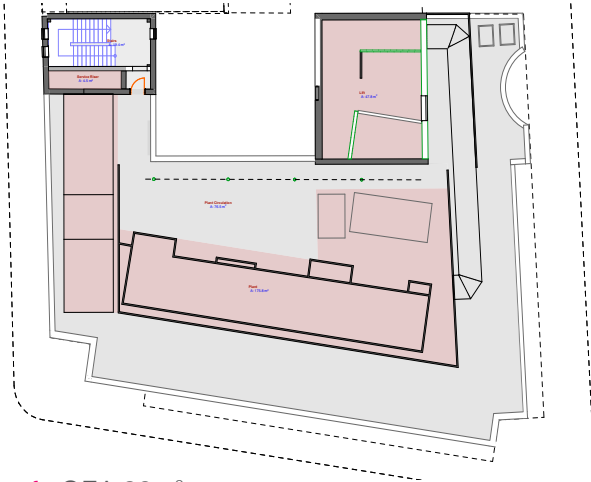
**Second Floor:** GEA 570m<sup>2</sup>



**Fourth Floor:** GEA 567m<sup>2</sup>



## Existing Layouts



**Roof:** GEA 90m<sup>2</sup>

## 4.2 The Existing Building

85 Gray's Inn Road is a 6 Storey building built in 1991, comprising basement, Ground Floor and 4 Upper floors. Along the primary streets it is stone clad with patent glazing system, and masonry brick facades to the rear and mews elevations. There is a rooftop plant enclosure at roof level and small plant room. Centrally to the rear of the property there is a courtyard lightwell.

### Appearance:

The Building leans towards high quality finishes with hi-tech systems for the main facades along Gray's Inn Road and Roger Street. The Ground floor base is a polished black granite, the upper floors are a frameless glazing system with a metal brise soleil system used for shading and also access purposes. Pink polished granite frames bookends the curtain walling.

At Ground Floor the window system is recessed within the structural bays allowing for pavement level lights to provide daylight to the basement floors.

### Entrance:

The entrance to the building is at the base of a vertical pink granite panel with vertical strip glazing and balcony feature.

The entrance is muted with a narrow glass canopy. It is proposed to improve the presence of the entrance with an improved canopy and signage.

There is a rear service entrance to the courtyard from Brownlow Mews. This is restricted in height and is primarily used for deliveries and cycle access at present.

### Public Realm/Relationship to the Street:

The building footprint fronts directly onto the pavement, the ground floor windows are recessed over the basement lights, setting them back from the street.



Photo from Gray's Inn Road

### Circulation:

There are east and west circulation cores. The West Core is stairs that access the roof level. The East Core is stairs going up the 4th Floor and also 2Nr Passenger lifts serving basement to 4th floor.

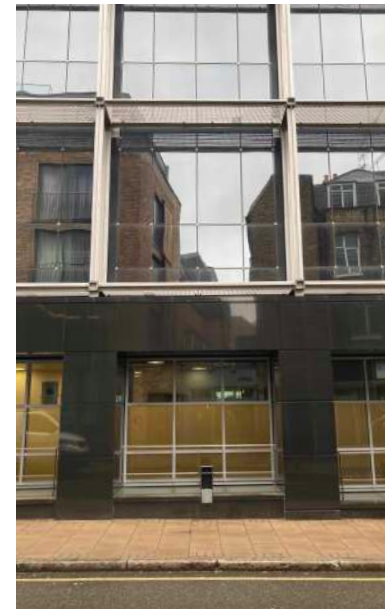
It is proposed to extend the East Stair core and one of the passenger lifts up to roof level to access the proposed roof terrace.

### Basement:

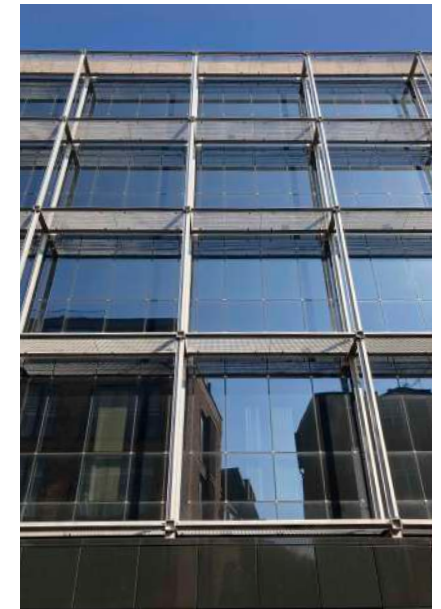
There is a single storey basement that extends to the complete boundary of the site. There is an existing plant room in the basement and also a UKPN Substation for which they have access rights from Brownlow Mews. UKPN have recently confirmed an additional substation is required to be provided on site.



Main Entrance



Base of Facade



Upper Levels Facade

**Courtyard - rear infill:**

The rear courtyard is accessed from an undercroft from Brownlow Mews. It presently houses disparate plant items and cycle parking provision. The facade is of limited merit and considered back of house.

As expected for the re-purposing of this building for ACDP Cat II Laboratory provision a considerable amount of additional plant is required. An infill to the upper levels (1st -4th) of the courtyard is proposed to accommodate a proportion of this additional kit.

At ground floor the courtyard will be an external space for bike parking and servicing the building.

**Roof:**

The existing roof currently has a tired plant enclosure and plant room housing the lift motor rooms. It is the intention to strip-out the enclosure and redundant plant and demolish the plant room. To be replaced with a new plant enclosure with acoustic screen and a small additional area for an AHU. A flue enclosure housing multiple Fume Extract flues is to be located on the West side of the building stepped back from the facade. We are also proposing a roof terrace overlooking Gray's Inn Road and extending the East Circulation Core to roof level.

**Upgrade:**

The building is currently unoccupied and is in need of a complete refurbishment throughout to achieve the required high quality environment to attract prospective tenants from the Bioscience Sector. This includes improvements to core facilities such as reception, inclusive sanitary provision, cycling facilities, etc.



**Rooftop plant (looking east)**



**Internal facade of courtyard**



**Rooftop plant & West Stairs**



**Looking over courtyard**



**Rear courtyard infill**



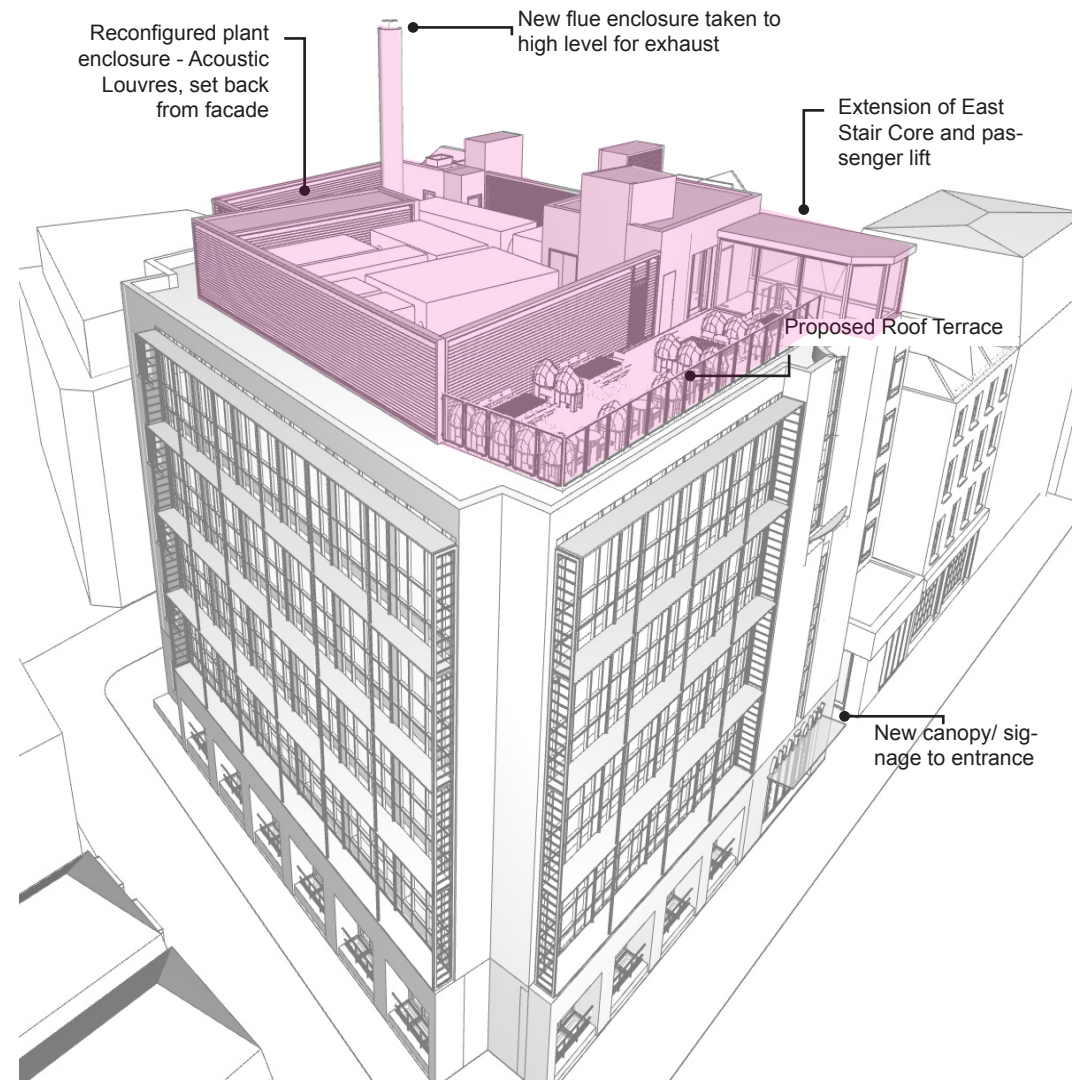
### 4.3 Proposal Overview

Clearbell Capital LLP have recently acquired 85 Gray's Inn Road, previously a speculative office building, and seek to re-purpose it to serve the growing Bioscience sector emanating from the King's Cross Knowledge Quarter. The intention is to rejuvenate the building and offer improved core facilities such as a roof terrace and an enhanced cycling provision, with an inclusivity focus, to meet the needs of building users in central London.

#### Design Concepts

The Design Concepts for the proposal include:

- Maximise the potential of 85 Gray's Inn Road to meet the needs of potential Science Sector Tenants, with minimal extension to the building envelope.
- Undertake a complete fit-out and rejuvenation of the existing building to provide a high quality environment with shell & core suitable for science fit-out and complementary high quality core facilities such as reception, circulation, sanitary facilities, cycling facilities, FM services, etc.
- In order to re-purpose the building to a science building & guarantee future performance of the building significant addition of MEP plant is required. To minimise the impact of this on the conservation area it is intended to infill the rear courtyard above ground level and reconfigure the plant enclosure at roof level with a minor additional area.
- It is intended for a new canopy, signage and minor improvements to the main entrance to assist the presence of the building and signify 'way-in'.



3D Concept from Model