

Planning Statement

30 Leighton Road, Kentish Town

LPA Ref: PP-10029327

Firstplan Ref: 21246/CJ/EC/AM

Date: August 2021

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Section 1 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Firstplan on behalf of N Family Holdings Ltd (operating as 'N Family Club') in support of a planning and listed building consent application at 30 Leighton Road, Kentish Town, London, NW5 2QE, for the following development:

“Internal and external refurbishment/reconfiguration works including replacement mezzanine and partitions, rear infill extension, window replacement/refurbishment, bicycle, waste and scooter storage, external plant and other works.”

1.2 This application seeks planning permission and listed building consent for works to refurbish and convert the building's interior to create an exceptional childcare environment. The works seek to enhance the quality of childcare provision that will be provided at the site through the creation of high-quality indoor and outdoor learning environments, substantially improved arrangements for buggies, scooters, bicycles and waste storage, and other minor alterations to the building. This forms part of a package of refurbishment works to the listed building, which represent a significant financial investment in the building's fabric, condition and appearance by the Applicant.

1.3 This comprehensive submission demonstrates that the proposed works have been sensitively designed to preserve and where possible enhance the appearance and setting of the Grade II Listed Building. The amenity of surrounding users will also be preserved. Moreover, the proposals will deliver clear social and economic benefits via the creation of 30 new local job opportunities and up to 117 much-needed childcare places. The proposals will enable the re-occupation of this vacant building and bring it back into an active social infrastructure use, which is supported by policies across the Development Plan.

1.4 This Statement is to be read alongside the architectural drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by Kennedy Woods Architecture (KWA). The submission is also supported by the following suite of documents which are designed to assist in the London Borough of Camden Council's assessment of the application:

- Design and Access Statement, prepared by KWA;
- Schedule of Alterations and Restoration, prepared by KWA;
- Summary of Alterations and Restoration, prepared by KWA;
- Door Schedule and Specification, prepared by KWA;

- Mechanical, Electrical and Public Health Services Statement by Plenarius Design;
- Heritage Appraisal, prepared by The Heritage Practice; and
- Plant Noise Assessment, prepared by ACA Acoustics.

1.5 This Statement assumes the following format:

- **Section 2** sets out the relevant background information, including a description of the site and relevant planning history;
- **Section 3** provides a description of the application proposals;
- **Section 4** outlines the national and local planning policies relevant to the application;
- **Section 5** assesses the proposed alterations in the context of the planning policy; and
- **Section 6** presents the conclusions.

Section 2 Background Information

a. Site Description

- 2.1 The application relates to a vacant Grade II listed office building situated on the southern side of Leighton Road, Kentish Town. It is located within the London Borough of Camden Council authority area.



Figure 1. Aerial Photograph of Application Site

- 2.2 No. 30 Leighton Road occupies an irregular shaped plot, which wraps around the rears of nos. 28 and 26 Leighton Road. The building fronts onto Leighton Road (north) and immediately south are the sunken railway lines and platforms, which run east-west into Kentish Town Station. On the southern side of the railway lines and platforms is the Kentish Town Church of England Primary School. The entrance to the Station is approx. 150m to the west of the site on Kentish Town Road.
- 2.3 Immediately west of the application building is no. 28 which is in residential use as flats and to the west of the rear of the site is a builders' merchants. Immediately east at no. 32 Leighton Road is a modern office building. Beyond this at the rear of no. 32 is 'The Caversham Group Practice' and 'The Peckwater Centre', which is a substantial complex that extends east and south/east of the site. The rear boundary of the application site is formed partly by the railway wall (area to rear of nos. 28 and 26) and the car

park associated with The Caversham Group Practice and The Peckwater Centre. The Station platforms sit approximately 4m below the ground level at the application site and adjacent car park.

- 2.4 Immediately north are residential properties on Leighton Road. The application site and the immediate area are depicted in the aerial photograph provided at Figure 1.
- 2.5 The building comprises the former Postman's Sorting Office, constructed in 1903. The plot is broadly 'L' shaped with the main volume of the sorting office building situated at the front and central parts of the site. At the rear, there are a number of extensions of varying ages, which project rearwards (south), including a garden room at the rear of the site built in the early 2000's. To the south/west of the building is a studio office room, connected by a glazed link, which was built in the late 1990's. The rear garden is split in two parts, separated by a tall feature curved wall (built at the same time as the studio room) and includes paving and low landscaping.
- 2.6 The application building was Grade II listed in 1995 (listing entry number: 1379291) at the time of its conversion to office use and is described as follows:

“Royal Mail sorting office. Dated 1903. Red brick with stone dressings. Hipped slated roof with central tall panelled brick chimney-stack set above a segmental pediment and flanked by brick pediments with ball finials above Diocletian windows with keystones. Symmetrical design. Lower single storey facade projects forward beneath the Diocletian windows to give a segmental-arched entrance with pilasters having enriched capitals and frieze inscribed "Postmens Office", above which a pediment with carved royal coat of arms; original part-glazed double doors. Left hand bay with 2 sashes, upper halves with glazing bars; right hand bay with 3 smaller sashes, upper halves with glazing bars. Both bays with brick parapets, corresponding to doorway frieze, and having central segmental headed plaques carved with royal GR monograms. Original rainwater head and pipe to left hand bay. INTERIOR: not inspected.”

- 2.7 A full description of the listed building, including its interior and its significance is provided within the submitted Heritage Appraisal, prepared by the Heritage Practice. There are a number of other listed buildings in close proximity, including No. 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 to the south side of Leighton Road and No. 27 and 37 Leighton Road on the north side.

- 2.8 The application site is situated within the Kentish Town Conservation Area and also within the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan Area. The site is not located within an area at risk of flooding and has a PTAL Rating of 5 with very good access to public transport links. The Council’s database further confirms that there is potential for contamination and that the site is situated within a Strategic View: Wider Setting Consultation Area (View from Kenwood to St Pauls).
- 2.9 Extensive photographs of the building and site are provided in the submitted Design and Access Statement and Schedule of Works by Kennedy Woods Architects.

b. Planning History Overview

- 2.10 The lawful use of the building comprises an Office under Class E (g) (i) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020. This is confirmed by the grant of planning permission (ref: **9500344**) in 1995 for:

“Change of use from G.P.O. sorting office to studio/ office/workshop with ancillary warehouse/storage accommodation within Class B1 use as defined by the Town and country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as shown on location plan”.

- 2.11 Subsequently the building has been extended as follows:

- Ref: **LE9700265R1** (Listed Building Consent) and **PE9700162R1** (Planning Permission) for the: *“Demolition of existing pre-fabricated building, erection of a single storey building for use as a design studio (Class B1) and alterations to the rear elevation including installation of decorative grilles over the windows, as shown on drawing numbers 97/500/20, 21, 24, 1 to 4, 30i, and 30ii”.* Granted on 1st August 1997.
- Ref: **2003/2999/P** for the: *“Erection of a single storey structure at the rear of the site for use as a garden room”.* Granted on 23rd December 2003.

- 2.12 No conditions were attached to these consents that would preclude the use of the building (now within Class E) as a children’s nursery.

- 2.13 The other relevant applications at the site are summarised in the Table 1 below.

Application Ref:	Year	Proposal	Decision
33695	1982	Alterations at the rear of the existing building at 30 Leighton Road and the erection on land at the rear of 26-30 Leighton Road of a single storey pre-fabricated building for use as welfare accommodation for Post Office Staff.	Grant
9560125	1995	Partial demolition of a prefabricated building as shown on drawing nos. 95023/010 020.	Grant
9500975	1995	Removal of end section of existing prefabricated building and erection of a green PVC coated chain link fence 1800mm high with 3 runs of double twist security wire along the top the fence post are to be pre-cast reinforced concrete and incorporating a gate. (Plans submitted)	Permitted Development
LE9700265	1997	Demolition of existing portakabin and the erection of a single storey building for use as a design studio (Class B1) and alterations to the rear elevation comprising rendering of existing brickwork and the installation of decorative grilles over the windows. (Plans submitted)	Withdrawn – application revised
PE9700162	1997	Demolition of existing portakabin and the erection of a single storey building for use as a design studio (Class B1) and alterations to the rear elevation comprising rendering of existing brickwork and the installation of decorative grilles over the windows. (Plans submitted)	Withdrawn – application revised
LE9700265R1	1997	Demolition of existing pre-fabricated building, erection of a single storey building for use as a design studio (Class B1) and alterations to the rear elevation comprising the rendering of the existing brickwork and the installation of decorative grilles over the windows, as shown on drawing numbers 97/500/20, /21, /24, /1 to /4, /30i, and /30ii.	Grant
PE9700162R1	1997	Erection of a single storey building for use as a design studio (Class B1) and alterations to the rear elevation including installation of decorative grilles over the windows, as shown on drawing numbers 97/500/20, /21, /24, /1 to /4, /30i, and /30ii.	Grant
LE9800092	1997	Submission of details of roof materials, curtain walls, external services, render, grilles, railings and repair works, pursuant to condition 02 (a) – (h) of the Listed Building Consent dated 01/08/97 (Ref no. LR9700265R1).	Grant
2003/2999/P	2003	Erection of a single storey structure at the rear of the site for use as a garden room.	Grant
2015/4778/P	2015	Refurbishment with alterations of the Postman's 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.	Grant
2015/4856/L	2015	Internal and external alterations to the Postman's Office, and associated demolition of rear additions, to provide B1a offices and communal access corridor to residential redevelopment at rear of site	Grant

2016/6361/L	2016	Internal and external alterations to the Old Postmen's Office, to provide an accessible WC/Shower and kitchen within existing rear office room and two dog-legged stairs to each end of new mezzanine floor, as a variation to listed building consent dated 4.7.16 ref 2015/4856/L (for Internal and external alterations to the Postman's Office, and associated demolition of rear additions, to provide B1a offices and communal access corridor to residential redevelopment at rear of site wall).	Grant
2016/6378/P	2016	Amendments to planning permission reference 2015/4778/P dated 16/06/16	Withdrawn
2020/0644/P	2020	Demolition of rear buildings and construction of a replacement building to the rear to be used as offices (Use Class B1)	Grant
2020/0784/L	2020	Demolition of rear buildings and construction of a replacement building to the rear to be used as offices (B1) and associated internal alterations	Grant

Table 1. Summary of Planning History

2.14 The recent consents have granted permission for various schemes of refurbishment and intensification at the site. The 2015 scheme (ref: 2015/4778/P and 2015/4856/L) included a new access corridor through the main hall and mezzanine, and a redevelopment at the rear of the site comprising three 2-3 storey blocks providing live-work units and residential flats. See Figures 2 and 3.

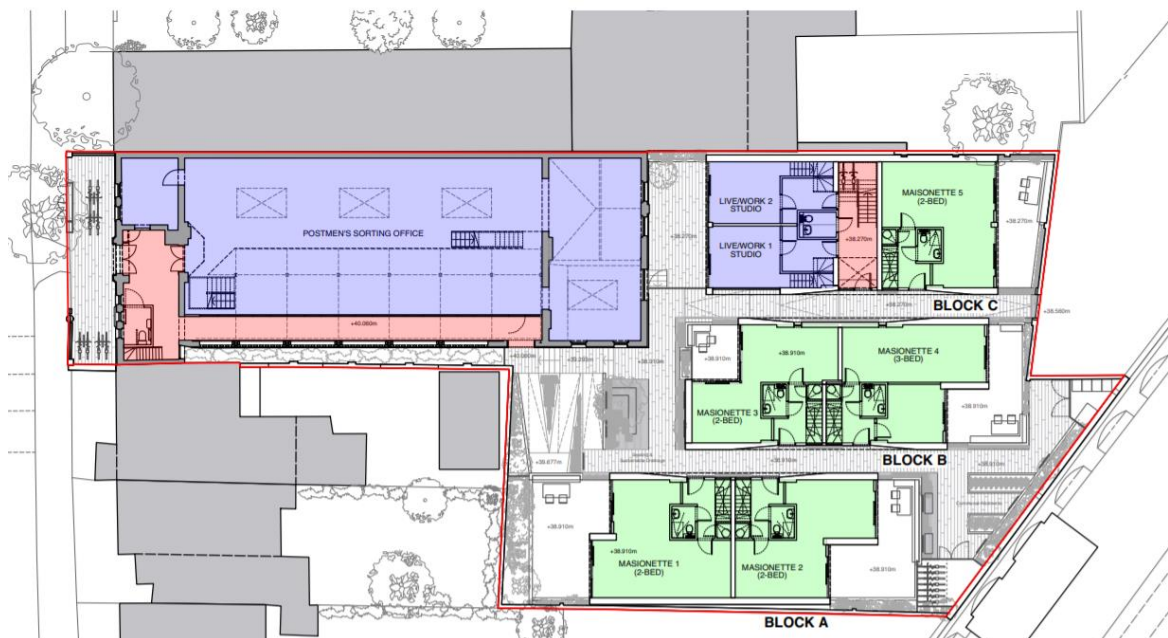


Figure 2. Proposed Site Plan (Ground Floor) from permitted scheme 2015/4778/P and 2015/4856/L



Figure 3. Proposed Office Plan (Ground Floor and Mezzanine) from permitted scheme 2015/4778/P and 2015/4856/L

2.15 The 2016 scheme (ref: 2016/6361/L) obtained listed building consent for a new mezzanine within the main space, which comprised an alternative to the 2015 scheme. See Figure 4.

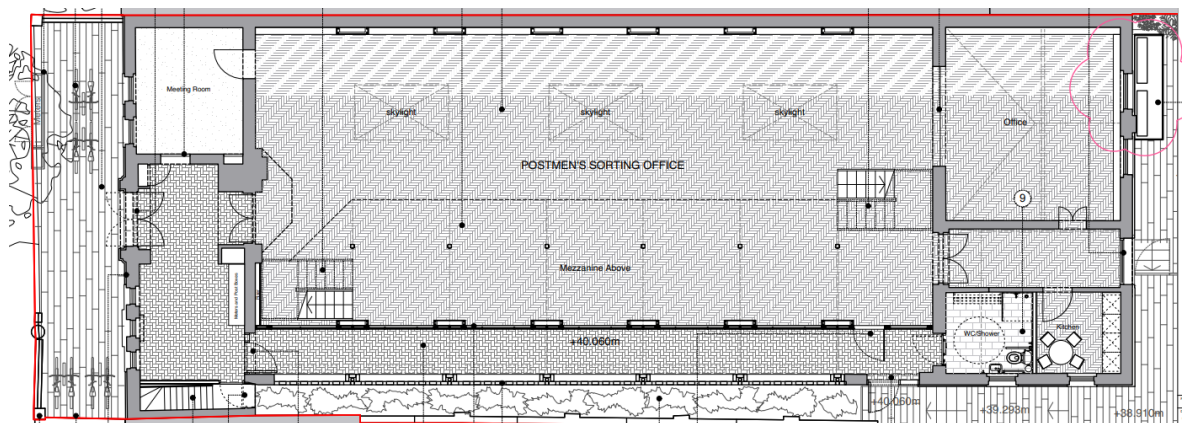


Figure 4. Proposed Office Plan (Ground Floor) from permitted scheme 2016/6361/L

2.16 The 2020 scheme (ref: 2020/0644/P and 2020/0784/L) included the demolition of all the buildings at the rear and the construction of two 2 storey blocks at the rear of the site, which are similar in height to the main listed building and would occupy the majority of the plot. The scheme further included a larger mezzanine within the sorting office and an access corridor providing independent access to the

rear, together with mechanical plant across the site. The approved ground floor plan is depicted at Figure 5 and visuals of the permitted extensions are provided at Figures 6 and 7, demonstrating the scale of the approved development.

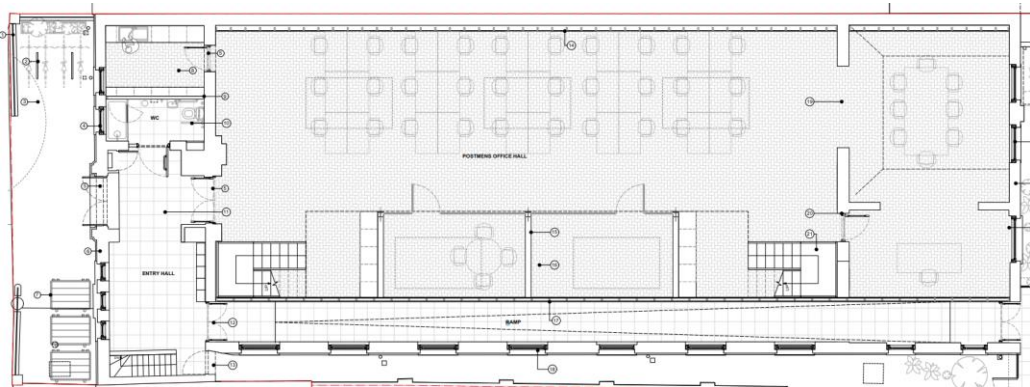


Figure 5. Proposed Post Office Plan (Ground Floor) from permitted scheme 2020/0644/P



Figure 6. Visual of Permitted Extensions



Figure 7. Visual of Permitted Extensions

Section 3 Application Proposals

- 3.1 N Family Club are seeking to take occupation of the vacant building and undertake a significant financial investment in the refurbishment of its interior and exterior to enhance the quality of the childcare accommodation to be provided at the site.
- 3.2 N Family Club was founded in 2017 and opened their first site in Stoke Newington (London Borough of Hackney) the same year. They are seeking to deliver several new sites this year to address a growing demand for childcare spaces across London. N Family Club is seeking to establish itself as London's best nursery group and see this site as an ideal opportunity to expand its operation. N Family Club has identified this site as an ideal building within Kentish Town with a high demand for additional childcare capacity.
- 3.3 The proposed nursery will operate Monday to Friday, catering for up to 117 children with 30 members of staff.
- 3.4 Both the existing (office) and proposed (nursery) uses fall within the same planning use class, Class E of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020. As a result, planning permission is not required or sought for the change of use of the building, as a change of use within the same use class does not amount to 'development'. This is confirmed within the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 under Section 55 Part (2) f).
- 3.5 The building and site can therefore be occupied and operated as children's nursery without the requirement of planning permission. The works proposed by this application seek simply to refurbish the site, which will enhance the quality of the childcare provided at the site and enhance the condition and appearance of the Grade II listed building.
- 3.6 The proposed works are detailed in full within the enclosed Schedule of Alterations and Restoration and architectural drawings, prepared by KWA. The proposals have been informed by an understanding of the building's heritage interest and historical development as set out within the submitted Heritage Appraisal by The Heritage Practice, which demonstrates that the works will preserve the significance of the Grade II listed building and are a clear improvement when compared to the existing consented development at the site.

3.7 The works are outlined in turn below.

a. Internal Alterations

3.8 Internally the works comprise a refurbishment of the building's décor and services, together with subdivision work within the main space to enable its conversion to a children's nursery.

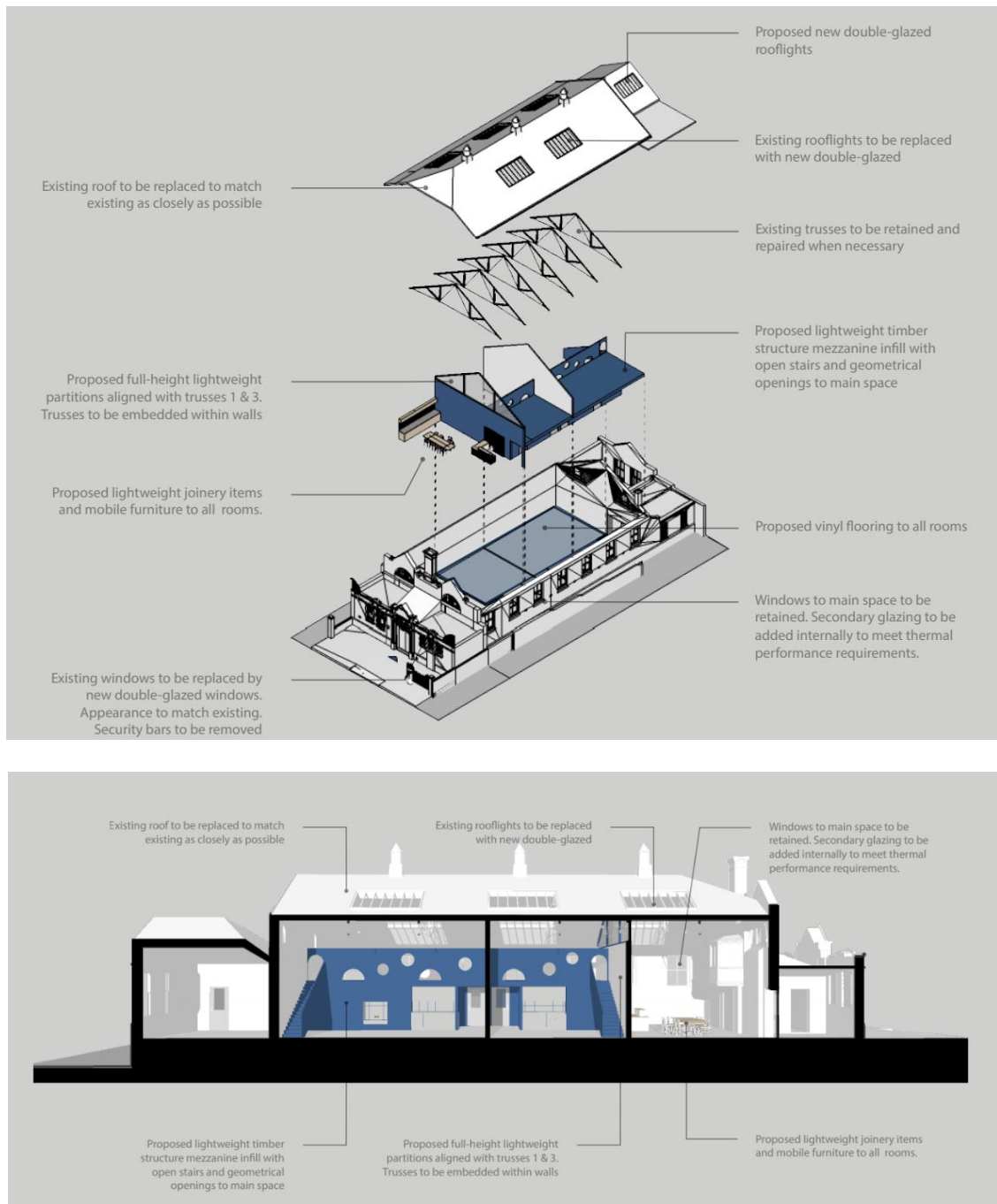


Figure 8. Proposed Subdivision Works to Main Space

3.9 The existing entrance layout will be largely retained, with the creation of a buggy store for use by parents within the lobby, and provision of a private office / meeting room for staff. The existing staircase

to the small basement storage area will be separated from the public space, to instead be accessed by staff from the rear of the site, which will improve the safety of the entrance area.

- 3.10 To the 'front' (north) of the sorting hall will be an open, full-height reception area, which will preserve the sense of height and space within the hall, including the original Overseer's office at first floor level. The proposed internal works to the main space include the creation of 2no. classrooms at ground floor level, each with their own toilets and open stairs leading the newly created mezzanine level. This new mezzanine floor will offer additional classroom floorspace, with geometric openings to allow light and views down to the main classroom below.
- 3.11 A subdivision of the main sorting office is proposed, which includes two full height partitions to create the reception area and two playrooms, as demonstrated in Figure 8. This requires the demolition of the current mezzanine and the creation of a replacement mezzanine, which houses the access corridor and toilets below this.
- 3.12 The two full height partitions have been designed around the existing roof trusses and are designed to be entirely removable. The first partition, in between the Reception Area and Playroom 1, will have a glazed upper section ensuring that views up to the ceiling are maintained when entering the space.
- 3.13 All existing historic doors, architraves and joinery within the sorting hall are proposed to be retained and repaired, as set out in the accompanying Door Schedule. All proposed new materials, fixtures and fittings will be high-quality and contemporary, with lightweight joinery items and mobile furniture used in all spaces across the site, so as to reduce impact to the fabric of the Listed Building, and provide an adaptable and flexible space.
- 3.14 The majority of the existing buildings to the rear (south) of the site will also be retained and repaired, to create 4no. further classroom spaces, each with independent access to the rear garden areas. To facilitate the operation of these buildings, the existing glazed link to the studio office will be demolished and replaced, creating a larger lobby space, and enabling access to the buggy store, play spaces, and two of the classrooms.
- 3.15 The wider works are detailed in full within the Design and Access Statement and Schedule of Works by Kennedy Woods Architecture.

3.16 The proposals will provide a comprehensive upgrade of the buildings services, including the provision of a combined heating, cooling, and filtration system. This is detailed in the submitted Mechanical, Electrical and Public Health Services Statement by Plenarius Design.

b. External Works

3.17 The external works proposed include:

- Existing roof covering to be replaced and upgraded in matching materials
- Replacement of existing rooflights and new rooflight to later extensions
- Mixture of replacement or refurbished windows (incorporating double or secondary glazing) across the building, to improve its condition, appearance, and thermal and acoustic performance
- Demolition and replacement of glazed link to Studio Office (10m²)
- Construction of infill extension to provide internal link to Garden Room (24m²)
- Construction of Bin Store and Bicycle Storage to site frontage
- Replacement of surface to site frontage and repairs to existing railings
- Construction of Buggy Store to rear side alley
- Demolition of curved garden wall and new scheme of landscaping
- New external plant and acoustic enclosure

3.18 The proposed areas schedule is provided at Table 2 and demonstrates a very minor increase in floorspace of 44m² as a result of the extensions and replacement of the existing mezzanine. The extensions will not materially increase the internal area for childcare but improve the internal access arrangements and connectivity to the garden room and studio office, providing covered and level access.

	Basement Floor Area (m ²)	Ground Floor Area (m ²)	First Floor (Mezzanine) Area (m ²)	Totals (m ²)
Existing	13	625	61	699
Proposed	13	663	67	743
Difference	0	+38	+6	+44

Table 2. Floorspace Schedule

3.19 An extract of the proposed ground floor plan is provided at Figure 10, which demonstrates the waste storage and bicycle stands to the site frontage; the proposed infill extension connecting the building and the garden room; the replacement link connecting the studio room; and the proposed plant enclosure at the rear of the site.

3.20 A new scheme of soft landscaping is proposed, which will provide an open and pleasant setting for the listed building, which includes the demolition of the tall, curved wall that currently severs the garden in two. This will provide a functional, safe and attractive external learning and play environment for children.

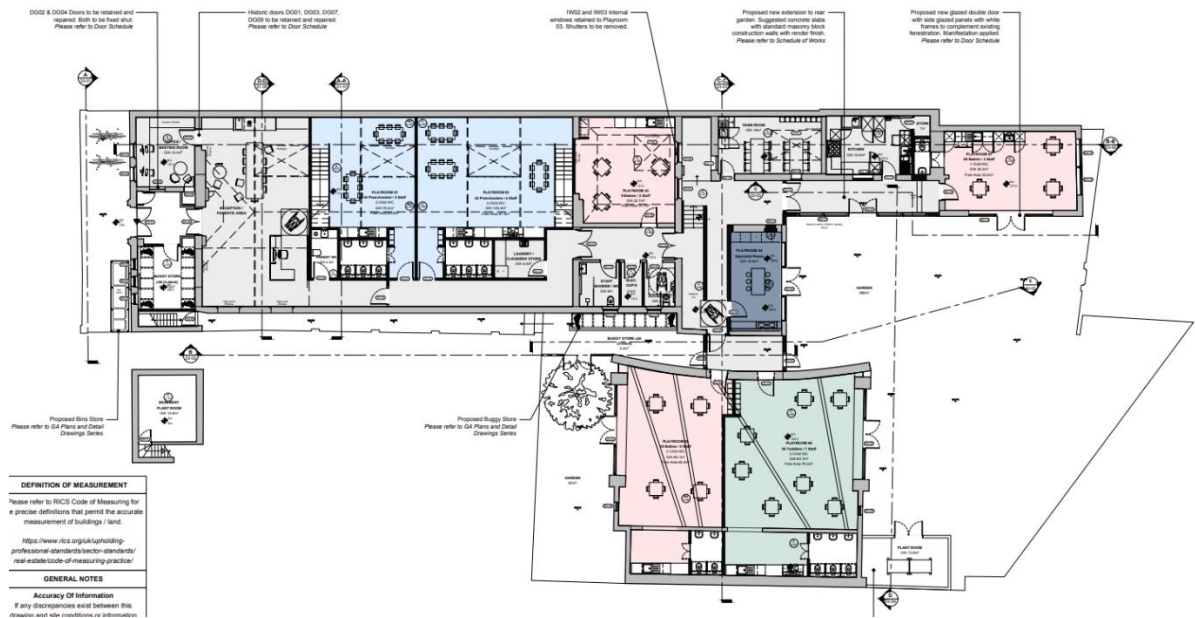


Figure 10. Proposed Ground Floor Site Plan

Section 4 Planning Policy Summary

4.1 The planning policy documents relevant to the application proposals are the following:

National Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (Adopted 2021)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (Online Planning Resource)

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

- London Plan (March 2021)
- Camden Local Plan (2017)
- Camden Local Plan Policies Map
- Kentish Neighbourhood Plan
- Camden Supplementary Planning Guidance (CPG)

4.2 The relevant policies and guidance from the above documents are summarised below.

a. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990

4.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.

b. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

4.4 Section 7 of the Act requires the approval of works affecting listed buildings (through Listed Building Consent) where they would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

4.5 Section 66 of the Act established a general duty for local planning authorities in considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall:

“have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”.

4.6 Section 72 of the Act established a general duty for local planning authorities in considering whether to grant permission for development 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”

c. National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

4.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides overarching planning policy guidance for development across England and was last updated in July 2021. It states:

“the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development” by “meeting the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

4.8 In terms of decision taking, **Paragraph 38** sets out that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. It states that decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. **Paragraph 47** requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.9 **Paragraph 126** outlines that good design is one of the fundamental elements in ensuring sustainable development and contributes to creating:

“better places to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.

4.10 **Paragraph 197** sets out that when determining applications affecting heritage assets, they 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 including their economic vitality; and

the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.”

4.11 Furthermore **Paragraph 202** outlines:

“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.”

4.12 **Paragraph 206** relates to conservation areas and sets out that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas to enhance or better reveal their significance. It states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset should be treated favourably.

d. London Plan (2021)

4.13 This document provides the overarching development framework for London over the next 20-25 years.

4.14 **Policy S1 Developing London’s Social Infrastructure** establishes that proposals which provide high quality, inclusive social infrastructure that satisfies a local or strategic need will be supported.

4.15 Paragraph 5.3.3 of the London Plan sets out that it is estimated that an additional 100,000 childcare places will be needed between 2016-2041 and that boroughs should ensure the location and provision of a range of childcare services in different types of settings to meet the needs of local communities.

4.16 **Policy S3 Education and Childcare Facilities** sets out considerations for education and childcare facilities including locating them away from busy roads, in accessible locations.

4.17 **Paragraph 5.3.10** says that the design and creation of a good learning environment is critical. **Paragraph 5.3.4** states that childcare facilities should be safe, accessible for all, and provide both indoor and outdoor learning opportunities.

4.18 **Policy D3 Optimising Site Capacity through the Design Led Approach** affirms the importance of making the best use of sites through the most appropriate form of development that reflects the site’s context; as such, proposals should, inter alia, seek to enhance both local distinctiveness and heritage assets. Designs should integrate architecture that pays attention to detail and attributes thorough

consideration to practicality of use, flexibility, safety and building lifespan through appropriate construction methods and the use of attractive and durable materials.

- 4.19 **Policy HC1 Heritage Conservation and Growth** requires development proposals to conserve the significance of heritage assets; indeed, the cumulative impact of incremental changes should be actively managed and enhancement opportunities should be sought.

e. Camden Local Plan (2017)

- 4.20 **Policy G1 Delivery and location of growth** notes the importance of development located at highly accessible locations, and encourages delivery of high-quality development and growth by

“supporting development that makes best use of its site, taking into account quality of design, its surroundings, sustainability, amenity, heritage, transport accessibility and any other considerations relevant to the site”.

- 4.21 **Policy C2 Community facilities** supports delivery of childcare facilities, and encourages provision of access to facilities on foot and by sustainable modes of travel. In its implementation of this policy, the Council confirms that the term ‘community facility’ includes childcare and education uses. In terms of childcare facilities, the supporting text to this policy states that:

“There is a wide range of nursery education and childcare options in Camden. These include children’s centres operated by Camden Council, those run by local primary schools and nurseries operated by the independent, voluntary and private sector. Childcare provision is an important means of tackling the Borough’s inequalities as a lack of childcare can prevent our residents from taking up employment opportunities or restrict parents to part-time work close to home. The Council will, therefore, encourage non-residential developments to include provision for child care facilities”.

- 4.22 **Policy C5 Safety and security** seeks development that includes design principles which contribute to community safety and security.

- 4.23 **Policy C6 Access for all** promotes development which can be used safely, easily and with dignity by all, and expects facilities to be located in the most accessible parts of the borough.

- 4.24 **Policy E1 Economic development** aims to secure a successful and inclusive economy, and recognises the importance of ‘other employment generating uses’ including education.
- 4.25 **Policy A1 Managing the impact of development** seeks to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours, stating that the Council will “*grant permission for development unless this causes unacceptable harm to amenity*” with factors including visual privacy, outlook, sunlight, daylight and overshadowing, contaminated land, noise and vibration. The Council will seek to ensure development contributes towards strong and successful communities by balancing the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities, and may require submission of relevant assessments and implementation of remedial measures to mitigate their harm.
- 4.26 **Policy A4 Noise and vibration** outlines that development should not cause harm to amenity and requires submission of an acoustic report.
- 4.27 **Policy D1 Design** welcomes high quality contemporary design which responds to its context, and aims to improve the character and quality of an area and preserve what is distinctive and valued about the local area. It encourages flexible and adaptable design, which integrates into its surroundings. The Council seeks development that (inter alia):
- “a. Preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage;**
 - b. Comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;**
 - c. integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces; and**
 - d. preserves gardens and other open space.”**
- 4.28 **Policy D2 Heritage** outlines that development proposals within conservation areas should preserve or, where possible, enhance the character or appearance of the area. Proposals for Listed buildings should not cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building or its setting. This policy is addressed fully within the accompanying Heritage Statement, prepared by The Heritage Practice.
- 4.29 **Policy CC1 Climate change mitigation** outlines that development should be located to minimise the need to travel by car, and supports sensitive energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings.

4.30 **Policy T1 Prioritising walking, cycling and public transport** seeks accessible, secure cycle parking facilities, requiring that new developments in the borough are car-free. It supports the redevelopment of existing car parks for alternative uses, and resists alterations to boundary treatments which provide vehicle crossovers and on-site parking.

f. Kentish Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011)

4.31 The site is Grade II Listed Building (List Entry Number: 1379291) and is located within the Leighton Road Character Area of the Kentish Town Conservation Area. This document sets out that while the capacity for new development in the area is low, there is room for enhancement of detail and materials on Leighton Road. This is addressed in further detail within the accompanying Heritage Appraisal, prepared by The Heritage Practice.

g. Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan (2016)

4.32 **Policy 3: Design Principles** supports the redevelopment of existing buildings where proposals: (*inter alia*)

- Are based on a comprehensive understanding of the site and its context;
- Are well integrated into their surroundings and reinforce and enhance local character;
- Are of the highest quality and sustainable, using materials that complement the area; and
- Enhance accessibility in buildings for different user groups.

4.33 The document uses a similar high-quality nursery (Montpelier Nursery by AYA Architects) as an example of good design.

4.34 Development must respect the historic appearance of Kentish Town in order to reinforce rather than detract from its local distinctiveness.

h. Camden Supplementary Planning Guidance (CPG)

4.35 **CPG Access for All (2019)** outlines that development should be inclusively designed and useable by all.

4.36 **CPG Amenity (2021)** sets out that the Council will adopt the ‘agent of change’ principle to protect the amenity of neighbouring buildings and occupiers. Amenity implications should be considered at the beginning of the design process, so that impacts can be minimised.

- 4.37 **CPG Community Uses Leisure and Pubs (2021)** recognises the importance of community facilities (including childcare) in meeting the needs of a growing population.
- 4.38 **CPG Design (2021)** seeks to promote and achieve design excellence, through taking into account the context of surrounding area, design of building, use and function. It encourages development that responds positively and sensitively to the existing context, integrates well with the existing character of a place, building and its surroundings, and is safe, secure and adaptable. Landscape design and green infrastructure should be fully integrated into the design of development proposals from the outset.
- 4.39 It sets out that the Council will only permit development within conservation areas that preserves and where possible enhances the character and appearance of the area. In terms of Listed Buildings, development that may affect the significance of a listed building should be fully justified and set out why the works or changes are desirable or necessary. Supporting paragraph 1.7 states that:
- “As well as conserving our rich heritage we should also contribute towards it by ensuring that we create equally high-quality buildings and spaces in the borough which will be appreciated by future generations.”**
- 4.40 With regards to storage and collection of recycling and waste, collection areas should be off-street, not hazardous to the public and have minimal visual impact, particularly for listed buildings.
- 4.41 **CPG Transport (2021)** details the measures required in order to mitigate the transport impact of the development.
- 4.42 **CPG Trees (2019)** sets out that trees that contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area should be retained and protected.

Section 5 Planning Assessment

5.1 This section of the Planning Statement demonstrates the acceptability of the application proposals in the context of the relevant planning policy and guidance outlined at Section 4. The principal planning considerations in this case are as follows:

- a) Principle of the Development
- b) Heritage and Design Considerations
- c) Impact on Residential Amenity
- d) Transport Considerations
- e) Trees and Landscaping
- f) Other Considerations

5.2 These matters are addressed in turn below.

a. Principle of the Development

5.3 This application facilitates the conversion of this vacant office building (Class E) into a children’s nursery (Class E). Both uses fall within the same planning use class and as a result, the proposed conversion does not amount to ‘development’ requiring planning permission. Indeed, the Use Classes Order confirms at Article 3 (1) that:

“Subject to the provisions of this Order, where a building or other land is used for a purpose of any class specified in the Schedule, the use of that building or that other land for any other purpose of the same class shall not be taken to involve development of the land.”

5.4 Notwithstanding this, the works proposed are driven by the Applicant’s ambition to enhance the quality of the childcare that will be provided at the site, together with the condition and appearance of the application building. The proposals will generate up to 117 much-needed childcare places and will convert the building into a community use, together with 30 new local job opportunities. This is in line with Camden Policies E1 and C2, which recognise the importance and support delivery of childcare facilities, and London Plan Policy S1 that identifies that an additional 100,000 childcare places will be needed between 2016-2041.

- 5.5 There is a wealth of planning support for the proposals across the development, as summarised in Section 4 of this Statement. Policy S1 in the London Plan further sets out that childcare facilities should be safe, accessible for all, and provide both indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. The works contained within this application seek to ensure the standard of childcare at the site is maximised.
- 5.6 In addition to the above, the application building and location are considered to be well suited for the proposed use. Indeed, Camden Policy C2 directs community facilities to sustainable locations such as this site. The building lends itself well for the use given its scale, potential to create larger rooms and ability to provide external play space. Furthermore, the proposed subdivision of the main space would be entirely reversible, resulting no permanent impact to the significance of the Grade II listed building.
- 5.7 This building is also situated within a central location. The new facility will be able to draw on a large, established residential catchment and will be able to maximise sustainable modes of travel due to this large immediate customer-base and the excellent connectivity of the Town Centre location. Indeed, the site is well-placed to encourage and facilitate drop off and collection as parents travel to and from Kentish Town Station, which is consistent with the objectives of Camden Policy C2, CC1 and T1.
- 5.8 In light of the above, the principle of the proposed development of the site is considered to be entirely acceptable as it seeks to modernise and secure the long-term occupation of this building, contributing positively to the quantity and quality of the childcare accommodation in the area. Specifically, the proposals will generate up to 117 childcare places and 30 new job opportunities for the local area. The repurposing of the building will deliver a new social infrastructure use and preserve the significance of the listed building.
- 5.9 The application is in accordance with the NPPF, London Plan Policy S1 and S3, and Camden Policy G1, C2, E1, CC1 and T1.

b. Heritage and Design Considerations

- 5.10 The national and local planning policy requires that development proposals preserve or enhance the character of heritage assets. The designated heritage assets relevant to this proposal are the Grade II listed sorting office, the Kentish Town Conservation Area and neighbouring listed buildings.
- 5.11 A full Heritage Appraisal has been undertaken by The Heritage Practice and accompanies this application. The appraisal focusses on the effect of the totality of the proposed scheme on the significance of these heritage assets. In accordance with the NPPF, the Heritage Appraisal demonstrates

that the scheme has been developed on a detailed understanding of the building's history and significance.

- 5.12 In terms of design, the extent of the works is limited and the impact on the exterior of the building would be minimal. Indeed, the appearance of the building in street views would be restricted to the replacement and enhancement of the existing windows, and the formalised bin storage arrangements in place of the existing loose eurobins that are placed to the site frontage. It is considered that these works will generally enhance the building's appearance and condition, in particular the removal of security bars to the building's principal windows. At the rear, the proposed additions are minor in scale and would not be visible from outside of the site. These will be entirely proportionate to the host building and would not represent an overdevelopment of the plot.
- 5.13 In terms of heritage, policies across the Development Plan require that proposals preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets. The significance of the listed building is outlined in full within the Heritage Appraisal by the Heritage Practice. It identifies that the building forms part of a wider group of similar buildings designed by Jasper Wager in the Edwardian period, and that the group value and association with Wager contributes to the building's significance.
- 5.14 It identifies that the building has a strong identity and architectural generosity that can also be seen in police stations, town halls and magistrates courts. The architecture of the building reveals its purpose, status, and historic interest. Internally, the building has a simple and functional layout with smaller rooms either side of the larger hall. The exuberance and expense of the building was clearly concentrated on external appearance, and the simplicity of the interior was dictated by its function.
- 5.15 In this regard, the Heritage Appraisal concludes that:

“The principal interest of the listed building is in its reflection of the expansion of the Post Office in the Edwardian period, its association with Wager, the Office of Works and a series of related structures.

Sorting offices are not rare and there are large numbers of similar examples across London. What makes the building distinct is the composition, language and articulation of the principal elevation, a feature that aggrandises a relatively prosaic and commonplace function. Obviously the remainder is not without value but the form and layout of the building is not unique or rare. The building's historic associations and architecture of its street elevation contribute most substantially to

its significance and special interest. It is these attributes that make the building special and distinct within the local area and within the group of similarly dated sorting office buildings.”

5.16 In respect of the works proposed, these comprise the physical internal and external works to facilitate the conversion of the building into a children's nursery, to be occupied by N Family Club. It further includes a comprehensive, once in a generation upgrade of the building's services, including drainage/plumbing, heating/cooling and electrics, and upgrade of its fabric, including windows and roof covering.

5.17 In assessing the proposed works, it is important to consider that the Council has recently granted consent for the redevelopment of the rear of the site and that the proposals should be considered in the context of these consents (ref: 2020/0644/P and 2020/0784/L). In this regard, the Heritage Appraisal sets out that:

“The scheme now proposed is a better proposition for the existing building and its special architectural and historic interest. There is no need to separate out parts of the building to unlock the site to the rear and the underlying historic plan form remains. The current applicant intends to restore and repair the existing building as necessary which will secure its ongoing preservation/conservation without having to demolish and redevelop parts of the site. The proposed use for the building is a sustainable one and will be implemented, the end-user is the applicant and therefore the occupier is already fully secured. This is not a speculative development.

The proposals do require a degree of subdivision of the original sorting hall but this is entirely reversible and maintains an appreciation of the historic height and volume of the hall, particularly to that area adjacent to the overseer's window which has no vertical or horizontal subdivision. It also allows for the integrity of the building's envelope and footprint to remain intact.”

5.18 It goes on to state that:

“The proposed scheme retains an open garden, essential for nursery use and provision, and this helps to preserve the listed building and its setting. It also ensures

that the listed building remains the principal building on the site with structures to the rear clearly having an ancillary relationship.”

- 5.19 Furthermore, the proposals would secure a series of public benefits, including a sustainable new occupier for the building with a track record of working with heritage buildings. In addition, this proposal would guarantee the provision of a new social infrastructure use with 30+ new jobs and 117 new childcare places for the local community, set within a fantastic learning and play environment.
- 5.20 In addition to the public benefits, the scheme will clearly deliver heritage benefits through the reoccupation and restoration of this heritage asset, and by delivering a scheme which is preferable to the recently consented development in terms of the impact on the heritage asset. This scheme does not require extensive demolition or redevelopment and would only have a positive effect on the character of the Kentish Town Conservation Area through works of repair and restoration to the building. In terms of the impact on the listed building, the Heritage Appraisal provides the following conclusion:

“The proposals overall will enhance the listed building and improve upon the harm that would be caused by the previously consented scheme if implemented. If any harm were perceived through vertical partitioning, this would be undoubtedly at the lower end of less than substantial and the heritage and public benefits identified above – particularly in securing a viable and deliverable use for this redundant and vacant building – will certainly outweigh this level of harm. This is a use that does not require fundamental compromises to inhabit the building.”

- 5.21 In the light of the above, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with the NPPF, London Plan Policy HC1, Camden Policy D1 and D2, the Kentish Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, and Camden CPG Design. The design and heritage impacts of the development should therefore be acceptable.

c. Impact on Residential Amenity

- 5.22 Policy A1 of the Camden Local Plan states that the Council will “*grant permission for development unless this causes unacceptable harm to amenity*”. This includes factors such as visual privacy, outlook, sunlight, daylight and overshadowing, noise and vibration, with Policy A4 providing further guidance on noise mitigation. These factors are addressed in turn, below.

i) Privacy and Outlook

- 5.23 In terms of privacy and outlook, the proposals will retain the existing buildings on the site with no new windows creating any new opportunities for overlooking. On the western elevation, the existing windows, which are to be refurbished, will have a privacy film applied to their lower halves. This would enhance the privacy enjoyed by the neighbouring dwellings.
- 5.24 The outlook from neighbouring residential properties is not considered to be harmed given the retention of the existing buildings, and given the location and minor scale of the two infill extensions. There would be no increased sense of enclosure.
- 5.25 In a similar vein to the heritage assessment, the impact of the proposals should also be considered in the context of the recently consented development, which included large two storey buildings to the rear of the site and immediately to the rear of nos. 26-28 Leighton Road, as demonstrated in Figures 6 and 7. The privacy and outlook of these properties will be significantly improved when compared to the consented development.
- 5.26 In this regard, the proposals are in accordance with Policy A1 and Camden CPG Amenity.

ii) Noise

- 5.27 The Camden Local Plan Policy A4 sets out that the Council will only grant permission for noise generating development, including any plant and machinery, if it can be operated without causing harm to amenity. It requires that the rating level from proposed industrial and commercial developments (including plant and machinery) should not exceed 10dBA below the existing background level during both daytime and night-time periods.
- 5.28 Careful consideration has therefore been given to the impact of noise from the proposed plant equipment, which supports an energy efficient combined heating, cooling and air filtration system. The application is supported by a Noise Impact Assessment, prepared by ACA Acoustics, which makes recommendations based on the results of a survey undertaken to establish the existing residual and background sound levels in the vicinity. The survey was undertaken between 8th June and 11th June 2021 at a position representative of the acoustic soundscape at the most affected noise sensitive residential dwellings.
- 5.29 In terms of the proposed plant equipment and mitigation measure, the report recommends the incorporation of noise control treatments into the design, to ensure that noise emissions from the new

plant are low and not disturbing to nearby residential occupants. On the advice of the report, it is proposed that an acoustic louvred enclosure is installed surrounding the condensing unit with no gaps at the edges. It is suggested that this be formed from 300mm deep acoustic louvres, with the Allaway Acoustic's AL3015 model or equivalent recommended, alongside necessary structural supports or steelwork and access panels or doors, to be determined by the final supplier. The recommendations of the report ensure that the plant would be at least 10dBA below the representative background sound level during the operating periods and complies with the planning requirements of London Borough of Camden Council. These recommendations have been accepted by the Applicant and are incorporated into the application scheme.

5.30 On this basis, the Noise Impact Assessment concludes that:

“With benefit of noise control treatments as detailed within this report, the calculated Rating Level from new external mechanical plant will not be detrimental to the amenity of nearby occupants.

The site is suitable for the proposed development with no further noise mitigation measures necessary.”

5.31 Accordingly, it is considered that the proposals would be compatible with the surrounding uses and that the amenity of neighbouring properties would be safeguarded, in accordance with Camden Policy A1 and A4, and CPG Amenity.

iii) Sunlight and Daylight

5.32 The proposed additions comprise single storey, infill extensions only. These will have no impact on the level of daylight or sunlight to surrounding residential properties, in accordance with Policy A1.

d. Transport Considerations

5.33 The proposed nursery will accommodate 117 childcare places and 30 jobs, and the minor extension will not materially increase the capacity of the building beyond a simple conversion scheme. Indeed, the rear infill extensions simply seek provide covered, level access to the garden room and studio office building.

- 5.34 The site is located in a highly accessible location, with a PTAL rating of 5, which is in line with policy C2 and C6. However, planning permission is not required for the occupation of the building by N Family Club. Notwithstanding this, the occupation of the building by N Family Club will align with sustainability objectives as set by Camden Policies T1, C2 and CC1, which seek accessible, secure cycle parking facilities, and require that new developments in the borough are car-free. The proposals will provide scooter, buggy and bike storage onsite, which are designed to encourage parents to both walk and cycle with children to the facility.
- 5.35 Furthermore, the proposals include the replacement of the single car parking space to the front yard with short-stay cycle parking for 4 bicycles, for use by parents at pick up and drop off times, which again is in line with Camden Policies CC1 and T1.
- 5.36 The transport impacts of the development are acceptable and in accordance with policies C2, CC1 and T1, and CPG Transport.

e. Trees and Landscaping

- 5.37 Camden Policy A3 promotes the protection and provision of trees and vegetation, with both positively integrated as part of the site layout. There are currently no trees of significant amenity value within the site. There is one street tree to outside the building frontage on Leighton Road, which will be unaffected by these proposals.
- 5.38 To the rear of the site, the proposals will demolish the existing tall, curved wall that currently severs the garden, providing a more open and spacious setting for the listed building. A new scheme of soft landscaping as part of play space will be implemented, providing a pleasant and attractive external environment for the listed building and a functional external amenity space for the nursery.
- 5.39 As per the preceding sub-sections, the extent of landscaping and open space surrounding the building is an improvement when compared to the existing consented scheme, which included the development of two blocks to the rear.
- 5.40 The proposals are therefore considered to be in accordance with Camden Policy D1.

f. Other Considerations

i) Sustainability

5.41 The development proposes to use sustainable materials and recycle where possible during construction and will incorporate measures such as controlled LED light fittings and PEFC certified timber. The proposals further include an efficient combined heating, cooling and air filtration system. The refurbishment and replacement of the existing single-glazed windows and addition of double or secondary glazing will improve the energy efficiency of the building, in accordance with Camden Policies D1 and CC1. The Design and Access Statement, prepared by Kennedy Woods Architects, provides further detail.

ii) Accessibility and Fire Strategy

5.42 As outlined in the Design and Access statement accompanying the application, the proposed scheme has been reviewed by a fire safety consultant and building control consultant to assess the fire strategy and means of escape, with a detailed fire safety and evacuation policy and procedures to be managed by the nursery operations team. This is in line with Camden Policy C5. The proposals will also enhance the accessibility of the site by providing step free access throughout.

Section 6 Conclusions

6.1 This application by N Family Holdings (operating as “N Family Club”) at 30 Leighton Road, Kentish Town, London, NW5 2QE, seeks permission from the London Borough of Camden Council for the following:

“Internal and external refurbishment/reconfiguration works including replacement mezzanine and partitions, rear infill extension, window replacement/refurbishment, bicycle, waste and scooter storage, external plant and other works.”

6.2 The application will assist in delivering a high-quality childcare facility at this site and securing the re-occupation of this vacant office building. The proposals will turn the building into a community / social infrastructure use and will create up to 117 new childcare places and 30 new local job opportunities, providing social and economic benefits, in line with Camden policies G1, C2 and E1. Furthermore, the proposals will enhance the quality of the childcare accommodation at the site through the provision of a high-quality indoor and outdoor learning and play environment for children.

6.3 The proposals will further deliver heritage benefits by undertaking a comprehensive refurbishment of the listed building.

6.4 The proposals represent a well-considered, high-quality refurbishment of this listed building that will preserve its features of special architectural or historic interest and the setting of the Kentish Town Conservation Area. The application will therefore satisfy the statutory duty outlined at Section 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The proposals are further consistent with Chapter 16 of the NPPF, specifically Paragraphs 197 and 202, and Camden policies D1 and D2.

6.5 The proposals will provide a high-quality design, which protects the amenity of surrounding residential properties with regard to noise and disturbance, in accordance with Camden Policies D1, C5, C6, A1 and A4, and will offer overall improvements to the on-site landscaping, in accordance with policies A3, D1 and CC1.

6.7 In the light of the above, the application proposals are consistent with all of the relevant legislation, policy and guidance at a local and national level. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning and listed building consent is granted without delay.



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