

7-8 EARLY MEWS, NW1

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23/03/2022

PLANNING DESIGN STATEMENT

CASSION CASTLE ARCHITECTS

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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This statement is put forward in support of the proposal for the refurbishment and extension of the commercial property at 7-8 Early Mews, Camden. The proposal will create additional high quality workspace by refurbishing and extending the existing building.

This statement has been written to ensure that the proposed development provides a high quality scheme that is in line with the relevant local and national planning policies. The aim of this document is to demonstrate the key factors affecting the proposed development, and how the proposed design has worked with them.

The development seeks to refurbish the existing two storey commercial property, restoring a more traditional mews appearance, and to add a single storey extension on top (including external roof garden amenity space).

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

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The site is located close to Camden High Street, in a mews just to the south of Arlington House. The mews is a cul-de-sac with the back of Inverness Street to the south and Arlington House to the north.

The site is not in a conservation area and is not locally or nationally listed.

7-8 Early Mews sits at the east end of the cul-de-sac, dominated by the back of Arlington House. The buildings that make up the site (7 & 8) are of a typical mews scale, but have been rebuilt with a general industrial appearance, including large roller shutter doors and prominent AC units.

The rest of the street is not of a typical 'mews' appearance, meaning the site forms its own distinct 'block' at the end. The south side of the street is a mixture of piecemeal structures and buildings, including residential, office, and storage, without any particular coherence.

The site is bordered on the north east edge by a large industrial unit that extends roughly 3m above the roof line of the existing building.



1. AERIAL SITE VIEW



2. VIEW FROM ARLINGTON RD



3. VIEW FROM 7 EARLY MEWS



4. VIEW TOWARDS 7-8 EARLY MEWS

### 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

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In 2010 the property was permitted a temporary change of use class from B1 to class D1 counselling and treatment centre. B1 remains the lawful use and as stated in the decision letter of this planning permission (dated 24/05/2011), if the current specific D1 usage is ended, the building will automatically revert to B1 usage - the proposal is in line with this ruling.

*"Notwithstanding the provisions of Class D1 of the Schedule of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, 1987, or any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order, the ground and first floor as detailed on the approved floorplan shall only be used as a nonresidential substance misuse treatment centre and for no other purpose. On the cessation of the use hereby approved the ground and first floors of the building shall revert back to its lawful use of Class B1."*

2004/4948/P

In 2004 the property was permitted a temporary change of class from B1 to class D1 community training facility. B1 remains the lawful use and as stated in the decision letter of this planning permission (dated 24/01/2005), if the specific D1 usage is ended the building will automatically revert to B1 usage.

*"The use of the site shall be restricted to the activities described within the application form and it shall not be used for any other purpose within Class D1 of the Use Classes Order 1995. On cessation of this use the site shall revert back to its lawful use of Class B1."*

#### PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

In 2021 pre-application advice was sought for a two-storey extension to the same site. The feedback was clear that the scheme needed to be revised to a single storey extension in order to be acceptable.

Below we have set out how the new scheme addresses each point made in the pre application response:

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## PRE-APP FEEDBACK POINTS

## DESIGN RESPONSE

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Increase in height to the building results in a building that would not be subservient to Inverness Street or Camden High Street

The design has been altered to a one storey extension, subservient to both Inverness Street and Camden High Street.

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The height and scale of the building is more like a landmark building which is not appropriate in the mews

The design has been altered to a one storey extension, and now does not read as a landmark.

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The front elevation will be flush and repetitive in design

The front elevation on the existing is being retained and upgraded. The new extension's front elevation is broken up to avoid repetition.

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The extended larger building will overwhelm the existing small scale mews building

The extension is now much smaller than the existing building, so does not overwhelm it.

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In terms of the form (rounded end of the pavilion structures and the height) these are the most harmful elements. The scale of the building and its form makes the building more like a warehouse building than a mews building which is inappropriate

The design is now a much simpler one storey extension, and has been designed to purely read as a contemporary addition, not as a warehouse-type building.

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It is likely that as a new lift is being installed into the building the existing mews building will be unable to be retained resulting in full demolition of this building

A push-up type hydraulic lift is being proposed to improve accessibility in the building, and does not require demolition of the building to be retrofitted into it.

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This building is trying to make a statement in its own right. This new building is too tall and is not mews like in character which is considered unacceptable

The design has now been altered to deliberately read as a simple contemporary extension to the existing mews, not as a statement piece.

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The urban design is an overplayed design for this location and is not appropriate for mews. Something more modest could be considered acceptable but should be restricted to single storey. Any additional storey should read as a modern storey (e.g glass / sheeted material). The design should not copy the brickwork and design of the existing building. More brick work swallows up the existing building

The design is now for a modest single storey as suggested. It has been designed in such a way so as not to swallow up the existing, with a contemporary form and contrasting facade material.

## 4.0 PRINCIPLE OF DESIGN

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### DEVELOPMENT

*"The Council will deliver growth by securing high quality development and promoting the most efficient use of land and buildings in Camden by: a. 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; b. resisting development that makes inefficient use of Camden's limited land;" - Camden Local Plan 2017: Policy G1*

This proposal aligns well with this objective - providing a high quality development within the existing footprint, and without changing the lawful use of any land. It has also been designed to be highly respectful of both its immediate context and of the wider Camden area.

### WORKSPACE

The existing building is made up of approximately 285m<sup>2</sup> (GIA) of low grade office space and will be refurbished and then extended by approximately 115m<sup>2</sup> to provide a total of 300m<sup>2</sup> of high quality workspace.

The Camden Local Plan 2017 identifies the requirement for new office floorspace in the area, and again favours the efficient use of land for this.

*"This Plan seeks to meet Camden's objectively assessed needs to 2031 for: [...] • 695,000sqm of office floorspace (see Policy E1 Economic development);" - Camden Local Plan 2017: Policy G1*

This proposal will contribute to the increase in workspace that the local authority require with an extension that carefully balances increased office floorspace with any effects that increased massing would have on the immediate context.

### RETROFITTING

*"Resource efficiency and demolition 8.15 Given the significant contribution existing buildings make to Camden's CO2 emissions, the Council will support proposals that seek to sensitively improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings." - Camden Local Plan 2017: Policy CC1*

As recipients of the 2021 'Architects Journal Retrofit of the year', the architects behind this scheme are well aware of the vital role that sustainable development plays locally and nationally. The re-use of buildings in-place of new build is a key shift that local authorities are increasingly encouraging.

This proposal seeks to retain as much of the existing building as possible, including the whole external brick envelope and any sound structure within. Where any local demolition is necessary such as unstable floor joists, we will seek to reuse the materials elsewhere. The existing building will then be carefully upgraded with raised insulation values and air tightness to improve the overall thermal performance.



6. VISUAL OF PROPOSAL

## 5.0 DESIGN

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### OUTLINE

The proposal seeks to retain and retrofit the existing buildings, and extend upwards. The existing facade will be enhanced by restoring the more traditional architectural character of the 'mews' typology, clearing the brick facades of the large AC units/external security bars, and replacing the industrial roller shutters with crittall style glazing.

The extension is designed to be a subtle addition, that adds an element of high quality design intrigue to the street. It has a contemporary form to read as a distinct new element. It's massing is minimal and broken up with the curved cut-outs on the corners and centre, in order to visually reduce the extension's mass on approach. It will also have a contrasting facade material to the existing building it sits on.

### EFFICIENT USE OF LAND

In line with the local plans G1 policy, the proposal seeks to make very efficient use of the land in question by adding additional commercial workspace without an increase of footprint. The proposal has been drawn up to carefully balance increasing floor space and massing, whilst remaining subservient to the key buildings in its surrounding context (Inverness street, Camden Road High Street, and Arlington House).

### MASSING

The height of the proposed extension is in keeping with the local urban grain, being lower and subservient to the adjacent terraced

houses, and much lower than Arlington House opposite. The only public place the proposal will be visible from is the main entrance to the mews on Arlington Road.

### LOCAL CONTEXT AND CHARACTER

The proposal improves the existing building's character and contribution to the local area by restoring the facade's traditional windows and removing the unseemly industrial alterations. Currently the building does not have a mews character, and reads more as a 2 storey brick industrial unit. Following our upgrades, the facade will read more as a traditional mews that contributes positively to the local context and character.

The design of the extension has been carefully considered to be a clearly contemporary but modest addition, subservient to the existing building, without becoming a simple pastiche addition.

The subtle cut-out forms create a design intrigue without becoming overbearing. We are confident this design strikes the right balance for the Camden high street zone, that feels traditional and in-keeping, but also has a creative and exciting element to it.

### MATERIALS

The upgrades to the existing facade will be carried out using a matching brick where needed, but will replace the current ramshackle windows/doors to a consistent crittall style.

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The cladding to the new extension will read as contemporary, as suggested in the pre-app advice. Terracotta tiles are proposed - see image 7, final details of this can be confirmed as a condition.

## HERITAGE

Although the site itself does not lie within a conservation area, nor is the building nationally/locally listed, it sits within the 'setting' of the grade II listed Arlington House.

As an important building historically and culturally, Arlington House should not be affected by an adverse change made in its setting.

The proposal is aligned with this protection given the site's lawful usage is not changing and the material palette and design are remaining traditional in feel. The proposed elevation, with its more classic mews character, will be a positive contributor to the setting of Arlington House - restoring the traditional style in place of the current industrial feel.

The ordnance survey maps below (Images 9 & 10) show how Early Mews pre-dates Arlington House (previously Rowton house). The buildings on the 7-8 Early Mews site were not historically associated with it. It appears as though they serviced the yard that Arlington House replaced.

Furthermore none of the original buildings on Early Mews still exist, all having been rebuilt in the Sixties.

Given this lack of heritage link to Arlington, the buildings on the mews should not be given any higher status than their current state/condition.



7. TILE CLADDING



8. EXISTING BUILDING, INDUSTRIAL ADDITIONS



9. EARLY MEWS 1870

### EARLY MEWS c1870\*

Early Mews can be seen here, as a complete street of buildings, before Arlington House was built. The street faces and has direct access to the central yard created by the terraced housing on the urban block.

\*Map obtained from the National Library of Scotland Archives: London (First Editions c1850) XVI Series Ordnance Survey. 25 Inch to the mile. Revised 1870. Published 1875.



10. EARLY MEWS 1915

### EARLY MEWS 1915\*\*

Arlington House can be seen here as a later addition to the context (Originally named Rowton House). The scheme replaced the yard and smaller buildings which appeared to be functionally related to Early Mews.

\*\* Map obtained from the National Library of Scotland Archives: London (First Editions c1850) XVI Series Ordnance Survey. 25 Inch to the mile. Revised 1915. Published 1916.

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## DAYLIGHT & SUNLIGHT IMPACT

A daylight & sunlight impact study has been carried out for this application, and is submitted alongside it.

The study shows that the impact upon the windows and gardens of surrounding structures is within BRE guidelines.

Overall the report is in complete support of the proposal's massing.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Alongside the previously mentioned retrofitting of the existing Ground and First floors to upgrade thermal performance, the extension will be built to meet or exceed modern standards of thermal performance. It will make use of passive cooling strategies in place of energy intensive mechanical air conditioning.

Where new materials are used, we have selected sustainable options such as timber that can be sustainably sourced and also recycled at the end of the building's life span.

## STORAGE

The existing bike store on Early Mews currently serves the site. We have calculated that there is capacity to serve the new increased occupancy of the building.

The bins on the site are currently stored and collected on-street, we are not proposing a change to this.

## ACCESS

Accessibility in the proposal will be an improvement on the existing building, with step-free access threshold on entrance and a vertical lift allowing step free access to all floors. The existing building's 1st floor is currently inaccessible to wheelchair users or people with special ambulatory requirements.

## HEALTH

The proposal adds new open air landscape amenity space to the site by the introduction of balcony spaces, and a roof garden, which is a significant health benefit for any future occupants of the building compared to the existing.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

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The proposal will be a beneficial and very efficient use of the current site, upgrading the design quality, floorspace, and thermal performance of the existing building.

Through a careful 'retrofit' process the proposal will be an inherently sustainable way to add high quality modern workspace and landscape amenity, without having to demolish and rebuild.

The design has been tailored to be subservient to the immediate context, using a restrained material palette, and restoring the existing building back to a more traditional mews style.

Impact on the neighbouring buildings has been carefully considered, with a modest single storey addition, strategic gaps and cut-outs, resulting in a massing that passes the 'right of light' tests carried out.

Early mews as a whole will also benefit from this development, lifting the appearance of the street from its current unwelcoming industrial aesthetic.

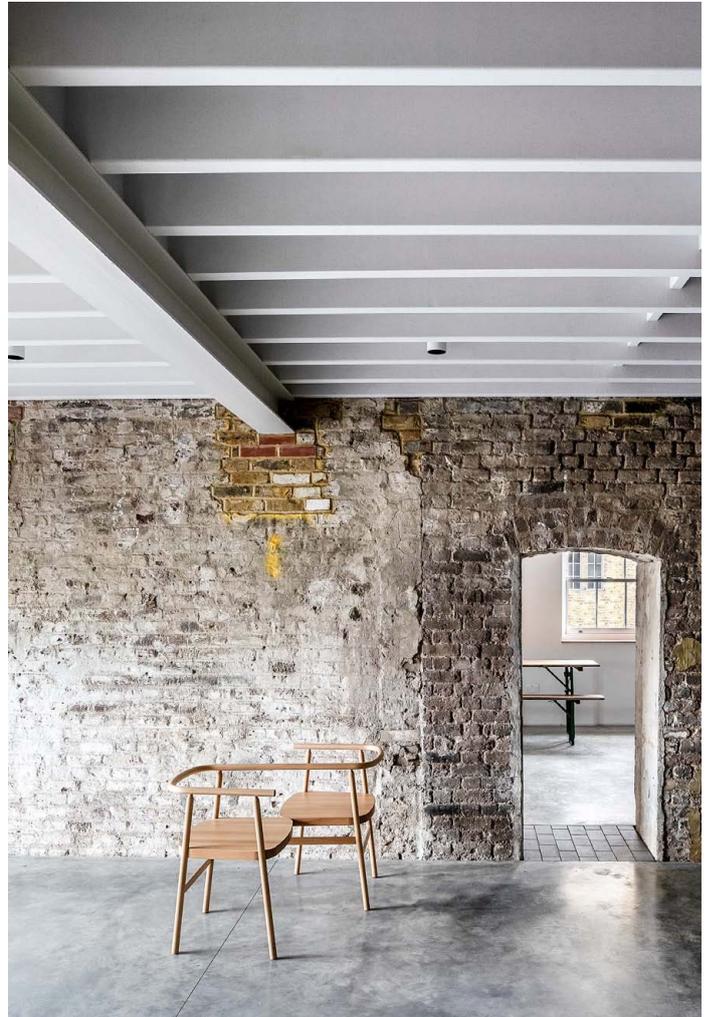
## 7.0 CASSION CASTLE ARCHITECTS

Cassion Castle Architects are an award winning practice based in North London, who specialise in adaptive re-use and retrofit projects.

Their recent project 'Yorkton Workshops' was recently awarded 'Retrofit of the Year 2021' by The Architect's journal.

The project has many similarities to the proposal in Early Mews: a comparable existing building, neighboured by grade II listed buildings, and a brief for high quality commercial space.

The architects bring their experience working in sensitive urban sites to this project, creating a proposal that feels like it belongs, whilst also being an exciting piece of high quality contemporary design.



11. YORKTON WORKSHOPS