

Scott Hobbs Planning

Empiric (London Francis Gardner) 24 May 2022
Limited

Francis Gardner Apartments

Planning Statement – Refurbishment





Planning Statement for:

Planning application for the refurbishment of existing student accommodation at 89-91 West End Lane, Camden.

Summary

This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of Empiric (London Francis Gardner) Limited in relation to a Minor application to refurbish existing student accommodation. The site is an existing five storey building and requires façade and window refurbishment to bring it up to modern standards. The proposal also involves erection of a setback roof extension providing four additional student bedrooms and communal amenity space. Concurrently, improved internal reconfiguration, not requiring planning permission, will also be implemented. Overall, the changes proposed create a building of higher quality in terms of design and sustainability and make a positive contribution to the appearance of the South Hampstead Conservation Area. The proposal has been assessed against relevant planning policies and found to be in accordance with the London Plan, the Camden Local Plan and relevant supplementary and national planning guidance.



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the retention and refurbishment of the existing Francis Gardner Apartments, 89-91 West End Lane, London (hereinafter referred to as “the Subject Site”). This application seeks to refurbish the existing student accommodation building and erect a setback rooftop extension at fifth floor to create four additional student bedrooms and communal facilities. The total floorspace uplift will be 460 sqm GIA sqm (2407 sqm to 2867 sqm). The total student residential floorspace uplift will be 80 sqm (NIA). There are no existing or proposed car parking spaces on site.
- 1.2 The Applicant has engaged in pre-application discussions with the London Borough of Camden (LBC) prior to the submission of this application and further details are provided in this Planning Statement and in the Design and Access Statement.
- 1.3 This planning application follows a grant of planning permission, in December 2020 (2020/0928/P), for the demolition of the existing building and erection of new PBSA to create 88 student bedrooms on the same site. This permission is subject to the conclusion of a s106 agreement to include developer contributions, which is imminent. Planning permission is now sought for this alternative minor refurbishment proposal on sustainability and cost grounds; it is submitted without prejudice to the conclusion of the S106 and issuing of this planning permission. This proposal is an alternative approach for the property and the applicant would like to retain future flexibility to implement either consent.
- 1.4 Key principles of this new proposal are:
- Retention of the existing building to help reduce carbon emissions.
 - Improvements to façade performance – new windows, internal thermal improvements to existing brick façade and throughout the building.
 - Setback rooftop extension to increase student accommodation provision and provide additional communal facilities.
 - Entrances redefined to create a clearer distinction at street level.
 - Improved amenity and communal spaces.
- 1.5 The scope of the application submission has been agreed, and the suite of documents accompanying the planning application comprises the following:
- Forms and full set of plans
 - **Planning Statement**
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Noise and Acoustic Survey
 - Energy and Sustainability Statement
 - Daylight and Sunlight Report
- 1.6 Whilst provided with this application, an Energy and Sustainability Statement is only strictly needed for development creating more than 500 sqm additional floorspace, which is not the case here.
- 1.7 The Planning Statement will explain the location and planning history of the Subject Site, relevant planning policy and guidance, and will assess the proposed development against the Development Plan and other material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, in accordance with the requirements of legislation.

2.0 The Applicant

- 2.1 The application is submitted on behalf of Empiric (London Francis Gardner) Limited (hereinafter referred to as “the Applicant”), a subsidiary of Empiric Student Properties plc. The Applicant is a leading provider and operator of modern, direct-let, premium student accommodation across the UK. Investing in both operating and development assets, the Company focuses on quality, with assets generally in prime central locations in top university cities and towns in the UK, attracting international students and/or those studying beyond first year, in particular, postgraduates. Empiric's customer base comprises approximately 60% international students.
- 2.2 The Applicant’s property portfolio comprises 8,603 beds across 77 assets in 28 cities including the Francis Gardner Apartments (application site) and Grosvenor Apartments in Twickenham. The typical customer demographic in Empiric properties is skewed toward postgraduate and international students, who are more attracted to such premium student accommodation. As a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) Empiric is a long-term investor and operator and is committed to delivering a high-quality student experience at the site. All properties are managed directly through the Hello Student platform.

3.0 The Site

- 3.1 The application site relates to the existing site at 89-91 West End Lane in the London Borough of Camden. The site boundary is shown in Figure 1. The existing building is five storeys including a single storey lower ground floor. It has undergone significant alterations and extension over time and as a result has a complex internal layout with stairs linking different levels. The present building dates from the early 1900s. Major renovations and repairs took place following bomb damage during the Second World War and was converted into Carlton Mansions in 1953.
- 3.2 The existing property has 18 cluster apartments between ground and 4th floor, with a self-contained flat on the 1st floor with visitor's room. Currently communal facilities are in the lower ground floor and consist of a lounge, toilets, store room, gym and cinema.
- 3.3 The building was last refurbished in 2004/2005. The property reads as three adjoining blocks which are set back from the front boundary of the site at varying degrees to form a development with a stepped appearance. There is some hardstanding to the front of the site that allows drop-off activity to take place; there is no dedicated car parking on site. Short stay cycle parking is located in-front of the existing building.



Figure 1: Site Location

- 3.4 The Subject Site is located on the western side of West End Lane, in the West Hampstead area of Camden. Whilst the building is located within the South Hampstead Conservation Area it is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as making only a “neutral” contribution. The

buildings on either side are identified as making a positive contribution. The existing building can be seen in Figure 2. There are no designated heritage assets within 500m of the site.

- 3.5 The site is located within a predominantly residential area with surrounding buildings being in residential use including Kings Gardens, Smyrna Road, and Sidney Boyd Court. There are other uses in the vicinity with several commercial uses and amenities provided nearby at Kilburn High Road and in West Hampstead Town Centre. The site is close to several public transport links and is within walking distance of the London Underground, London Overground, and Thameslink services at West Hampstead. The site has a PTAL rating of 5 being within walking and cycling distance of public transport opportunities.



Figure 2: Existing Building and adjacent buildings (street view)

Planning History

- 3.6 Four planning decisions exist in relation to the site, two relating to the basement and roof extension development (granted 2003 and 2005), one relating to windows (2015) and the most recent (2020) being for demolition of the building and erection of PBSA (subject to the signing of a s106 legal agreement).
- 3.7 Details of the four planning permissions are contained in Table 1.

Table 1: Planning History

Planning Reference	Decision and Date	Description of Development
2020/0928/P	Minded to Grant 17/12/20 (subject to s106)	Demolition of existing student accommodation building (Sui Generis) and erection of a seven storey plus basement student accommodation building (Sui Generis). The demolition and erection of new PBSA on the site at 6 storeys, with a recessed roof storey, was deemed to be acceptable: <i>“Given the limited increase in its height and scale, and in its location in relation to neighbourly buildings, the proposed development would preserve</i>

		<i>residential amenity in terms of daylight/sunlight, outlook, and privacy”.</i>
PWX0203119	Approved 18/03/2003 (subject to conditions)	Conversion of the basement area to provide 4 additional bedrooms and the erection of 2 roof extensions to provide 7 additional bedrooms for the existing student hostel.
2003/3484/P	Approved 05/01/2005 (subject to conditions and s106)	Part excavation of lower ground floor and rear garden of the hostel to change existing storage and boiler room to habitable space including external alterations, alterations to increase the number of hostel rooms from 55 to 65 and roof over two light wells, erection of a roof extension to provide 3 self-contained flats, erection of a new lift shaft, installation of a ramp to the front entrance and provision for the parking of 15 bicycles and 1 car in the forecourt.
2015/3178/P	Refused 06/10/15	Replacement of front, side, rear and lightwell windows with aluminium and UPVC framed windows. The replacement windows were refused planning permission because it was considered the “ <i>material, and detailed design, would be detrimental to the appearance of the host building and the character and appearance of the South Hampstead Conservation Area</i> ”.

4.0 Pre-Application Stage

Pre-Application Discussions (LBC)

- 4.1 The Applicant has engaged in pre-application discussions with the London Borough of Camden (LBC) in relation to the proposed development (2022/0611/NEW). A Pre-Application Discussion Document (PADD) was submitted to inform this pre-application process in February 2022. The pre-application original proposal is shown in Figure 3.
- 4.2 This pre-application process follows a previous request for pre-application advice in October 2017 before submission and approval (subject to signing of a s106 legal agreement) of a 2020 consent for demolition and re-build (see Table 1).



Figure 3: Pre-Application Proposal

- 4.3 A pre-application meeting for this application was held between LBC and the Applicant on 30 March 2022. A summary of this meeting is below, which had been informed by both council planning and design advice:
 - *No objection in principle to the proposed development. It will largely match the height of the development recently approved under permission reference 2020/0928/P and is preferred in many ways to this previous proposal on sustainability grounds given the building’s retention. There will also be less neighbour disturbance with limited construction vehicles.*
 - *Confirmation that the application will be ‘Minor’ in nature and that any proposed internal refurbishment works will fall within permitted development (PD) not requiring planning permission.*

- *In design terms, the use of arched windows for the proposed extension are an interesting design feature that references the form and fenestration of nearby positive contributors within the surrounding conservation area, albeit in a contemporary fashion. The proposed metal cladding should be removed from the top of the extension and replaced with brick to match the building below.*
- *The proposed changes to the windows on the front elevation will result in, what appear as, large-glazed openings. Consider breaking this up with glazing bars like the windows on the lower floors of the rear elevation.*
- *It is unlikely the proposals will cause harm to neighbouring amenity in terms of loss of light, outlook, or privacy but the application should be accompanied with all relevant documents to demonstrate this.*
- *It may be necessary to secure a Construction Management Plan (CMP) (via s106 legal agreement) on a grant of planning permission to limit the impact of constructions works on neighbouring amenity and the surrounding highway network.*

4.4 It was agreed that given the minor modest scale of the proposed extension it is unlikely to be reviewed at the council's Design Review Panel.

4.5 The design has evolved based on these discussions. Refer to the Design and Access Statement for further details on design development.



Figure 4: Final design based on comments received at the Pre-Application Stage

Pre-Application Consultation

4.6 The applicant has engaged in some limited pre-application engagement with the local community given the previous relationship built with the community during the 2020 demolition proposal/planning application process. This has involved contacting key neighbours to inform them of this revised application approach.

- 4.7 It is important to note that the consultation team will continue to be available during the application stage. The applicant is committed to continuing the dialogue with all stakeholders through the planning application process.

5.0 Proposed Development

- 5.1 The Application is submitted for the following description of development (hereinafter referred to as “the Proposed Development”) as shown on Figure 5:

“Proposed refurbishment of existing student accommodation building (Sui Generis), including replacement recessed windows and façade cleaning, and erection of roof extension to accommodate four studio flats and internal and external communal amenity space, with associated landscaping”.

- 5.2 The existing building footprint will remain as is. Four high quality studio flats will be provided.
- 5.3 The proposal involves an uplift of four bedrooms, with the increased floorspace (460sqm) achieved through a sympathetic extension/new floor at roof level. Additional residential floorspace will be 80sqm NIA. The roof level is set back from the main elevation and has a smaller footprint than the other storeys. The proposal removes the current ad-hoc extensions at roof level, replacing these with a more appropriate higher quality solution. Building height was fully tested as part of the previous application and has been agreed as acceptable at the pre-application stage.
- 5.4 There will be increased internal and external amenity space at roof level including a new communal lounge area (36 sqm) and an external roof terrace (42 sqm).
- 5.5 Brickwork is being cleaned and repointed, with no over-cladding proposed. Window openings are remaining as is, apart from at ground floor level and windows with arches. All window openings align. New replacement windows will all be timber sash and case, as preferred by the council in pre-application discussions, and will be more energy efficient than the existing windows.
- 5.6 The rooftop extension will provide a small outdoor terrace and new lounge area to provide space for students to connect and socialise. It will also provide the additional four bedspaces. Materials and detailing for this extension take reference from neighbouring properties.
- 5.7 Internal reconfiguration, not requiring planning permission, is proposed to improve efficiencies and student living accommodation, including moving the internal staircase to improve circulation/access, refurbishing the existing lounge, gym, and entertainment area in the lower ground floor area, and providing a study room at each floor level 1-4. Level access will be provided, including a direct route to all basement communal facilities, reintegrating one of the two central lightwells into a new central core and providing new lift services to ensure step free access throughout to rationalise circulation space. Existing circulation routes are convoluted and confusing.
- 5.8 Bicycle and bin storage is also improved with an internal secure bike and bin store at ground floor level, with direct access to the front garden area with collection from West End Lane. Access is provided via the main entrance foyer and lobby. Space for a total of 16 bicycles is now available internally where none was before. In addition, five Sheffield bike stands remain (space for 10 bikes) in the external landscape to provide cycle parking for short-stay visitors. Again, none of this requires planning permission and is provided for information purposes only to illustrate the improved living environment through refurbishment.
- 5.9 The tree to the front of the building will remain, with improved planting externally.

- 5.10 New plant will be provided in the lower ground, ground, and roof level. The Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) will be located within the plant compound at roof level.
- 5.11 A separate Energy and Sustainability Statement outlines energy efficiency measures to be adopted, including the new ASHP system along with a thermal buffer vessel to provide heating and hot water (gas free). All rooms will be mechanically ventilated with heat recovery (MVHR), including wet rooms (dMEV). All lighting will be low energy and efficient. These changes represent a significant upgrade to the mechanical and electrical performance of the building. Again, none of this requires planning permission and demonstrates the applicant’s commitment to energy efficiency.
- 5.12 Full details of the proposal are provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

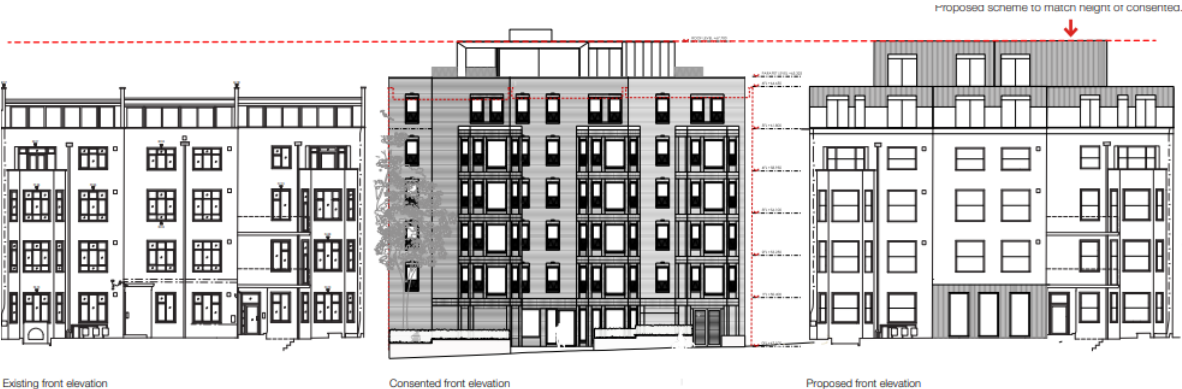


Figure 5: The Proposal compared to that existing and recently consented (subject to s106).

6.0 The Development Plan and other Material Considerations

- 6.1 The relevant Development Plan is the London Plan (2021) and the Camden Local Plan (2017).
- 6.2 Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Mayoral Supplementary Planning Guidance, South Hampstead Conservation Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011), and Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) on Design, Sustainability, Student Housing, Amenity and Developer Contributions.
- 6.3 The principal considerations material to the determination of this minor application, based on planning history, are taken in turn below:
- Land use / principle of development
 - Design and Conservation
 - Amenity
 - Standard of accommodation
 - Safety and security
 - Sustainability
 - Transport / Active Travel
 - Waste / recycling
 - Major of London Crossrail CIL
 - Camden CIL

Land Use / Principle of Development

- 6.4 The principle of student accommodation has been established on site through historical use (see Table 1). The building's existing lawful use is for student accommodation (Sui Generis).
- 6.5 A need for student accommodation is identified in Policy H1 of the Camden Local Plan. Self-contained student housing is a priority land use.
- 6.6 Policy H9 of the Camden Local Plan and H15 of the London Plan is specific to proposals for student housing. The four additional bed spaces proposed will make an important contribution towards meeting council targets for 160 additional student spaces per year and London Plan targets of 3,500 bed spaces annually.
- 6.7 The existing building has no undertakings/nomination agreement in place to provide housing for students at one or more specific education institutions, or affordable to the student body, as per Policy H9 (g) of the local plan and Policy H15 of the London Plan. As such Policy H4 of the Local Plan expects an affordable housing contribution for additional residential floorspace of 100sqm GIA or more calculated at 33% of the additional floorspace provided. The London Plan equivalent figure is 35% (Policy H15 and H16). The additional residential floorspace proposed is 80 sqm and therefore no affordable contribution is expected.

Design and Conservation

- 6.8 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is relevant requiring special attention to preserving character/appearance of the conservation area. The building is not listed. Whilst within the South Hampstead Conservation Area it is considered to be a 'neutral' building which neither preserves nor detracts from the character and appearance of the area such that consent was recently granted for its demolition. The minor changes now proposed improve both the appearance and sustainability of the building for the greater good.

Unsympathetic additions at roof level will also be removed with the building of a set-back roof level extension.

- 6.9 NPPF section 12 (paras 126-136), London Plan Policies D1-D14, Camden Local Plan policies D1 and D2 and CPG (Design) are all relevant with regards to design and conservation. They aim to secure high quality design that will preserve/enhance heritage assets and their setting.
- 6.10 Policy D1 of the Camden Local Plan requires development to be of the highest architectural and urban design quality, which improves the function, appearance, and character of the area in terms of scale and proportion, using materials that complement the local architectural character. Policy D2 states that the council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including within conservation areas. London Plan Policies are similar; Policy D3 aims to optimise site capacity and Figure 3.2 emphasises the Circular Economy, with retention of existing buildings being at the top of the hierarchy.
- 6.11 The proposed height of alterations at roof level are no higher than the 2020 approved scheme which have already been accepted in terms of height and setback. Its report of handling states: *"The stepped form of the proposed building helps to maintain the building's existing relationship with the curve in the road along this part of West End Lane, which is welcomed.... the height of the proposals is broadly equivalent to the scale of the taller buildings forming Kings Gardens immediately to the south and also to Sydney Boyd Court opposite"*. See paragraph 6.15 below.
- 6.12 Privacy and overshadowing are protected (see separate daylight report). Climate change mitigation and adaptation has been considered. Higher quality indoor and outdoor communal spaces are proposed at both ground and upper levels. The potential of the site has been optimised making effective use of an existing building to provide a higher standard of accommodation. An appropriate modern response which respects the historic local context and character has been found. The stepping back at roof level helps to break up the mass of the building. The use of red brick continues. The street frontage is better addressed with design changes at ground floor. A high-quality sustainable building is being improved in an accessible location. Internal circulation space is being improved to make it more accessible. Additional and improved communal areas promote improved health and wellbeing. Existing views will not be affected. New window proportions and detailing work well with the surrounding context.
- 6.13 The proposed development includes the refurbishment of the existing building to provide a much higher quality building which will be both more sustainable and visually more attractive. The proposal has been developed following a pre-application planning and design process with LBC. The final design presented with this application achieves a high-quality building which is in keeping with the local area and will be a positive addition to the Conservation Area.

Amenity

- 6.14 The key issues are daylight/sunlight, outlook, overlooking and noise/disturbance. The relevant policies are A1 and A4 of the Camden Local Plan and D3 and D6 of the London Plan which seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. CPG Amenity aims to minimise the impact on the loss of daylight/sunlight.
- 6.15 As the proposal is largely for the refurbishment of an existing building, with the roof extension rising to the same height, and occupying a similar footprint to that which LBC was resolved to grant in 2020, there can be no change to the conclusion reached in relation to that application in terms of amenity impacts, including impacts on wind and microclimate, which will be negligible. The 2020 report of handling states: *"Given the limited increase in its height and scale, and in its location in relation to neighbourly buildings, the proposed development would*

preserve residential amenity in terms of daylight/sunlight, outlook, and privacy". A separate daylight/sunlight assessment has been prepared which confirms no harm to light levels. Outlook will remain as existing with an increase in eight windows on the set back 5th floor roof level and four additional windows at the floor level below where rooflights have been upgraded to windows. Windows have also been added where front terraces have been infilled. There is no direct overlooking of neighbouring properties.

- 6.16 The documentation submitted with this application focuses on the impacts on amenity in relation to noise, privacy, overshadowing and light.
- 6.17 The London Plan Policy D14 requires proposals to avoid significant adverse noise impacts as a result of new development. Camden Local Plan Policy A4 also relates to noise and confirms planning permission will not be granted for a development likely to generate unacceptable noise and vibration impacts; or for development sensitive to noise in locations which experience high levels of noise unless appropriate attenuation measures can be provided and will not harm the continued operation of existing uses. Given the ASHP, standby generator and smoke ventilation fans will be located on the roof, a separate noise assessment is required as confirmed at the pre-application stage and has been submitted. The London Plan's Agent of Change Policy D13 has been addressed.
- 6.18 A Construction Management Plan (CMP) Pro-Forma has not been submitted given the uplift in floorspace is less than 1000 sqm. A detailed CMP will be submitted once a contractor has been appointed, who will be registered under the Considerate Contractor Scheme. The effect of any noisy or dusty work will be minimised by all means available and comply with Camden's Minimum Requirements for Building Construction.
- 6.19 Existing surface and foul water sewer networks will service the proposed development.
- 6.20 The London Plan at Policy G1 requires development proposals to incorporate appropriate elements of green infrastructure that are integrated into the wider network. Camden Local Plan Policy A2 also seeks developer contributions for open space enhancements using s106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to apply a standard of 9 sqm per occupant for residential schemes (which should be further discounted by 25% for student schemes). The proposal delivers an additional 72 sqm of amenity space at roof level (creating a second lounge / dining room with small terrace) for an additional four bedspaces (overall 460 sqm increase; 80 sqm residential floorspace increase) which exceeds these standards. The proposed internal changes also offer a variety of amenity and social spaces at all levels of the building. The basement level contains a gym, an entertainment/ cinema room and a lounge area which will be refurbished. The external communal courtyard area to the rear will remain as existing, provide residents with an outdoor area to relax and socialise. The upper floor level will have a communal roof terrace.
- 6.21 Given only four additional bedspaces are provided there is no requirement for a contribution towards wider open space. Landscaping on site is being improved at lower ground/ground floor levels, with improved planting beds/greenery.

Standard of Accommodation

- 6.22 Policy H9 of the Camden Local Plan requires student housing to comply with minimum HMO standards and benchmark areas for study bedrooms and studios. London Plan Policy H15 focuses on student accommodation. The four proposed studio units will each incorporate shower and kitchen facilities and the smallest unit will have an area of 18 sqm which exceeds local plan minimum benchmark space requirement of 17.5sqm for a double room studio. They also have access to a number of communal living areas both at the basement and roof levels, which again exceed standards.
- 6.23 A separate Daylight and Sunlight Report demonstrates that the four additional flats provide a good standard of accommodation for future occupants in terms of their size, layout, and levels of daylight/sunlight. It also demonstrates suitable daylight/sunlight in relation to surrounding properties and neighbouring amenity spaces, taking account of overshadowing effects. All are fully compliant.

Safety and Security

- 6.24 Local Plan policy C5 (safety and security) and CGP1 (Design) promote secure by design. Numerous safety and security measure are already in place. The proposed internal cycle storage area will minimise cycle theft. Surveillance of the street at roof level is provided which also increases security and safety over the current building. Defensible planting beds proposed to the front at ground level windows add to privacy and security.
- 6.25 Policy D12 of the London Plan deals with fire safety and only requires a Fire Statement for major applications. The British Government requires fire statements on all 'relevant buildings' – including residential accommodation for students - over 18m or 7 stories tall containing more than one dwelling. Given the proposal constitutes a 'minor' application and is below the size threshold a Fire Statement is not required.

Sustainability

- 6.26 The re-use of an existing building previously permitted for demolition is inherently sustainable, minimising embodied carbon emissions and avoiding pollution.
- 6.27 The proposal also presents an opportunity to increase the number of student rooms on site, addressing the growing need for student accommodation within the borough of Camden.

Transport / Active Travel

- 6.28 The London Plan Policy T5 requires student accommodation developments to provide 0.75 cycle spaces per bedroom (long-stay) and 1 space per 40 bedrooms (short-stay). The four additional bedrooms proposed will only require 3/4 additional cycle spaces. Currently space for 10 bikes is provided externally (five Sheffield cycle stands), which will remain. This new proposal provides space for 16 bicycles internally integrated in a secure store at ground floor, with level access from the front courtyard area or main entrance to the building. Cycle parking exceeds standards.
- 6.29 The London Plan Policy T6 sets maximum parking standards. The Camden Local Plan Policy T2 promotes car free development. No parking spaces continue to be provided. An additional four student rooms will have limited additional impact on the surrounding highway network.

Waste / Recycling

- 6.30 Camden Local Plan Policy CC5 (Waste) and CPG (Design) seeks to ensure the appropriate storage of waste and recyclables. London Plan Policy S1 aims to ensure waste is reduced and recycling is increased as part of the circular economy.
- 6.31 Camden's waste guidance advises that each dwelling with three bedrooms or less should be provided with storage for:
- 120 litres of general waste;
 - 140 litres of mixed dry recycling; and
 - 23 litres of food waste.
- 6.32 Given that the proposal is for student accommodation and not C3 Use Class property, there will be less waste generated and, as such, a relaxation of the standards is considered appropriate.
- 6.33 An area has been proposed which can store six 1100 Litre Eurobins and five 1100L food waste bins. This level of provision is considered appropriate for both the additional four bedspaces and existing accommodation.
- 6.34 The waste storage area continues to be located to the front of the property at ground floor level. An internal store will also be created which is direct and step-free to the footway/dropped kerb. Refer to the separate Design and Access Statement.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Subject Site is currently in use as student accommodation known as “Francis Gardner Apartments”.
- 7.2 The London Borough of Camden resolved to grant planning application 2020/0928/P in December 2020 for “*Demolition of existing student accommodation building (sui generis) and erection of a 7 storey plus basement student accommodation building (sui generis)*”. That proposal included a total of 88 student bedrooms, representing an increase of 20 bedrooms when compared with the existing building. The accommodation was to be delivered through a mix of self-contained studio flats and larger two, three and four bed cluster flats with shared kitchen and living facilities. This consent will be issued following conclusion of a s106 legal agreement.
- 7.3 This current Minor development proposal is an alternative proposal and involves the retention of the existing building and its refurbishment, including cleaning of the existing brick façade, the installation of recessed replacement windows and the erection of a set-back roof extension to accommodate a modest increase in bedrooms (four) and student amenity space to encourage more social interaction.
- 7.4 The roof-top storey is significantly set back from the main elevation to reduce any impact. Building height is no greater than that recently consented and there is no change to the building footprint. Car parking remains at zero spaces and cycle facilities on site have increased with secure indoor cycle storage now provided as well as secure internal bin storage. The proposal complies with the NPPF in relation to the presumption in favour of sustainable development – it makes more efficient use of existing land within an accessible existing urban area.
- 7.5 The Applicant has engaged in pre-application discussion with LBC which is summarised within this Planning Statement. The proposals have been positively received, particularly in relation to design and sustainability, with the retention of the existing building where demolition was previously consented.
- 7.6 The Design and Access Statement sets out in detail how the design has developed. The proposed development is considered to offer a high-quality refurbished building which, having taken account of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the building’s considered current neutral impact, will be a positive addition to the area. Energy efficiency and internal circulation will be vastly improved and is documented in a separate Energy and Sustainability Statement. Daylight/sunlight has also been assessed and found to be acceptable.
- 7.7 The application is supported by a number of reports which, in totality, demonstrate compliance with the London Plan, Camden Local Plan and relevant supplementary guidance. Planning permission for the proposed development should be granted.



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