

## **CRABTREE FIELDS AND TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD**

### **INFORMATION NOTE ON RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRE-APP SITE AT 16-24 WHITFIELD STREET**

#### **Background to creation of Crabtree Fields**

Crabtree Fields is a compact public open space managed by LB Camden and provides an important green area in the Charlotte Street Conservation Area and is used by residents and office workers.

It was a bomb-damaged site and was used for many years as temporary open car parking by Schmidt's Restaurant then based in Charlotte Street pursuant to a 1957 planning permission.

Planning permission was granted to the then GLC on 15 March 1984 for development of the site for open space purposes. In 1985 the space was landscaped by LB Camden and the space opened in 1986.

The Friends of Crabtree Fields is a voluntary user group and during 2020 they planted over 100 new saplings in the space courtesy of the Woodland Trust and the BTCV.

The position in the conservation area and the relative lack of other open space nearby makes this area an important local amenity.

#### **Current layout of Crabtree Fields**

The open space can be divided into 3 or 4 sections.

The rear section at the west side is a children play area and is relatively sheltered and private with surrounding buildings on the east side of Charlotte St providing a safe enclosed area.

To the direct east of this is a formally tree-planted square surrounded by seating and a central gravelled area occupied by a grid of deciduous trees.

To the east of this is the main attractive grassed area surrounded by timber 'cloister' structures enclosing the surrounding paths with a further smaller grassed area to the north backing into the south side of Colville Place with an attractive green beech hedge boundary which extends to the east and south boundaries.

The front boundary of and entrance to the open space is set back from the west side of Whitfield St with a wider pavement area with seating.

#### **Surrounding buildings around Crabtree Fields**

The preapp site overlooks the open space from the east and to the south as does Kirkman House, 12 – 14 Whitfield Street, a 1930s/1940s office building with some art deco detailing extended and refurbished. There was a 2003 approved roof extension for residential use which is visible from this open space.

To the south is Crabtree Place 3 storey residential scheme of apartments and townhouses which frames the southern boundary of the open space and is very close up against this boundary.

To the west are the mainly blank exposed walls of the properties on the east of Charlotte Street.

To the north is a terrace of residential property fronting the north side of Coville Place with Cyclone House on the Whitfield St corner at 27-29 which has recently been refurbished and extended as offices with flexible commercial uses at ground and first floors pursuant to a 2018 planning permission

### **Relationship with of Crabtree Fields to pre app site**

The current police station and administrative police offices were erected pursuant to a November 2000 planning permission.

Studio CF have amended the preapp scheme to avoid the potential for the private roof terrace and the proposed new build space at 4<sup>th</sup> floor level to overlook users of Crabtree Fields for most of its depth. Where there is minor potential visibility of the roof terrace and new floor at the western end of Crabtree Fields it is very distant from this area and hidden by the tree canopy. For example, the front of the play area is 60 m from the frontage of the building on 16-24 Whitfield Street.

### **Revisions to initial pre-app to reflect Crabtree Fields**

Studio CF have made revisions to the preapp drawings to set back the proposed new top floor of offices sufficiently to not be visible from most points in the open space.

Each of the viewing points is marked approximately on the attached open space layout plan

From none of the viewpoints will the bulk of the additional floor replacing the plant room be materially visible from the open space.

It is intended to provide a landscaped strip along the west edge of the amenity terrace at this 4<sup>th</sup> floor level that will provide both privacy to office users of the terrace and avoid visual disturbance to the public open space by office users.

A small area of the 'brise soleil' and slab edge may be visible from viewpoint 4 but this is the most distant area and is from the hard landscaped play area where the views looking east are already obstructed by the tree planting especially in summer.

The new 4<sup>th</sup> floor offices will be hidden behind the parapet line due to the increased setback provided and the 4<sup>th</sup> will not be seen from the view points in the 3 principal areas used by the public (the 2 grassed areas and the formal tree planted square to the east of the play area). Further the heavily leafed nature of the native deciduous trees provides dense shading to the open space and, especially, obscures views looking east from the open space towards Whitfield Street. This protection includes the cover provided by very tall trees that line Whitfield Street.

There will be no increased sense of enclosure to Crabtree Fields caused by the proposed new top floor.

Whilst these views are not yet visually verified it would be intended to provide these as part of a formal planning application.

### **Information supplied to assess relationship with Crabtree Fields**

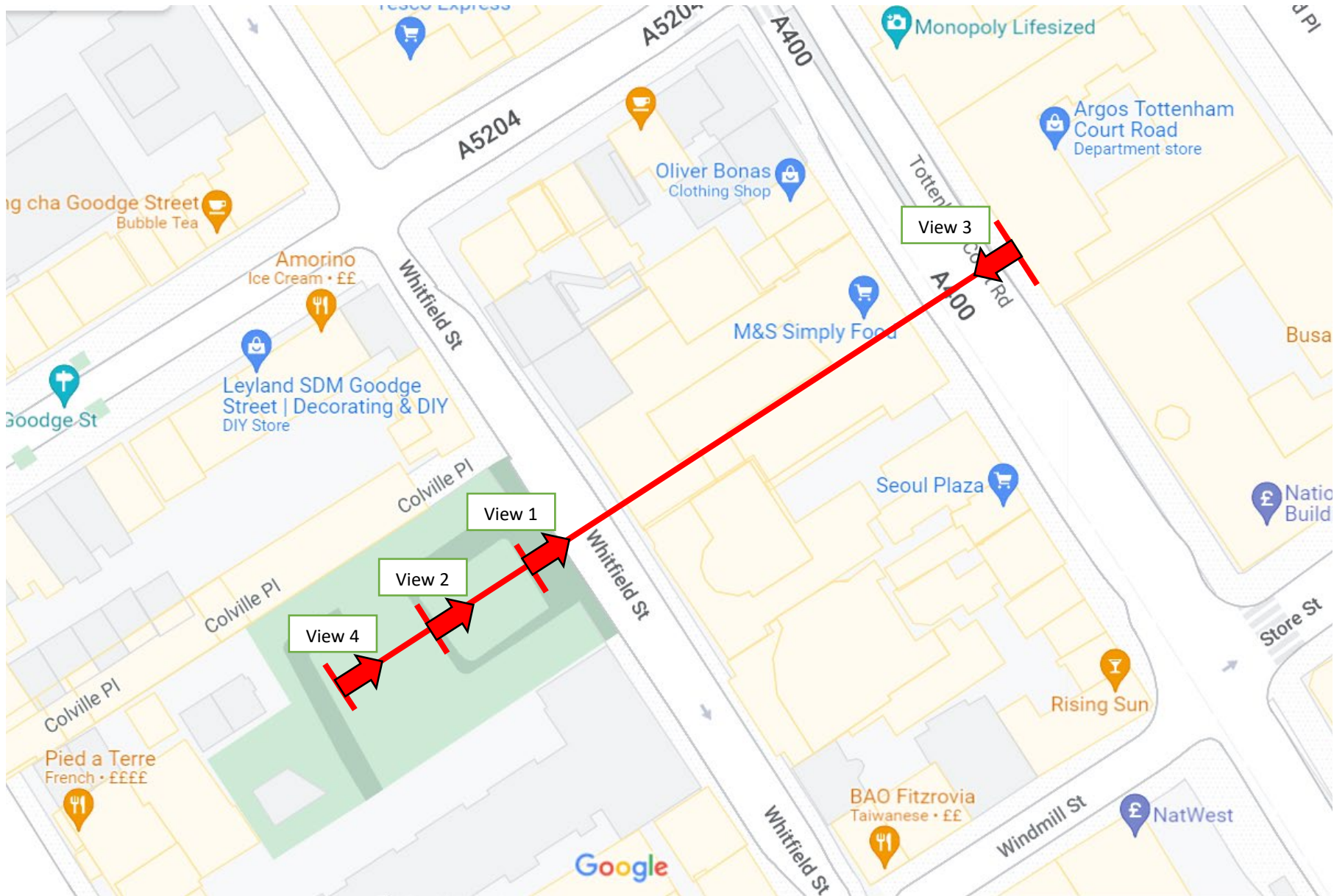
- Plan showing approximate position of viewing points on open space layout plan. The viewpoints are –

- 1 – frontage to Crabtree Fields (back of pavement by pedestrian entrance to the public space)
  - 2 – rear of main grassed area
  - 4 - middle of grid of trees in gravelled area
- Photographs of Crabtree Fields labelled and the following should be noted -
- Proposed site section west to east showing the viewing angle from the viewpoints 1,2,4 noted above.

#### **View from TCR**

- The site section has been extended to include viewpoint 3 on the east side of Tottenham Court Road which shows that the proposed plant enclosure will not be visible from this point.

**150422**



LOCATION PLAN - KEY – VIEWS TAKEN FROM CRABTREE FIELDS AND TOTTENHAM COURT



Image 1 View dense trees West side of Whitfield Street





**Image 2 View looking West towards viewpoint 2 with viewpoint 4 within taller trees in gravelled area.**





Image 3 View point 4 in middle of gravel square looking east





**Image 4 View point from front of children's playground with dense trees obscuring view east**





**Image 5 View of Crabtree Fields from first floor of Pre App site looking South West.**





Image 6 View from rear of children's play area looking east





**Image 7 View point middle of the main grassed areas between view point 2 and 4**



