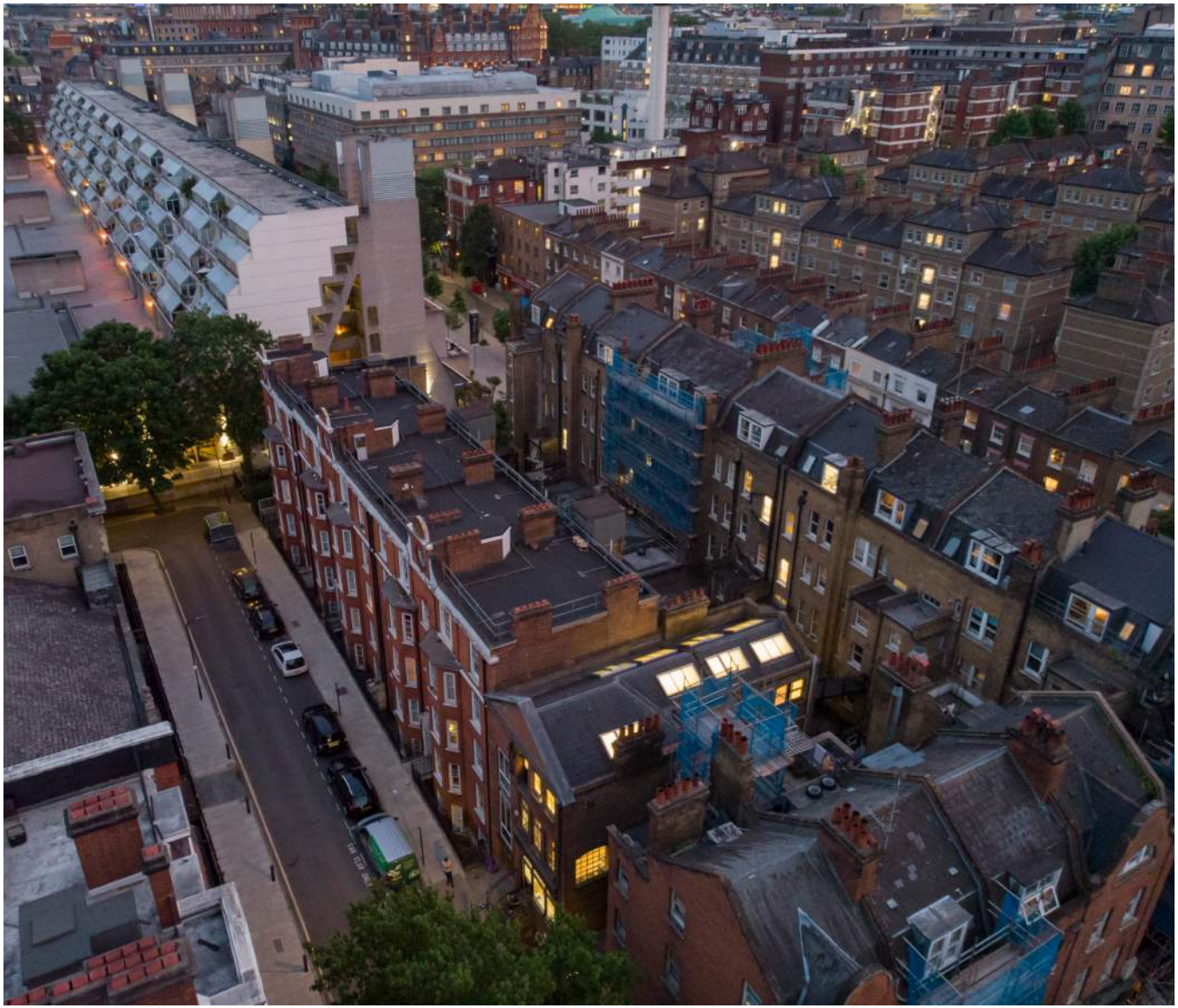
Design and Access Statement

73-75 Kenton Street
WC1N 1NN

Prepared on behalf of BKDM LLP • 2023



1. **Introduction**

1.1 **About the Team**

BKDM LLP is founded and run by a small group of architects, all having graduated with Master in Architecture degrees from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design in the United States. Operating at scales across the urban and the interior, the architects at BKDM seek to address the ideological and the material challenges of today's architectural practice through innovative, critical, and detail-oriented design experimentations.

Prior to assembling the studio, members have had experience designing for the preservation and renovation of a range of historical buildings, including the preservation and energy upgrade of a brick masonry pump house dated back to the late 1800's (*Fig. 1*), and the renovation and re-rehabilitation of a dilapidated granary building, also dating back to late 1800's (*Fig. 2-3*). The granary restoration project has won the *2021 Progressive Architecture Award*. The team believes that historical buildings need to be respected for their original character and their process of ageing, and to be acknowledged for their capacity for transformation and growth as times change.

Fig. 1. Preservation and energy upgrade of Pump House in East Boston, MA, USA

Fig. 2. In Construction: Rehabilitation and restoration of Granary

Fig. 3. Local Community Participation

1.2 **Proposal**

This design and access statement presents the proposed change of use and minor alterations of 73-75 Kenton Street from office use (Class E) to a mixed-use building, with office use (Class E) on the lower ground level, and single-family dwelling-house (Class C3) across ground, first and second floors.

1.3 **Overview**

73-75 Kenton Street is a four-story brick building near the corner of Kenton Street and Tavistock Place. The building is not listed and is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The building is a semi-detached, self-standing masonry structure with a total internal area of 320m^2. Though the site had existed since the early 1800's, the building in its current form is estimated to have been built in 1906. 73-75 Kenton Street was originally built as a light-industrial/warehouse building, and was later re-purposed into an office building.

1.4 **Applicant**

This statement is prepared by BKDM LLP. The applicant, as partner of BKDM LLP, wishes to retain the business use on the lower ground level, and occupy the ground, first, and second floors as their long-term single-family dwelling.

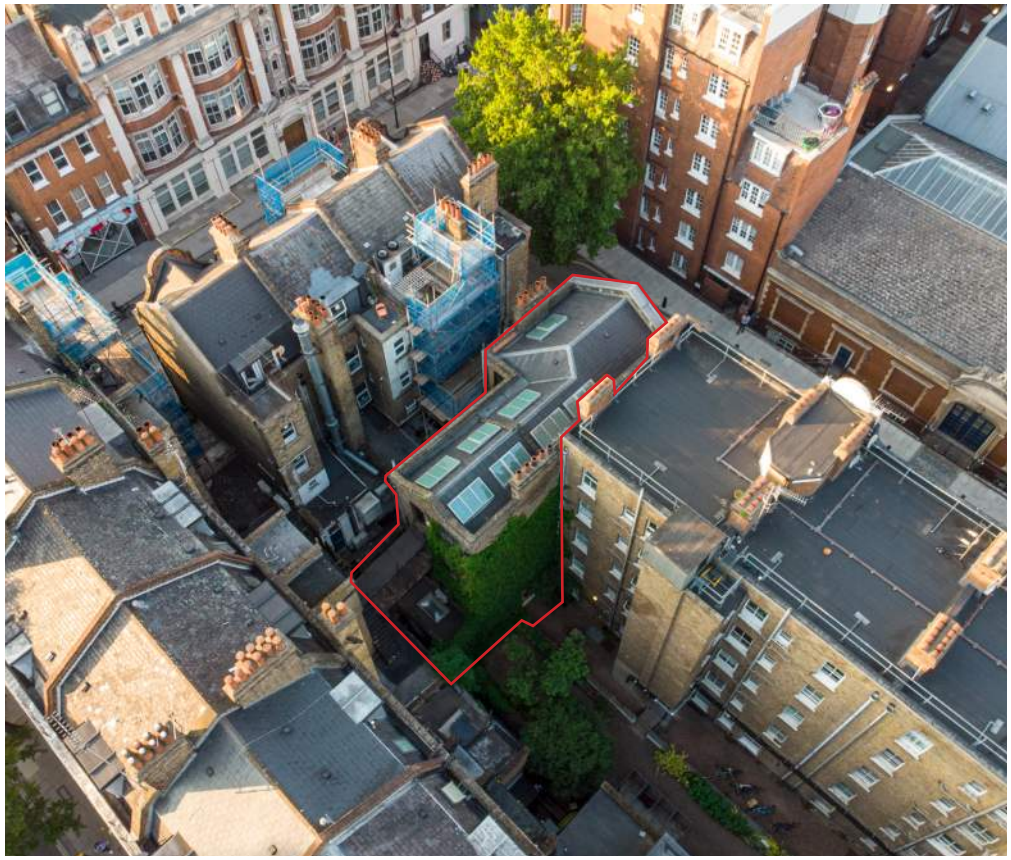


Fig. 4. 73-75 Kenton Street aerial view from southwest

1.5 **Site Condition**

1.5.1 Site Location

73-75 Kenton Street is located in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The neighbouring Marchmont community is a vibrant area harbouring a diverse mix of residents and local activities. The site is within walking distance from Russell Square, University College London, the Foundling Estate, Brunswick Centre, Army Reserve Centre, among other places of cultural significance.

Site Location Plan

Fig. 5. Site Location Plan

1.5.2 Site History

Kenton Street originated as part of the fields surrounding the Foundling Estate (*Fig. 6*). The street was first developed between 1806 and 1809, running north-south from Compton Street (now Tavistock Place) to Great Coram Street (*Fig. 7*). The street was named after Benjamin Kenton, who made a fortune by inventing ale bottling and was a benefactor of the Founding Estate.

In the 1960's, development of the Brunswick Centre overtook the southern portion of Kenton Street. Today, Kenton Street runs north-south between Tavistock Place and Handel Street.

73-75 Kenton Street is part of a block of buildings bordering Marchmont Street to the west, Kenton Street to the east, and Compton Street (re-named Tavistock Place in 1938) to the north. The block has existed in its current configuration, but is estimated to have been re-constructed in the early 1900's. The town plans predating 1900 and in 1911 (*Fig. 8-10*) illustrate the transformation of the block back then. Based on maps for drainage planning dated in 1906, the construction of 73-75 Kenton Street took place in 1906, preceding the neighbouring buildings by about one year.

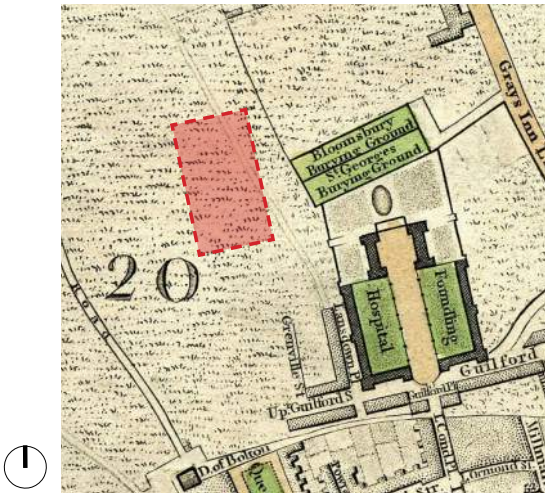


Fig. 6. Cary's New and Accurate Plan of London and its Vicinity, 1795

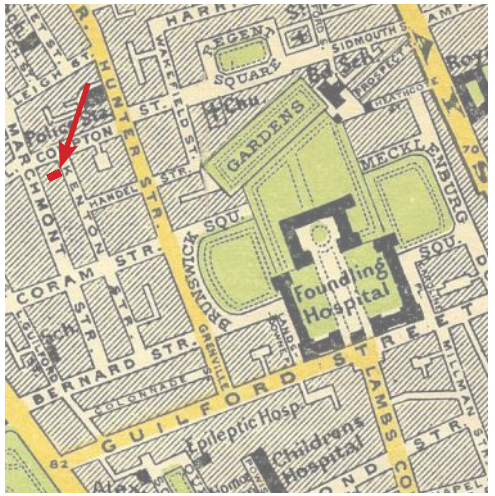


Fig. 7. Stanford's Library Map of London and Its Suburbs, 1987

Fig. 8. Town Plans, 1893-1895
Source: Ordnance Survey

Fig. 9. Drainage Site Plan, 1906
Source: Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre

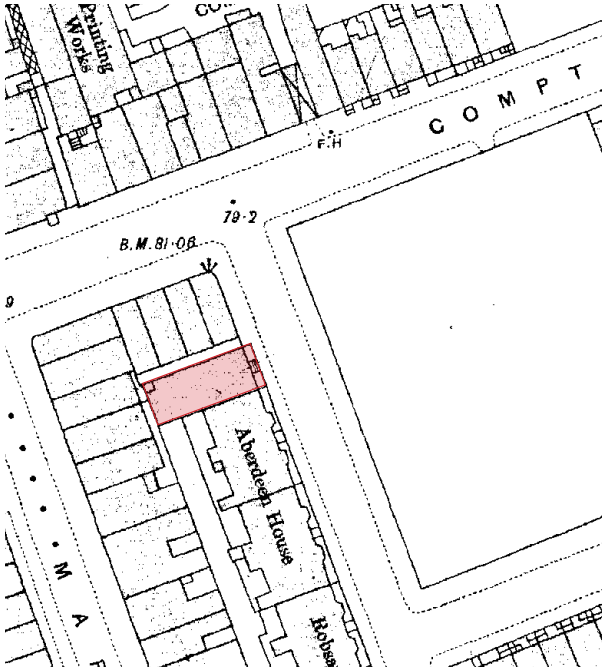


Fig. 10. Town Plans, 1911
Source: Ordnance Survey

Fig. 11. Borough of Camden Title Plan

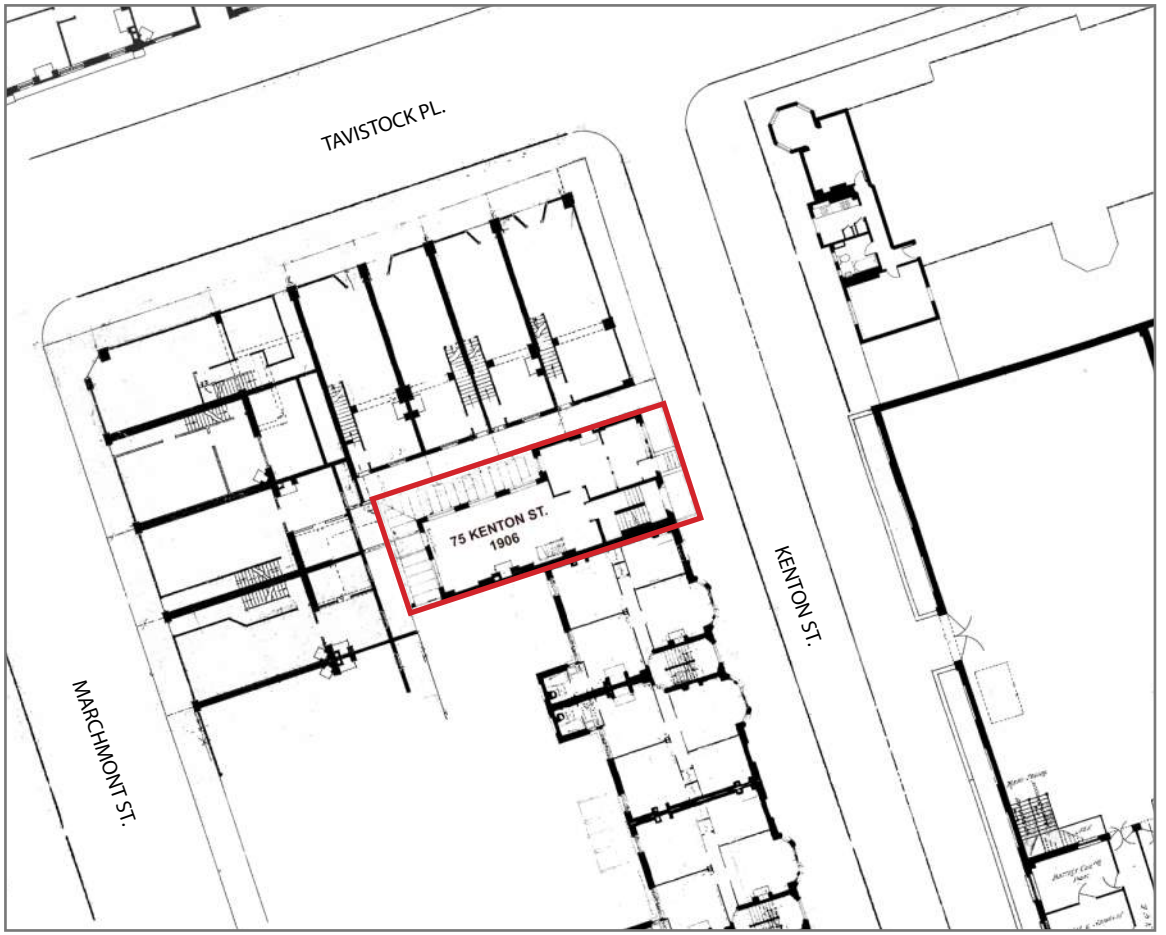


Fig. 12. Composite Historic Building Plans of the surrounding buildings, ca.1906-1908

1.5.3 Traffic and Access

73-75 Kenton Street is 4 minutes away from Russell Square Station, and 10 minutes away from King's Cross/St. Pancras Stations. Kenton Street is a one-way street; vehicles enter from Tavistock Place and exit into Hunter Street.

1.5.4 Surrounding Land Use

Since the reconstruction of the building blocks in the early 1900's, buildings on Kenton Street and the surrounding streets have mostly been configured as dwellings and small retail shops. Nowadays, the surrounding land uses include shops (computer repair shops, beauty parlors, bookstores, galleries, etc.), restaurants and cafes, dwellings (dwelling houses, HMOs), short-stay hotels and hostels, the Army Reserve Centre, and public parks (*Fig. 13*).

Kenton Street is a quiet residential street and receives light foot traffic. As shown in the Camden Policies Map (*Fig. 14*), published in August 2021, **73-75 Kenton Street is not included in the 'Neighbourhood Centre' zone**, however it is a positive contributor in the area according to Bloomsbury CA Townscape Appraisal.

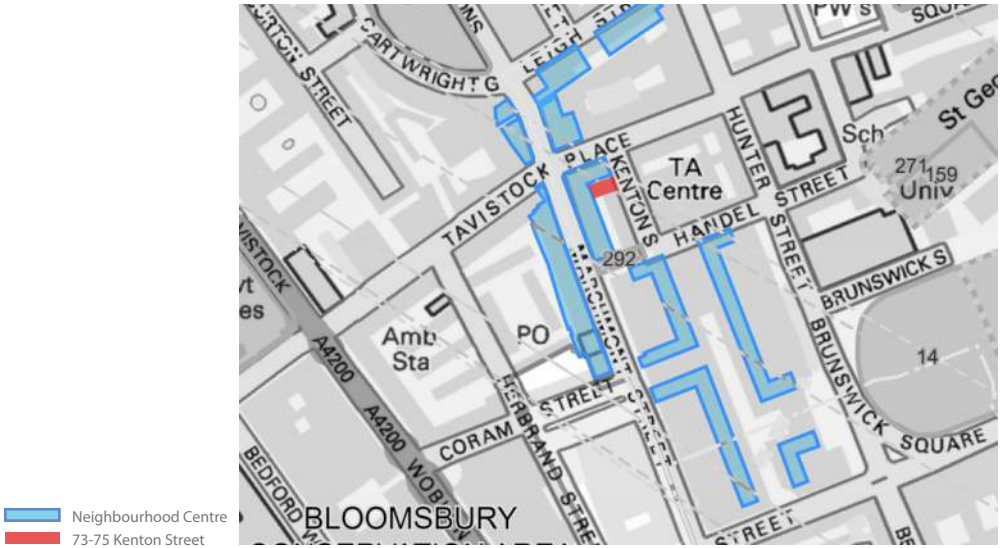


Fig. 14. Camden Policies Map, 2021
(colours redacted for clarity)

Fig. 13. Surrounding Land Use:
1. Brunswick Centre 2. Marchmont Street 3. Tavistock Pl. 4. Waitrose & Handel Street
5. Russell Square 6. Marchmont Community Garden 7. Brunswick Square 8. St. George's Gardens

1.6 **Building Condition**

1.6.1 Building History

Built around 1906, 73-75 Kenton Street is a late Victorian-style warehouse building. Based on evidence from original drawings and Academy Architecture directory, the architect of the building was Frank Selby (*Fig. 16*). Initially built as a printing factory/office building for Messrs Charles Jaques and Son (*Fig. 15*), 73-75 Kenton Street had been re-appropriated as a metal workshop for Hudson, Sheed & Towell by 1929 (*Fig. 18*), and was later occupied by C. E. Norris & Sons Ltd., a local contractor firm. The building was converted into four self-contained office spaces in the early 2000's.

The property boundary and building envelope have been largely preserved in their original form. As noted in the original block plan, dated September 1906, **73-75 Kenton Street has right of way in the service alleyway shared with 50-56 Tavistock Place** (*Fig. 17*).

Fig. 15. Excerpt from *Plans, Section and Elevation of factory in Kenton Street for Messrs Jaques and Son, 1905*
Source: London Metropolitan Archives

APPLICATIONS UNDER THE 1894 BUILDING ACT.

The London County Council at their meeting on Tuesday dealt with the following applications under the London Building Act, 1894. The names of applicants are given between parentheses :—

Projection and Construction.

***St. Pancras, South.*—The erection of a projecting crane in front of Nos. 73 and 75, Kenton-street, St. Pancras (Mr. F. Selby for Messrs. C. Jacques & Sons).—Consent.**

Fig. 16. Excerpt from *The Builder Magazine Vol 93, Issue 3381, 1907*

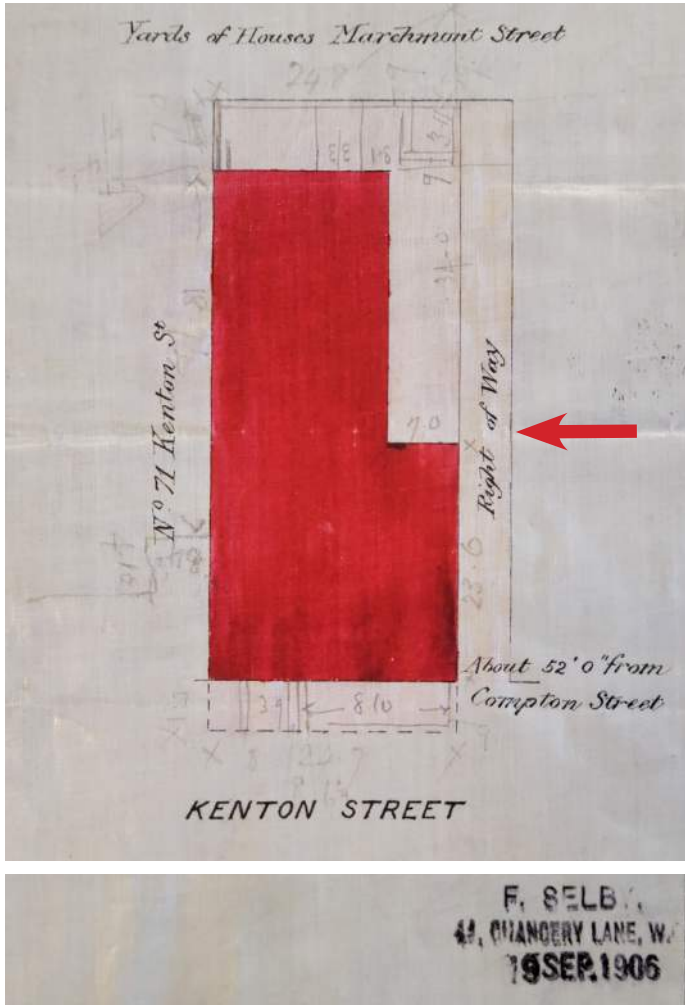


Fig. 17. Block Plan of 73-75 Kenton Street (excerpt), 1906
Source: London Metropolitan Archives

1929

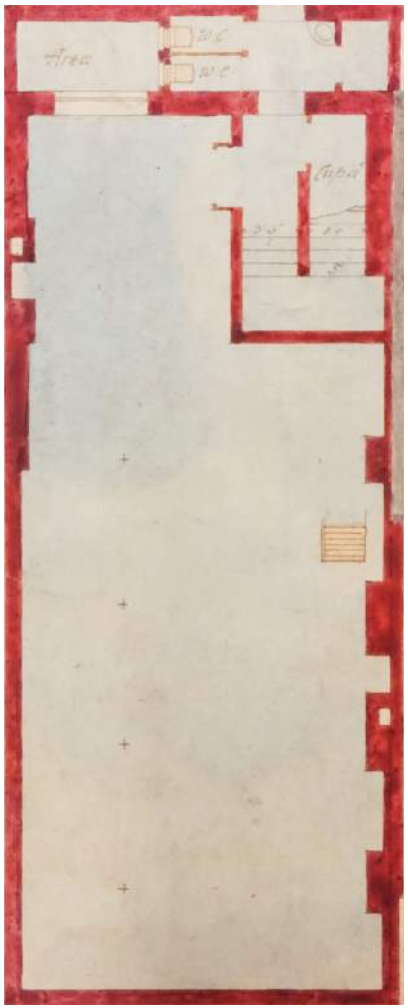
Fig. 18. Photograph of 73-75 Kenton Street, 1929
Source: Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre

2021

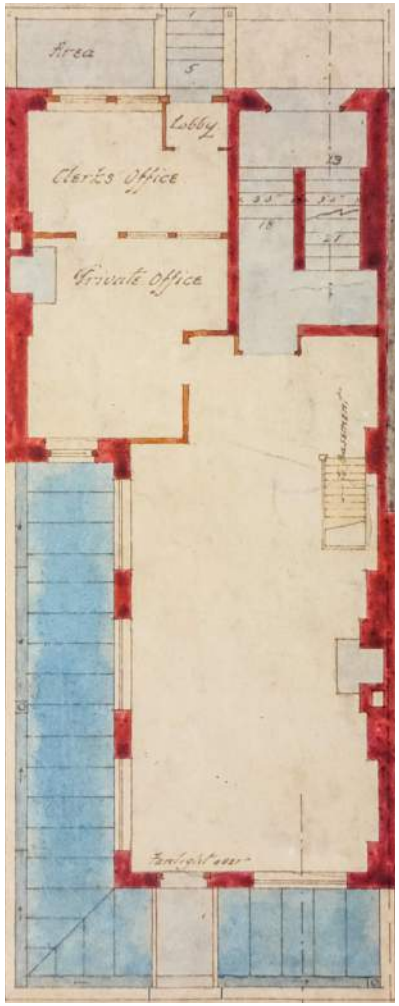
Fig. 19. Current exterior view of 73-75 Kenton Street

1.6.2 Original Drawings

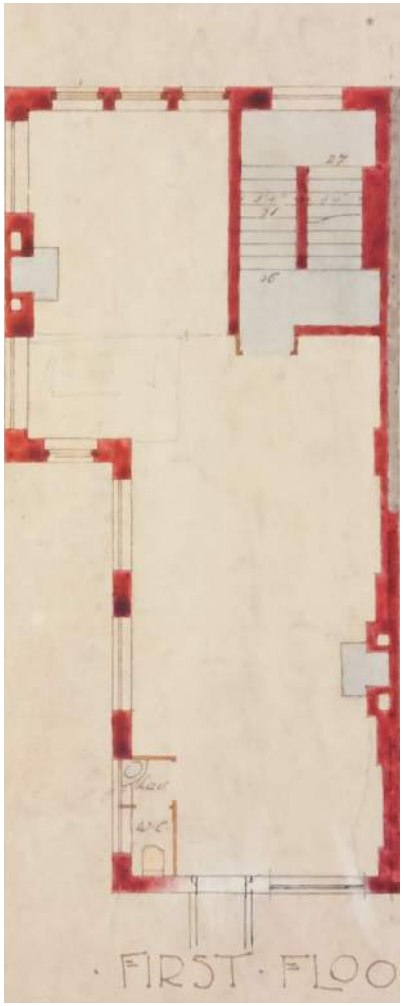
LAYOUT: The original design drawings for Messrs Jaques and Sons, dated 1905, demonstrated an open plan layout across all floors. Aside from the main stairwell, a secondary stair connected the ground floor to lower ground floor. The ground floor plan indicated continuous, pitched skylight on the low roof. On the rear side of the first and second floors, doors lead out to exterior egress passageways (steel egress bridges).



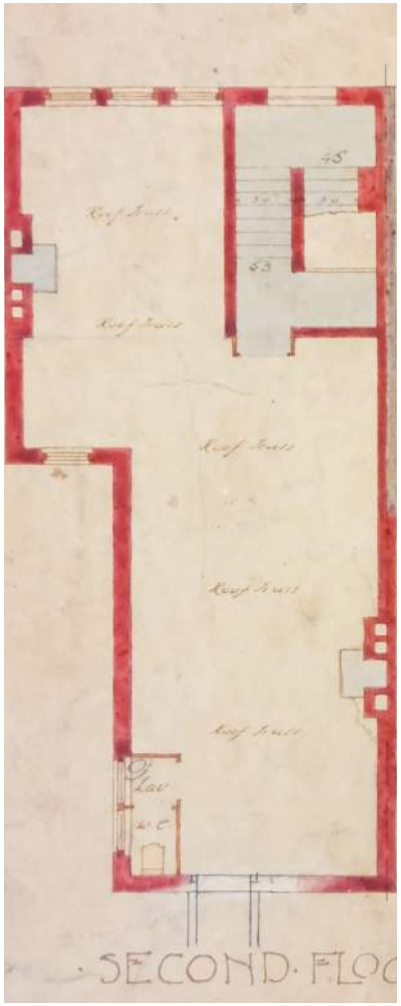
Lower Ground Floor



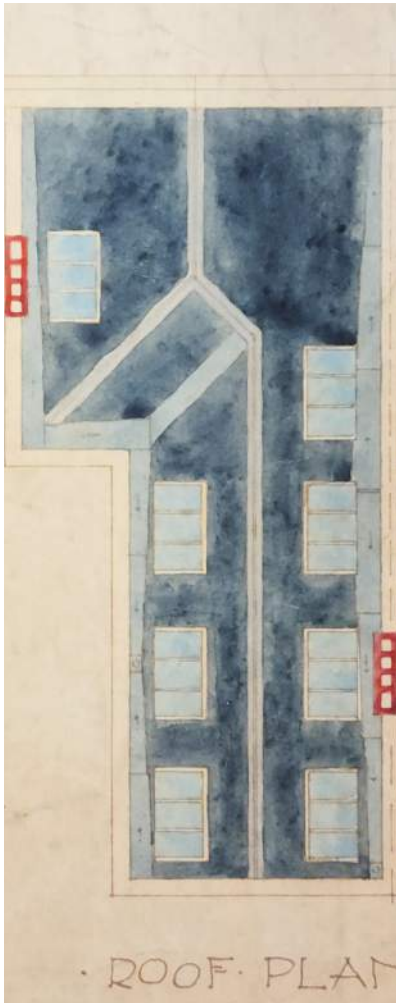
Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



Roof

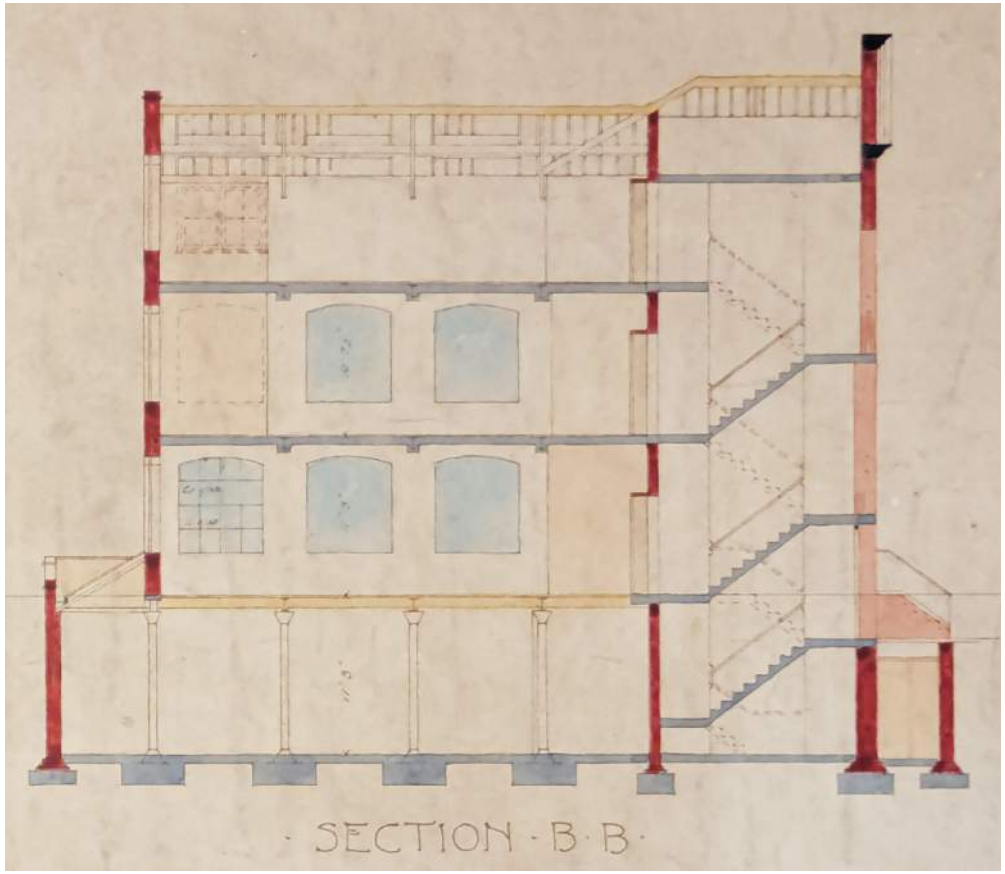
Fig. 20. Excerpt from *Plans, Section and Elevation of factory in Kenton Street for Messrs Jaques and Son, 1905*
Source: London Metropolitan Archives

WINDOWS: The section and elevation drawings display several types of windows, including large crittal windows facing north and west, double hung windows facing north, and smaller hinged windows facing east and west.

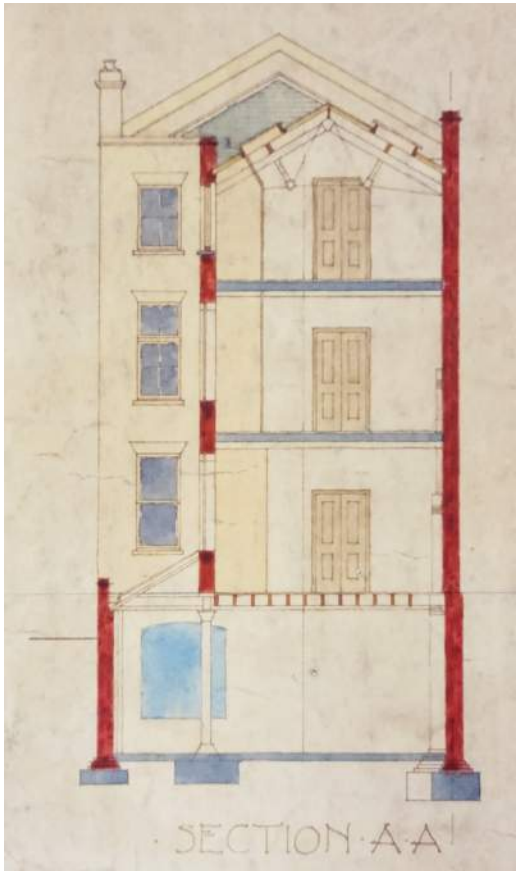
STRUCTURE: The building is of masonry structure, with steel columns on the lower ground floor level to support the northern envelope wall above ground. Except for the lower ground floor slab and staircase, which are cast in concrete, the other slabs were built of simple timber structure. The roof was supported by timber fink trusses with tensioned steel rods.

VERTICAL CIRCULATION: The main stairwell opened to the outside with large openings, which were framed by concrete lintels and protected by metal railings.

Front Elevation



Longitudinal Section



Cross Section

Fig. 21. Excerpt from *Plans, Section and Elevation of factory in Kenton Street for Messrs Jaques and Son, 1905*
Source: London Metropolitan Archives

1.7 Current Condition

1.7.1 Changes and Alterations in the Early 2000's

The current 73-75 Kenton Street has largely preserved the original structures and design features, despite some minor changes to the exterior appearance and internal layouts. The renovation in early 2000's did not introduce irreversible alterations, although on the exterior some modern substitutes have replaced the original elements; on the interior, modern construction materials such as plasterboard were applied throughout, and many original finishes were painted over.

Facade comparison
Original vs *Current*

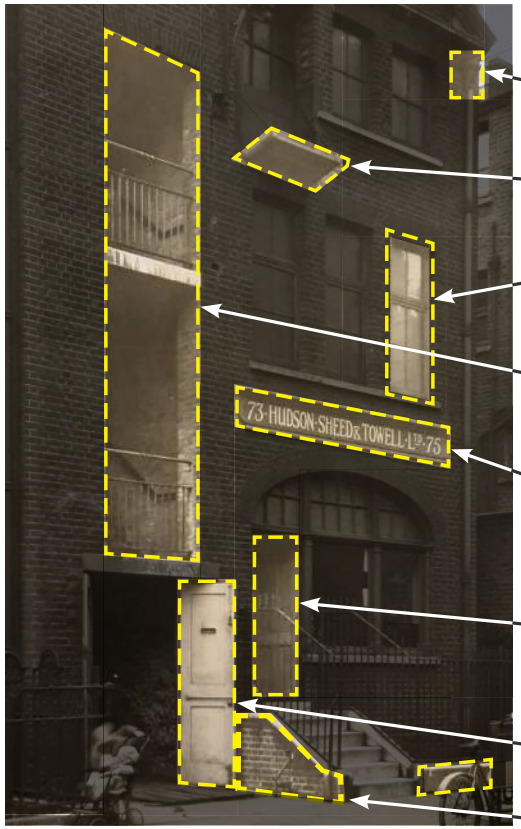


Fig. 22. Photograph of 73-75 Kenton Street, 1929
Source: Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre

Original ornamented scupper replaced

Original loading platform removed

Wooden window frames partially painted white

Stairwell openings partially enclosed by double-pane glazing panels with white PVC framing

Additional row of facade signage added, with the original signage painted over

Raised front door changed from wooden door to glazed wooden door; door swing switched direction

Main door changed from double-swing wooden door to modern single-swing door with glass side panels

Original brick plinth covered with concrete

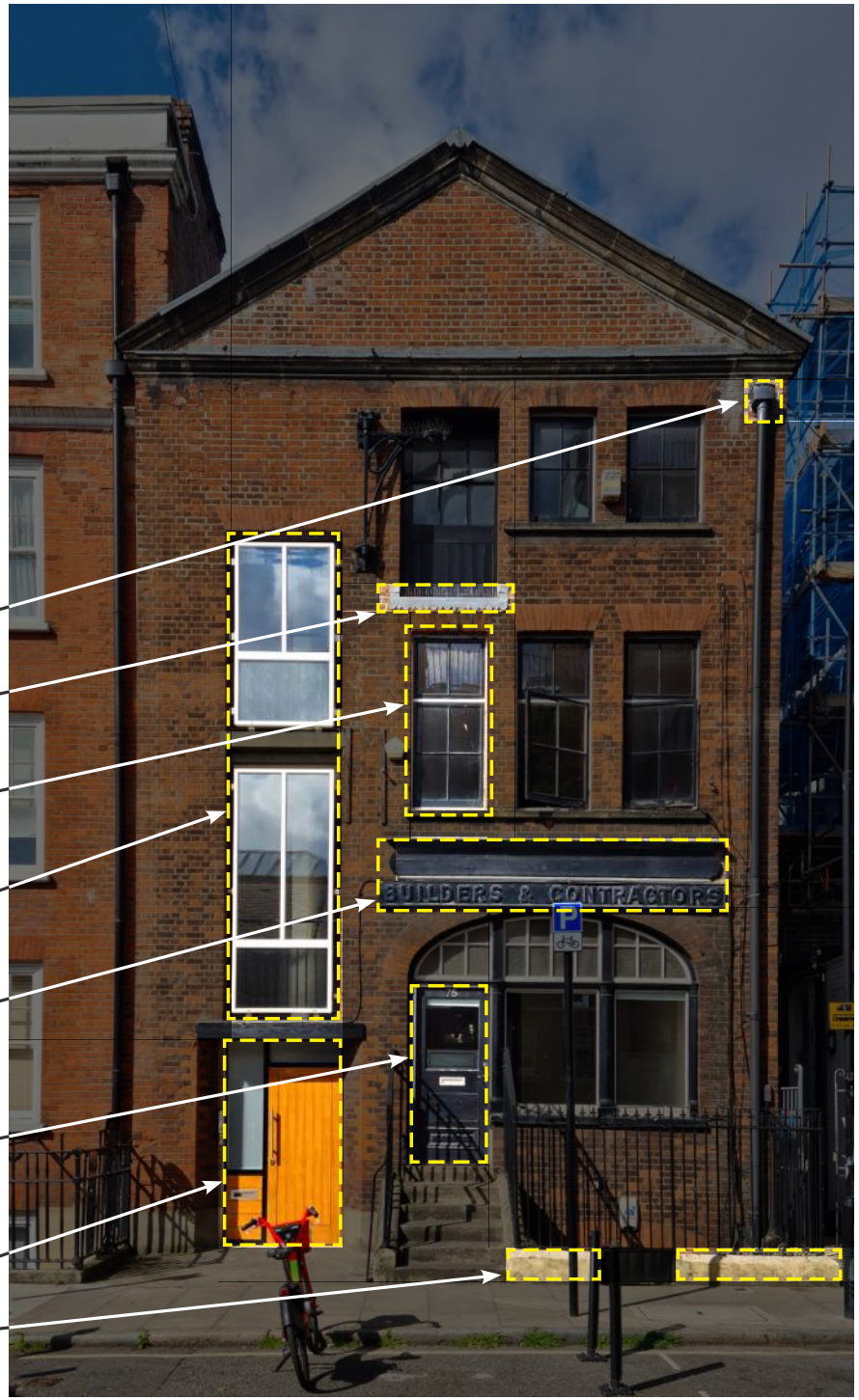


Fig. 23. Exterior View of 73-75 Kenton Street, 2021

1.7.2 Windows and Skylights

Overall, windows and skylight at 73-75 Kenton Street are in working condition.

All eight roof skylights (*Fig. 24*) have been upgraded to modern specifications but remain in their original location. These skylights are of the waterproof kind, though in recent storms they have shown signs of leakage.

The low roof currently has five polycarbonate skylights (*Fig. 25*), as opposed to the continuous pitched skylight low roof indicated in the original drawings. Though not characteristic of the building, these skylights perform the basic function of waterproofing fairly well.

Throughout the building, most of the windows have remained original, maintaining their single-pane glass and wooden mullions construction (*Fig. 26*). The crittal windows are overall well preserved; however, the thermal performance of these windows are not meeting the modern-day energy efficiency needs.

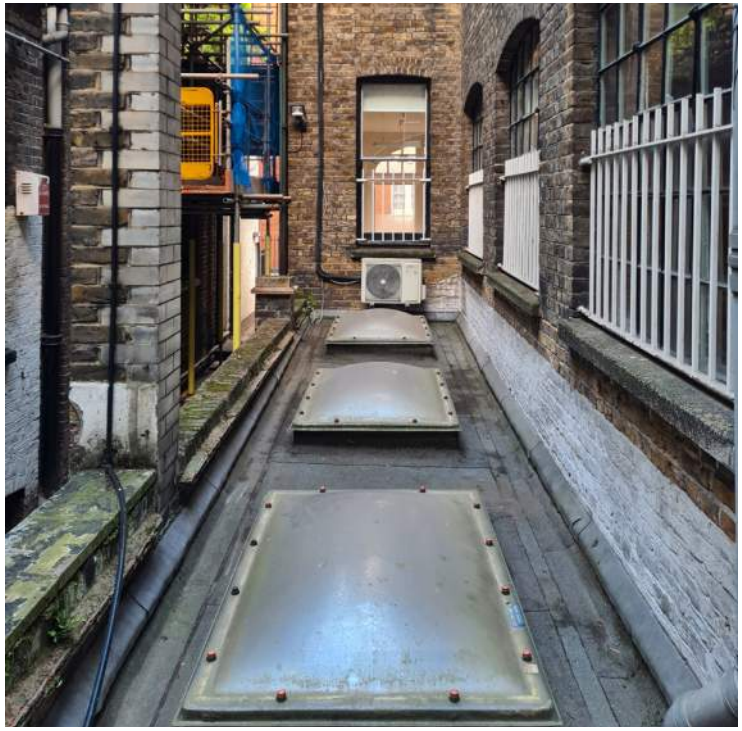
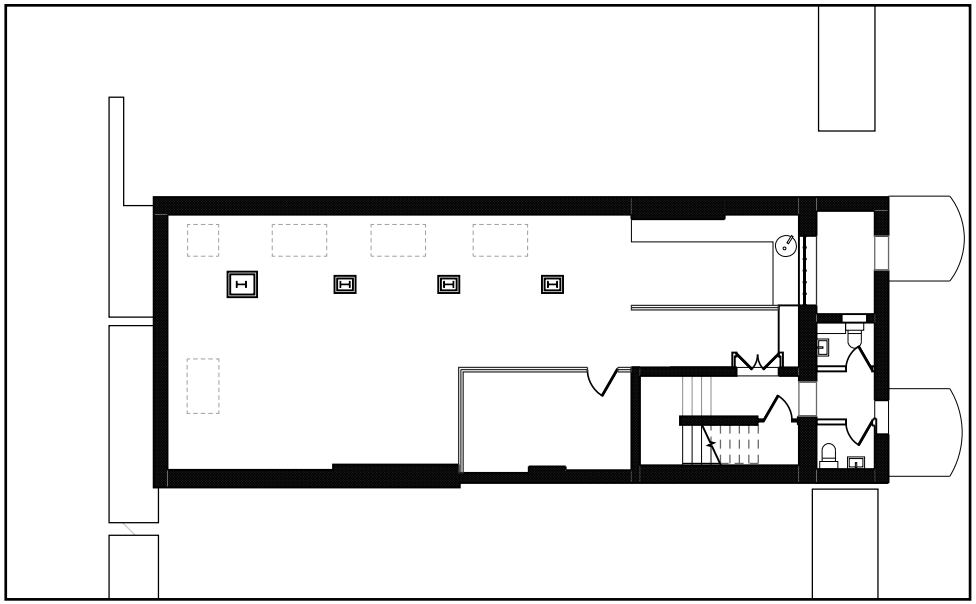


Fig. 25. View from lower roof looking East

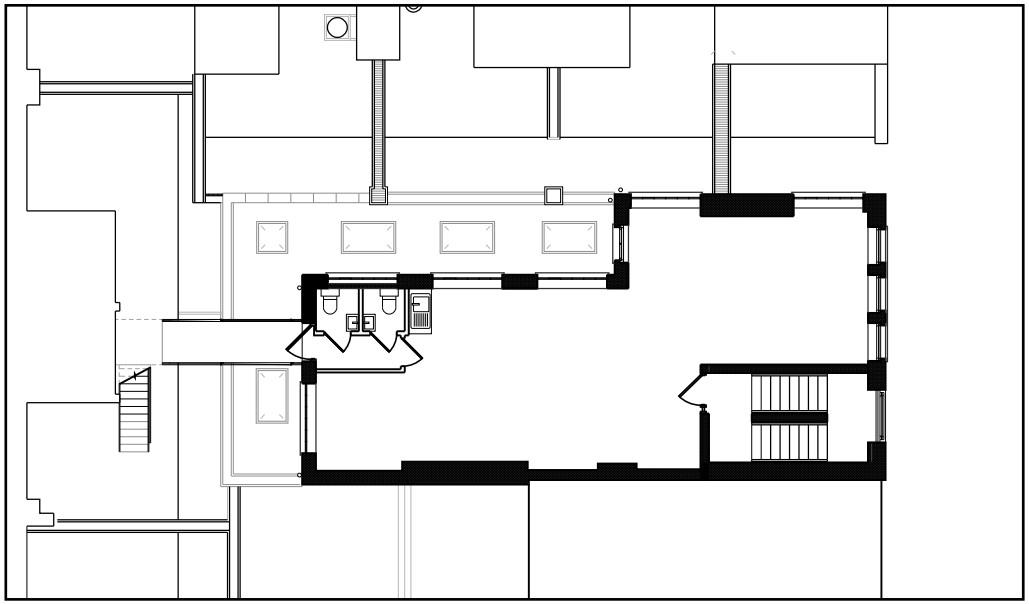
Fig. 24. Second floor - Roof Skylights and Timber Fink Truss Roof

Fig. 26. Original Windows

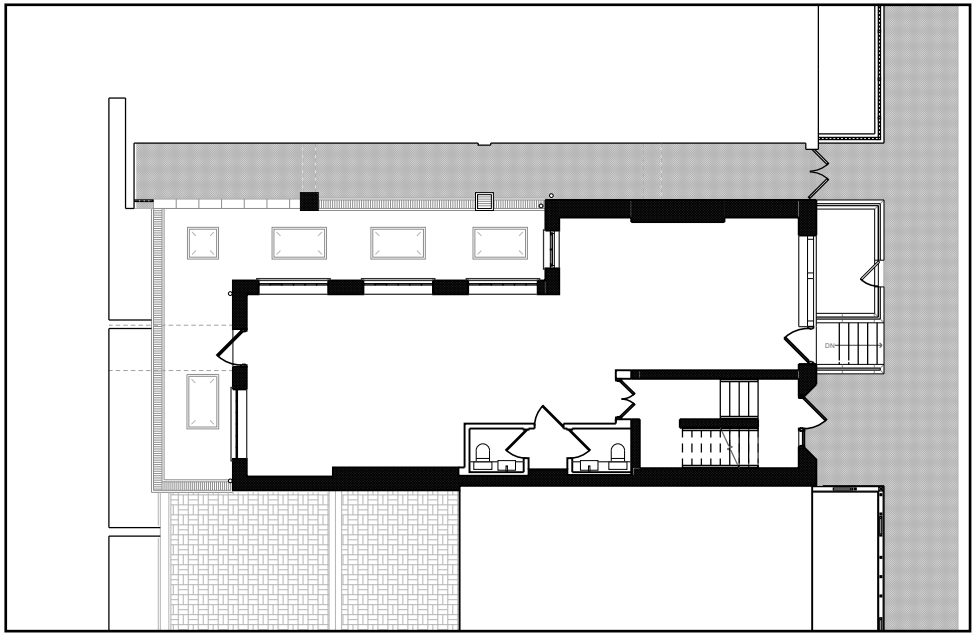
1.6.3 Current Drawings



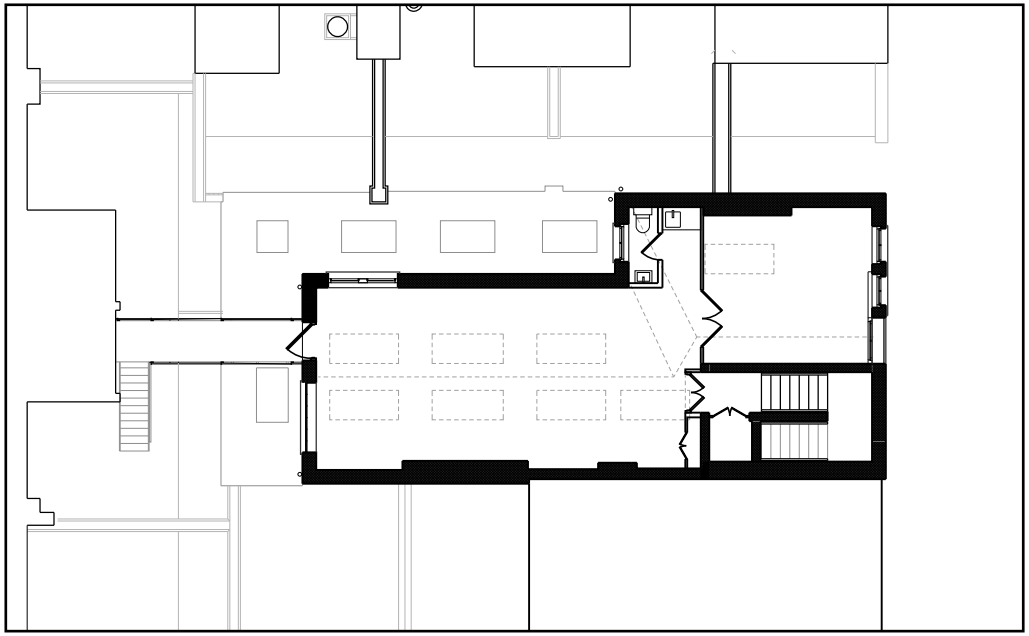
Lower Ground Floor



First Floor



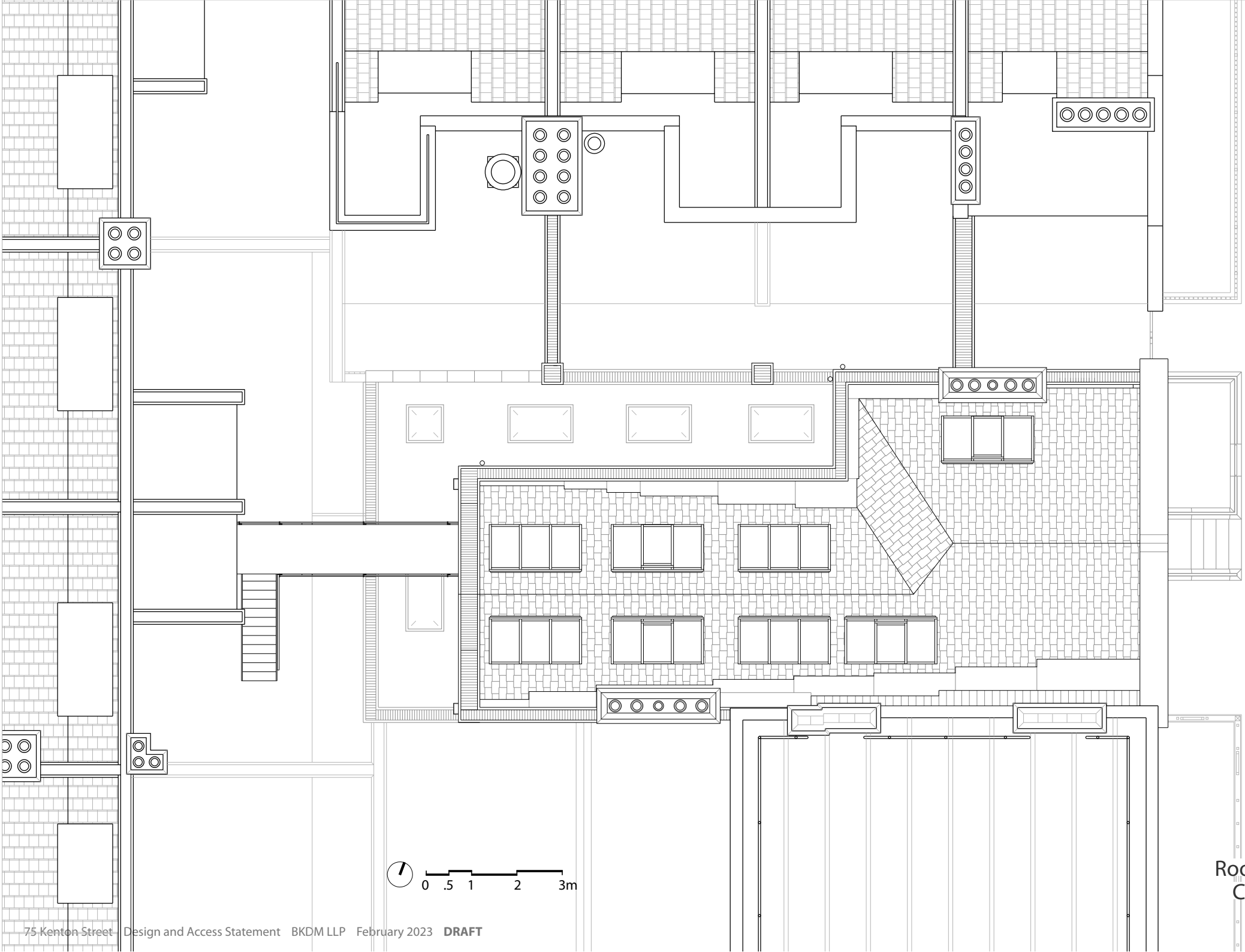
Ground Floor



Second Floor

0 1 2 3m

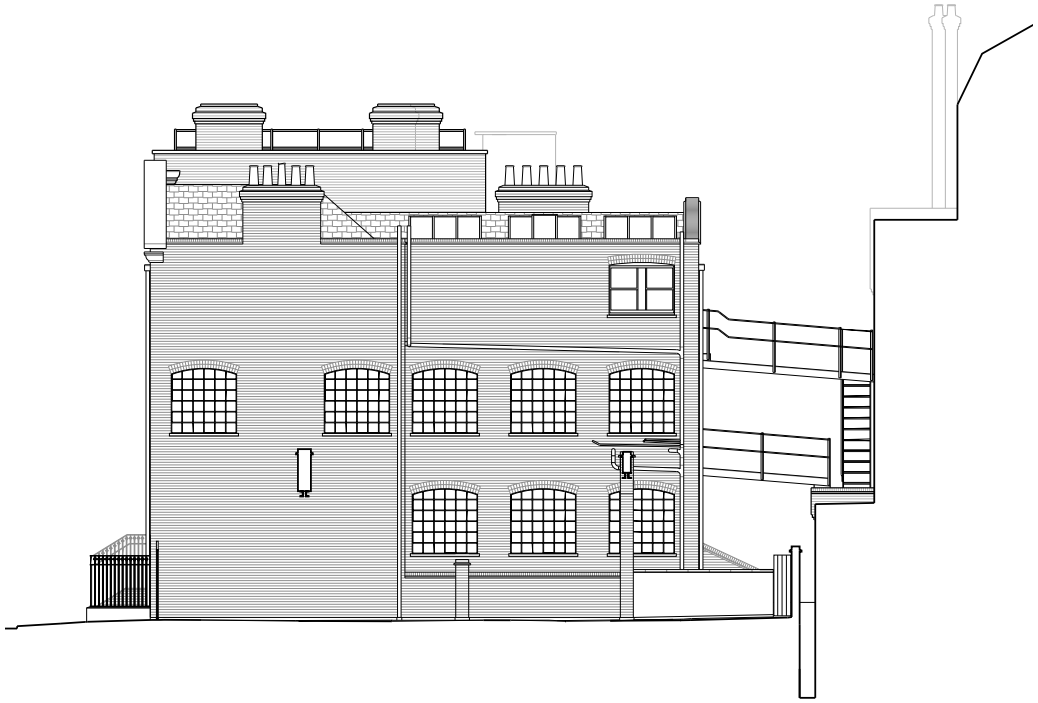
Floor Plans Current



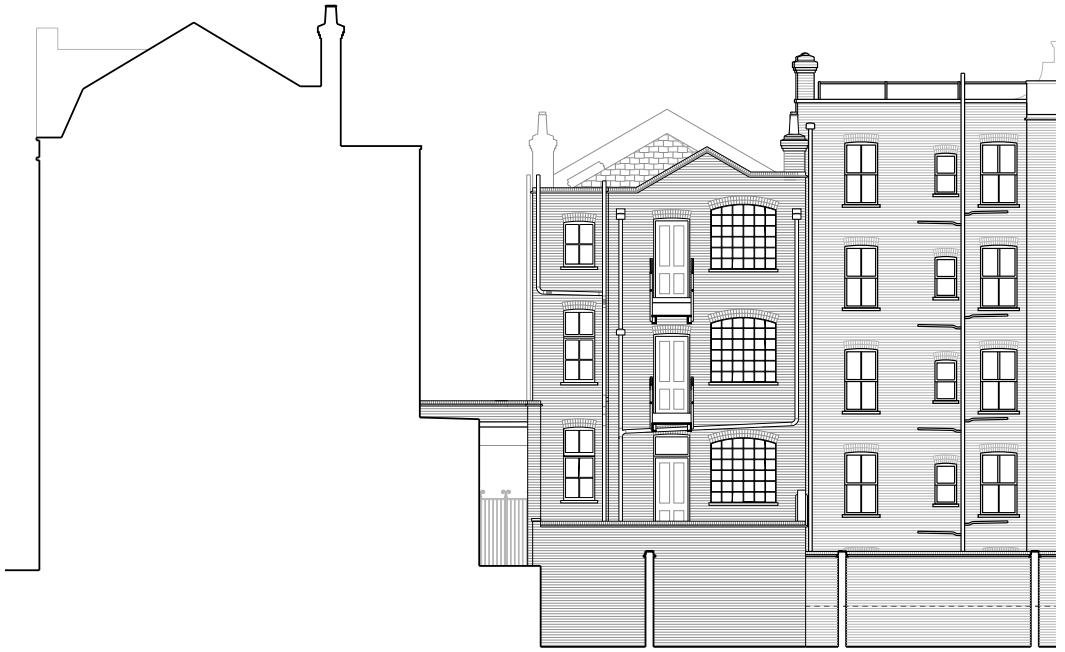
Roof Plan
Current

0 .5 1 2 3m

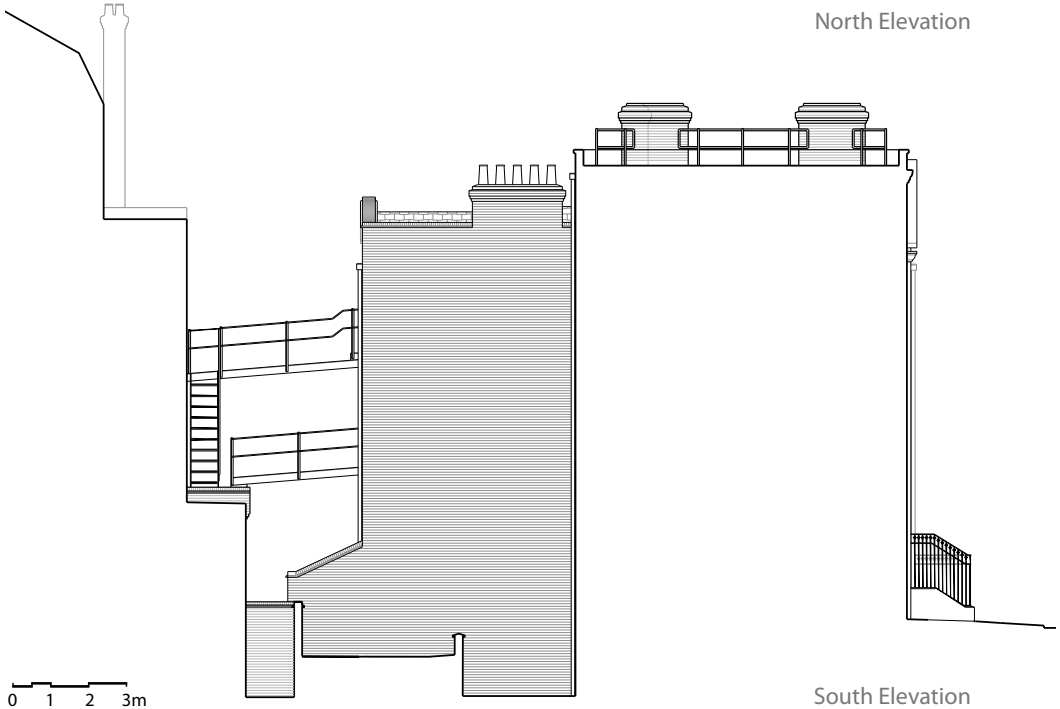
Front Elevation Current



North Elevation



West Elevation



South Elevation

Elevations Current

1.7 Building Condition

1.7.1 Deterioration

Two significant problems are identified at 73-75 Kenton Street: one is localized water ingress at roof level (*Fig. 27*), and the other is a horizontal crack to the flank wall at lower ground floor level (*Fig. 30*), due to leaking lower roof and poor rainwater drainage (*Fig. 29*). The previous lower ground floor tenant had reported flood damage in 2019. Both issues will likely require structural interventions in the near future. As an exposed brick masonry building, 73-75 Kenton Street is poorly insulated, resulting in very low energy efficiency in winter months; due to the lack of proper insulation, heating appliances work inefficiently despite causing surges in energy usage.

Fig. 27. water ingress inside roof, picture taken two weeks after fresh paint

Fig. 28. dilapidated egress bridges pose dangers to occupants and neighbours

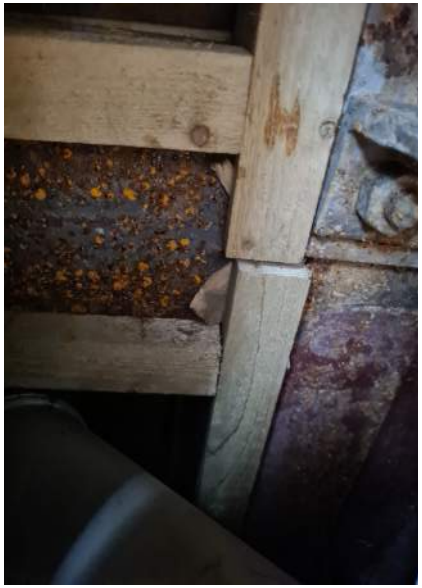


Fig. 29. surface rust on ground floor steel beams close to lower roof drainage

Fig. 30. horizontal crack on lower ground floor flank wall

1.7.2 Presence in the Neighbourhood

For the past few years, 73-75 Kenton Street has been attracting anti-social behaviours at night and disturbing the neighbours, due to its vacancy after business hours and lack of vigilance. The front steps, the pocket space in front of the main entrance, and the low roof on the back side all provide space for late-night gatherings, littering, and occasionally illegal activities such as drug dealing (*Fig. 31, 32*).

Such occurrences are frequent and often disturbing. Surveillance camera regularly captures instances of urination onto the facade and into the neighbour's lightwell, and the building's owners frequently confront drug-related activities in front of the building entrance. Neighbours from Aberdeen Mansions and Tavistock Place have expressed concern over late-night noises and drunken gatherings at the front steps.

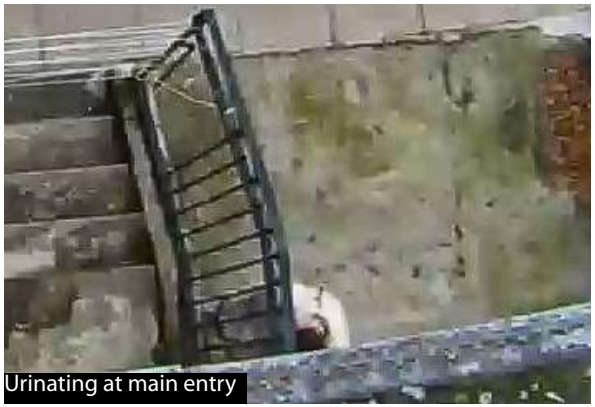
Multiple actions have been taken to control these anti-social activities. Besides the security camera, the owner has also tried installing a security flood light; unfortunately it did not deter people from trespassing and littering. Additionally, the owner once installed a temporary rope at the front steps to stop people from loitering, but it was quickly vandalized. A temporary black metal grill was then installed, which provided some relief; however, it is not a permanent solution and does little to deter illegal activities in front of the main entry.

Notwithstanding the importance of providing local employment space, 73-75 Kenton Street's status as the lone office building will continue to encourage illicit conducts on an otherwise family-oriented and quiet residential street.

Trespassing & Littering


Loose rubbish


Loose rubbish


Urinating at main entry


Urinating into Neighbour's Lightwell


Camper blocking the alleyway


Urinating at main entry

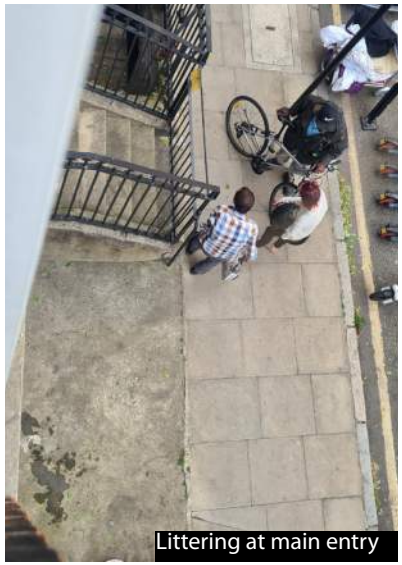
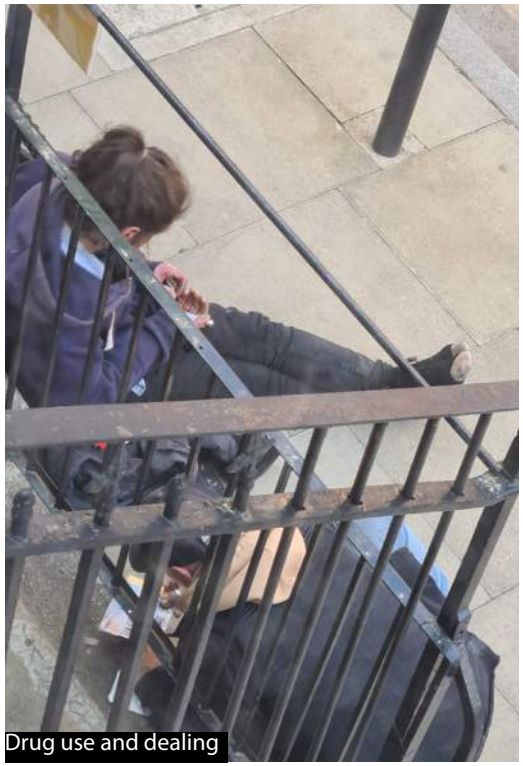

Littering at main entry

Fig. 31. a sample of instances of trespassing, littering, and urinating

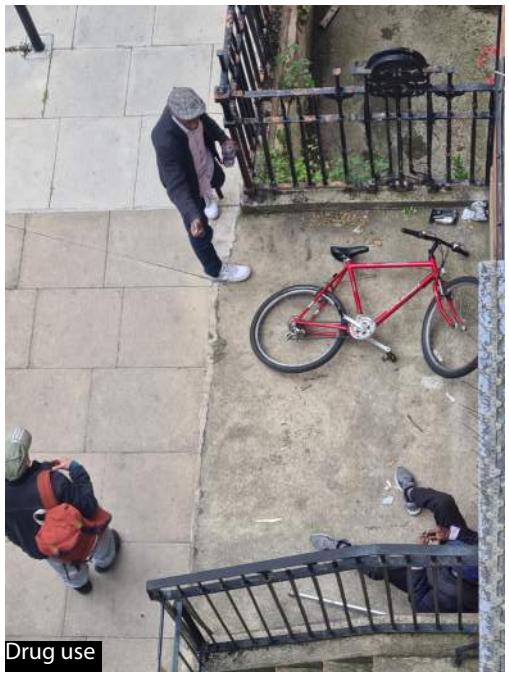
Drug Dealing/Use, Drinking, Trespassing & Vandalizing

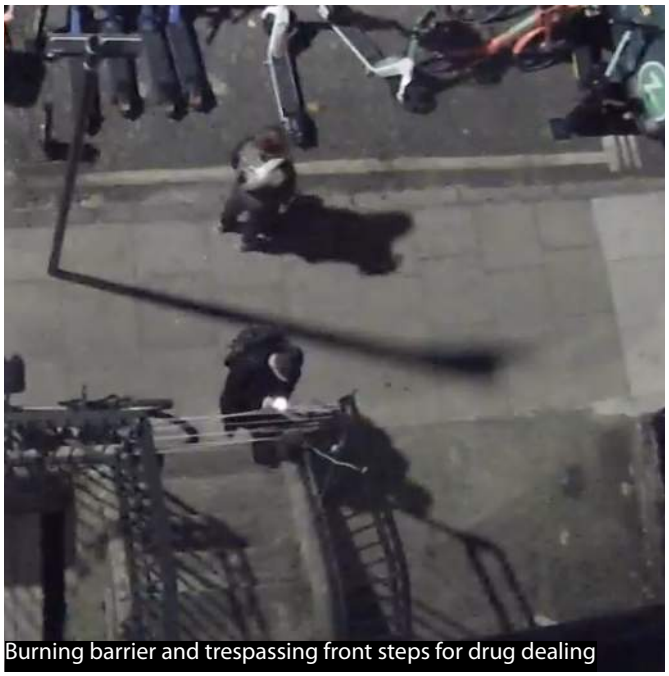

Drug use


Smoking and alcohol consumption at entry


Drug use and dealing


Smoking and overnight camping


Drug use


Burning barrier and trespassing front steps for drug dealing


Drug use and littering

Fig. 32. a sample of instances of substance use, drug dealing, trespassing and vandalizing

2. Design Statement

Front Elevation
Proposed Concept Image

2.1 **Design Objective**

This application proposes the change of use of 73-75 Kenton Street from an office building (Class E) into a single-family dwelling-house (Class C3) and office (Class E) mixed-use property. The chief objective is to create a single-family residence across ground, first, and second levels, and a business space on the lower ground level.

Through partially changing the building's use class, this proposal aims to preserve the historical character of 73-75 Kenton Street, and revitalize the building's active usage through sensitive design and renovation. The proposed changes as demonstrated in this statement and its supporting documents are prepared with the overarching goals of maintaining and improving the building's appearance, suitability for living and working, and its positive contribution to the neighbourhood.

2.2 **Consultation**

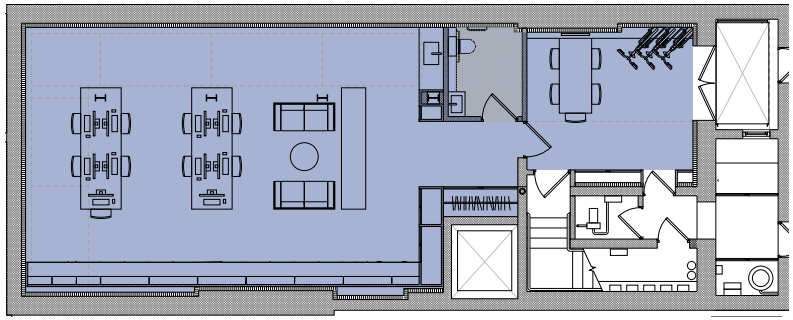
Prior to preparing this statement, in January 2021, BKDM commissioned Thomas & Thomas Chartered Building Surveyors to produce a thorough building survey report.

In December 2021, the applicant submitted a pre-planning application (ref: 2021/6142/PRE) to Camden's planning department. Following communications with Camden's planning commissioners, the applicant has made design updates based on the borough's advice.

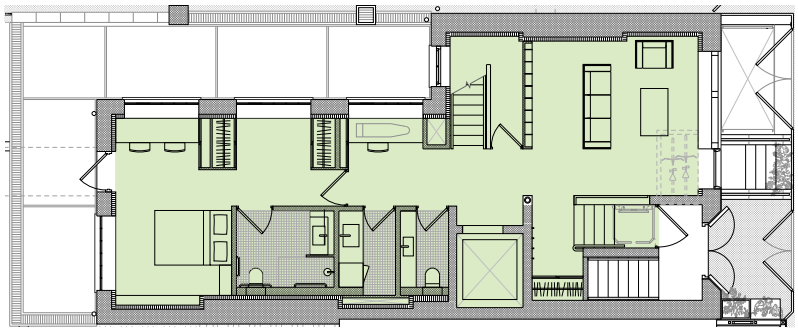
The applicant has also consulted with Marchmont Association leaders, neighbours from both Tavistock Place and Aberdeen Mansions, and a Bloomsbury Ward Councilor regarding the proposed changes. This application has taken the neighbourhood's opinions and concerns as guidance to the design process.

	Current Use Class (Area)*	Proposed Use Class (Area)**
Lower Ground Floor	**Office** Class E 98.4 m^2	**Office** Class E 90.6 m^2
Ground Floor	**Office** Class E 63.4 m^2	**Dwelling House** Class C3 70.9 m^2
First Floor	**Office** Class E 62.6m^2	**Dwelling House** Class C3 72.7 m^2
Second Floor	**Office** Class E 66.6 m^2	**Dwelling House** Class C3 73.5 m^2

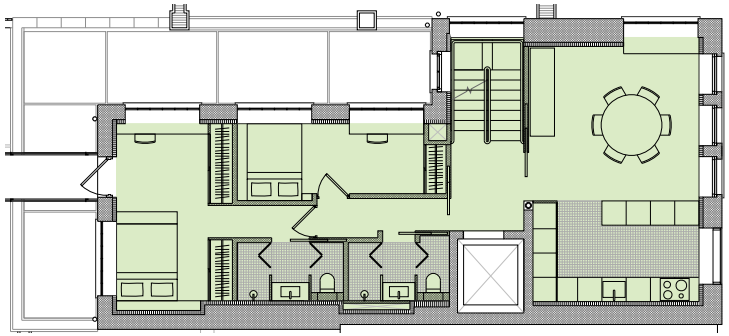
* Based on calculations from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA)
** Calculation based on the National Technical housing standards – Department for Communities and Local Government



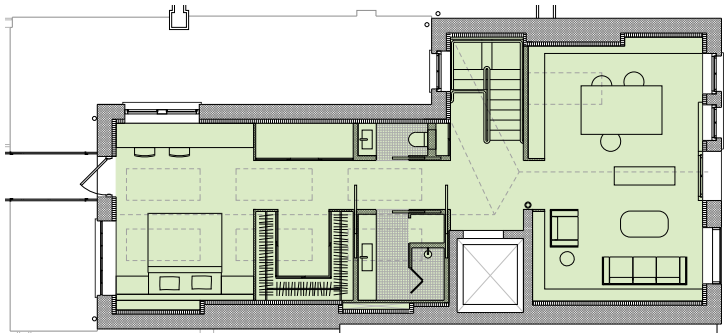
Lower Ground Floor



Ground Floor

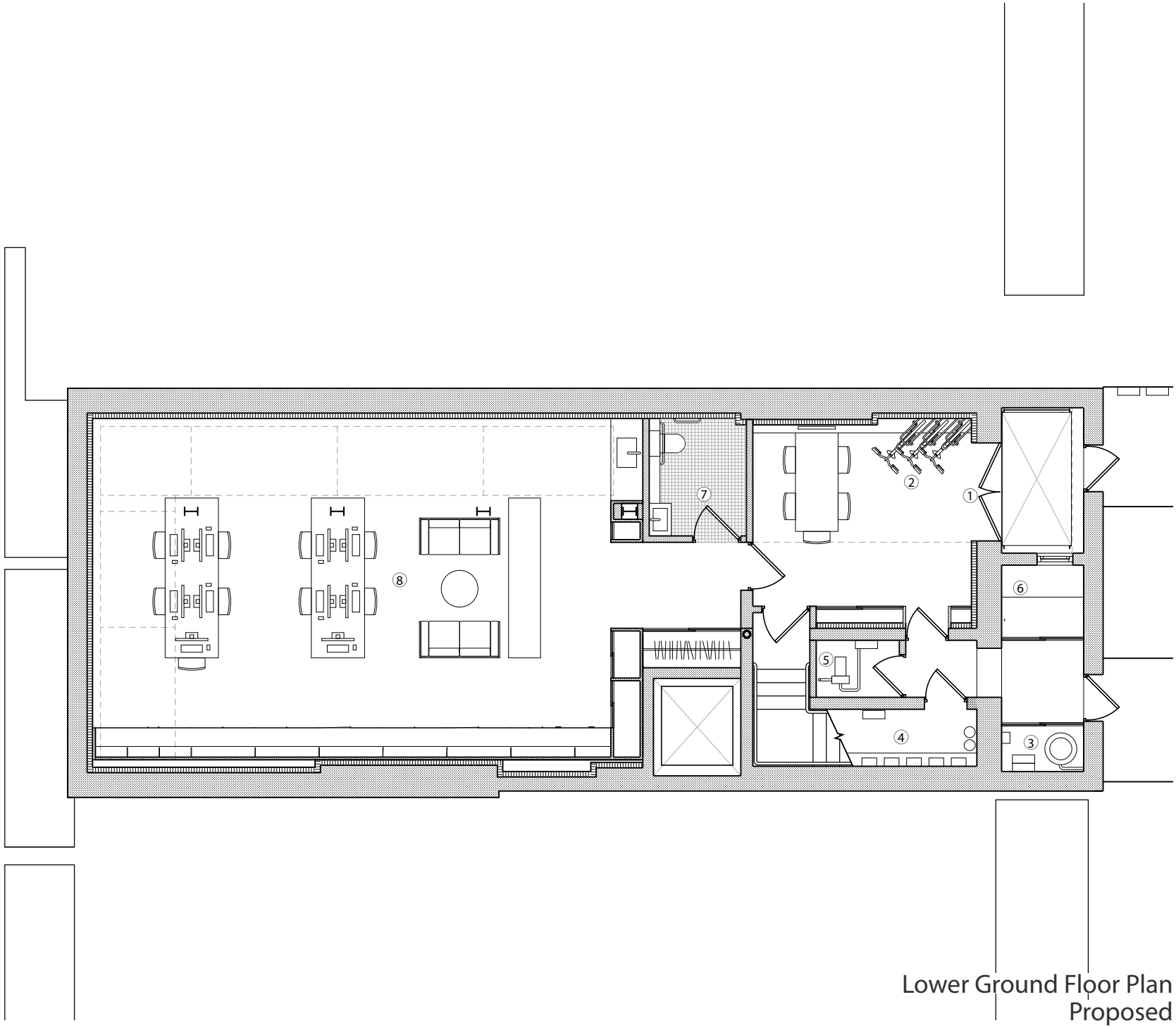


First Floor



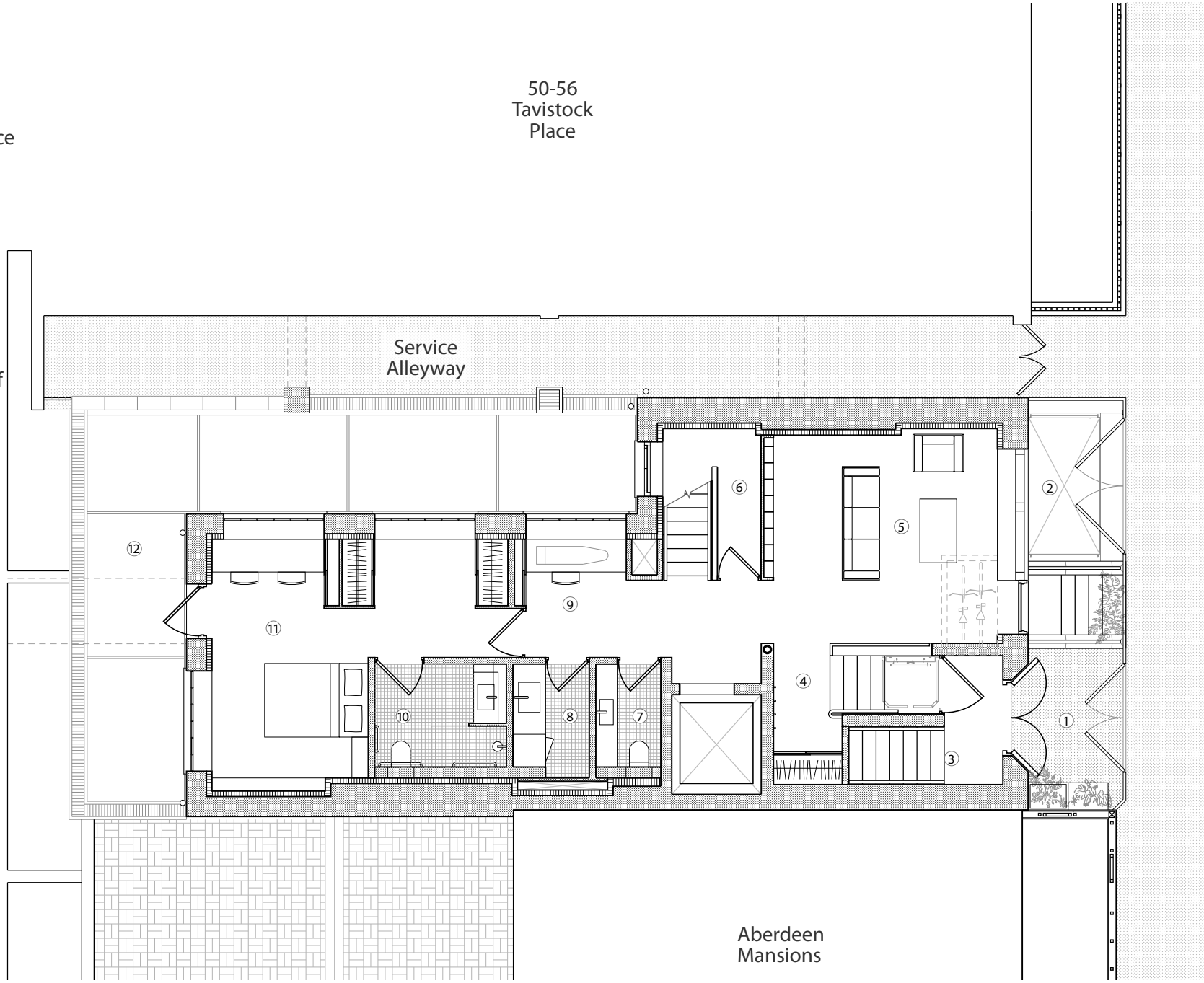
Second Floor

1. Lightwell Lift Entrance Vestibule
2. Office Bicycle Storage
3. Boiler Room
4. Meter Room
5. Pump Room
6. Janitor's Room
7. Office Restroom
8. Office Space



Lower Ground Floor Plan
Proposed

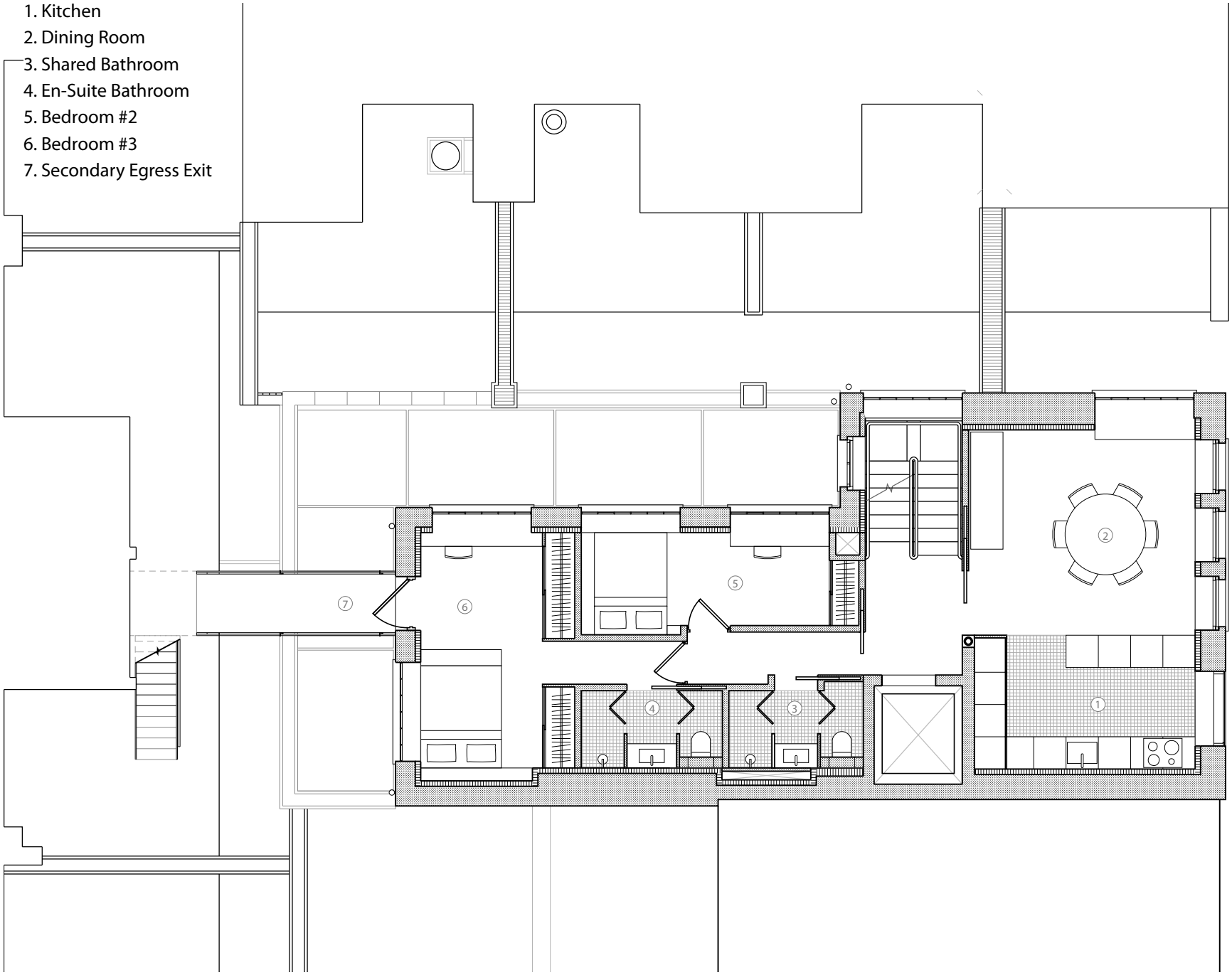
1. Main Entrance
2. Exterior Accessible Lightwell Lift
3. Stairs to Lower Ground Floor Office
4. Residence Entry Vestibule
5. Lobby (Drawing Room)
6. Storage
7. Powder Room
8. Laundry Room
9. Folding and Ironing Area
10. Accessible Bathroom
11. Accessible En-Suite Bedroom #1
12. Secondary Egress Exit/ Low Roof



0 .5 1 2 3m

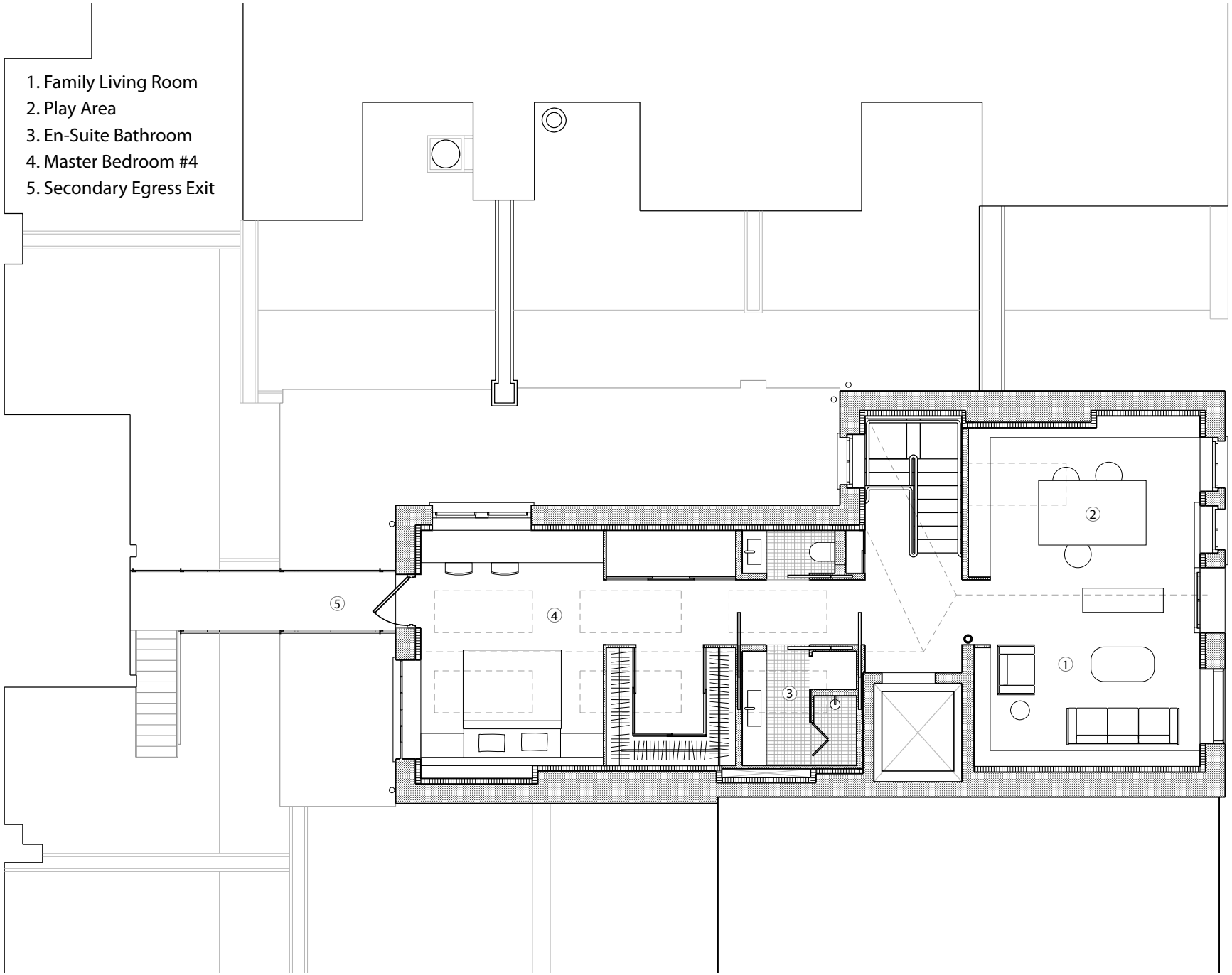
Ground Floor Plan Proposed

1. Kitchen
2. Dining Room
3. Shared Bathroom
4. En-Suite Bathroom
5. Bedroom #2
6. Bedroom #3
7. Secondary Egress Exit



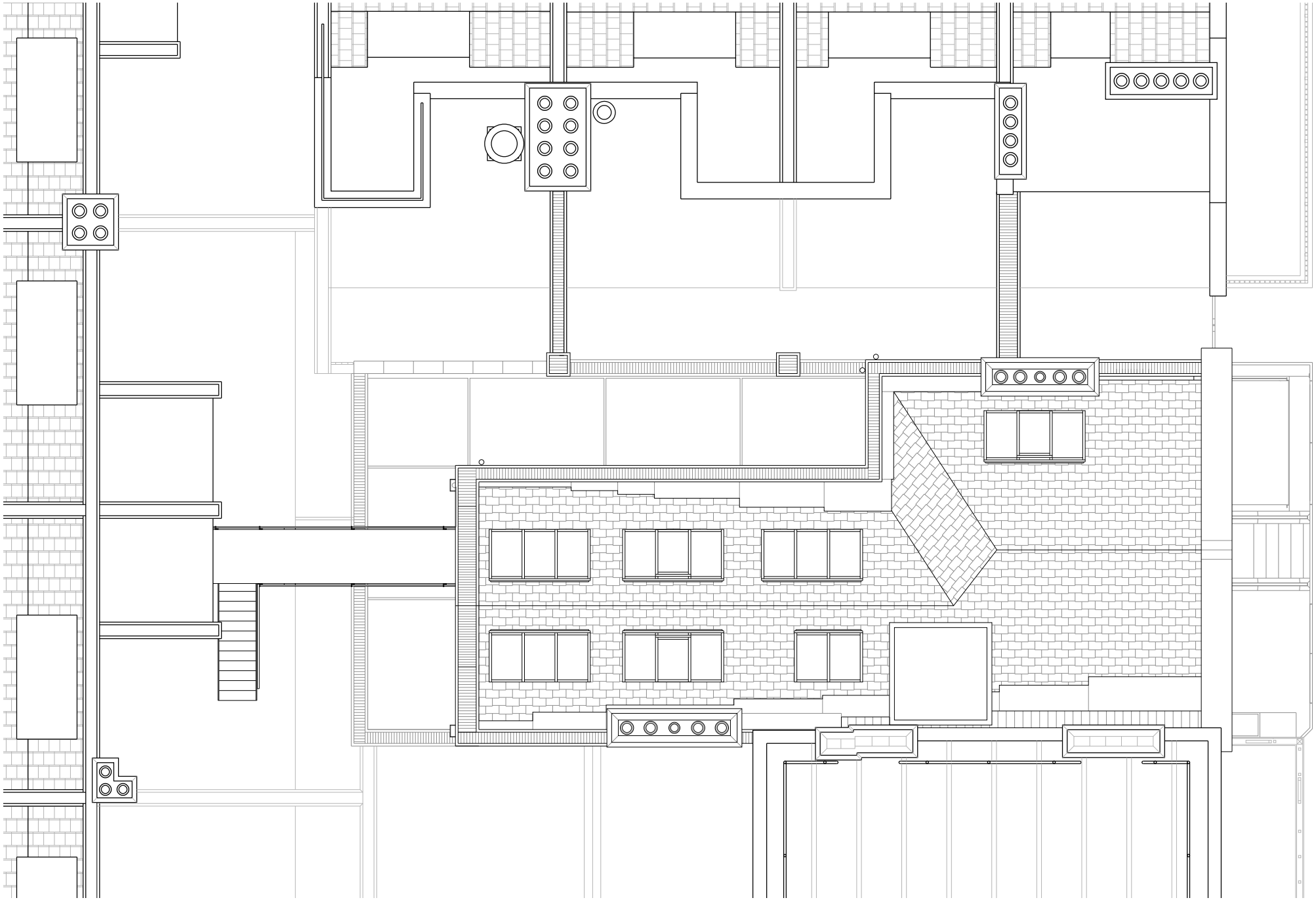
0 .5 1 2 3m

First Floor Plan Proposed



0 .5 1 2 3m

Second Floor Plan Proposed



0 .5 1 2 3m

Roof Plan Proposed

1. Replacement of PVC windows to steel frame insulated windows to match original crittall windows

2. New double door for primary entry based on original

3. Continuous metal entry gate and railing of existing height

Green-scape enhancement

5. New matching accessible swing gate for lightwell lift access

7. Restoration of original black window frames

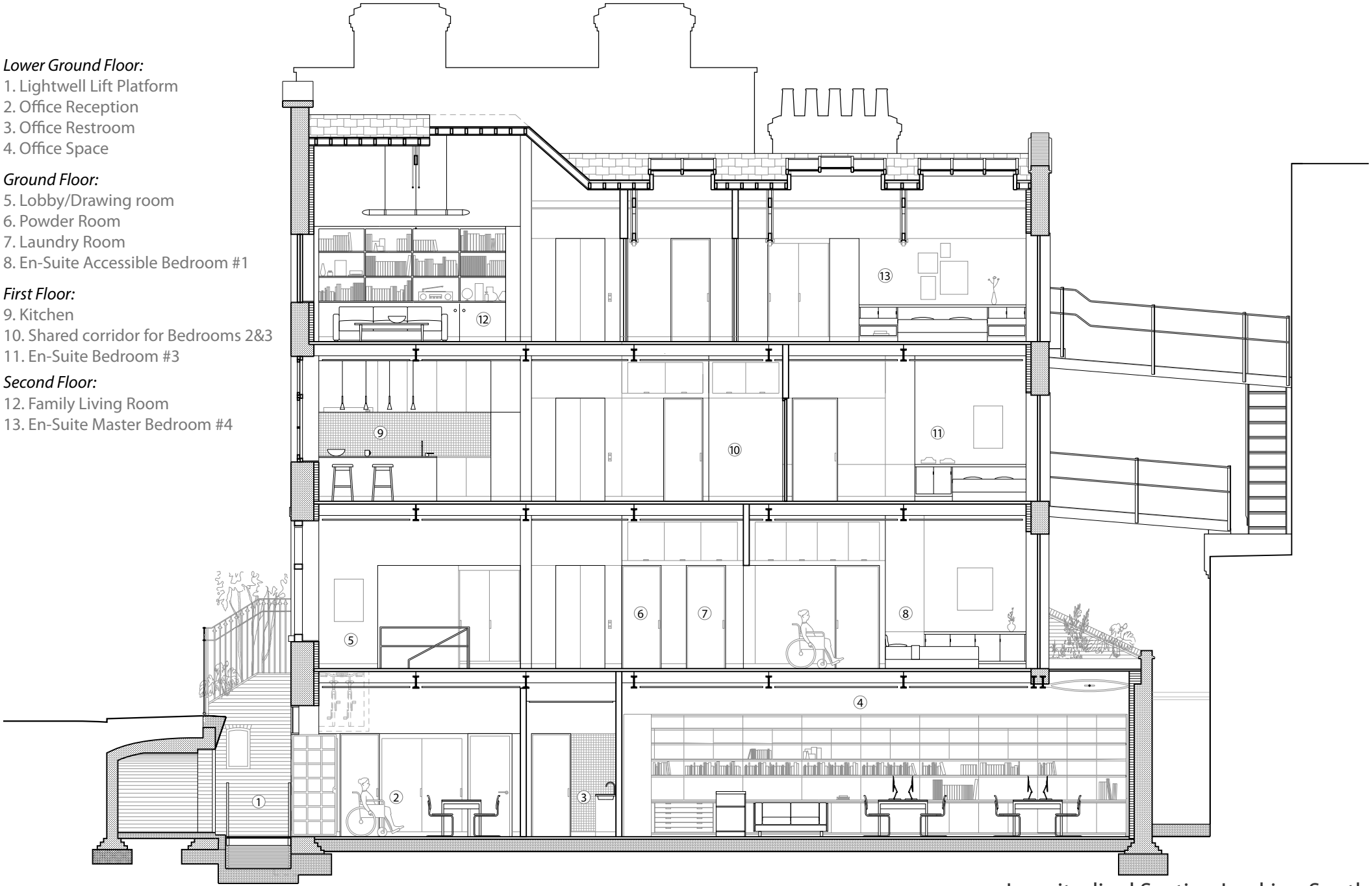
Front Elevation Proposed

Lower Ground Floor:
1. Lightwell Lift Platform
2. Office Reception
3. Office Restroom
4. Office Space

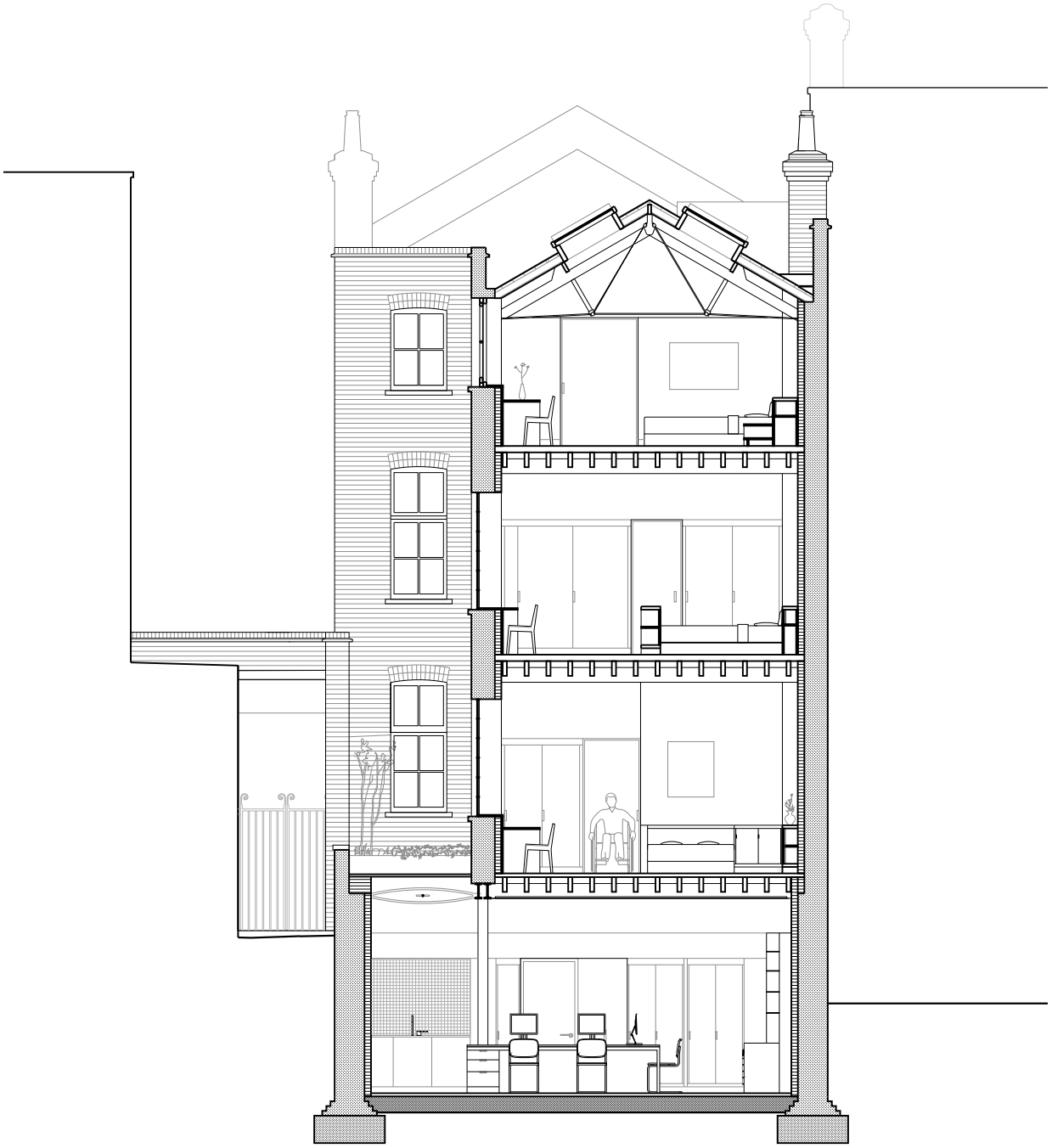
Ground Floor:
5. Lobby/Drawing room
6. Powder Room
7. Laundry Room
8. En-Suite Accessible Bedroom #1

First Floor:
9. Kitchen
10. Shared corridor for Bedrooms 2&3
11. En-Suite Bedroom #3

Second Floor:
12. Family Living Room
13. En-Suite Master Bedroom #4



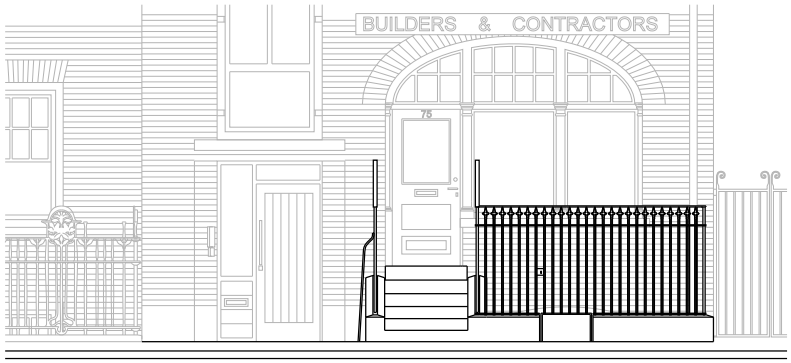
Longitudinal Section Looking South
Proposed



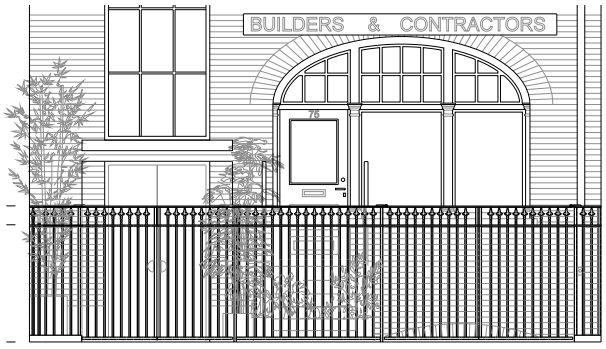
Section Looking East

Cross Section Proposed

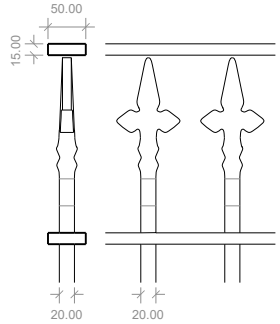
Front Gate & Lightwell Lift Proposed



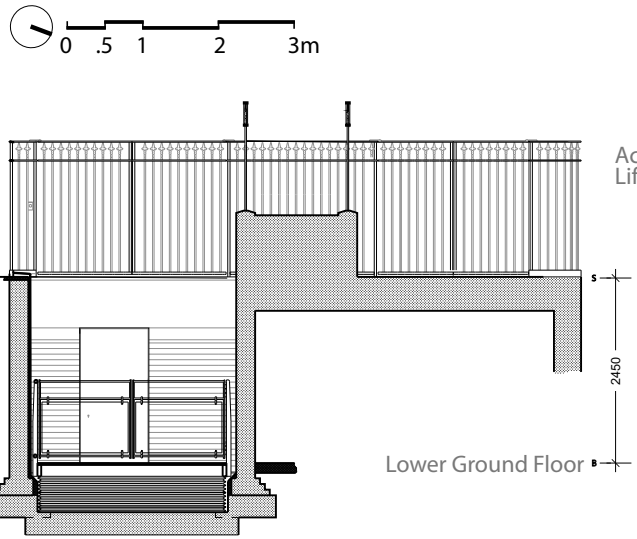
Existing Front Elevation - Railing and Entries



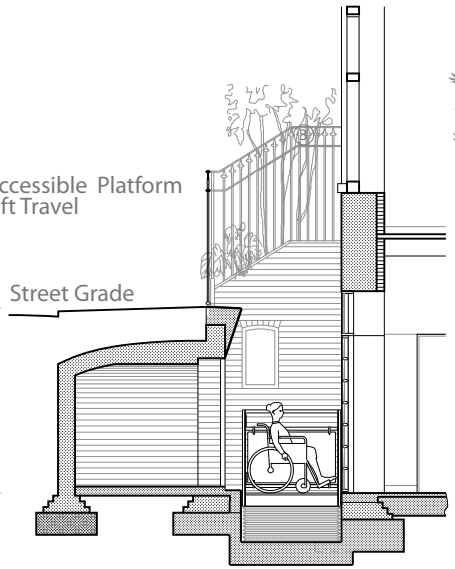
New Matching Continuous Gates



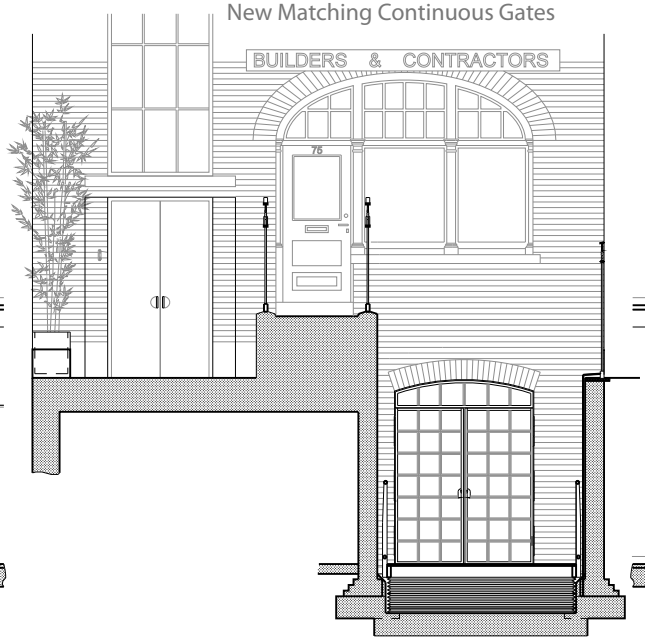
Matching Railing Bar Heads (scale:10X)



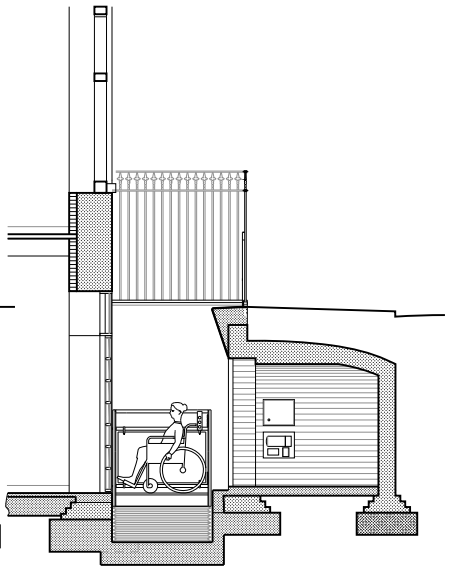
Section looking East



Section looking South



Section looking West

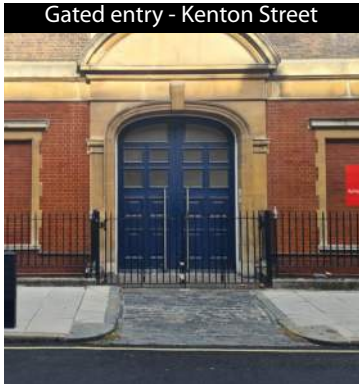


Section looking North

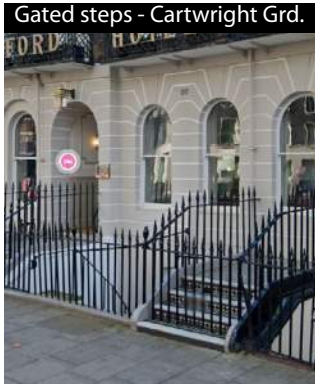
Examples of front gates and lightwell lifts

Lightwell lift - Bidborough St.

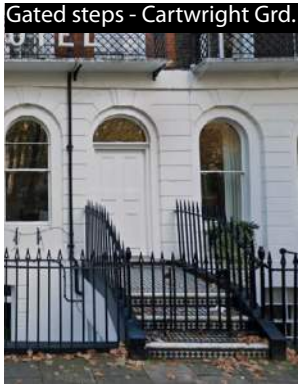
Lightwell lift - 1 New Square



Gated entry - Kenton Street



Gated steps - Cartwright Grd.



Gated steps - Cartwright Grd.

Gated steps - Hastings St.

Ground Floor
Living Room

Proposed

First Floor
Kitchen

Proposed

First Floor
Child's Bedroom

Proposed

The lower ground level office space benefits from ample natural light from a continuous skylight on the low roof (as indicated in the original design) and diffused LED lighting on the ceiling. The space is designed to accommodate 8 to 10 people, and will be fitted to the highest office standard, both architecturally and environmentally. With a high degree of lighting, acoustic, and environmental control, the office space shall cater especially to creative industries.

Lower Ground Level Office Space

Proposed

3. **Access Statement**

3.1 **Site Access**

3.1.1 Wheelchair Accessibility

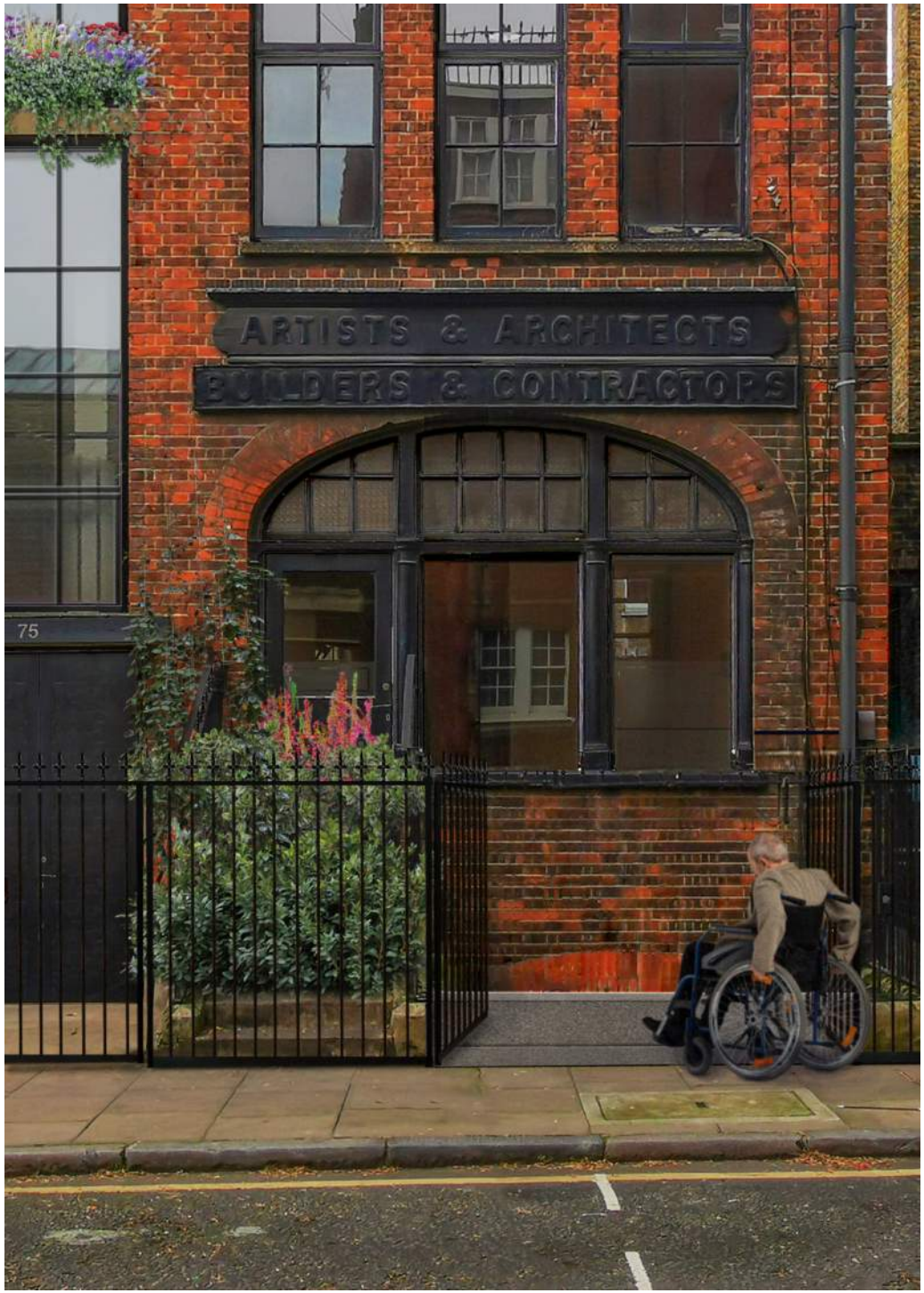
The proposed 73-75 Kenton Street accommodates wheelchair access in both the residential and the business components of the building. All wheelchair accesses are provided with step-free level thresholds, as the exterior lightwell lift connects sidewalk level to the business at lower ground level, and a chair lift inside the residential entrance connecting from street level to raised ground level (**see Page 39**).

Inside the building, an interior lift allows wheelchair users and people with reduced mobility to traverse across all residential floors.

3.1.2 Transportation & Parking

This statement does not propose any on-site car parking spot or seek a parking permit. The property will be car-free. Easy access to major underground stations and bus stops eliminates need for vehicle in most cases. Kenton Street is wheelchair vehicle and ambulance friendly, with space in front of the building for assisted vehicular access.

The building provides three indoor bicycle storage spaces on the lower ground level for office use, and two indoor spaces for residential use; additional bicycle parking docks are located across the street. The shared bicycle and e-scooter bay in front of the building provides additional transportation options for users and visitors of the building.



Accessible platform lift providing step-free connection between sidewalk and office

3.2 **Accessibility & Lifetime Homes**

3.2.1 Building Regulations Part M Volume 4

Volume 1, Part M of *the Building Regulations* sets out minimum standards for accessible dwellings. It is applicable to change of use of an existing building. Within the volume, there are three sections:

- M4 (1) *base requirement* - Visitable dwellings,
- M4 (2) *optional requirement* - Accessible and adaptable dwellings, and
- M4(3) *optional requirement* - Wheelchair use dwellings.

Following the Government's 2015 'housing standards review' Lifetime Homes standards were replaced by the optional building regulations standard M4 (2) entitled 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'. The current London Plan policy requires 90% of all new build housing in London to meet this standard, with the remaining 10% being wheelchair user dwellings.

The proposed residence requires wheelchair access to cater to its future residents' need. The proposal meets all the minimum requirements in M4 (1), and qualifies as wheelchair adaptable dwelling, meeting requirements in M4 (2).

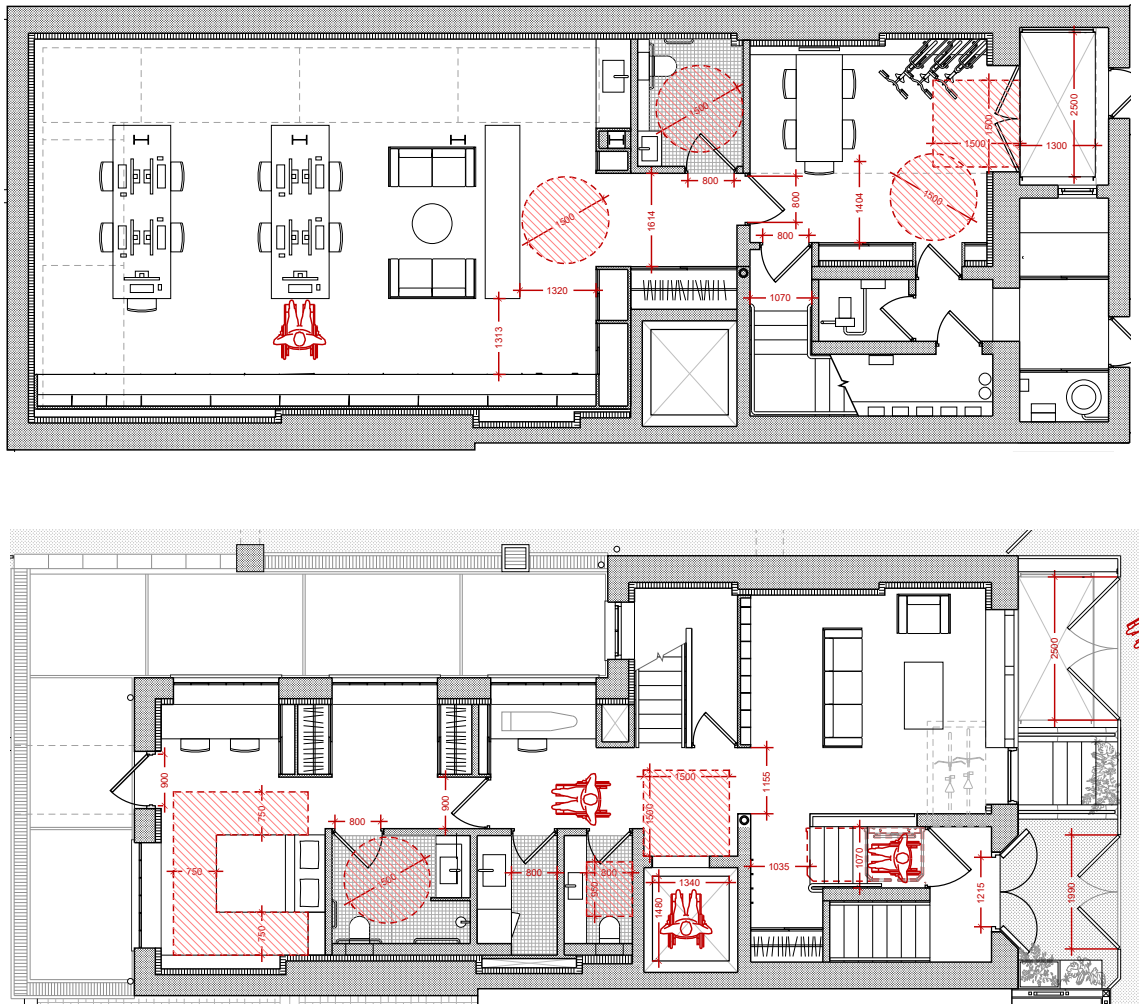
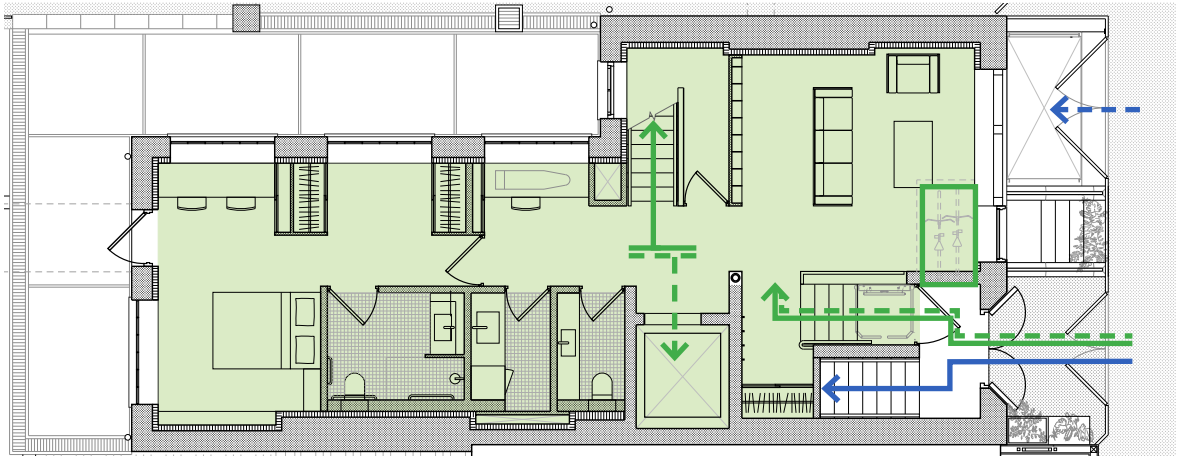


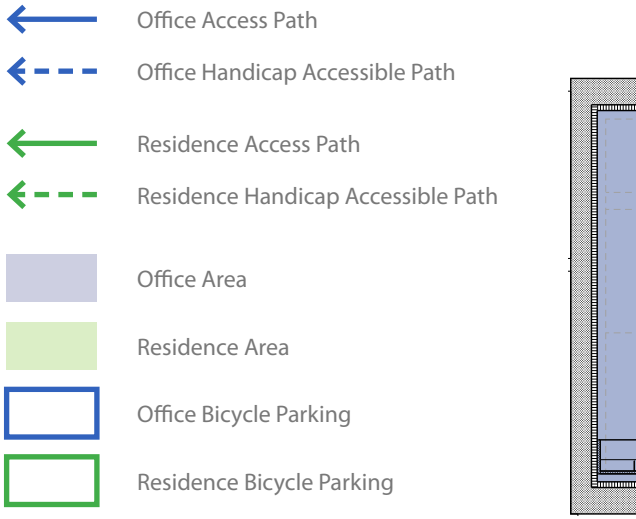
Fig. 33. Lower Ground & Ground Floor Accessibility Diagrams

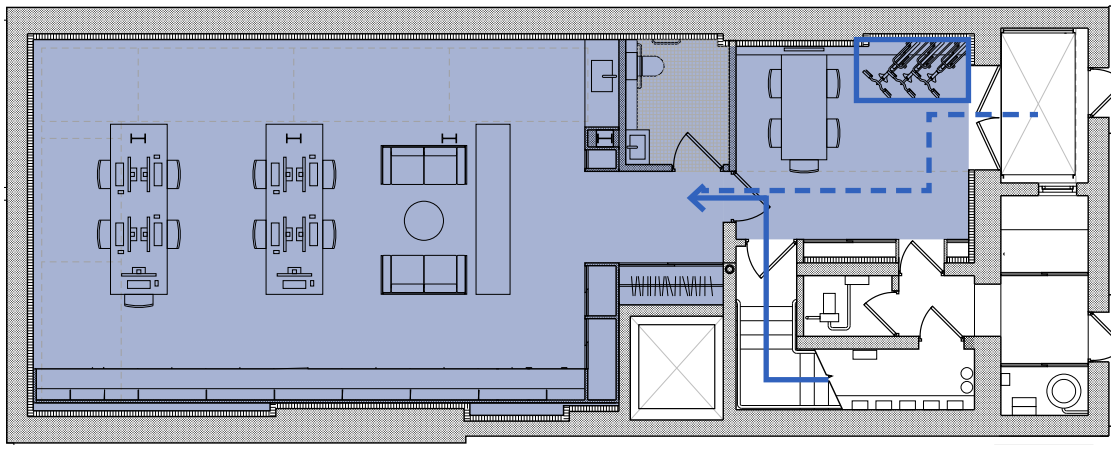
3.3 **Separation of Circulation**

To ensure privacy and easy access , it is vital to maintain separate access between the office and residential areas. As illustrated in the diagrams, the proposed design provides both zones with regular and handicap accessible paths, which also serve as emergency egress routes.



Ground Floor





Lower Ground Floor

Fig. 34. Separation of Access Diagram

4. **Sustainability Statement**

4.1 **Sustainability in Design & Construction**

The applicant and the architects at BKDM believe strongly in the importance of integrating sustainable design principles from the onset of a project. One of the guiding principles for the renovation and upgrading of 73-75 Kenton Street is the intentional, ethical, and environmentally responsible inclusion or reclamation of long-lasting materials, through high quality construction, while strictly managing and reducing waste. BKDM's goal is to prioritize preservation, restoration, and enhancement of existing structures, and help 73-75 Kenton Street regain a meaningful urban presence and become a positive contribution to the future built environment.

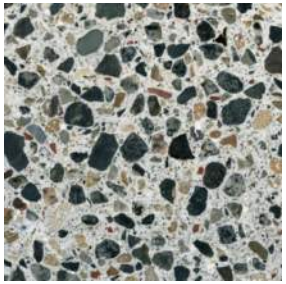
Prior to approaching this project, BKDM has conducted research on sustainable ways of restoring historical buildings, and has identified potential internal thermal and acoustic insulation systems for the long-term enhancement of the building's energy efficiency and comfort. Low energy appliances and building equipment will also be included as part of the renovation.

Sustainable Design Considerations:

- Restoring window frames and replacing single glazing with thin matching vacuum insulated glass panels
- Fitting internal walls and roofs with high performance vacuum insulated panels
- Installing a three-stop lift with a regenerative drive which will generate and offset its own energy consumption
- Installing natural gas condensing boiler
- Upgrading all lighting fixtures to be minimum 50,000 hour LED bulbs
- An inverter and battery will be fitted to supply renewable electricity through PV arrays

Construction Material Recycling and Reuse

Reclaimed aggregate to Terrazzo



Old Bricks to Concrete Aggregate

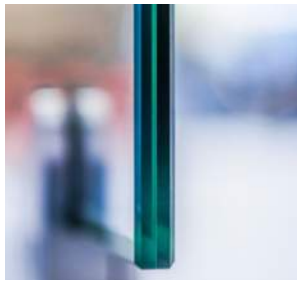
Preservation

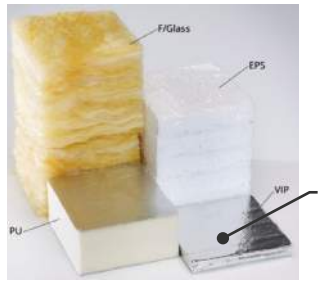
Repointing

Window Restoration

Thermodynamics

Vacuum Insulated Glazing





Vacuum Insulated Panel (thickness comparison)