



MRPP

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DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

MIXED USE REDEVELOPMENT OF 110 WALM LANE, WILLESDEN GREEN

JANUARY 2018

gml architects

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Design & Access Statement supports the application for full planning permission by Redbourne (Queensbury) Ltd to replace the existing building (containing a public house and former members club) with a mixed use development comprising a public house with function room (A4), and 48 residential flats (C3).
- 1.2 This application follows the refusal of a prior planning application (13/3503) by the previous landowner in March 2014, and dismissal of the subsequent appeal (APP/T5150/A/2219081) in March 2015.

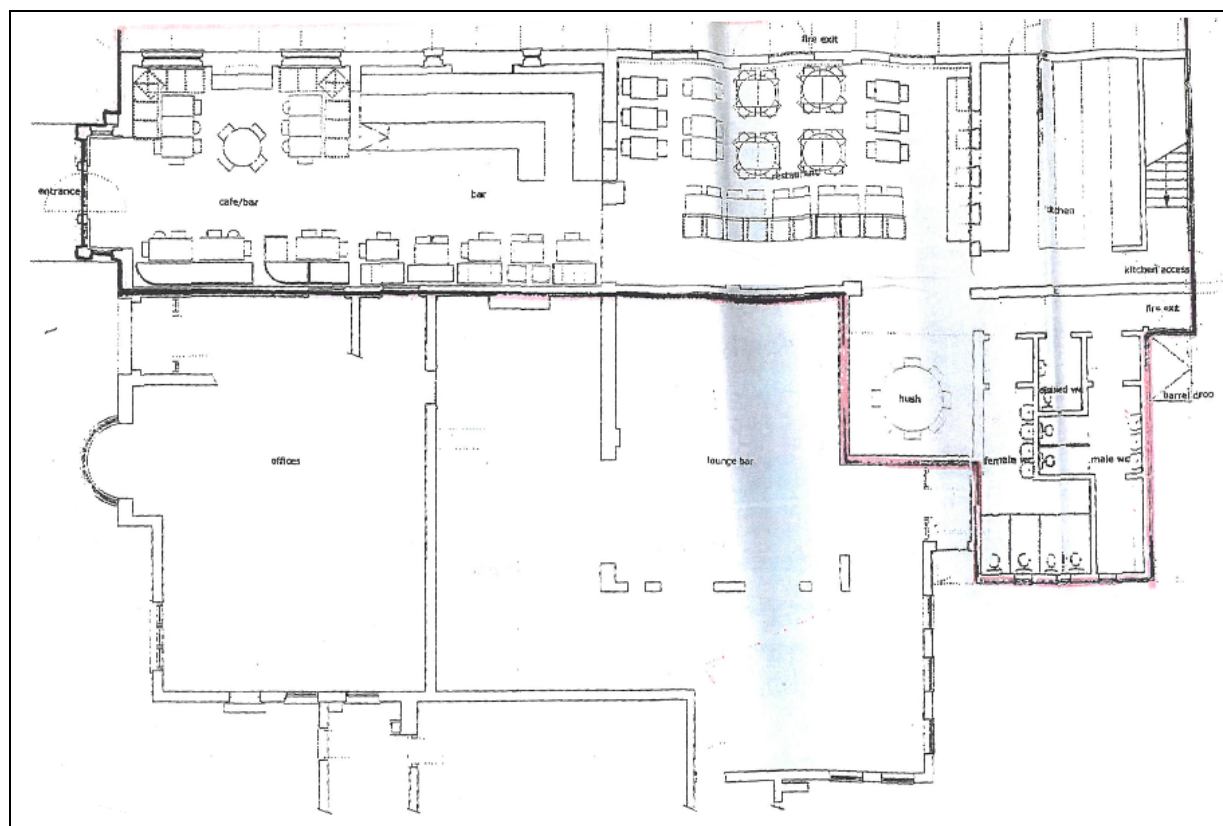
2. EXISTING SITE

- 2.1 The accompanying Heritage Impact Assessment explains the historical context of the site and surroundings in detail. In summary, it sits within the Mapesbury Conservation Area, and opposite the listed Underground station building, which sits within Willesden Green Conservation Area.



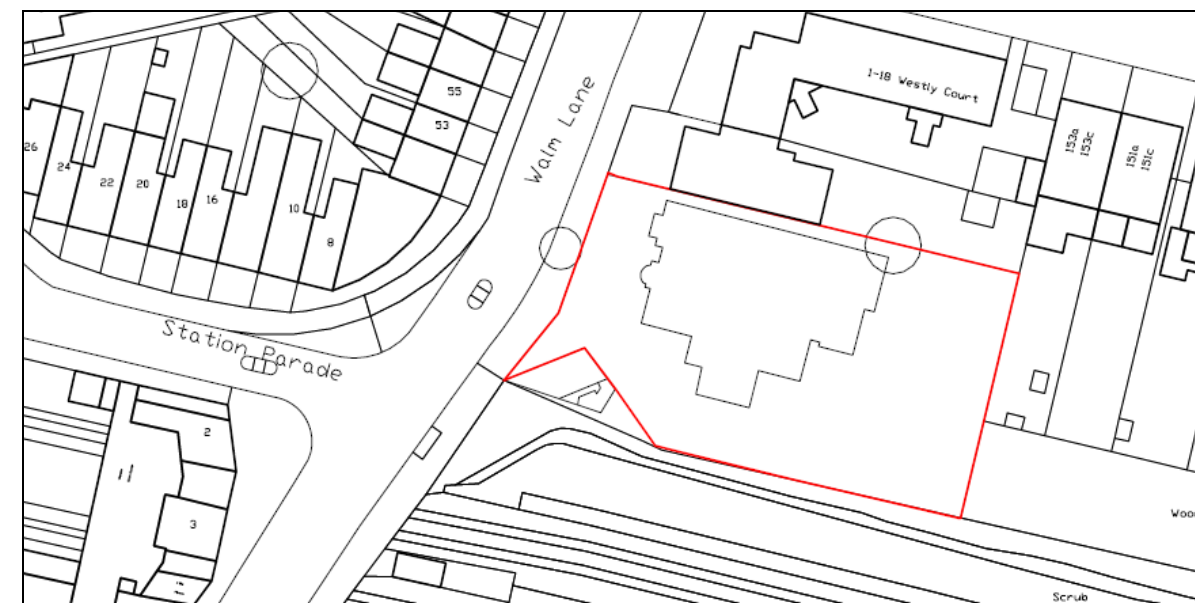
Aerial View of Site

- 2.2 The existing building on site was completed in 1893 as a doctor's surgery with residential accommodation above, until 1911 when it was occupied by the Conservative Club. In 2001 the northern part of the building was converted into a café/bar, now operated as the Queensbury PH. The Conservative Club has since vacated the remainder of the building.



Existing Ground Floor Plan

- 2.3 The building is situated at the front of the site, which extends to 0.21 ha. The remaining part of the site, to the side and rear, is undeveloped, comprising surface car parking.



Existing Site Plan

- 2.4 The site is bounded by Walm Lane to the west, and a railway¹ cutting to the south. Residential gardens to Dartmouth Road properties lie to the east, and 112 Walm Lane is situated to the north, with Westly Court beyond. A small parade of shops are located adjacent, fronting Walm Lane.
- 2.5 The Heritage Impact Assessment provides an architectural description of the building, and an analysis of its contribution to its setting.



Existing Building



¹ Jubilee Underground Line

3. EXISTING ACCESS

Vehicular

- 3.1 Access is taken directly from Walm Lane, at the southern end of the site's street frontage.
- 3.2 Walm Lane is the A407 distributor road. The A5 (Edgware Road) is only 0.6 miles north along Walm Lane.

Cycle

- 3.3 St Pauls Avenue/Chatsworth Road, immediately south and parallel to the underground line is part of the London Cycle Network.

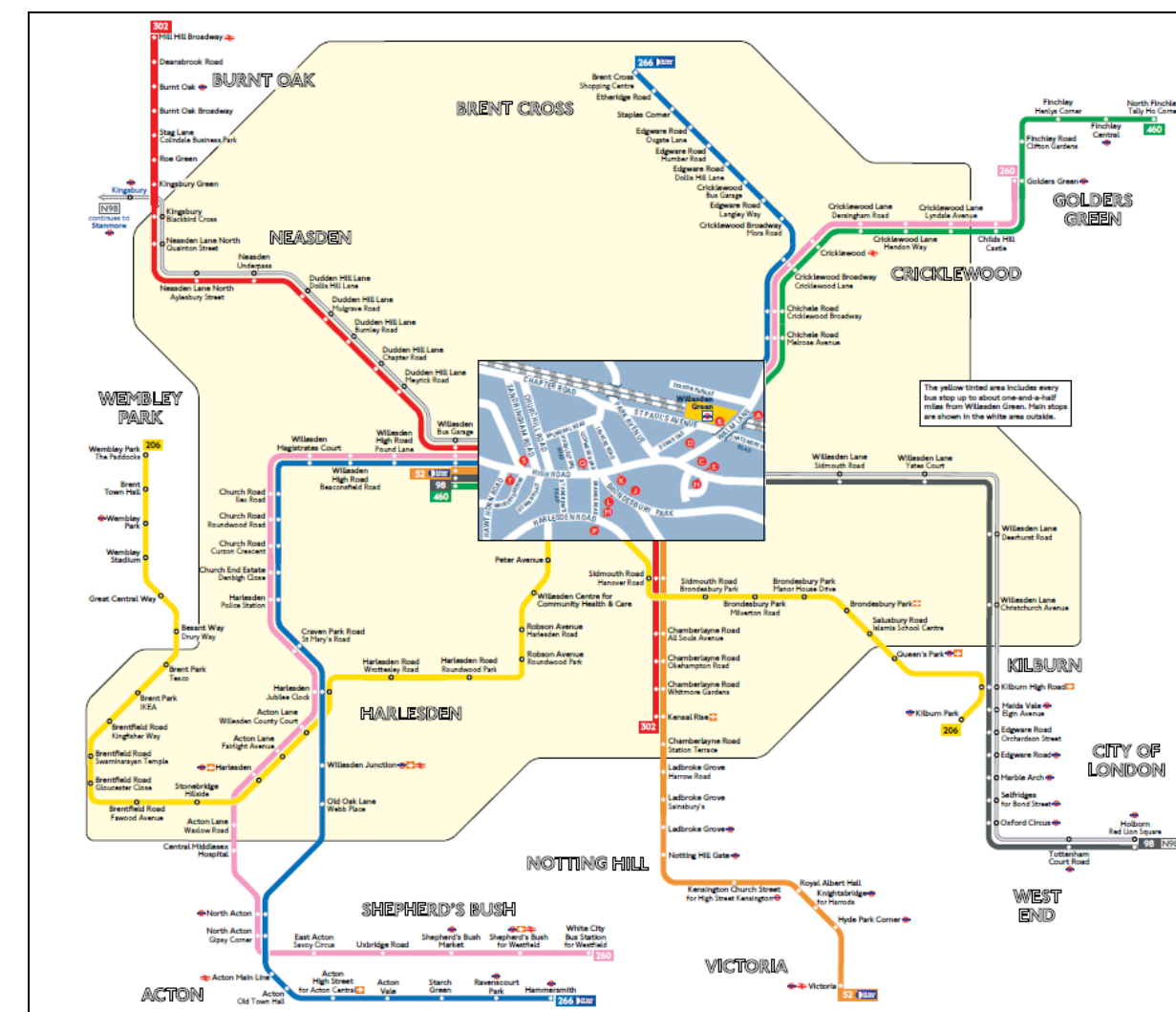


Pedestrian

- 3.4 Footways are provided either side of Walm Lane. A crossing island is situated adjacent to the site whilst a zebra crossing is located approximately 50m to the south adjacent to the underground station.

Public Transport

- 3.5 The site has a PTAL of 6A². The bus stops 'Willesden Green Station' both northbound and southbound are on routes 260, 266 and 460, providing direct connections to Brent Cross, Acton, Hammersmith and Shepherds Bush. Nearby bus stops provide wider connections.



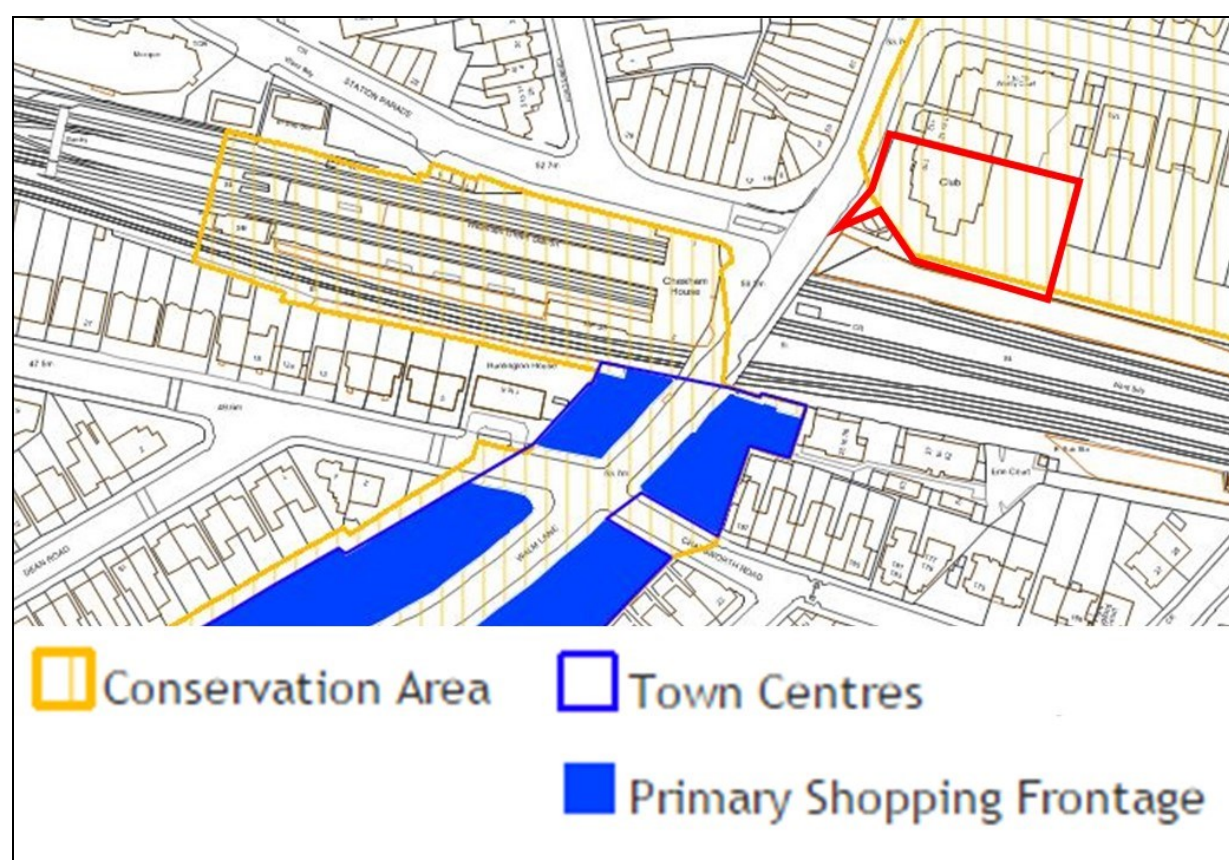
Willesden Green Bus Map

- 3.6 Willesden Green Underground Station is opposite, providing a direct link to central London on the Jubilee line.

² TfL, WebCAT website (Grid Ref: 523476, 184862).

4. DESIGN & ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Given the underutilisation of this very accessible (PTAL 6) and 'central' site, and that the Council has a marginal case for a five year supply of deliverable housing sites, an opportunity arises to optimise this site with additional residential floorspace through redevelopment (see Planning Statement).
- 4.2 The site is not land-use designated, and therefore, subject to satisfying policy requirements for the existing on-site use(s), the principle of residential use on this site is acceptable.



Extract from Brent Policies Map

- 4.3 Redevelopment would necessitate the re-provision of a public house unit of greater community value. Whilst not formalised, the site currently has a quasi-role in providing space for community groups, and hence it would be beneficial to formalise this as part of the redevelopment.

- 4.4 Recent surrounding developments – namely Erin Court³, 112 Walm Lane and the rooftop extension to Wesley Court – provide a guide for acceptable building height. In respect of 112 Walm Lane – the closest and most recent of the three developments – the Council, in determining the planning application⁴ commented that *“the proposal does relate well...to the generality of the character of this section of the road at the edge of the conservation area, reflecting the changing ground level, and your officers believe, the 5 storey proposed frontage on Walm Lane would enhance the streetscene sitting between the 4 storey Westley Court...and a 3 storey building, the Conservative Club at 110 Walm Lane”*⁵.
- 4.5 The site sits within the Mapesbury Conservation Area. Willesden Green Underground Station, opposite, is Grade II listed, and sits within the Willesden Green Conservation Area. It will therefore be necessary for the proposal to at least preserve the character of the conservation areas, and setting of the nearby listed building. It is considered that the existing building already makes a positive contribution.
- 4.6 The site has excellent public transport accessibility – PTAL 6.
- 4.7 In order to assist with the delivery of the affordable housing on-site (i.e. attractive to a Registered Provider) this component would need to be accessed via a separate entrance door and core.
- 4.8 Adequate on site private and communal amenity space would need to be provided.
- 4.9 Overlooking and overshadowing to neighbouring properties would need to be avoided.
- 4.10 A mixture of smaller and family residential units is necessary to contribute to the achievement of sustainable communities, both on a development and borough-wide basis.

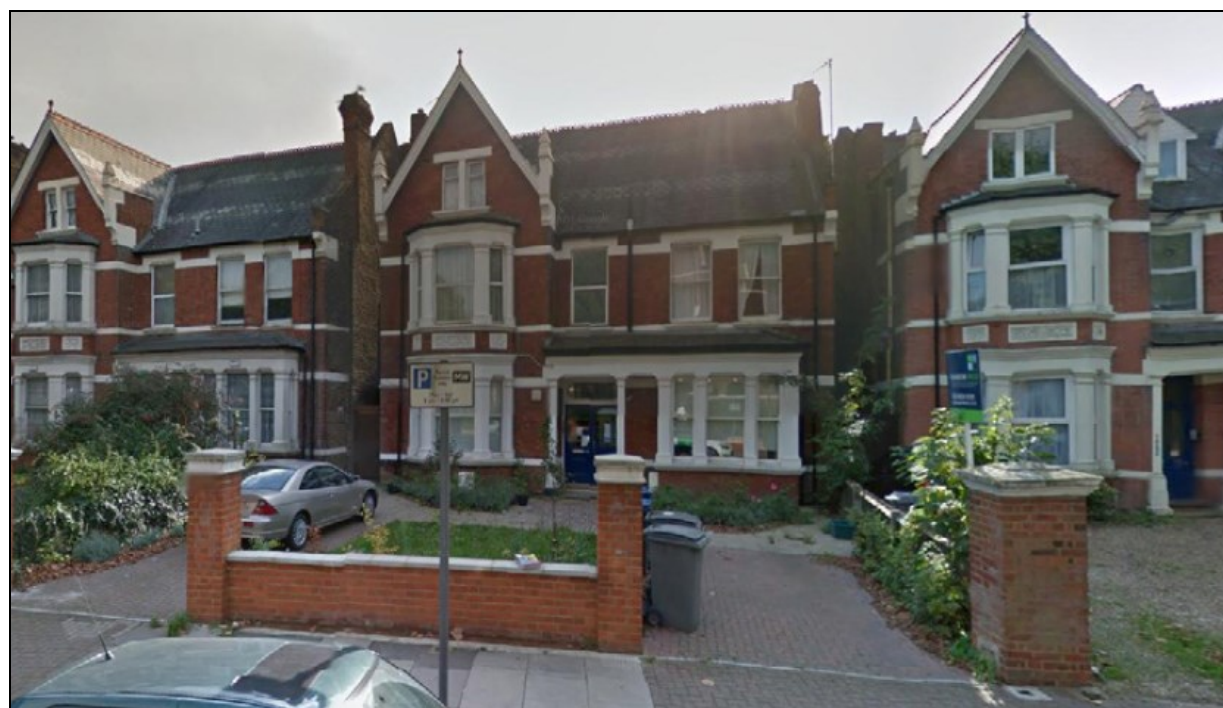
³ 01/1432

⁴ 07/3806

⁵ Council's Report

Understanding the Conservation Areas

- 4.11 The site's location within the Mapesbury Conservation Area, and opposite the Willesden Green Conservation Area necessitates an understanding of their character and setting. There are consistent design themes and features running through both, that give them their significance.
- 4.12 Generally the buildings within the Mapesbury CA are situated on generous plots, and set back from the street. This illustrated by 170 Walm Lane.



170 Walm Lane

- 4.13 These buildings also generally have stepped frontages, with bay windows a particularly prevalent theme. Essex Mansions is a good example of this.



Essex Mansions

- 4.14 The 'angular' theme also continues from the canted bay windows into the balconies on Dartmouth Road.



Dartmouth Road



23 Stanley Gardens

- 4.15 The syncopated gable elevation at 23 Stanley Gardens is a particularly novel and unusual feature of the Mapesbury Conservation Area.

- 4.16 Lightweight glazed wraparounds are particularly noticeable at 112 Walm Lane, 1-3 Grosvenor Gardens, and Westbury Court on Darmouth Road.



Westbury Court

- 4.17 In terms of materiality, brick and stone banding is a common theme throughout both conservation areas.



Alexandra Mansions and Rutland Park Mansions

- 4.18 Some or all of the above themes/features can help to inform the design process.

5. PROPOSED DESIGN

Dismissed Proposal

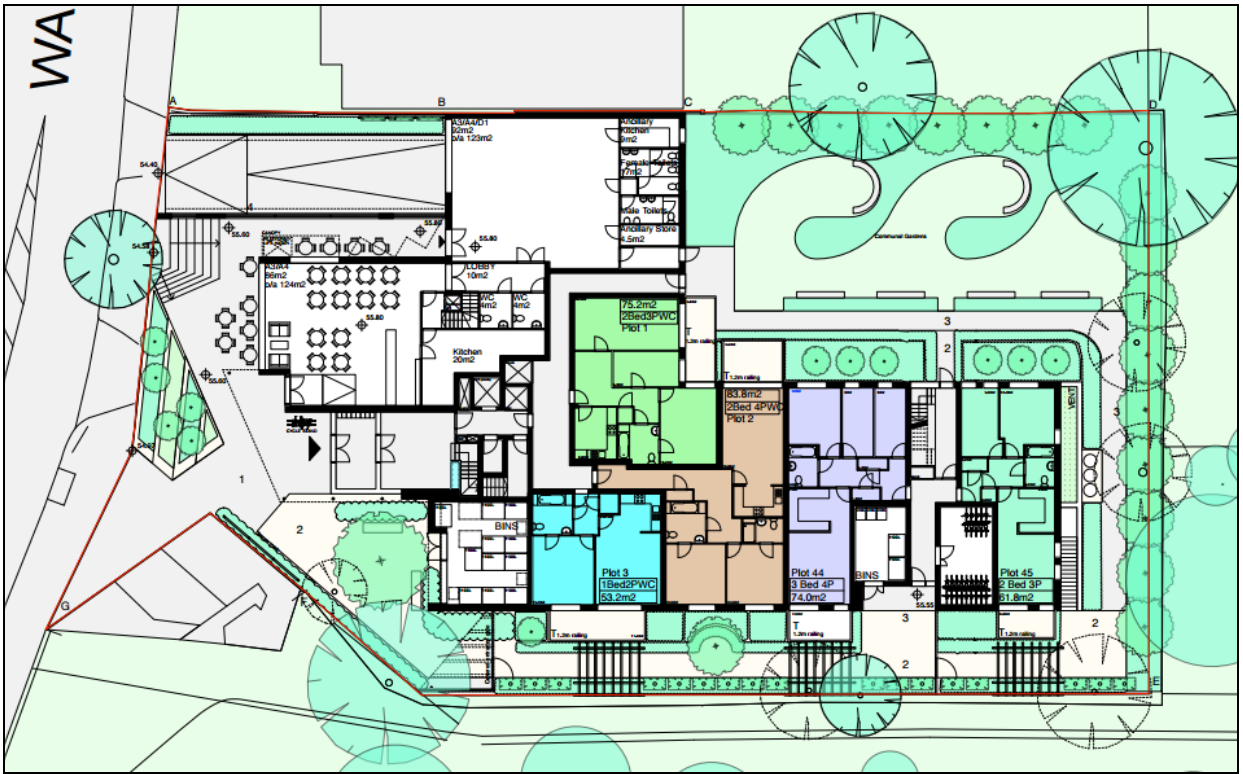
5.1 Prior to the applicant’s ownership, the site was subject to a planning application⁶ for 53 flats across 10 floors, which was refused by the Planning Committee in March 2014, on three grounds, contrary to officers’ recommendation to approve. The subsequent appeal was dismissed on the single ground that the proposed design would be harmful to the two conservation areas and listed Willesden Green Underground Station.



Dismissed Proposed Scheme

5.2 The Officer’s Report explained that “Whilst the building will be higher than the surrounding developments, it is considered that a case can be made for a taller building in this location on the railway between the urban context of Willesden and the

more suburban area of Mapesbury. The scheme is considered to deliver high quality architectural and urban design quality with a well attenuated tower element. The location of the site within the edge of the Mapesbury Conservation Area and Willesden Green Town Centre, opposite the underground station, emphasises the important location on the site, and a distinctive high profile building is considered appropriate in this context. The modern design reflects the character of surrounding developments in the immediate locality such as 112 Walm Lane”.



Dismissed Proposed Ground Floor Layout

5.3 However members “raised concerns about the height, scale, massing and density of the proposed development within a conservation area”⁷. This view was supported by the Inspector who found that “It appears that the design has over-estimated the site’s capacity for a landmark building. I endorse the analysis on behalf of the Council of the tower’s likely adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Mapesbury Conservation Area in views from the north along Walm Lane. These show that because of the tower’s height and plan area, it would have a much greater presence than the

⁶ 13/3503

more distant Erin Court, and would introduce an intrusive accent where none is needed”.

- 5.4 Notwithstanding, the Inspector did comment that the existing building “is not of outstanding architectural merit” and he recognised the Council’s position that “a replacement building of sufficient quality could be supported”.



Dismissed Proposed South East Elevation

Design Inception & Evolution

- 5.5 The team’s first task was to consider whether a case could be made for the replacement of the existing building. Our Heritage Expert advised that there could, and he advises within his Heritage Impact Assessment that the building “has undergone many alterations and changes of use [and] these have diluted its original architectural interest and consequently the existing building is not absolutely integral to the quality of the conservation area as a whole and is now physically segregated from other buildings of the same era”⁸. The Inspector was also clear that the existing building “is not of outstanding design merit”⁹ and “its importance is not absolutely integral to the quality of the area as a whole”¹⁰. That said, he nevertheless took the view that “the

building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area”¹¹. In essence, a planning case can be made for the replacement of the existing building, but only with a development of high quality design. The team therefore decided to progress a replacement building scheme.



SWOT Diagram

- 5.6 The following Opportunities and Constraints were identified:

OPPORTUNITIES

- Potential to provide active frontages along Walm Lane
- Potential to strengthen corner and relationship to station
- Opportunity to provide a focal building to define the edge of the Conservation Area to the south
- Potential to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

⁷ Minutes of Committee Meeting

⁸ Paragraph 7.5

⁹ IR24

¹⁰ IR52

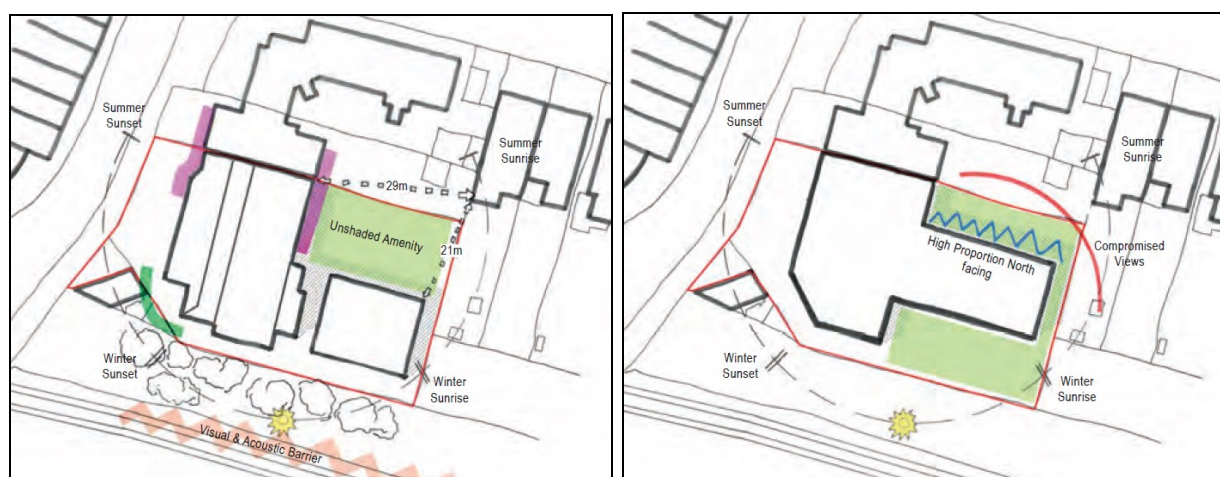
¹¹ IR27

- Opportunity to provide new landscaped areas to increase natural habitats on site
- Opportunity to provide amenity/play space to the rear
- Opportunity to maximise density by utilising highly accessible location
- Prospect of lowering ground floor to reduce overall massing compared to the existing building's plinth
- Maintaining neighbouring building line allows for large depth of plot to Walm Lane site.

CONSTRAINTS

- Site is within Mapesbury Conservation Area and opposite the Grade II Listed Willesden Green Station
- Site lies close to National rail and Underground lines
- Limited road frontage to Walm Lane through which there must be access
- Massing must be considerate of surrounding built environment with respect to overshadowing

5.7 Thus the starting point was to consider the site in relation to its position at the hinge point of the Mapesbury and Willesden Green Conservations and diagonally opposite the Grade II listed Underground Station. Three important aspects exist – 1) to the front and Walm Lane, 2) to the south to the railway and open aspect over the bridge, and 3) to the rear, against the gardens and amenity of surrounding developments and houses.



Block Layout Options

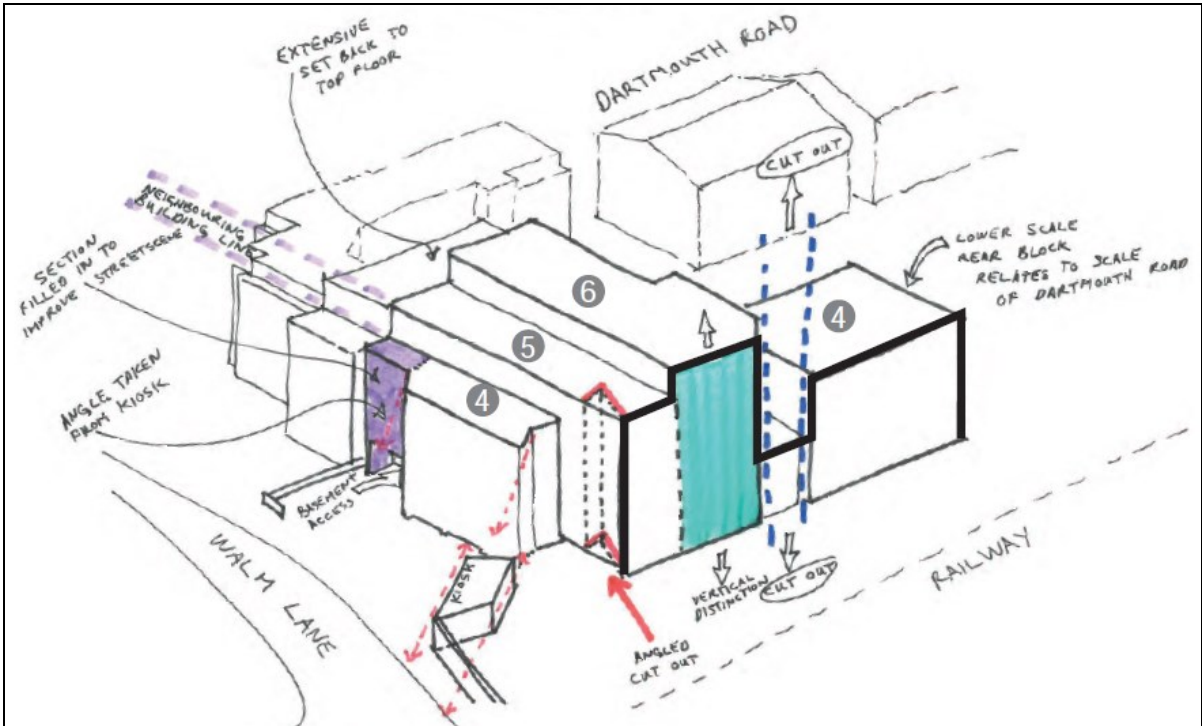
5.8 From a thorough review of the public, Planning Committee and Inspector's comments on the previous scheme, it was clear that the general layout of the block was not criticised, and testing of alternative arrangements reaffirmed that an L shaped block, fronting Walm Lane and the railway line is the most appropriate layout for this site.



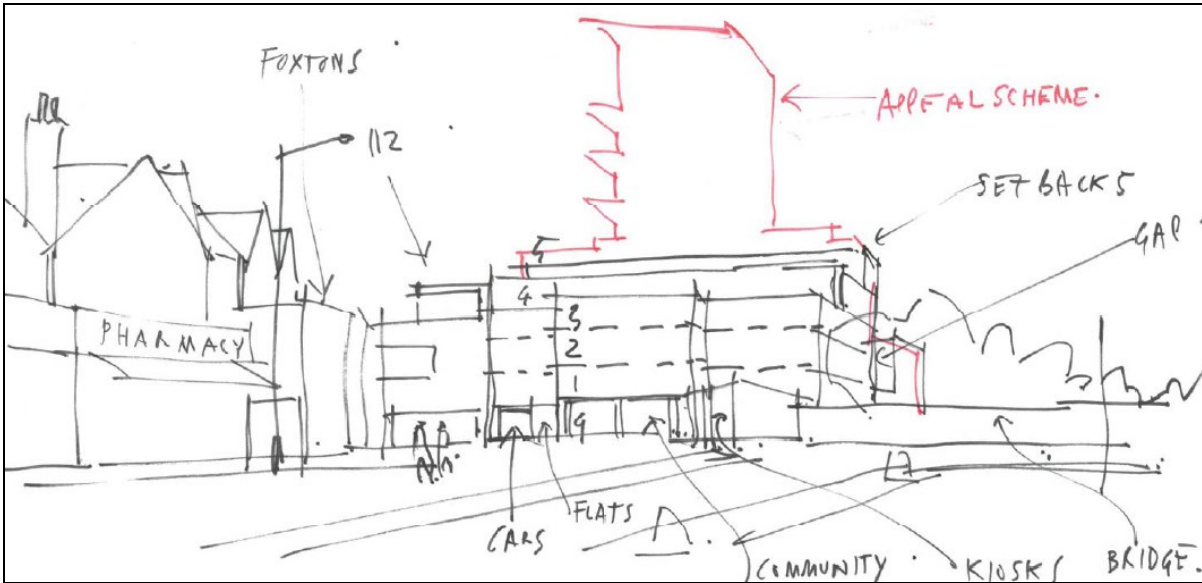
Layout Feasibility Testing

5.9 It was also clear that the site could not sustain a development of such intensity and height as the dismissed scheme, and it was agreed that five/six storeys is the maximum height that the site could accommodate.

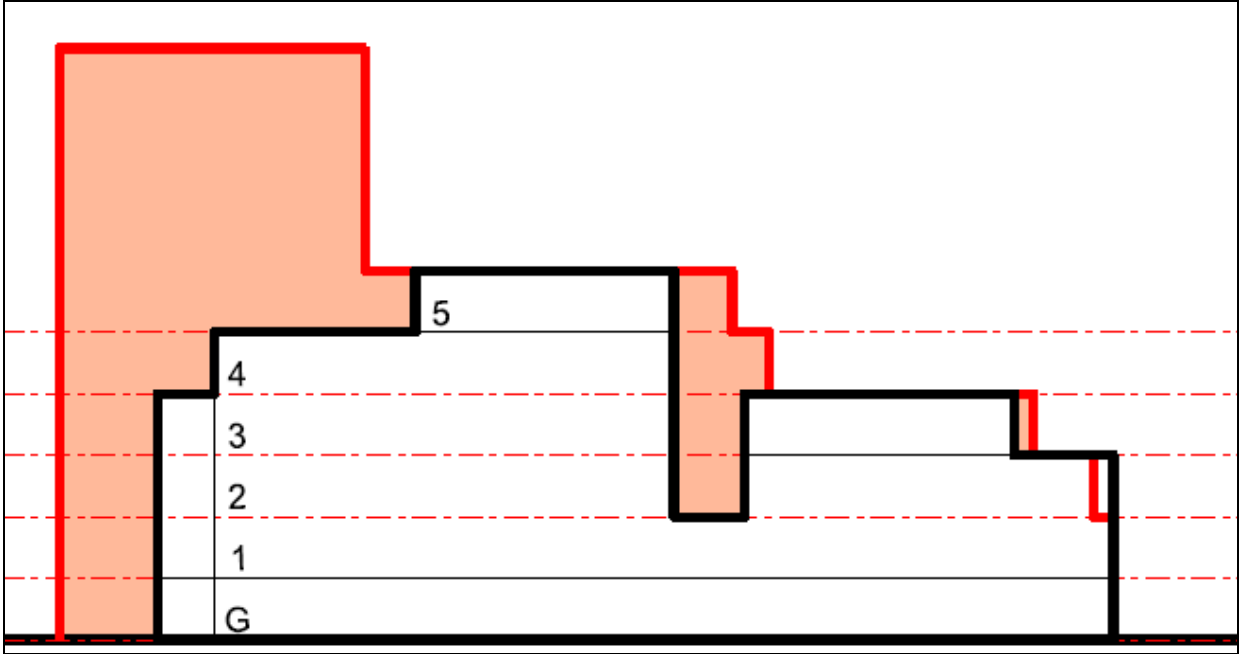
5.10 The proposed design needed to continue and line up with the frontage of 112 Walm lane.



Scale/Mass Feasibility Testing



Scale/Mass Feasibility Testing



Comparison of scale/height of dismissed scheme versus a feasibility scheme

- 5.11 Comparison with the dismissed scheme confirmed that a significant reduction in height and perceived scale could be achieved.
- 5.12 With the general arrangement and scale agreed, the team began to consider the internal layout in greater detail.
- 5.13 Further research into the objections raised by interest groups previously necessitated the inclusion of a dedicated public house unit, with separate community hall. Two residential entrances (and two separate bin and bike stores) would also be required for the market and affordable housing. This created a particular challenge in containing all of these functions within the building frontage, which is limited in width by the site frontage.



Ground Floor Layout Option

- 5.14 Additional space at basement level was incorporated for the public house unit, and circa 20 car parking spaces provided.
- 5.15 The upper floors were also considered to ensure suitable amenity for future and neighbouring residents. The team was satisfied that the arrangement would avoid any overlooking or loss of privacy to neighbours. It was also considered that there would be enough separation to avoid internal overlooking within the development itself.
- 5.16 The team then moved on to consider the building form and appearance more closely. Three initial options were considered.

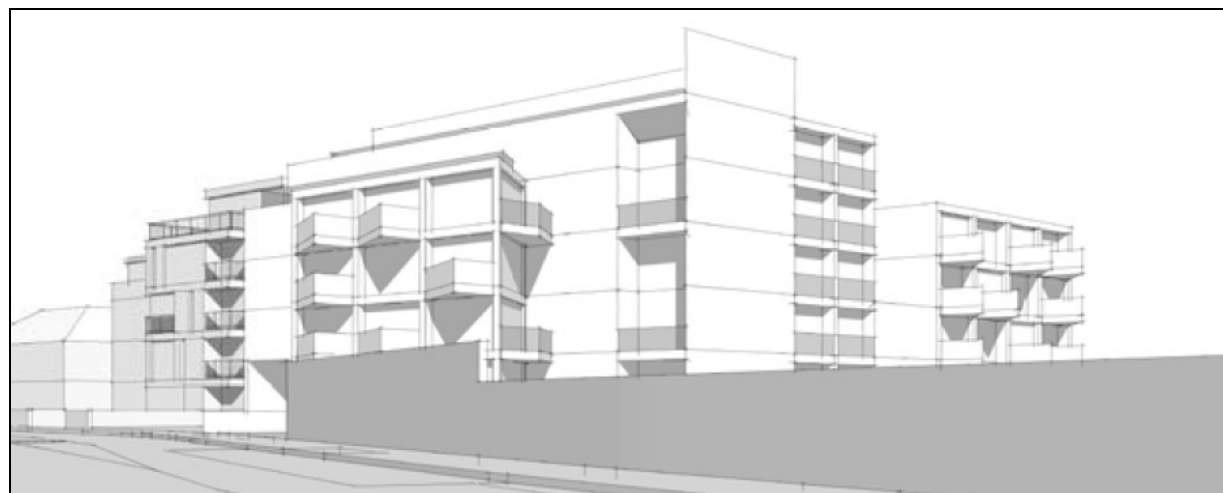


Option A



Option A Precedents

- 5.17 Option A sought to break down the bulk and massing into a number of legible elements – with the intention of reducing the perceived overall massing. The architecture anticipated the ‘New London Vernacular’ which is very much promoted by the GLA with large openings, expressed balconies and materials and detailing that might allude to the context in the conservation area.



Option B

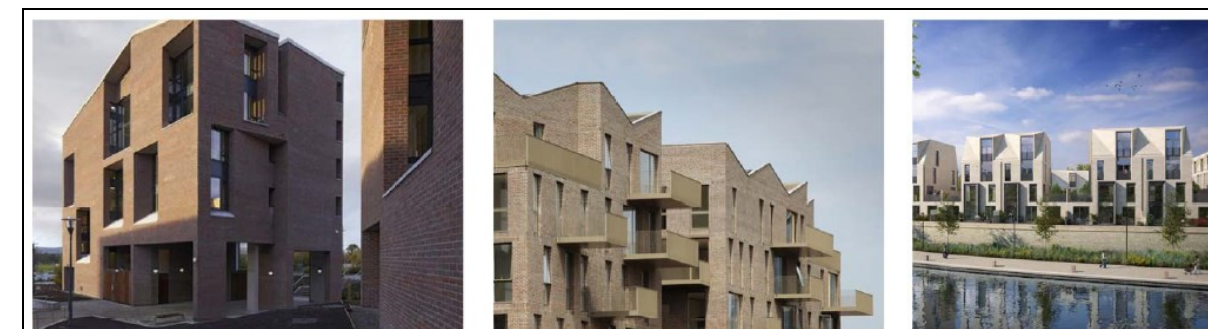


Option B Precedents

- 5.18 Option B incorporated the diagonal geometry of the adjacent kiosk into the scheme to create a more landmark response. The diagonality would create an axis through to the site from the station, and continuing this through to the projecting bay and balcony would create a very striking design response within an ordered framework.



Option C



Option C Precedents

- 5.19 Option C looked to pair the top two floors of the main frontage block into a pitched roof, with flatted cap, that picks up on some of the key buildings within the conservation area that have large gables at corners.
- 5.20 Common themes in all three options were:
- Frontage consistent with that of 112 Walm Lane in terms of set-back and height.
 - Set back from street front, reflecting the character of Mapesbury Conservation Area.
 - Central element of façade brought forward to break façade into three separate elements, with the widths reflecting semi-detached housing on Dartmouth Road. This also means no more than two entry points within each element of the façade and allows for each entry to have its own breathing space and signifier without an over active frontage zone.
 - Reduced height to central element.

- Angled geometry at return to reflect angular nature of bays within both Mapesbury and Willesden Green Conservation Areas – to acknowledge geometry of site front and kiosks, and to act as directional signifier to station.
- Gap in railway line elevation to make distinct front (street) and side (railway line) elevations, and to break down the massing. The gap also reflects breaks between terraces and pairs of houses at corners within the Mapesbury Conservation Area.
- Vertical element at the gap to accentuate the break between front and rear elements/blocks.
- 6th floor (half floor) aligns with vertical element and set well back to street.
- Rear block reduces in height to 4 floors (reflecting scale of Dartmouth Road housing to the rear)

5.21 Option B was taken forward initially and refined into Option D.



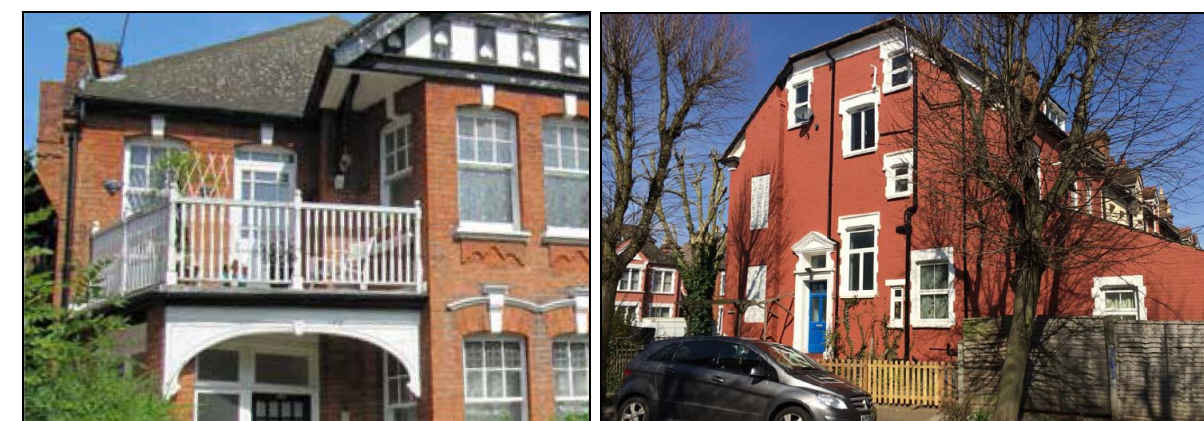
Option D

5.22 Option D sought to incorporate design accents of the Mapesbury Conservation Area, most notably the canted bays, which were reflected in the projecting and recessed balconies. In terms of materials, terracotta is the dominant colour, and white banding is a prominent theme.



Terracotta and Banding

5.23 In consultation with Counsel, the team decided that further improvements could be made to the scheme to include stronger canted bays with recessed balconies, and gable themes, both features being prevalent with the two conservation areas.



Canted Bay (with Recessed Balcony) and Gable Form

5.24 Accordingly, the scheme was adapted to borrow elements from Option C, in terms of the gable form, fronting the railway line. The canted bays, as projecting elements, were also much stronger as a form/feature. This scheme was the subject of a pre-application enquiry in December 2016.

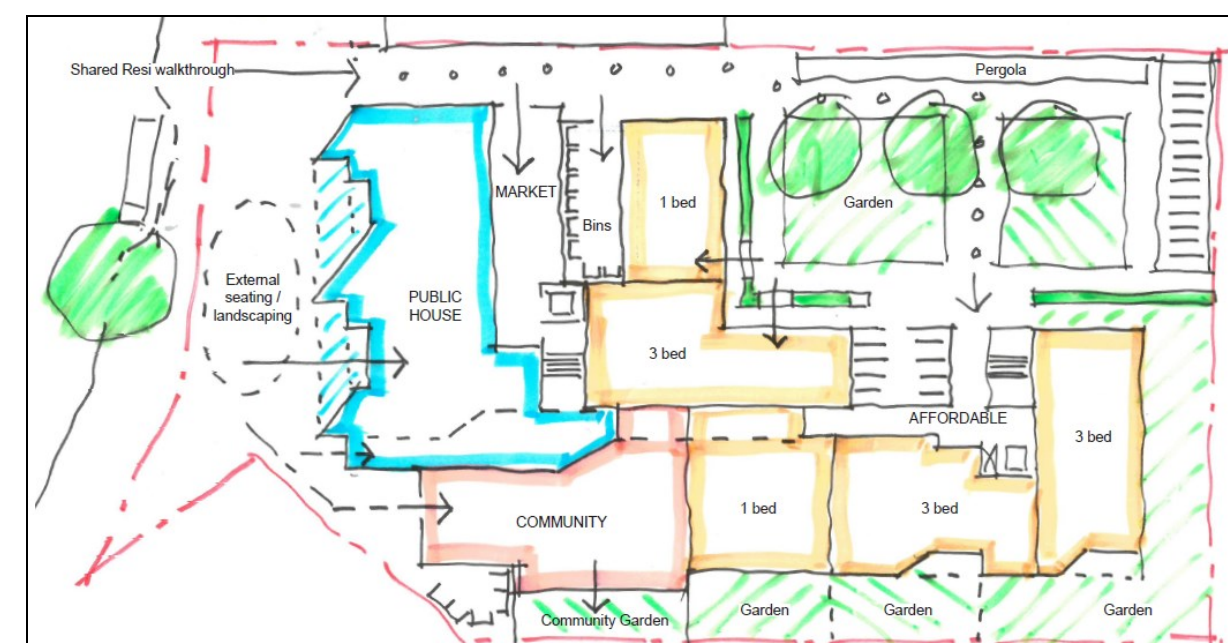


December 2016 Pre-application Scheme



Discounted Option

- 5.25 In conjunction with Brent planning officers the team refined the design as part of the pre-app process.
- 5.26 The main discussion points were around the lack of need for on-site parking, the number of 'entrances' on the Walm Lane frontage, simplification of the elevational treatments, increasing the emphasis of the gable form, increasing the amount of fenestration, the alignment of the building frontage, and the relationship with the kiosks block,.
- 5.27 It was agreed to remove the basement parking, and promote a car-free development. This in turn gave back the northern part of the frontage which could then become the residential 'entrance' passageway through to the courtyard. The entrance doors to the two blocks could then be fed off the courtyard, along with the bikes and bin stores. This reduced the number of entrances on the frontage from seven to three, and gave the pub much more frontage width and presence.



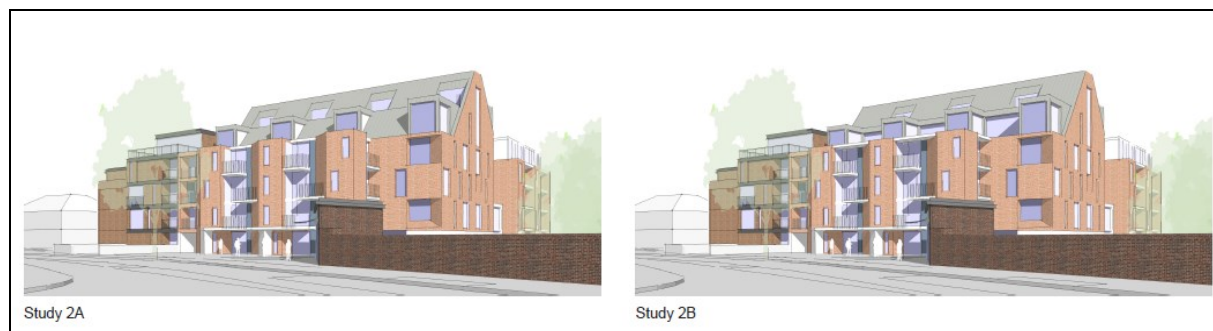
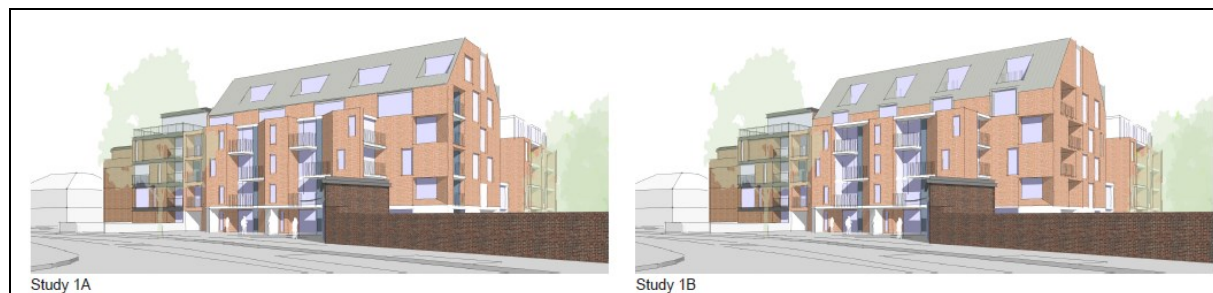
Revised Ground Floor Concept Sketch

- 5.28 Simplification of the elevation was achieved through removing much of the heavy banding and projecting balconies, and the increased emphasis on the gable form,

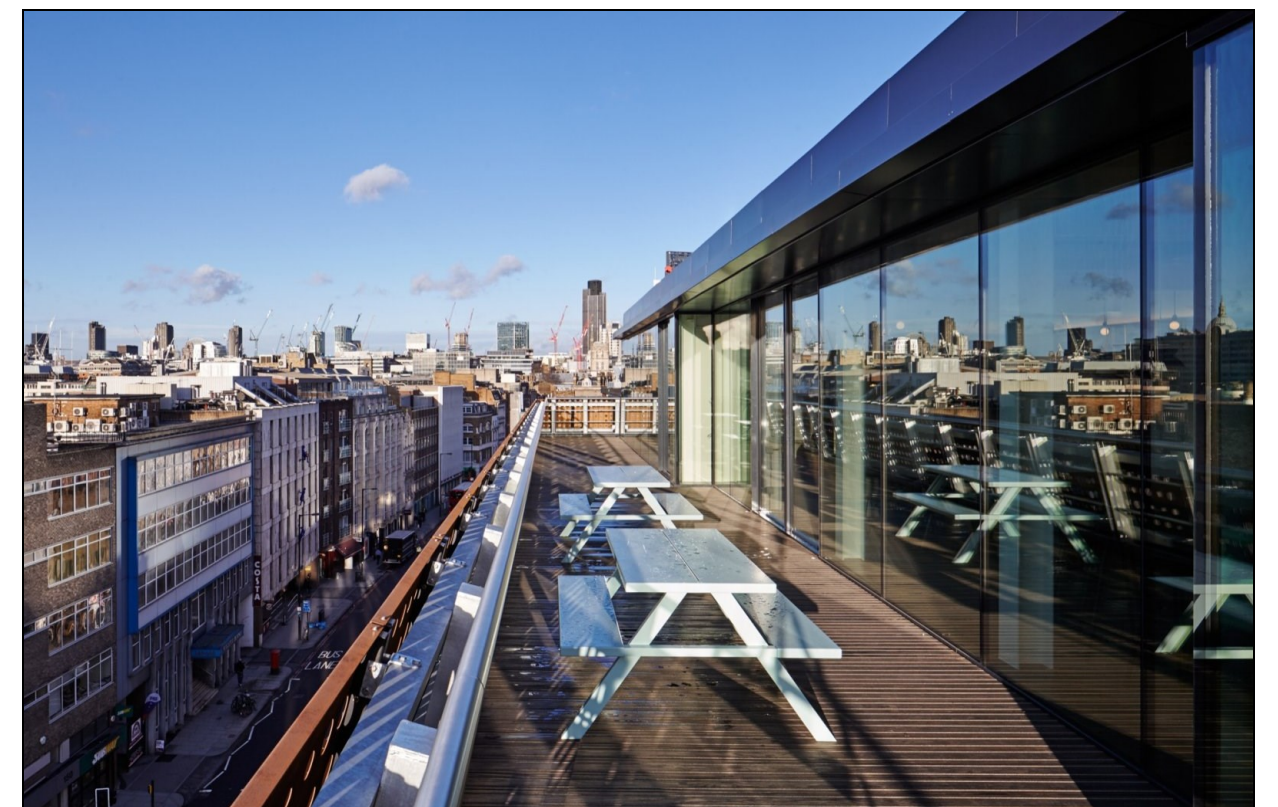
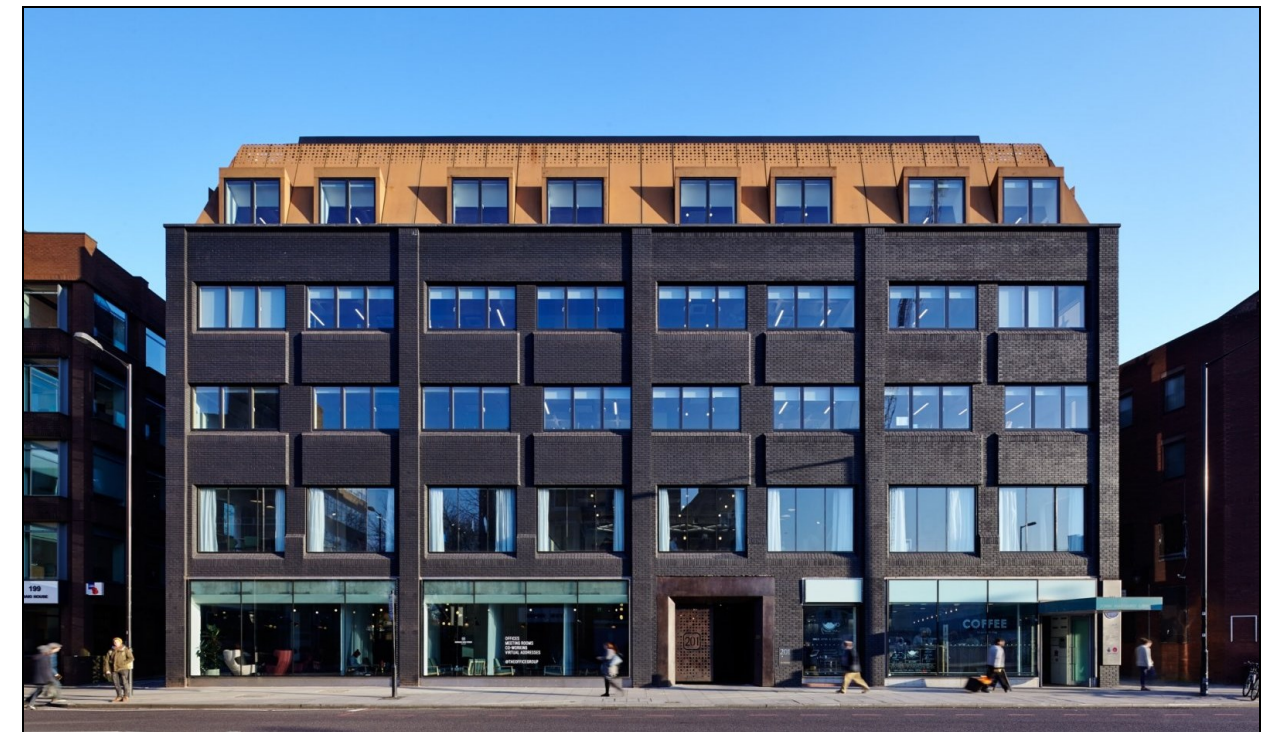
resulted in the white element across the fifth floor frontage being subsumed into the roof shape.



Initial Elevation Simplification



Roof and Gable End Form Studies



Example (201 Borough High Street by Stiff Trevillion) of Roof Form



Roof Dormer/Fenestration Studies



Roof Dormer/Fenestration Studies

building frontage. This was achieved through increased fenestration and the use of the a contrasting white material to distinguish those projecting bay elements from the brick of the main façade.

- 5.30 The pub was given further presence by increasing the width of the white band running along the top of the unit, and increasing the floor to ceiling height beyond that of the residential floor above.



Contrasting Materials

- 5.31 The windows either side of the projecting bays were given added interest through the simple angled reveals, which is an idea taken from a building a building at Limerick University by Grafton Architects.

- 5.29 The alignment of the building frontage and relationship with the kiosk was an area of particular focus. It was considered that the prevailing building frontage should align with No.112 (to avoid exposing the blank side façade of No.112 which the Inspector identified as a particular issue of the dismissed scheme), and that the projecting elements should read as just that – i.e. they should not be perceived as the prevailing



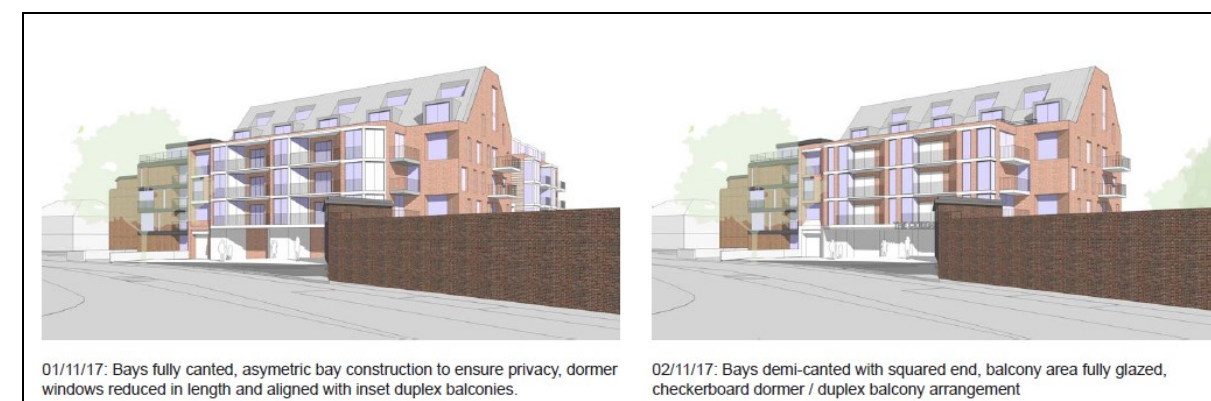
University of Limerick, Grafton Architects

- 5.32 It was discussed whether it would be possible for the frontage to avoid the step-back at the south west corner, to further simplify the frontage, and emphasise the corner. It was however considered that this is not a 'corner plot' in the conventional sense given that the return elevation faces onto the railway line and not public realm. Studies were nevertheless conducted to understand if it was achievable, but they ultimately reaffirmed that a step-back would be required, owing to the shape of the site and need to give some 'breathing space to the kiosks block.'



Frontage Alignment Studies

- 5.33 The proposed scheme was presented to the Planning Committee during October 2017, and following comments, the front elevation was refined in consultation with the Council's Planning and Urban Design Officers. The next set of images illustrate the evolution and refinement of the front façade that occurred during late 2017.





Use

- 5.34 The proposal is to demolish the existing A4 use building and replace it with a public house and function room (A4) and residential (C3) development.

Amount

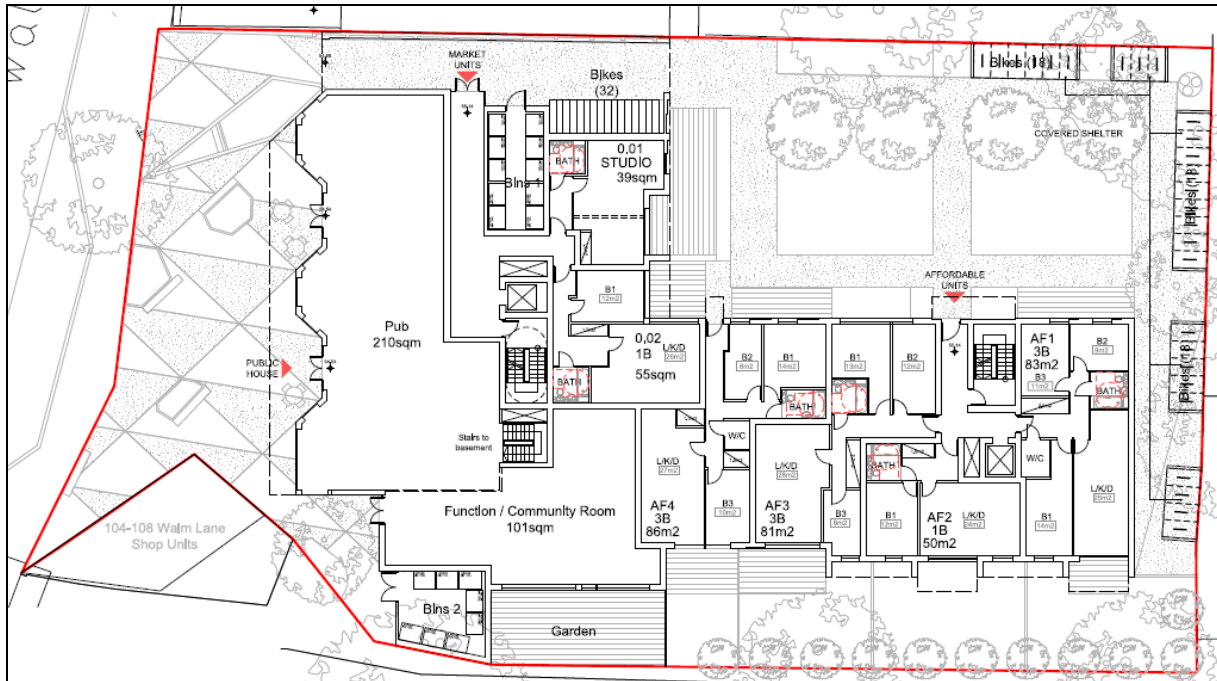
- 5.35 The existing public house has a floorspace of 325m². The proposed public house and function room would have a total floorspace extending to 486m², and outdoor seating would be maintained. The unit has been purpose designed and hence would have increased functionality, such that there would also be qualitative benefits.
- 5.36 In summary, the proposal would provide 10 x 1 bedroom, 19 x 2 bedroom, and 4 x 3 bedroom market units – 33 in total. The affordable units are broken down by 4 x 1 bedroom, 3 x 2 bedroom, 7 x 3 bedroom, and 1 x 4 bedroom – 15 in total (or 35% by habitable room).
- 5.37 Of the affordable housing, all the 3 and 4 bedroom units would be social/affordable rented, such that a policy compliant 70/30 split (by habitable rooms) between social/affordable rented and shared ownership tenures would be provided.
- 5.38 The proposal therefore provides 12 (25%) family dwellings (3 bedrooms).
- 5.39 Owing to the amount of private amenity space (667m²) and the (395m²) of communal amenity space (i.e. 1,062m² in total), the proposal would exceed the Council's amenity

space standard within the Development Plan (Policy DMP19) – i.e. 20m² per flat, and 50m² per ground floor family flat (1,050m² in total).

- 5.40 The proposal would not provide any parking on site.

Layout

- 5.41 The development would be broken into two blocks. The first to the front of the site, across the full width, and containing the market housing, with the public house and function room at ground floor. The second to the rear of the site, fronting the railway line, and containing the affordable housing. The north east quadrant of the site would be an outdoor communal amenity area.
- 5.42 The public house with function room would be a prominent active frontage onto Walm Lane, creating activity within this edge-of-centre location.



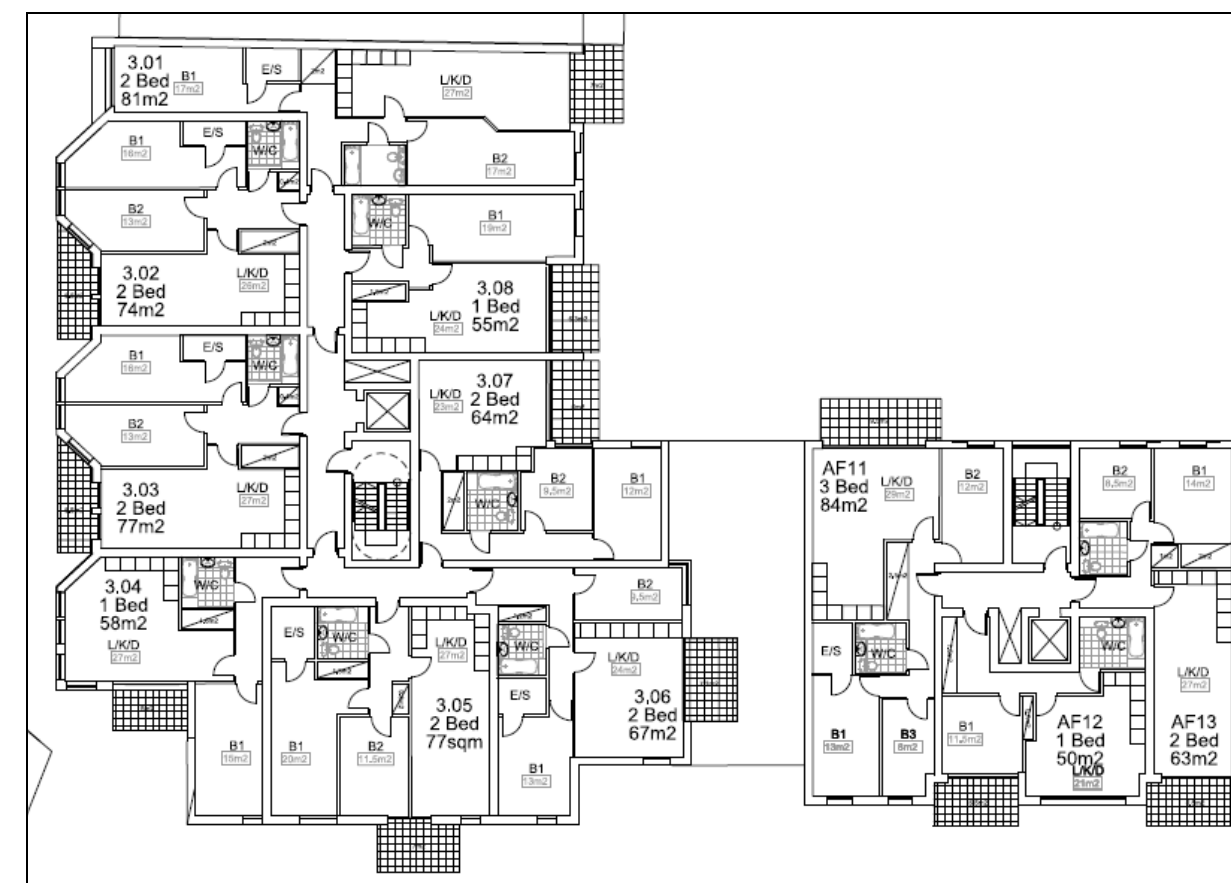
Proposed Ground Floor Layout

- 5.43 This site layout also ensures maximum separation from adjoining residents, to protect the amenities of neighbouring and future residents. Whilst the affordable housing block would be situated close to the site's eastern boundary, this proximity would not cause unneighbourly issues given that the building mass would be situated at the very end of the large garden of 153 Dartmouth Road, and opposite the very end of the spur to the garden of 147 Dartmouth Road (which has an unusual T-shaped garden arrangement).

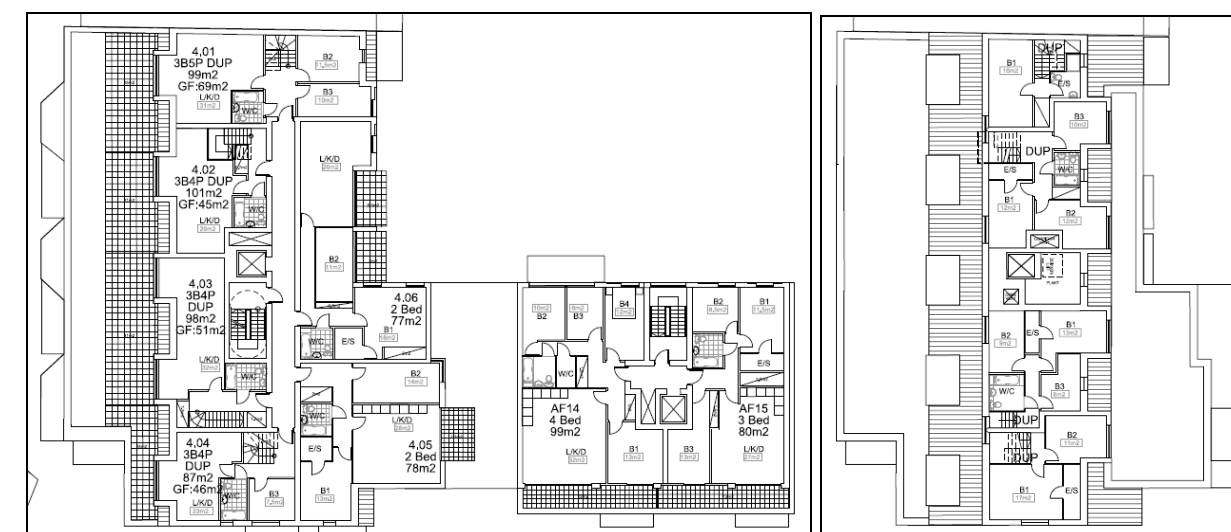


Proposed Site Layout

- 5.44 Access to the market and affordable housing blocks would be gained via the passageway along the north boundary. Each block would then have a separate access from the courtyard. Bin and bicycle stores would be provided in accordance with policy requirements.
- 5.45 The internal layout has been designed to avoid any single aspect north facing units, and to maximise natural light.



Typical Floor Layout



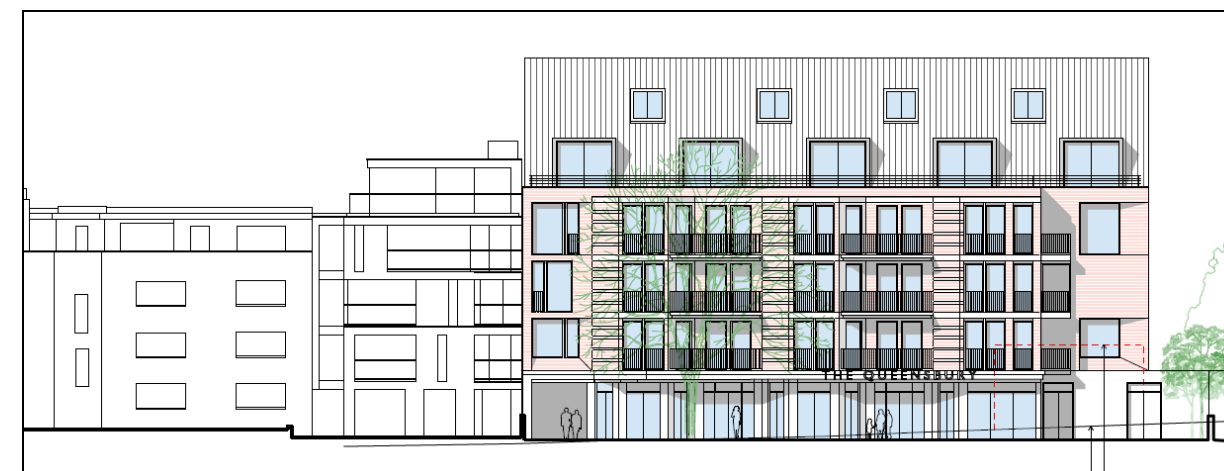
Fourth and Fifth Floor Layouts

Scale

- 5.46 The front block would be part four, five and six storeys stepping back from the frontage, within the gable end form. The rear block would rise to five storeys.
- 5.47 This is a considerable improvement on the dismissed scheme which included a ten storey tower element.
- 5.48 The roof element of the front block would be visible only from certain angles and positions, and hence from many vantage points, the perception of the building's scale would be significantly reduced. This element would not be visible unless one was sufficiently distant away and approaching from either the south (along Walm Lane) or the west (along Station Parade). It would not be visible from the foot of the development and largely obscured when approaching from the north (along Walm Lane) owing to the set back and that No.112 would sit directly in front of this element.



South (Railway Side) Elevation

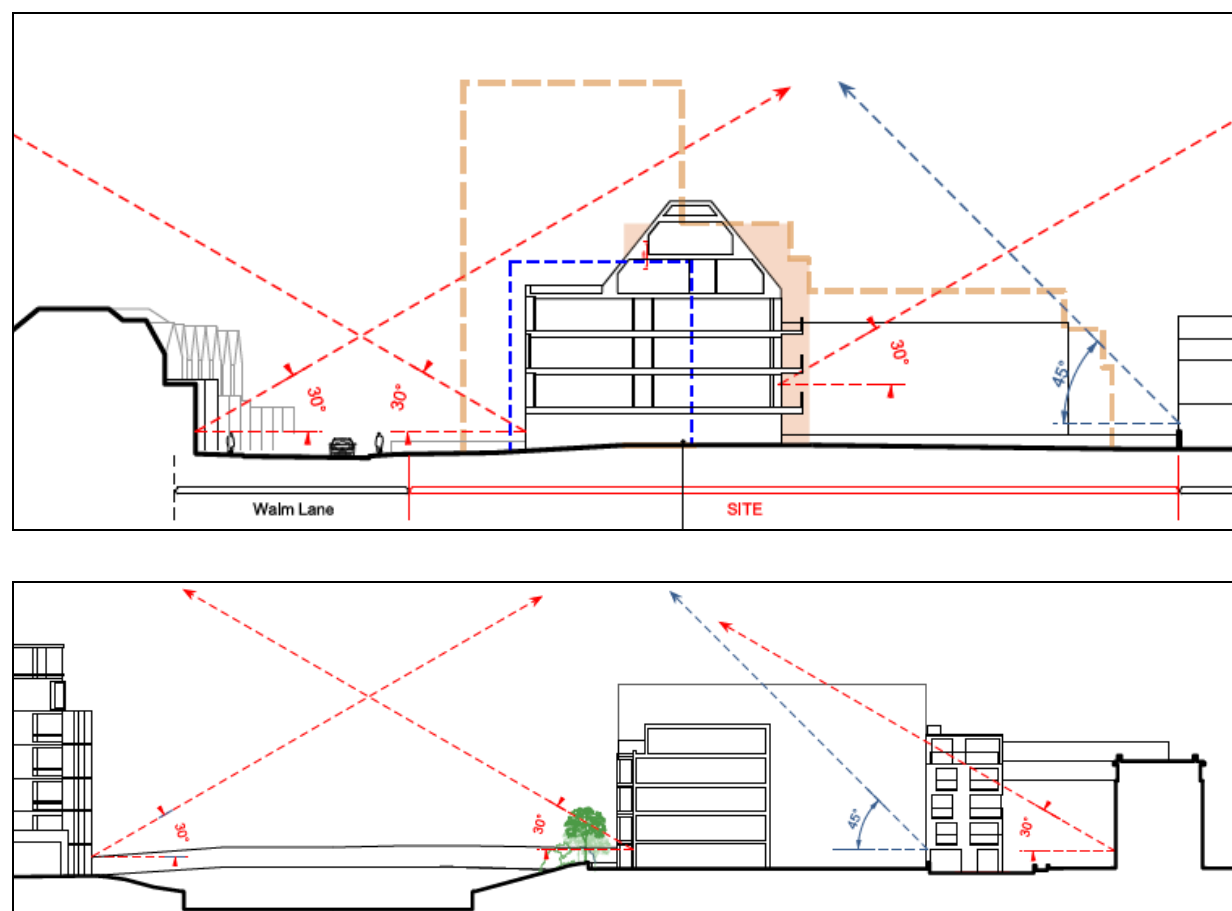


West (Front) Elevation



Views from the north (along Walm Lane)

- 5.49 The scale would be proportionate to the surrounding context, and the submitted sections illustrate the relevant 30° and 45° lines, in accordance with SPG17. The existing building is shown outlined in dashed blue, and the dismissed scheme outlined in dashed orange.



Appearance

- 5.50 There have been a number of key considerations in developing the architectural language. The site's location at the southernmost corner of the Mapesbury Conservation Area, and at the same time opposite the northernmost end of the Willesden Green Conservation Area, effectively position it at a hinge point between the two. The design therefore seeks to respond to materials and language within the Mapesbury Conservation Area whilst at the same time acknowledging elements and the different scale of the more commercial nature of the Willesden Green Conservation Area.
- 5.51 Materials are a combination of red brick with stone accents prevalent within both the conservation areas. The inclusion of canted bay elements within the façade picks up on the bay windows typical within the terraced housing within the Mapesbury

Conservation Area. The inclusion of balconies between the bays picks up on the relationship between balconies and projecting bays within residential mansion blocks further to the south along Walm Lane in the Willesden Green Conservation Area and creates a series of vertical elements across the frontage, breaking down the width of the massing.

- 5.52 The arrangement of flats along the frontage allows for an asymmetric approach to the canted bay arrangement with glazed openings onto balconies to one side (south facing) and to the north cheeks of the canted bays a solid element to avoid overlooking between adjacent flats and balconies. The banding within the solid elements, with stone coursing between bricks, reflects stone and render coursing prevalent within both Conservation Area's.
- 5.53 The ground floor is proposed as stone to reflect the different commercial uses and provide a traditional separation of base, middle and top. The top floors along the frontage are situated within a double height pitched roof with dormer windows on 4th floor situated with regular spacing and conservation Velux windows at 5th situated between in an ordered chequerboard grid. The pitched roof expresses itself at its southern end in the form of a large gable with openings and projecting balconies (with long views across the railway line to the south) syncopated to reflect other gables within the area that have a striking, non-ordered composition.
- 5.54 Railings are simple vertical railings so as not to clutter the expression of the bays on upper floors.
- 5.55 To either end of the front façade we have included angled brick cheeks to openings to perpetuate the angles of the bay windows and to acknowledge the angled relationship of the kiosk outside the site boundary to the south and the underground station beyond.
- 5.56 The windows adjacent to no. 112 are offset to reflect the asymmetric nature of that design and at the southern end to help turn the building to its southern gabled façade.

- 5.57 Beyond the gable end the rear block is designed to have a calm and ordered architectural response with the block designed to be read as a separate element by creating a gap on upper floors.
- 5.58 Internally, elevations to the courtyard continue a more ordered feel to create a calm backdrop to the shared landscaped amenity area.
- 5.59 The ground floor frontage is designed to give the sense of a traditional pub with a strong base (stone) and openings set back within – and doors between and within the canted bays giving access to the forecourt designed to encourage seating. The canopy above the ground incorporates balconies to the first floor flats whilst acting as separation and a band for signage to the Queensbury.



Proposed 3D Image

6. PROPOSED ACCESS

Vehicular

- 6.1 The existing vehicular crossover access would be removed as a consequence of the development being car free.
- 6.2 An obligation preventing residents from acquiring on-street parking permits would be entered into.
- 6.3 No changes are proposed to the surrounding road network.
- 6.4 Servicing would be undertaken to the front of the site, via a new layby, with a shared pedestrian surface.

Cycle

- 6.5 A policy compliant amount of cycle parking would be provided for all three of the proposed uses.

Public Transport

- 6.6 The development would pay Brent's CIL which is to be spent on *inter alia* public transport improvements.