



Planning Statement

31 The Green,
Richmond, TW9 1LX

December 2023 | Project Ref 9416A



Project Number: 9416A

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Contents-

1. Introduction	3
2. Description of Site and Surroundings	5
3. Proposals and Relevant Background.....	11
4. Planning History	20
5. Policy Framework.....	21
6. Planning Appraisal.....	39
7. Conclusions	56

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This Planning Statement has been prepared by HCUK Group on behalf of the owners and applicants, Mr Bailey and Mr Posner. It relates to an application for planning permission and listed building consent for the change of use of the premises at No 31 The Green, Richmond from offices (Class E) to residential (Class C3) and associated internal and external alterations.



Figure 1: 31 The Green, the application site

- 1.2** 31 The Green is a grade II listed building located to the south of Richmond Green. The building originates in the late 18th century and has been considerably altered and adapted over time. The site is located in the setting of a number of other listed buildings, most prominently the adjacent buildings nos. 30 and 32 The Green (both grade II listed) and is located in the Richmond Green Conservation Area.
- 1.3** This statement should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement prepared by M J Architects and the Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by HCUK Group and all other supporting statements.

1.4 This Planning Statement will describe the site and surroundings (Chapter 2), the proposals and relevant background including the Council’s pre-application advice (Chapter 3), the planning history of the site (Chapter 4), the relevant planning and heritage policies and guidance (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 provides an assessment of the proposed development in relation to relevant policies also sets out the significant public benefits associated with the scheme. The conclusions are set out in Chapter 6.

2. Description of Site and Surroundings

2.1 The application property is a grade II listed building of three storeys with a flat roof and there is a single storey rear extension and small private yard to the rear. The premises are located on the south side of Richmond Green and form part of a terrace of four properties which face a north west direction fronting a triangular paved area slightly set back from the green itself.

2.2 The site lies on the northern edge of Richmond Town Centre in an area containing a mix of residential and commercial properties with easy pedestrian access via Golden Court to the main shopping street and within easy walking distance of Richmond Station, local bus services and public car parks. It is an extremely sustainable location with a The PTAL of 6a and is in a controlled parking zone.

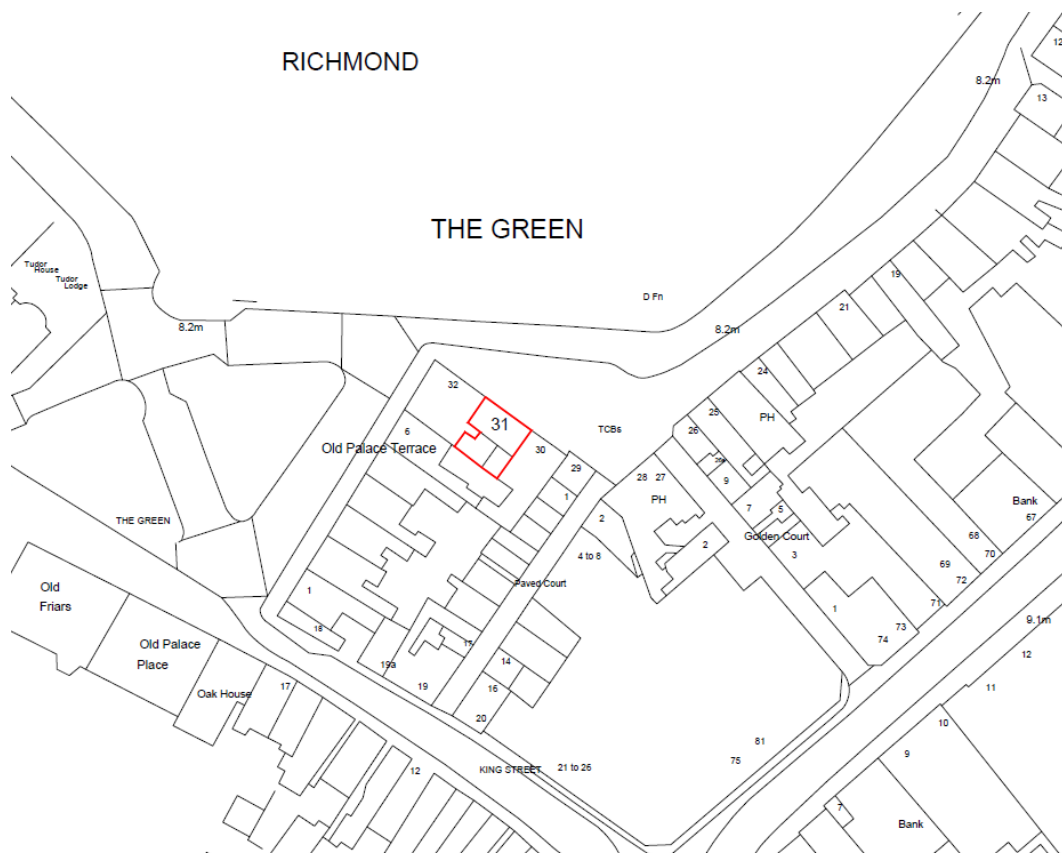


Figure 2: 31 Site location plan

2.3 The application property is in the Richmond Green Conservation Area, is adjacent to Metropolitan Open Land which covers most of Richmond Green and close to Old Palace Terrace which is designated as Other Open Land of Townscape Importance.

2.4 The site is subject the following designations:

- Archaeology Priority Site – Richmond APA 2.6 Richmond Town – Archaeology Priority Area – Tier II.
- Area Susceptible to Ground Water Flood.
- Community Infrastructure Levy Band (higher).
- Community Infrastructure Levy Town Centre Zone – (Richmond Town Centre CIL Boundary).
- Conservation Area (CA3 Richmond Green).
- Increased Potential Elevated Groundwater (GLA Drain London).
- Listed Building (grade II) – 31 The Green (UID: 1065310).
- Adjacent to two other listed buildings – 30 The Green (grade II) (UID: 1065309) and 32 The Green (grade II*) (UID 1357770).
- Main Centre Boundary.
- Main Centre Buffer Zone (Richmond Town Centre Boundary Buffer Zone – A residential development or mixed use scheme within this buffer area identified within the Plan does not have to apply the Sequential Test (for Flood Risk) as set out in Local Plan Policy 21).
- Richmond and Richmond Hill Village.
- Village Character Area (Richmond Green – Area 14 & Conservation Area 3 Richmond & Richmond Hill Planning Guidance Page 52 CHARAREA 06/14/01).
- Reg 19 Areas for Incremental Intensification.
- Reg 19 Urban Design Study Character Area: F1 Richmond Town Centre and Riverside.

2.5 The application premises were listed grade II in January 1950 (UID: 1965310) and described on the list as follows:

Probably late C18, 3 storey house, 4 windows wide. Yellow brick with parapet. Semi-circular entrance door. Square headed flush framed windows retaining glazing bars. Interior not seen.

2.6

The application property is currently in use as a bank (Class E). It is a three storey property with a flat roof but it was originally built as a two storey building, likely featuring a pitched roof concealed by a parapet. Although now used as a bank it was certainly built as a single family dwelling. Historic mapping (OS 1894 and 1913) shown in the Heritage Impact Assessment (Figures 4 and 5) show it as a standalone building of roughly rectangular form, with a small indent to the rear where the rear closet of the early 18th century projects into its footprint.

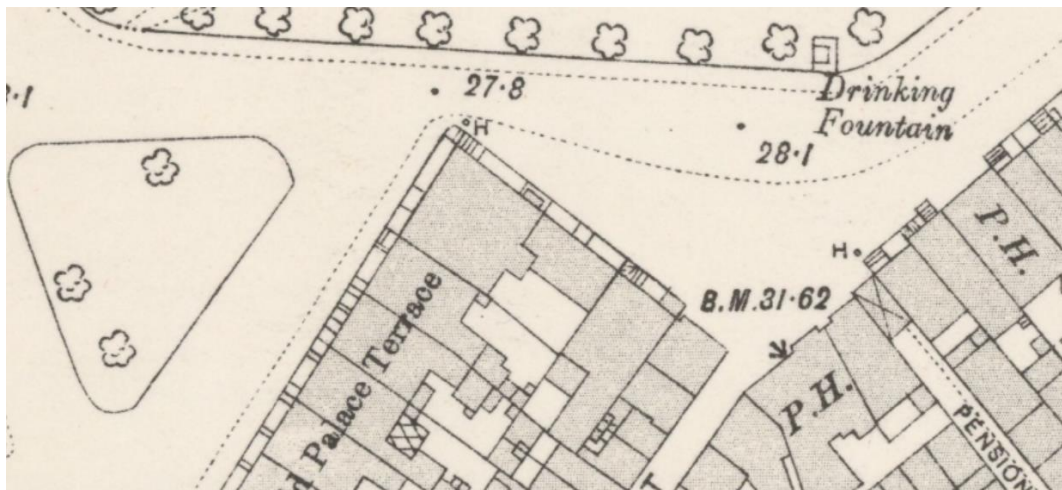


Figure 3: OS Map 1894

2.7

During the end of the 19th century and early 20th century the building had fallen into a state of considerable disrepair and the building was reconstructed behind a retained façade and some retained rear elevation with an additional second floor storey added with a flat roof.

2.8

The building remained in use as a single family dwelling until sometime after 1940 when the property was incorporated into the neighbouring building, no 32 The Green and used as an extension to that dwelling. Plans from 1991 (Figures 3, 4 and 5 below) show how nos. 31 and 32 were internally linked which also led to significant changes to the original plan form and circulation, specifically through the loss of original partitions and staircase.

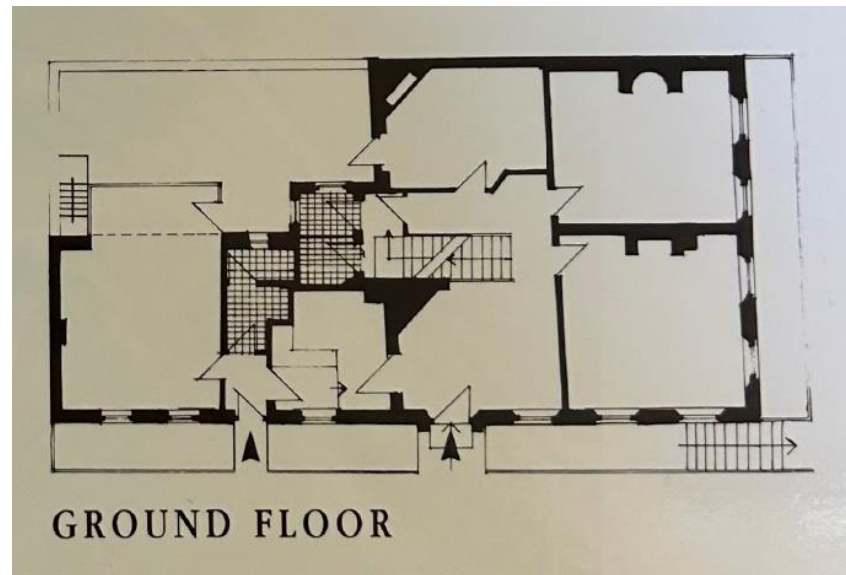
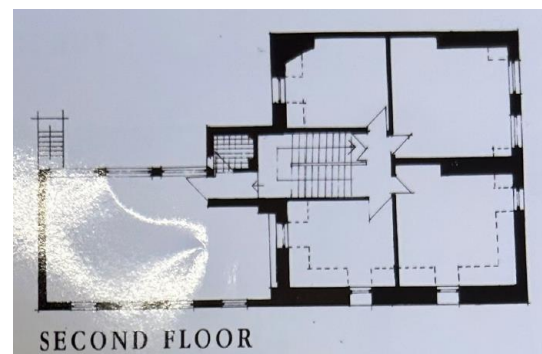
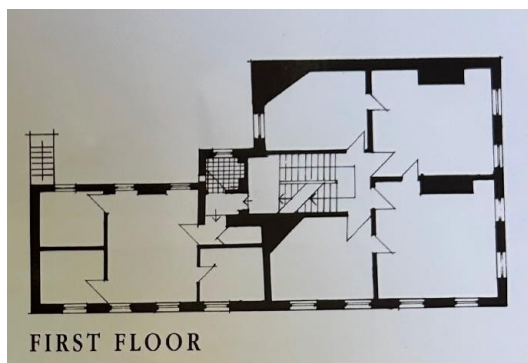


Figure 3: Ground floor plan from the 1990s



Figures 4 and 5: First and second floor plans from the 1990s

2.9 In the 1990s planning permission and listed building consent were granted for the separation from no 32 The Green by closing up the existing opening in the party wall and use of no 31 as a single family dwelling. Demolition of existing and erection of a new conservatory. (LPA Ref: 91/2234/FUL and 91/2234/LBC).

2.10 Under a planning permission also granted in 1991 the premises changed from use as a dwelling to use as a bank. (LPA REF: 91/0074/FUL).

2.11 The resulting internal layout of the building is one which is not historically accurate with a staircase in a non-original location and modern partitions throughout with loss of the original compartmentalised arrangement. Internally fabric (including floor structures, partitions, plasterwork and joinery) is entirely modern. Other changes can be summarised as the replacement of rear elevation windows with

modern sashes and introduction of modern weather board cladding to the rear elevation.

2.12 The rear elevation of the building is very heavily altered with replacement windows and the whole elevation now covered in a modern black painted timber weatherboard cladding. Some areas of this cladding have been removed and the substructure revealed a very mixed material and date although there was some survival of historic London stock brickwork between the two first floor windows.



Figures 6 and 7: Views of the rear elevation of 31 The Green with some areas of opening up

2.13 The properties either side are of similar height and scale and both Georgian properties built in the 18th century but of slightly different ages and with different but distinct architectural detailing. No 30 (grade II listed) is three storeys and three windows wide. It is thought to be mid C18. It is built in brown brick with red dressings. No 32 (grade II*) is of early C18. It is of red brick and has two storeys with dormers, four windows wide. This is a slightly larger building with return elevation to Old Palace Yard.

2.14 No 31 The Green together with the adjoining listed buildings have clear architectural and historic buildings and provide an attractive group of buildings with a clear positive role within the wider streetscape of buildings and a positive contribution to the conservation area. The rear elevation does not, however, provide a positive element to the appearance and character of the house or the conservation area. Fortunately, it is well concealed from public view but where

visible, for example from the site's yard and windows from other building, it is a distracting feature.

3. Proposals and Relevant Background

Proposed development

3.1 While originally constructed as a dwelling house, 31 The Green is currently in use as offices. Proposals seek to convert the building back to its original residential use and undertake a series of alterations which can be summarised as:

- Internal reorganisation of the building to provide a more historically authentic plan form including removal of modern partitions and the relocation of the staircase;
- Wholesale reinstatement of period appropriate detailing including new staircase, chimney pieces, skirting boards and joinery;
- Introduction of new fenestration to the modern rear extension (currently functioning as a meeting room);
- Recladding of the rear elevation with an appropriate brick slip (reclaimed London stock brick), replacing the existing modern and poor quality timber cladding;
- Introduction of solar panels on the existing modern flat roof;
- Gas boiler system to be replaced with air source heat pump and scheme designed to minimise carbon emission;.
- Landscaping enhancements to the rear garden;
- Habitats for bats and swallows to be provided on the roof;
- Parking permits for business purposes to be relinquished and agreement to for residents not to be able to purchase car parking permits;
- Cycle storage and refuse/recycling facilities provided on site.

3.2 The proposals have been based on a thorough understanding of the significance of the identified heritage assets as set out in the Heritage Impact Assessment and seek to provide high quality dwelling suited to 21st century living while materially enhancing the unique heritage values of 31 The Green and the Richmond Green Conservation Area.

Pre-application planning advice

3.3

Pre-application advice has been sought from LBRuT regarding the proposals (LPA ref: 23/P0153/Pre-app). Advice received as part of the pre-application stage has fed into the design development. Overall, the advice concluded:

3.4

Loss of office. The building is in active office use as and is not currently being marketed. As it stands change of use to residential would fail to comply with LP41 of the Local Plan 2018. No alternative supporting evidence has been provided to support a case to demonstrate that there is no longer demand for an office-based use in this property or that regarding the current tenant or how the rent/quality of the accommodation compares with available office stock. The complete absence of any supporting case to address the loss of employment weighs heavily against the scheme.

3.5

Response – Handelsbanken are the current occupiers of the property and have leased the premises for just over 11 years with the original lease starting on 16 November 2012. Their lease is however about to expire and they are moving to another unit also on Richmond Green, a few doors away. This is advertised on their website which states:

Later this year we will be relocating to new, larger premises which is within a very short walk from our current location.

Our new address will be:

4th Floor

Shearwater House

20-21 The Green

Richmond

TW9 1PX

3.6

Milestone Commercial Agency Ltd were asked by the applicant to prepare an Open Market Appraisal, in lieu of the local plan requirement for two years consistent marketing, to assess the likelihood of being able to obtain a meaningful lease of the

premises for office or another Class E use. The report concludes that it would be extremely difficult to let these premises for office employment use purposes due to:

- A low demand for E class office space;
- The incongruous setting of the building, being in a largely residential area, in a listed building of three floors where the first floor provides just 29 m² of office, and where an oversupply of modern purpose-built office space exists within walking distance;
- This leaves owners of commercial premises with a distressed asset, exposure to void business rates and insurance, as well as increasing costs set against a wholesale change in working practices and a backdrop of rising interest rates and deep recession.

3.7 The report also considers other Class E uses but none of these are regarded as appropriate or suitable given the type of premises and its location.

3.8 **Principle of residential use.** Policy H2 of the London Plan 2021 states that Boroughs should pro-actively support new homes on small sites (below 0.25 hectares). It is recognised that listed buildings are best used for their original purposes. As such, subject to addressing the loss of employment, a residential use would be acceptable.

3.9 Response This listed building was originally used for residential purposes and continued in this use until 2012 when the premises were leased to Handelbanken.

3.10 **Design and heritage impact.** The proposals would preserve the character, appearance and setting of the designated asset. The proposals would not impact upon historic fabric, owing to the degree of internal alterations that have taken place at the property. The proposals offer a mix of heritage benefits to be considered in the planning balance with respect to the proposed change of use back to residential and can be afforded moderate to great weight in the assessment. However, in the absence of any marketing evidence or other evidence the loss of office weighs very heavily against the scheme.

3.11 Response - We are pleased that the Council's Conservation and Design Officer recognises the significant heritage benefits which will be achieved as part of the conversion of this property back to use as a single family dwelling house and the

proposed internal and external alterations now proposed as part of this conversion scheme. Residential use is considered to be the 'optimum viable use' for these premises, and the proposed scheme will enable a complete refurbishment, restoring its original use and a historically influenced plan form and internal decorative scheme (including lath and plaster throughout). The scheme would also result in enhancements to the appearance of the premises and an enhancement to the conservation area and setting of nearby listed buildings, particularly through the enhancement works to the rear elevation.

3.12 As well as these significant heritage benefits the proposals also include other public benefits which are set out in our Planning Appraisal. These all weigh in favour of the change of use and to justify the loss of office use.

3.13 The Open Market Report included with this application also demonstrates that the premises are unlikely to be let for office or another employment use due to the prevailing market condition and difficulty of letting properties of this type, and the oversupply of vacant modern business premises in close proximity to the site. We trust that the Council will accept this report in lieu of being unable to demonstrate two years marketing of the premises and will agree that the proposed use and associated alterations will now weigh in favour of granting this application.

3.14 **Neighbouring residential amenity.** It is noted that an Air Source Heat Pump is proposed although not included on the drawings. An acoustic impact assessment would be required to support any new plant on site. The location of the plant should also be shown on plan. However, as submitted the proposal is unlikely to lead to demonstrable harm afforded to the inhabitants of neighbouring properties.

3.15 Response – 24 Acoustics Ltd were appointed to assess the impact of noise from the new plant upon the nearest noise sensitive properties and their survey and report is submitted with this application. An environmental noise survey has been undertaken to determine the existing background noise levels representative of nearby residential properties. Calculations have been undertaken, based on manufacturer's noise data, to determine the plant noise levels at the nearest noise sensitive windows. The assessment demonstrates that noise from the proposed plant at the most affected noise sensitive windows will be below the typical background noise level during all periods and in line with the guidance of Richmond

Borough Council and BS 4142. Therefore, noise from the proposed new plant is acceptable.

3.16 Flood Risk. Policy LP21 of Local Plan 2018 concerns flood risk. Whilst the site is within Flood Zone 1, it does fall within a throughflow catchment area, and it is an area of increased potential for elevated groundwater. A site-specific flood risk assessment including SuDs statement is required given the site is affected by these local sources of flooding.

3.17 Response – A Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Ardent Consulting Engineers is included with this application and concludes as follows:

"6.5 The property is located in Flood Zone 1. The property is not at risk of any sources of flooding except of the risk of groundwater flooding which is moderate but will remain unchanged from the development.

6.6 As the development involves a change of use from office space to a single-family dwelling any increase in impermeable area or subsurface development or extensions or external alterations, it is currently deemed that no mitigation measures are necessary.

6.7 The proposed change of use development will provide increase in the permeable area as the courtyard will be converted with SUDS compliant soft landscaping. The proposal also includes a rainwater harvesting tank connected to the roof gutter which will have sufficient capacity to provide some rainwater storage that can be reused mainly for irrigation in the garden. The overall proposals will provide a minor benefit to the surface water drainage network.

6.8 In conclusion, this Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the proposals are consistent with the aims of the NPPF. The site will not be at risk of flooding or increase the flood risk to others. The SuDS Statement confirmed that the proposal will include some on-site SuDS features improving the surface water management on site."

3.18 Trees. The proposed changes to the meeting room that extend towards the crown and the possible Root Protection Area of the tree in the neighbouring garden to the south. Additionally, any changes to the rear garden area that require excavation or changes to the surface, will need to be evaluated regarding their impact on the neighbouring trees. A tree survey, arboricultural impact assessment and

arboricultural method statement are required to fully assess the impact of the proposal on any on and off-site trees.

- 3.19** Response - An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement is included with this application. One off site bay tree which will be retained will need to be pruned to facilitate implementation of the proposals. The branches to be removed are small in size and will result in a maximum wound size no greater than 100mm in diameter. This will have an insignificant effect on the health and physiological condition to this tree and would comply with the recommendations of BS3998:2010. It is highly unlikely that the roots of this bay tree would extend beneath the wall and into the applicants' small private amenity space. The proposals will not therefore impact on the roots of this tree.
- 3.20** **Ecology.** Details of external lighting and landscaping are required.
- 3.21** Response - New decorative ornamental planting (Gysophelia) will be planted along the western boundary of the rear courtyard to add privacy to the space as well as to make it more inhabitable. It is also proposed to have permeable shingle surfacing in the centre of the garden. The northern edge (bordering No 32) of the garden is to have ornamental planting alongside climbing plants (Trachelosperman Jasminoides) onto the boundary wall. The area by the proposed rainwater tank will have low-maintenance ornamental planting (Ruscus Aculeatus). All planting is recognised by RHS as beneficial to pollinators.
- 3.22** All external modern light fittings will be removed as part of the façade renovation works and no upward spill fittings are proposed.
- 3.23** **Residential Standards.** Floorspace areas exceed the NDSS and floor to ceiling heights accord with London Plan Policy 6. A residential standards statement will be required addressing Policy D6 and confirming that the dwelling will accord to at least M4(2) standards.
- 3.24** Response - The London Plan Housing Design and Quality Standards require new homes of 3 bedrooms housing 5 people to have a GIA area of at least 86sqm, provide 8sqm of external amenity and all bedrooms should be at least 2.15m. The existing premises are 135sqm and all rooms exceed the minimum space standards.

- 3.25** **Waste.** The pre-application advice sets out the waste storage requirements of a 3-bed house and states that these should be located to the rear in order to reduce any impact upon heritage assets.
- 3.26** Response – Details of the proposed waste storage facilities are included with the application. The refuse bins are to be located in the rear courtyard not visible from the street. The store will provide space for 240L of general waste, 2 x 55L recycling boxes and one 23L food waste box.
- 3.27** **Transport.** This site has a PTAL of 6a and is in a controlled parking zone. The applicant would be expected to enter into an agreement with the council under Section 106 which will preclude occupants of the site from buying permits to park in the CPZ.
- 3.28** Response – The applicants have agreed to enter into a Section 106 Agreement with the Council to preclude occupants of the site from buying permits.
- 3.29** The applicant needs to provide at least two cycle parking spaces.
- 3.30** Response – The proposals show space for the provision of two bicycles in the rear courtyard area and one space at the front of the premises.
- 3.31** A Construction Management Plan will also be required.
- 3.32** Response – The applicants have completed the Construction Management Plan Pro-Forma provided by Richmond upon Thames Borough Council. As the project moves forward to the pre-construction/construction stage a Building Contractor will be instructed and will be responsible for preparing details of the programme schedule to include details of the vehicles to be used in accordance with the council’s requirements. It is anticipated that the council will include a condition requiring a Detailed Construction Management Plan prior to the commencement of any construction on site.
- 3.33** **Sustainability.** Reference was made to Policy LP22 of the Local Plan which requires development to achieve the highest standards of sustainable design and construction in order to mitigate climate change. Any future application should include completed Sustainable Construction Checklist to demonstrate that the new units would achieve maximum water consumption of 110 litres per person per day.

An Energy Report will also be required together with a BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment Pre-Assessment.

3.34 Response – All of these documents and reports have been provided with this application.

3.35 **Other Open Land of Townscape Importance and Metropolitan Open Land.** The site is in close proximity to Other Open Land of Townscape which is Old Palace Terrace and in close proximity to Richmond Green which is Metropolitan Open Land. Given the nature of the scheme, it is not likely to cause harm to these assets.

3.36 Response – We also agree that the proposed development will not cause any harm to these assets.

3.37 **Affordable Housing.** The report refers to Policy LP36 of the Local Plan which requires an affordable housing statement to include a community sum calculation pro-forma which is in the Council's Affordable Housing SPD. An agreement to pay affordable housing contribution is also required unless a viability report is produced to demonstrate that this is not viable.

3.38 Response – The applicants are willing to provide a financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing and the affordable housing pro-forma has been completed showing a total commuted sum of £156,744.

3.39 **Archaeological Impact.** The site is within Archaeology Priority Zone Tier 2. Based on the information provided, works are unlikely to lead to significant excavation to warrant the submission of an archaeological desktop assessment.

3.40 Response – The proposed development will not involve any significant excavation and we agree that an archaeological desktop assessment is not required.

3.41 **Land Contamination.** The site and surrounding area is not recorded as having been subject to former potentially contaminated land use.

3.42 Response – The Applicant is also not aware of any previous land use that would have resulted in contamination.

3.43 **Fire Safety.** The Applicant must submit certain information as set out in the Pre-Application response to address matters relating to fire safety in accordance with Policy D12 of the London Plan.

3.44 Response – This information is included with the application.

4. Planning History

4.1 There have been various applications made in relation to this property. The most relevant are as follow:

- **67/2388.** Temporary use of one room on ground floor of premises as offices for landscape architects. Granted 19/02/1968.
- **72/1817.** Replacement of existing rear window by glazed conservatory. Granted 20/10/1972.
- **91/0074/FUL.** Use as Class B1 (office use only) without compliance with conditions of consent Ref: 11894 dated 28.4.64 (limitation of use). Granted 25/03/1991.
- **91/2234/FUL and 91/2234/LPC.** Separation from No 32 The Green by closing up existing openings in party wall, and use of No 31 as single family house. Demotion of existing and erection of new conservatory. Granted 05/03/1992.
- **92/1623/FUL.** Office refurbishment to include removal of external staircase and conservatory. Construct extension. Installation of boarding and new window on the rear elevation. Granted 16/11/1992.

5. Policy Framework

Key Planning Policies

- 5.1** Decisions on applications for planning permission and listed building consent must be made in accordance with the policies of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the Development Plan comprises the London Plan, adopted February 2021 and London Borough of Richmond Local Plan, adopted July 2018 and March 2020.
- 5.2** In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (updated in December 2023) and the National Planning Policy Guidance provide strategic guidance in relation to the consideration of applications.
- 5.3** Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance relevant to proposals for alterations and extensions to residential properties and to listed properties are as follows:
- Residential Development Standards
 - Small and Medium Housing Sites
 - Affordable Housing
 - Design Quality
 - Refuse and Recycling Storage Requirements
 - Sustainable Construction Checklist
 - Richmond and Richmond Hill Village SPD
 - Development Control for Noise Generating and Noise Sensitive Development
 - Small Site Design Guides London Plan Guidance
 - Air Quality SPD 2020
 - Transport SPD June 2020

- Housing Design Standards LPG June 2023

5.4 Other materially relevant policy documents for the consideration of the proposed development include:

- The National Planning Policy Framework, December 2023
- The National Planning Practice Guidance
- The National Design Guide
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2020
- Richmond Green Conservation Area Study
- Richmond Green Conservation Area Statement

5.5 The decision maker is also required by sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building and its setting when exercising planning functions. The decision maker must give considerable importance and weight to preserving the significance of the listed building, and there is a strong presumption against the grant of permission for development that would harm its heritage significance.

5.6 There is broadly a similar duty arising from Section 72(1) of the Act in respect of planning decisions relating to development within conservation areas.

5.7 Measures being implemented as a consequence of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 will have the effect of making the desirability of preserving or enhancing other types of designated heritage asset a statutory consideration.

5.8 For the purposes of this statement, preservation equates to an absence of harm. Harm is defined in paragraph 84 of Historic England's Conservation Principles as change which erodes the significance of a heritage asset.

5.9 The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as being made up four main constituents: architectural interest, historical interest, archaeology interest and artistic interest. The assessments of heritage interest set out in the HCUK Group Heritage Assessment refer to these four elements of significance as defined in the NPPF.

- 5.10** The NPPF requires the impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset to be considered in terms of either “substantial harm” or “less than substantial harm” as described in paragraphs 207 and 208 of that document. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that substantial harm is a high test, and case law describes substantial harm in terms of an effect that would vitiate or drain away much of the significance of a heritage asset.
- 5.11** Paragraphs 207-208 of the NPPF refer to two different balancing exercises in which harm to significance, if any, is to be balanced with public benefits. Paragraph 18a-020-20190723 of NPPG makes clear that some heritage-specific benefits can be public benefits. Paragraph 18a-018-20190723 of the same NPPG makes it clear that it is important to be explicit about the category of harm (that is, if at all), and the extent of harm, when dealing with decisions affecting designated heritage assets, as follows:
- “Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent may vary and should be articulated.”*
- 5.12** Paragraphs 205 and 206 of the NPPF state that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset when considering applications which affect their significance, irrespective of how substantial or otherwise that harm might be.
- 5.13** One of the overarching objectives of sustainable development, as expressed in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, is mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. Historic England has a Climate Change Strategy, and has published Mitigation, Adaption and Energy Measures. More specifically, Historic England has published a Heritage and Climate Change Carbon Reduction Plan (March 2022). These are similar strategies run in parallel with heritage-specific methodologies relating to the assessment of significance, and the effect of change on significance.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.14** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in December 2023 sets out the Government's policies and guidance in respect of the preparation of plans and for the determination of planning applications and appeals.

- 5.15** The NPPF defines the purpose of the planning system as contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and divides this principal objective into three overarching and interdependent objectives, that need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways.
- 5.16** The three objectives set out at paragraph 8 are: Economic, Social and Environmental.
- An Economic Objective: to help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity, and by identifying and co-ordinating the provision of infrastructure.
 - A Social Objective: to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of the present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.
 - An Environmental Objective: to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 5.17** With reference to the above objectives, the NPPF states that they are not 'criteria against which every decision can or should be judged. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities in each area'. (Paragraph 9). There is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. (Paragraph 10).
- 5.18** Paragraph 47 of the NPPF states that "*Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing*".
- 5.19** Paragraphs 39 to 42 of the NPPF refer to the advantages of having early engagement with local planning authorities to enable early consideration of all

fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle.

- 5.20** Paragraph 128 refers to the need to make efficient use of land taking into account the identified need for different types of housing, and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it. It refers to the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including the importance of securing well-designed and beautiful, attractive and healthy places).
- 5.21** The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and makes development acceptable to communities and is a key aspect of sustainable development. (Paragraph 131).
- 5.22** Paragraph 135 seeks to ensure that developments will function well and add to the quality of the area; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history; establish or maintain a strong sense of place; and create places which are safe, inclusive and accessible.
- 5.23** Meeting the challenge of climate change by supporting the transition to a low carbon future, encouraging the reuse of existing resources, and supporting renewable and low carbon energy is also a key objective. (Paragraph 157).
- 5.24** Paragraph 2004 of the NPPF states:
- "In determining applications, local planning should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."*
- 5.25** A Heritage Assessment in accordance with paragraph 200 of the NPPF has been prepared by Sara Davidson, Heritage Director of the HCUK Group and this is included with the application.
- 5.26** Paragraph 205 of the NPPF states:
- "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation*

(and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance”.

5.27 Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states:

“Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to the significance to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss of harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss”.

5.28 Paragraph 208 of the NPPF states:

“Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”.

5.29 The HCUK Group consider that the application proposal will cause no harm to the significance of any of the heritage assets and paragraphs 207 and 208 of the NPPF will not be engaged.

London Plan

5.30 The London Plan 2021 sets out the spatial development strategy for Greater London. Of relevance to the consideration of these proposals are the following policies.

Policy D3: Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach

5.31 This policy states that “all development must make the best use of land by following a design-led approach that optimises the capacity of sites, including site allocations. Optimising site capacity means ensuring that development is of the most appropriate form and land use for the site”.

5.32 Sub-paragraphs D11 and D12 of Policy D3 state that development should:

- respond to the existing character of a place by identifying the special and valued features and characteristics that are unique to the locality and respect, enhance

and utilise the heritage assets and architectural features that contribute towards the local character.

- be of high quality, with architecture that pays attention to detail, and gives a thorough consideration to the practicality of use, flexibility, safety and building lifespan through appropriate construction methods and the use of attractive, robust materials which weather and mature well.

Policy D4: Delivering good design

- 5.33** This policy requires design and access statements submitted with development to demonstrate that the proposal meets the design requirements of the London Plan. The design should be thoroughly scrutinised by borough planning, and conservation officers, utilising the analytical tools set out in the policy, local evidence, and expert advice where appropriate.

Policy D6: Housing quality and standards

- 5.34** This policy states that housing development should be of high quality design and provide adequately-sized rooms as set out in Table 3.1. Qualitative aspects of a development are key to ensuring successful sustainable. Table 3.2 sets out the key qualitative aspects which should be addressed in the design of housing developments.

Policy D12: Fire Safety

- 5.35** This policy states that in the interest of fire safety and to ensure the safety of all building users, all development proposals must achieve the highest standards of fire safety. The policy sets out a number of criteria including:

- 1) identifying suitably positioned unobstructed outside space:
 - a) for fire appliances to be positioned on
 - b) appropriate for use as an evacuation assembly point.
- 2) are designed to incorporate appropriate features which reduce the risk to life and the risk of serious injury in the event of fire, including appropriate fire alarm systems and passive and active fire safety measures.
- 3) are constructed in an appropriate way to minimise the risk of fire spread.

4) provide suitable and convenient means of escape, and associated evacuation strategy for all building users.

5) develop a robust strategy for evacuation which can be periodically updated and published, and which all building users can have confidence in.

6) provide suitable access and equipment for firefighting which is appropriate for the size and use of the development.

Policy E1: Offices

5.36 This policy supports improvements to the quality, flexibility and adaptability of office space of different sizes through new office provision, refurbishment and mixed-use development.

Policy E2: Providing suitable business space

5.37 This policy states that boroughs should include policies that support the provision, and where appropriate, protection of a range of B Use Classes business space, in terms of type, use and size, at an appropriate range of rents, to meet the needs of micro, small and medium enterprises, and to support firms wishing to start-up or expand.

Policy H2: Housing

5.38 This policy states that boroughs should pro-actively support new homes on small sites (below 0.25 hectares).

Policy HC1: Heritage Conservation and Growth ...

5.39 This policy requires development that affect heritage assets and their settings to conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The policy also states that the cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.

5.40 Other policies which are relevant include Policy G5 Urban Greening, G6 Biodiversity and access to nature, G7 Trees and woodlands, Policy SI 1 Improving air quality, SI 2 Minimising Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Policy SI 12 Flood Risk Management, SI

13 Sustainable Drainage, Policy T5 Cycling and Policy and T6.1 Residential Car Parking.

Borough of Richmond Local Plan

5.41 The London Borough of Richmond Local Plan was adopted July 2018 and again in March 2020. Relevant policies of this document are as follows:

Policy LP 1 Local Character and Design Quality

5.42 This policy seeks to maintain and, where possible enhance the high architectural quality and urban design quality which contributes to the character and heritage of an area. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the site and its context when considering the design including layout, siting and access and the compatibility of the works to the neighbouring uses.

Policy LP 3 Designated Heritage Assets:

5.43 This policy notes that the Council require development to conserve, and where possible, make a positive contribution to the borough's historic environment and that proposals likely to adversely affect the significance of heritage assets will be assessed against the requirement to seek to avoid harm and the justification for the proposal. The policy goes on to provide a series of criteria with the following points being relevant:

"1. Give great weight to the conservation of the heritage asset when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of the asset.

4. Require the retention and preservation of the original structure, layout, architectural features, materials as well as later features of interest within listed buildings, and resist the removal or modification of features that are both internally and externally of architectural importance or that contribute to the significance of the asset.

5. Demolitions (in whole or in part), alterations, extensions and any other modifications to listed buildings should be based on an accurate understanding of the significance of the asset.

6. Require, where appropriate, the reinstatement of internal and external features of special architectural or historic significance within listed buildings, and the

removal of internal and external features that harm the significance of the asset, commensurate with the extent of the proposed development.

7. Require the use of appropriate materials and techniques and strongly encourage any works or repairs to a designated heritage asset to be carried out in a correct, scholarly manner by appropriate specialists.”

- 5.44** Part C of the policy states that all proposals in Conservation Areas are required to preserve and, where possible, enhance the character or the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Policy LP 4 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 5.45** The Council will seek to preserve, and where possible enhance, the significance, character and setting of non-designated heritage assets, including Buildings of Townscape Merit, memorials, particularly war memorials, and other local heritage features.

Policy LP 7 Impact on Archaeology

- 5.46** The Council will seek to protect, enhance and promote its archaeology heritage (both above and below ground) and will take the necessary measures to safeguard the archaeology remains found, and refuse development that adversely affect archaeology remains or their setting.

Policy LP 8 Amenity and Living Standards

- 5.47** This policy requires all development to protect the amenity and living conditions for occupants of new, existing, adjoining and neighbouring properties. The Council will:

"1. ensure the design and layout of buildings enables good standards of daylight and sunlight to be achieved in new development and in existing properties affected by new development; where existing daylight and sunlight are already substandard.

3. ensure that proposals are not visually intrusive or have an overbearing impact as a result of their height, massing or siting, including creating a sense of enclosure

4. ensure there is no harm to the reasonable enjoyment of the use of buildings, gardens and other spaces due to increases in traffic, servicing, parking, noise, light, disturbance, air pollution, odours or vibration or local micro-climatic effects.”

- 5.48** Applicants are also expected to have regard to the guidance set out in the Council's SPDs relating to design, including Village Planning Guidance and SPDs on extensions.

Policy LP 10 Local Environmental Impacts, Pollution and Land Contamination

- 5.49** The Council will seek to ensure that local environmental impacts of all development proposals do not lead to detrimental effects on the health, safety and amenity of existing and new users or occupiers of the development site, or surrounding area.
- 5.50** The policy stresses the importance of promoting good air quality, good acoustic design to ensure that new or existing noise sensitive buildings are protected, avoiding light pollution, odour and fumes, the remediation of land contamination and manage and limit environmental disturbances during construction and demolition.

LP 13 Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Local Green Space

- 5.51** When considering development on sites outside the Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) any possible visual impacts on the character and openness of the MOL will be taken into account.

LP 14 Other Open Land of Townscape Importance

- 5.52** When considering developments on sites outside other open land, any possible visual impacts on the character and openness of the designated other open land will be taken into account.

Policy LP 15 Biodiversity

- 5.53** This policy seeks to protect and enhance the borough's biodiversity and supports enhancement to biodiversity, ensuring new biodiversity feature or habitats and maximising the provision of soft landscaping, including trees, shrubs and other vegetation.

Policy LP 16 Trees, Woodland and Landscape

- 5.54** This policy states that the Council will encourage planting, including new trees, shrubs and other significant vegetation where appropriate.

LP 20 Climate Change Adaption

5.55 New developments, in their layout, design, construction, materials, landscaping and operation, should minimise energy consumption in accordance with the following cooling hierarchy:

1. minimise internal heat generation through energy efficient design
2. reduce the amount of heat entering a building in summer through shading, reducing solar reflectance, fenestration, insulation and green roofs and walls
3. manage the heat within the building through exposed internal thermal mass and high ceilings
4. passive ventilation
5. mechanical ventilation
6. active cooling systems (ensuring they are low carbon options)

5.56 Opportunities to adapt existing buildings, places and spaces to the likely effects of climate change should be maximised and will be supported.

LP 21 Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage

5.57 For sites within Zone 1 (applicable to this site) there are no land use restrictions but a Drainage Statement is required where there is evidence of a risk from other sources of flooding, including surface water, ground water and sewer flooding.

5.58 Due to the fact that the site does fall within a throughflow catchment area, and is an area of increased potential for elevated groundwater the LPA have advised that a flood risk assessment including SuDS statement is required given the site is affected by these local sources of flooding.

LP 22 Sustainable Design and Construction

5.59 This policy requires developments to achieve the highest standards of sustainable design and construction in order to mitigate against climate change.

5.60 Developments that result in a new residential dwelling, including conversions, change of use and extensions, will be required to incorporate conservation measures to achieve maximum water consumption of 110 litres per person per day.

- 5.61** Proposals for change of use to residential will be required to meet BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment 'Excellent' standard where feasible.
- 5.62** All new residential building should achieve a 35% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. This should be achieved by following the Energy Hierarchy:
- 5.63** 1. Be lean: use less energy
- 5.64** 2. Be clean: supply energy efficiently
- 5.65** 3. Be green: use renewable energy

LP 24 Waste Management

- 5.66** The Council will ensure that waste is managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy, which is to reduce, reuse or recycle waste as close as possible to where it is produced. All developments, including conversions or changes of use are required to provide adequate refuse and recycling storage space and facilities, which allows ease of collection and which residents can easily access, in line with the Council's SPD on Refuse and Recycling Storage Requirements.

LP 25 Development in centres

- 5.67** Development within the borough's centres will be acceptable if it is in keeping with the centre's role and function within the hierarchy and is of a scale appropriate to the size of the centre. Development should optimise the potential of sites by contributing towards a suitable mix of uses that enhance the vitality and viability of the centre. Richmond main centre is suitable for higher density residential development comprising small units. Car free development may be appropriate in areas with a PTAL of 5 or 6.

LP 34 New Housing

- 5.68** The Borough's target is 3,150 homes for the period 2015-2025. The Council will exceed the minimum strategic dwelling requirement, where this can be achieved in accordance with Local Plan policies. Richmond is expected to achieve approximately 1000-1050 units.

LP 35 Housing Mix and Standards

- 5.69** Development should generally provide family sized accommodation, except within the five main centres and Areas of Mixed Use where a higher proportion of small units should be appropriate to the site-specifics of the location.
- 5.70** All new developments, including conversions, are required to comply with the Nationally Described Space Standard.
- 5.71** All new housing developments, including conversions, should provide adequate external space. This should be:
- a. private, useable, functional and safe;
 - b. easily accessible from living areas;
 - c. orientated to take account of need for sunlight and shading;
 - d. of sufficient size to meet the needs of the likely number of occupiers; and
 - e. accommodation likely to be occupied by families with young children should have direct and easy access to private amenity space.

LP 36 Affordable Housing

- 5.72** A contribution towards affordable housing will be expected on all housing sites. The following requirements apply:
- c. on sites below the threshold of 'capable of ten or more units gross', a financial contribution to the Affordable Housing Fund commensurate with the scale of development, in line with the sliding scales set out in the policy.

For conversion schemes (for any units replacing employment floorspace) this would be 10% for 1 unit, 20% for 2 units and 30% for 3 units.

- 5.73** Where a reduction to an affordable housing contribution is sought from the above requirements on economic viability grounds, developers should provide a development appraisal to demonstrate that schemes are maximising affordable housing. The developer will be required to underwrite the costs of a Council commissioned economic viability assessment. In most cases the Existing Use Value plus a premium (EUV+) approach to assessing benchmark land value in

development appraisals and viability assessments should form the primary basis for determining the benchmark land value.

LP 40 Employment and Local Economy

- 5.74** This policy states that land in employment use should be retained in employment use for business, industrial or storage purposes.

LP 41 Offices

- 5.75** This policy states that there is a presumption against the loss of offices floorspace in all parts of the borough. It goes on to state that any loss of office space (on sites outside the designated Key Office Areas) will only be permitted where:

1. Robust and compelling evidence is provided which clearly demonstrates that there is no longer a demand for an office-based use in this location and there is not likely to be in the foreseeable future. This must include evidence of a full and proper marketing exercise of the site at realistic prices both for the existing office use or an alternative office-based use completed over a minimum period of two years in accordance with the approach set out in Appendix 5; and then,
2. A sequential approach to redevelopment or change of use as follows:
 - a. Redevelopment for alternative employment uses including social or community infrastructure uses; followed by
 - b. Mixed use including other employment generating or employment or community uses and residential which maximises the amount of affordable housing provided as part of the mix; followed by
 - c. Residential with maximum provision of affordable housing in accordance with policy LP 36 Affordable Housing.

LP 44 Sustainable Travel Choices

- 5.76** The Council will work in partnership to promote safe, sustainable, and accessible transport solutions, which minimise the impacts of development including in relation to congestion, air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions, and maximise opportunities including health benefits and providing access to services, facilities and employment.

LP 45 Parking Standards and Servicing

5.77 Car free housing developments may be appropriate in locations with high public transport accessibility, such as areas with PTAL of 5 or 6 subject to:

- a. the provision of disabled parking;
- b. appropriate servicing arrangements;
- c. demonstrating that proper controls can be put in place to ensure that the proposal will not contribute to on-street parking stress in the locality.

All proposals for car free housing will need to be supported by the submission of a Travel Plan.

Richmond Green Conservation Area

5.78 The Richmond Green Conservation Area was designated in January 1969 and was subsequently extended in November 2005. The designated area focuses on Richmond Green and the surrounding built form. It is enclosed by a number of other conservation areas including Central Richmond and Richmond Riverside.

5.79 LBRuT have produced two documents relating to the conservation area:

- Central Richmond, Richmond Green & Richmond Riverside (2007)
- Draft Richmond Green Conservation Appraisal (2007)

5.80 The Conservation Area Study and draft Richmond Green Conservation Area Appraisal provide a comprehensive description of the history and development of the conservation area which has a high degree of historic importance which can be summarised as being due to the royal connections with the now demolished Richmond Palace and Old Deer Park.

5.81 This draft conservation area appraisal provides a summary of the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area as:

- *Richmond is a historically significant settlement, which has origins dating from the 14th century.*
- *The use of a variety of materials, including red and stock facing brick, stucco, both decorative and plain, and stone facing are evenly distributed throughout the area.*

- *The townscape is noteworthy for its variety, with a consistently high quality and many exuberant individual buildings. There are also residential areas of mainly terraced development and more uniform rows of houses of a similar design.*
- *Building heights vary from two to five storeys and roof treatments vary but pitched roof forms predominate.*
- *Richmond Green is an open space with a tranquil residential character. It provides a welcome contrast from the busy town centre and is used year-round by visitors and residents alike.*
- *The Green is lined on all sides by residential properties of varying ages and - architectural styles. The south side is also home to many offices and businesses.*
- *Little Green is defined by Richmond Theatre and Richmond Library, which lend a distinct character in contrast to the buildings surrounding the larger Richmond Green.*
- *The remains of Richmond Palace, a royal residence of King Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, are located to the west of Richmond Green.*
- *Richmond Theatre, Maids of Honour Row and Palace Gate House are important architectural contributors to the Green.*
- *Several small lanes, some dating from the early development of Richmond – Brewer’s Lane, Golden Court, Waterloo Place, Church Court, Victoria Place, Mitre Court and the Market Passage – provide a refuge from traffic and are spaces of a more intimate nature.*
- *The lanes to the south of Richmond Green are lined with small businesses and boutique shops that add a commercial dimension to the character of the Green. They remain largely residential on the upper floors.*
- *Richmond Green is well known for its striking visual character and has been used as a backdrop for a number of television series and films.*

5.82 The main element of the conservation area is the central elegant urban green which is enclosed and surrounded by substantial houses of dating from the 17th to 19th centuries. Key components of the Green are its expansive openness complete with mature trees arranged in avenues, long straight paths and gaps between the

surroundings buildings which allow a backdrop of sky and tree tops to appear. The enclosure and tree coverage provides it with an inward facing character. The Conservation Area Statement describes the Green as:

It is a fine example of an early urban green with a feeling of formal elegance and provides a fittingly grand setting for the houses that surround it.

5.83 The architectural interest of the conservation area primarily derives from the built form within it. While all sides of the Green share characteristics in terms of palette of materials, scale etc. each side is quite different in terms of architectural form and townscape. The Conservation Area Statement summarises the built form as:

The scale of the development surrounding The Green is predominantly two and three storeys. Properties have tiled roofs, some with small dormer windows behind parapets or eaves cornices. Varying numbers of bays, bay widths and changes in roof and window levels accentuate the individuality of each building within the whole pattern.

5.84 The area including the application site is described in the draft Conservation Area Appraisal as:

The south-west frontage facing the Green is less uniform, but the buildings are of an equally high quality. A key element of the character of this frontage is the changing visual experience as one moves along the road, due to the differing building lines, garden sizes and tree cover.

5.85 31 The Green makes a clear positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This contribution is primarily by virtue of the attractive frontage of the building and its role within the wider streetscape of buildings surrounding the green. The rear elevation of 31 The Green is well concealed from public view and, due to its mixed brickwork with poor quality timber cladded character is not a positive element of the conservation area and, where visible (for example from within the site's yard or windows of other buildings) is a detracting feature.

6. Planning Appraisal

Principle of development

Loss of offices

- 6.1** In the pre-application statement reference was made to the policy presumption against the loss of offices and employment use (London Plan Policies E1 and E2 and Local Plan Policy LP40 and LP41) and the need for compelling evidence to be provided to demonstrate that there is no longer a demand for office-based use. It is acknowledged that at pre-application stage very little evidence was provided to support the loss of employment, the status of the current tenant or reasons why the premises were being vacated. Further information was therefore requested to support the loss of offices particularly in the absence of any marketing.
- 6.2** We are now able to confirm that the current tenants, Handelsbanken Banken PLC are leaving the premises in the next few weeks to move to other premises nearby at Nos 20-21 The Green, Richmond. They are now wishing to move to larger and more modern premises and as such do not wish to renew their lease.
- 3.45** The application premises have not been marketed but Milestone Commercial Agency Ltd were asked by the applicant to prepare an Open Market Appraisal, in lieu of the local plan requirement for two years consistent marketing, to assess the likelihood of being able to obtain a meaningful lease of the premises for office or another Class E use. The report concludes that it would be extremely difficult to let these premises for office employment use purposes due to:
- A low demand for E class office space;
 - The incongruous setting of the building, being in a largely residential area, in a listed building of three floors where the first floor provides just 29 m² of office, and where an oversupply of modern purpose-built office space exists within walking distance;
 - This leaves owners of commercial premises with a distressed asset, exposure to void business rates and insurance, as well as increasing costs set against a wholesale change in working practices and a backdrop of rising interest rates and deep recession.

6.3 The report also considers other Class E uses but none of these are regarded as appropriate or suitable given the type of premises and its location.

6.4 As stated in this report it is very unlikely that the premises will be let to another office or employment use. It would clearly not be advisable to leave a listed building vacant in order to carry out two years marketing and we hope that the Council will appreciate the significant heritage and other public benefits which would be achieved by allowing these premises to be converted back to their original use as a single family dwelling.

Public benefits

6.5 We set out below the number of heritage and other public benefits which are being proposed as part of this application:

Housing Benefit

6.6 The proposed conversion of the premises to provide a single family dwelling house accords with London Plan Policy H2 requiring boroughs to pro-actively support new homes on small sites (below 0.25 hectares) and helping to meet the RBRuT target to deliver 2,304 homes on small sites up until 2028.29. Paragraph 4.2.4 of this policy notes that incremental intensification of existing residential areas within PTALs 3-6 or within 800m distance of a station or town centre boundary is expected to play an important role contributing towards the housing targets for small sites. Conversion of non-residential buildings is one way of achieving this.

6.7 The site is within the Richmond Village Main Centre Boundary, it is within PTAL 6a and is within 800m of Richmond Station. In the Regulation 19 Local Plan the site and surrounds are designated as area of incremental intensification. It is also recognised that listed buildings are best used for their original purpose.

6.8 In the Council's pre-application response dated 16 October 2023 it is stated that, subject to addressing the loss of employment policies, a residential use would be acceptable in this locality subject to complying with other policy requirements.

Design and Heritage Benefits

6.9

In addition to providing much needed private housing with a contribution to affordable housing the proposed development would provide the following design and heritage benefits:

- Converting the building back to its original use as a single family dwelling which would also secure its optimum viable use in accordance with paragraph 202 of the NPPF.
- Reinstating the period appropriate (late 18th century) compartmentalised residential plan form and layout, informed by recent survey evidence showing where some of the original internal walls had previously been. Historic records show where the partition wall, perpendicular to the front/rear facades were on each floor, separating the original stair/hall from the living room. The wall is identified on the plans below. The original location of the door to the main habitable space on each floor is also known and could be reinstated.

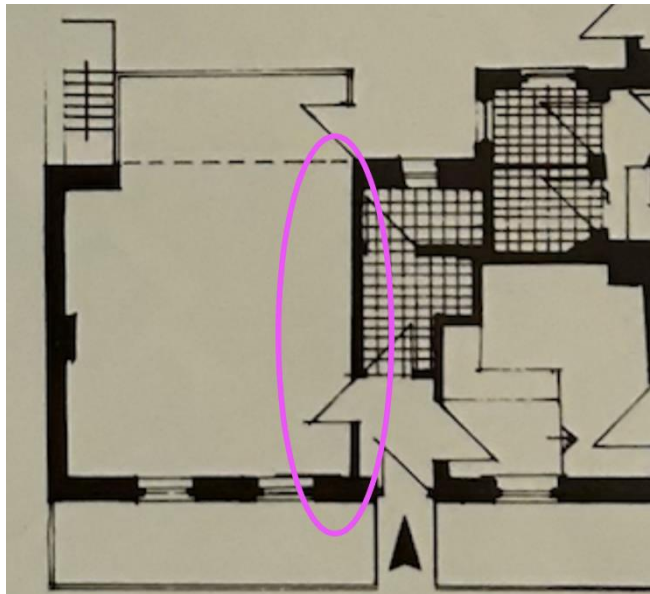


Figure 8: Historic partition location © Richmond Local Studies Library

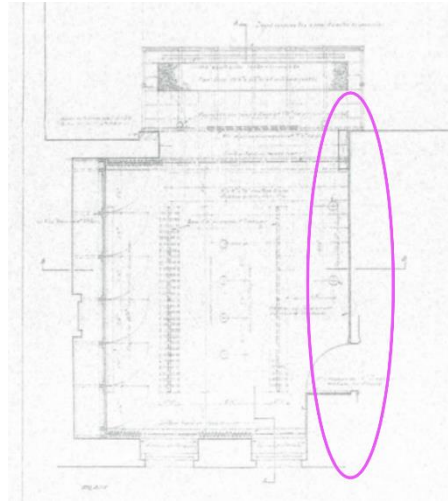


Figure9: Historic partition location © Richmond Local Studies Library

- Evidence of original lath and plaster stud walling has also been found and this will be reinstated and introduced to all existing and proposed walls. This new survey evidence addresses comments sent to the Architects by the conservation officer on the 8th September 2023. She stated as follows:

"Whilst the reinstatement of a period-appropriate plan and details would indeed offer some enhancements and add character to the building, the weight we could give to them as heritage benefits would unfortunately be limited if they are only generalised interpretations."

The Architects have now been able to show a layout which provides openings where known and using historical norms to influence the other elements. These significant heritage benefits would not be possible under the existing use as it would not suit an office functional use and there would be no reason for the owner to do this work.

- The original interior of the building appears to be fully rebuilt in modern materials post 2012 refurbishment works. There are no historic timbers or plasterwork present within the floor build ups and internal partitions.

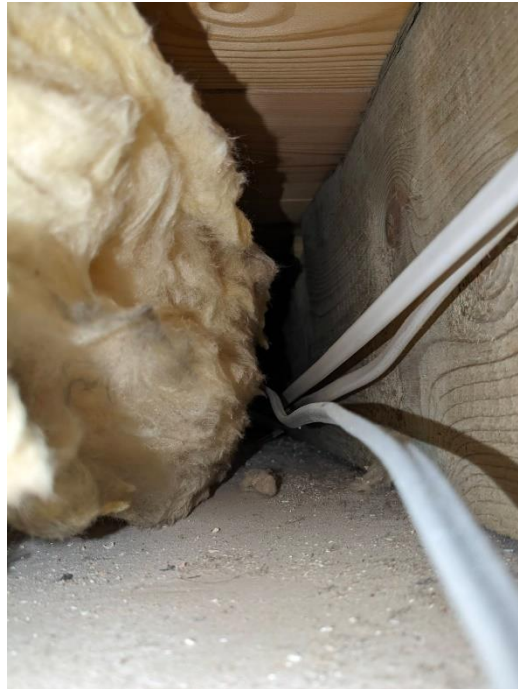


Figure 10: Typical floor buildup between the joists 2023 (view through and aperture of a light fitting © MJA

- In addition to the reinstatement of a period appropriate plan layout and reinstatement of a likely historical wall in its original location the Architects are introducing appropriate (late 18th century) internal detailing including:
 - i. A reinstated new staircase (in the likely original location);
 - ii. Lifting some of the carpet tiles revealed some original floorboards, although not in their original locations. These would be restored and reused;
 - iii. Appropriately detailed woodwork including skirting boards, dados and architraves;
 - iv. Decorative plasterwork;
 - v. Suitably detailed timber panelled internal doors;
 - vi. Lath and plaster walls and ceilings throughout the premises.
- Introduction of fireplaces, chimney breasts (and period appropriate chimney pieces) within the building. On the party wall to No 32 it is proposed to provide a corner fireplace to match the neighbouring property. On the party wall to No 30 it is proposed to provide a traditional period-appropriate

fireplace centred on the wall. These will both align with the fireplace positions in the neighbouring listed properties.

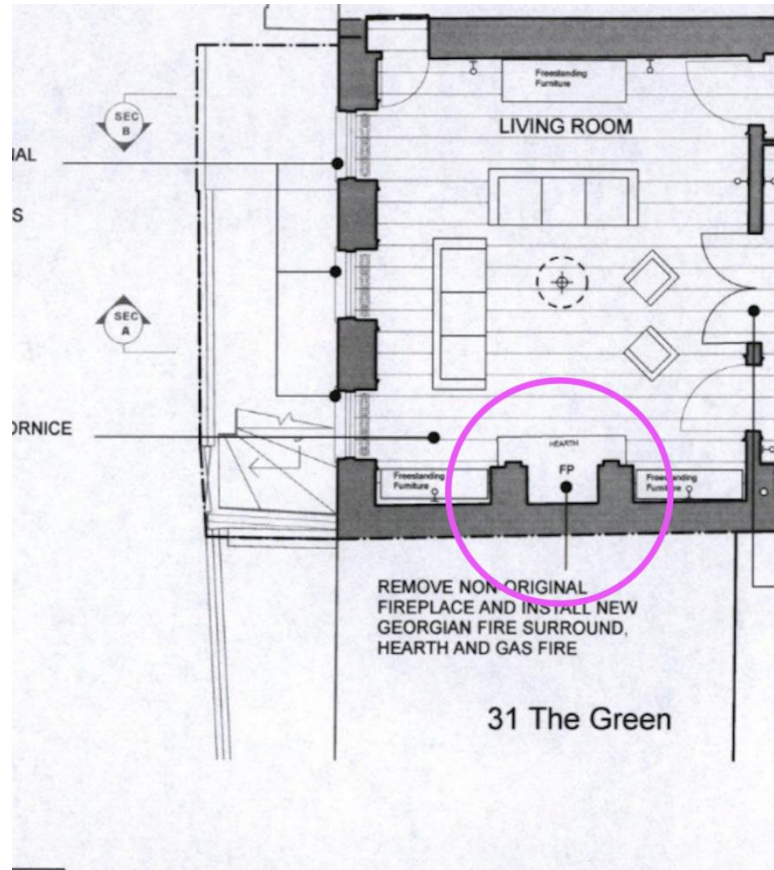


Figure 11: 2014 Plan showing fireplace position at 30 The Green © Planning Portal

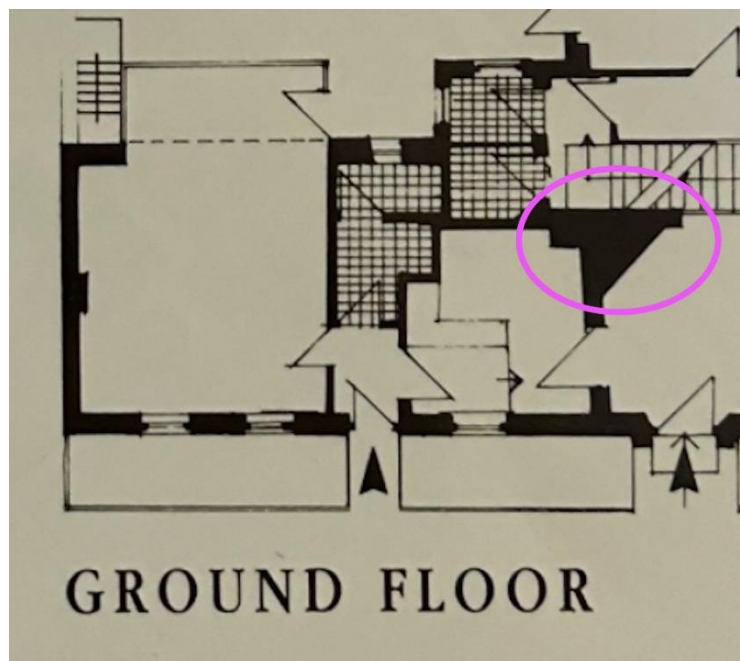


Figure 12: 1992 Plan showing fireplace position at 32

- On the rear elevation modern and poor-quality timber cladding (introduced in 2012) is concealing a series of unsympathetic alterations to the historic masonry wall. The Architects have been able to find evidence showing that the wall was originally facing brick (see Figure 13 and 14 below and Figures 6 and 7 which show photographs of opening up investigative works 2023). It is now proposed to reclad the rear elevation with an appropriate brick slip (reclaimed London stock brick).



Figures 13 and 14: Existing rear elevation during the investigation works 2023 © MJA

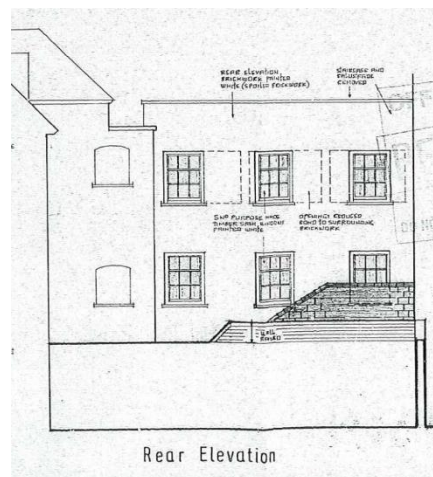


Figure 15: Plan from refused application 92/1029 showing proposed new window openings with painting over existing brickwork © Planning Portal

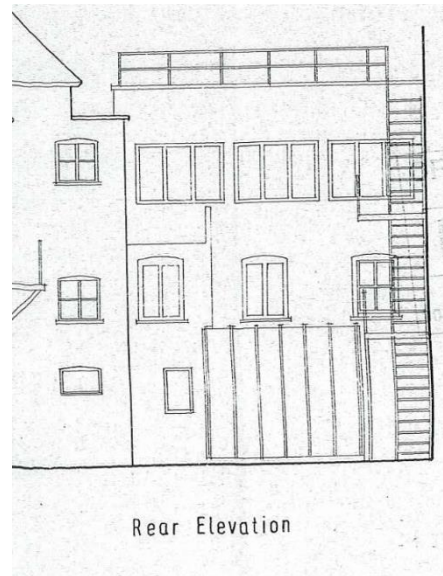


Figure 16: Photograph of the rear wall and conservatory 1992 © Richmond Local Studies Archives

Economic benefits

- 6.10** Any construction project will help to boost the local economy by creating jobs and other trickle-down benefits, such as the provision of tools and materials.

Environmental benefits

- 6.11** The proposed development also includes a number of environmental benefits which would reduce carbon dioxide emissions and address the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. The environmental benefits include:

- The existing gas boiler will be replaced by a more environmentally friendly air source heat pump and solar panels on the roof.
- Sympathetic draught proofing will be carried out throughout the building.
- A BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment Pre-Assessment has been carried out by Base Energy to identify the best possible environmental performance of the building. The proposals comply with the objectives of sustainable development contained in the NPPF and have a much greater environmental performance over an office in place as the energy consumption and consequent pollution would be significantly lower.

- An enclosed refuse store located at rear of premises to accommodate 240L of general waste, 2 x 55L recycling boxes and 1 x 23L food waste.

Biodiversity benefits

6.12 The biodiversity benefits include the following:

- The existing outdoor amenity consists of hard landscaping only. It is proposed to replace this with permeable soft landscaping throughout to encourage biodiversity.
- Provision of new habitats for insects and birds within the soft landscaping, and habitats for bats and swallows on the flat roof.

Infrastructure benefits

6.13 The proposed development will include more sustainable methods of rainwater management and introduce SuDS surface water drainage, measures for harvesting rainwater to use in the maintenance of the soft landscaping. These rainwater management methods would exceed typical requirements set out in the LBRuT Planning Guidance Document 'Delivering SuDS in Richmond' and in turn reduce the risk of flash flooding, reduce the stress on the public sewer known to back up on Richmond Green, and address the potential problems associated with the site being in a throughflow catchment area with increased potential for elevated groundwater.

Parking and Transport Benefits

6.14 The current office unit has access to a series of parking permits within the Richmond CPZ area 'A1'. The site has a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) score of 6a, which is the highest possible score. The building's reversion to its original use provides the opportunity to make the scheme car free and therefore reduce parking stress on Richmond Green.

6.15 The applicant has agreed to enter into a Section 106 Agreement with the Council to preclude occupants from purchasing permits to park in the CPZ. This is to mitigate the potential impact of overspill parking from the development in accordance with paragraph 114d of the NPPF.

6.16 The applicant also proposes to provide two secure cycle storage spaces at the rear of the premises and provide one cycle space at the front of the premises.

Summary of public benefits

6.17 Bringing the building back to its original use, layout and form would be an eminently suitable use for the building (both individually and in the context of dwellings located around the Green) insofar as:

- The use would be wholly in keeping with the residential character of the wider area;
- The proposals would reinstate the building's original use;
- The use would provide for the building's long term conservation and maintenance and is a use that would lead to investment in the structure and its surroundings.

6.18 These factors clearly suggest that the proposed conversion to residential use is a sensible one and one which would be consistent with the conservation of the listed building (paragraph 203 of the NPPF).

6.19 At pre-application stage, officer advice noted that:

The applicants have argued that a number of heritage benefits could be achieved which would outweigh the harm caused by the loss of the existing office. In order to achieve this, the applicant would need to demonstrate that the conversion to residential results in the optimum viable use for the building and results in less intervention than the present office use, thus lead to a benefit in heritage terms. It would also need to be demonstrated what works could be achieved from the conversion that could not be achieved from the retention of the current use.

6.20 In terms of optimum viable use, paragraph 015 of the NPPG defines optimum viable use as:

If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use. If there is a range of alternative viable uses, the optimum use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes.

The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most profitable one. It might be the original use, but that may no longer be economically viable or even the

most compatible with the long-term conservation of the asset. However, if from a conservation point of view there is no real difference between viable uses, then the choice of use is a decision for the owner.

- 6.21** In this case, the proposed use as a single family dwelling likely represents the building's optimum viable use being its original use and one which facilitates clear heritage benefits.
- 6.22** While the change of use to residential could be undertaken with very few alterations to the building itself, a detailed scheme of enhancement works has been created in order to reinstate lost detailing and character to the building. These considerable enhancements are wholly beneficial to the significance of the listed building, the setting of the two adjoining listed building and the conservation area as a whole and these would not be achieved if the premises were to be retained in office use or another Class E use.
- 6.23** It is also important to note that this level of restoration simply would not occur should the building be retained in its current, non-original, office use. There is no incentive for such works given the building currently functions as an office, especially given the cost implications of the restoration.
- 6.24** Overall, the proposed development is found to amount to considerable benefits including a new single family dwelling with significant design and heritage benefits, economic benefits, environmental benefits, biodiversity benefits, infrastructure benefits, parking and transport benefits. All these benefits need to be weighed against the loss of office space. The Handelsbanken is moving to larger offices in nearby premises so there is not a complete loss of offices in this area and the Open Market Appraisal demonstrates that it would be unlikely for these premises to be relet for office or other employment use in the foreseeable future having regard to the current problems of being able to let a building of this size and type.

Change of use of other listed buildings in this area.

- 6.25** We refer below to a number of relevant applications to other buildings surrounding Richmond Green.
- Application Ref: 06/0865/FUL – No 15 The Green, Richmond. Change of use of grade II listed building from office to single family dwelling. Granted in

19.05.2006. Reason: *"Whilst there is a general presumption against the loss of offices, this is considered to be acceptable in this location on Richmond Green. A return to the use as a single family dwelling house is welcomed in historic building terms."*

- Application Ref: 09/0292/FUL – No 32 The Green, Richmond. Change of use to Grade II* listed building, adjacent to application site, from offices to residential. Minor internal remodelling, fitting out of new kitchen and bathrooms. Granted 19.05.2009. Reason: *"A change of use of the building is acceptable in principle and the alterations would not unacceptably damage the historic fabric of the building or compromise the architectural features."*
- Application Ref: 09/2893/FUL – Nos 21 and 22 The Green, Richmond. Change of use from office to residential to allow reinstatement of original use of two grade II listed buildings to include internal alterations and construction of two front dormers. Granted 29.11.2009. Reason: *"Policy EMP4 suggests there are instances when the reversion to a use other than employment can be considered. Of particular relevance is point 1 of policy EMP 4 which states that when a property is vacant and returning to its former residential use this is an instance where loss of employment can additionally be justified."*
- Application Ref: 13/4340/FUL – 17 The Green, Richmond. This application was for a change of use of a grade II listed building from office/storage to residential, which was granted 30.10.2014. Reason: *Paragraph 5.3.10 refers to Policy DM EM2 and states:*

"There may be some instances where other appropriate evidence relating to a particular employment premises will be considered by the council (instead of marketing evidence). These could include listed buildings where the original use was residential. In this particular instance the listed building would have originally been a single residence. Although some inappropriate alterations have taken place, including the loss of a ground floor window, changes to some rear windows and internal floor level changes, loss of fireplaces, doors and mouldings, a number of historic features survive. The Council's Conservation Officer supports the proposed change of use as it would return the building to its original use, and unlock significant investment for its restoration and reinstatement of important features such as the ground floor sash window and front railings. This in turn would have

*a positive impact of the significance of this heritage asset and result in an enhancement of the character and appearance of the Richmond Green Conservation Area, of which the building forms a prominent feature. **The above considerations would lend significant weight to departure from the normal policy provision or requiring the retention of employment.***

- Application 18/4268/FUL – 19 The Green, Richmond. This was an application for change of use of a grade II listed building from a medical practice to residential. It was stated in the report that the original use was a dwelling house. This application was refused due to no agreement on affordable housing contributions. However, paragraph 4.3.9 of the report states:

"There is support for using the buildings for their original purpose. There is therefore a benefit of the principle of the change of use which could be considered to outweigh the requirements for marketing under LP 28.C.3."

Other considerations

6.26 Other matters which have now been addressed are set out below.

6.27 Affordable housing – The applicants have agreed to provide an affordable housing contribution in accordance with the Affordable Housing SPD. The pro-forma has been completed and shows the need for a total commuted sum of £156,744.

6.28 Neighbouring residential amenity – The proposals have been designed to avoid any harm to the amenities of adjoining residential properties. 24 Acoustics Ltd were appointed to assess the impact of noise from the new plant upon the nearest noise sensitive properties and their survey and report is submitted with this application. The assessment demonstrates that noise from the proposed plant at the most affected noise sensitive windows will be below the typical background noise level during all periods and in line with the guidance of Richmond Borough Council and BS 4142. Therefore, noise from the proposed new plant is acceptable and should not cause nuisance to the amenities of adjoining neighbouring residential properties.

6.29 Flood risk – A Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Ardent Consulting Engineers is included with this application and concludes as follows:

"6.5 The property is located in Flood Zone 1. The property is not at risk of any sources of flooding except of the risk of groundwater flooding which is moderate but will remain unchanged from the development.

6.6 As the development involves a change of use from office space to a single-family dwelling any increase in impermeable area or subsurface development or extensions or external alterations, it is currently deemed that no mitigation measures are necessary.

6.7 The proposed change of use development will provide increase in the permeable area as the courtyard will be converted with SUDS compliant soft landscaping. The proposal also includes a rainwater harvesting tank connected to the roof gutter which will have sufficient capacity to provide some rainwater storage that can be reused mainly for irrigation in the garden. The overall proposals will provide a minor benefit to the surface water drainage network.

6.8 In conclusion, this Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the proposals are consistent with the aims of the NPPF. The site will not be at risk of flooding or increase the flood risk to others. The SuDS Statement confirmed that the proposal will include some on-site SuDS features improving the surface water management on site."

6.30 Tree survey and arboricultural method statement - An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement is included with this application. One off site bay tree which is to be retained will need to be pruned to facilitate implementation of the proposals. The branches to be removed are small in size and will result in a maximum wound size no greater than 100mm in diameter. This will have an insignificant effect on the health and physiological condition to this tree and would comply with the recommendations of BS3998:2010. It is highly unlikely that the roots of this bay tree would extend beneath the wall and into the applicants' small private amenity space. The proposals will not therefore impact on the roots of this tree.

6.31 Ecology - New decorative ornamental planting (Gysophelia) will be planted along the western boundary of the rear courtyard to add privacy to the space as well as to make it more inhabitable. It is also proposed to have permeable shingle surfacing in the centre of the garden. The northern edge (bordering No 32) of the garden is to have ornamental planting alongside climbing plants (Trachelosperman

Jasminoides) onto the boundary wall. The area by the proposed rainwater tank will have low-maintenance ornamental planting (*Ruscus Aculeatus*). All planting is recognised by RHS as beneficial to pollinators.

- 6.32** All external modern light fittings will be removed as part of the façade renovation works and no upward spill fittings are proposed.
- 6.33** **Fire Safety** - A Fire Safety Strategy is included with the application.
- 6.34** **Construction Management Plan** - The applicants have completed the Construction Management Plan Pro-Forma provided by Richmond upon Thames Borough Council. As the project moves forward to the pre-construction/construction stage a Building Contractor will be instructed and will be responsible for preparing details of the programme schedule to include details of the vehicles to be used in accordance with the council's requirements. It is anticipated that the council will include a condition requiring a Detailed Construction Management Plan prior to the commencement of any construction on site.
- 6.35** **Residential Standards** - The London Plan Housing Design and Quality Standards require new homes of 3 bedrooms housing 5 people to have a GIA area of at least 86sqm, provide 8sqm of external amenity and all bedrooms should be at least 2.15m. The existing premises are 135sqm and all rooms exceed the minimum space standards.
- 6.36** **Sustainability** - Policy LP22 of the Local Plan which requires development to achieve the highest standards of sustainable design and construction in order to mitigate climate change. Any future application should include completed Sustainable Construction Checklist to demonstrate that the new units would achieve maximum water consumption of 110 litres per person per day. An Energy Report will also be required together with a BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment Pre-Assessment.
- 6.37** A BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment Statement is included with this application. The report refers to the building being grade II listed and as part of the refurbishment, historic and original parts of the building will be maintained and preserved (including external windows and doors), and this limits the BREEAM credits that could be achieved, particularly in terms of fabric upgrades.

- 6.38** The credits within the Energy section of BREEAM are 'heavily weighted' and have a significant impact on the overall score. Furthermore, under 'Ene Rating Energy Efficiency Rating Post Refurbishment', a minimum of 2.5 (out of 4) credits are required to BREEAM 'excellent' and it would not be possible to meet these minimum standards without making significant improvements to the building fabric and services.
- 6.39** However, the proposals do afford the opportunity for some elements of BREEAM DR to be incorporated, along with other sustainable measures which are not included in BREEAM but would provide significant benefit betterment when compared to the existing situation. These include:
- Cycle storage in the courtyard
 - Recycling bins and food waste boxes in a wooden store located in the courtyard
 - Legally harvested timber and responsible sourced materials wherever appropriate
 - New appliances to be energy efficient
 - Internal water use will be in compliance with Approved Document Part G
 - No increase hardstanding areas and therefore no increase in surface water
 - The soft landscaping to the rear courtyard will include small trees and ornamental plants along the southern and western boundaries which will enhance biodiversity.
- 6.40** As part of the application we are submitting a BREEAM pre-assessment/exemption report from an accredited BREEAM assessor.
- 6.41** In addition to BREEAM pre-assessment we have produced an energy statement which concludes that the proposed development will achieve 54.6% reduction in CO₂ over SAP Appendix S.
- 6.42** **Waste** – Details of the proposed waste storage facilities are included with the application. The refuse bins are to be located in the rear courtyard not visible from the street. The store will provide space for 240L of general waste, 2 x 55L recycling boxes and one 23L food waste box.

- 6.43 MOL and Other Open Land of Townscape Importance** – The site is close to Richmond Green, designated as MOL and the Old Palace Terrace, designated as Other Open Land of Townscape Importance – The proposed development will have no impact on these areas of open land.
- 6.44 Conservation Area** – The improved appearance of the rear elevation and landscaping of the rear garden will result in some enhancement to the Richmond Green Conservation Area.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** The proposed development would return the premises back to their original use and the internal and external alterations proposed would result in a significant enhancement to the unique heritage values of 31 The Green and the Richmond Green Conservation Area.
- 7.2** Although the change of use of the premises will result in a loss of office or other employment use the significant heritage benefits of the proposed development together with the other public benefits would outweigh the loss of this employment use.
- 7.3** The premises will be vacated in the next few weeks and the Handelsbanken will be moving to other larger premises on The Green a short distance from the application site. An Open Market Appraisal has been provided by Milestone Commercial Agency Ltd in lieu of the Local Plan policy requirement for two year consistent marketing and this concludes that it would be extremely difficult to let these premises for office or other employment use purposes. In addition, this is a listed building in need of sensitive repair and refurbishment and it would not be sensible to leave this building empty in order to complete two years of marketing which is unlikely to be successful.
- 7.4** There have been several applications for change of use of listed buildings from office to residential use and all of these have been allowed for reasons of the significant heritage benefits of being able to revert back to their original use as single family dwellings enabling the restoration of the premises and the resultant significant heritage benefits to the premises.
- 7.5** We consider that this is also a case where the heritage and other public benefits outweigh the loss of employment use and trust that the Council will grant planning permission and listed building consent for this proposed development.