



Westminster House

Design & Access Statement
(Including an Inclusive Access Statement & Residential Standards Statement)

December 2023



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01

Introduction & Use



#### Introduction & Use



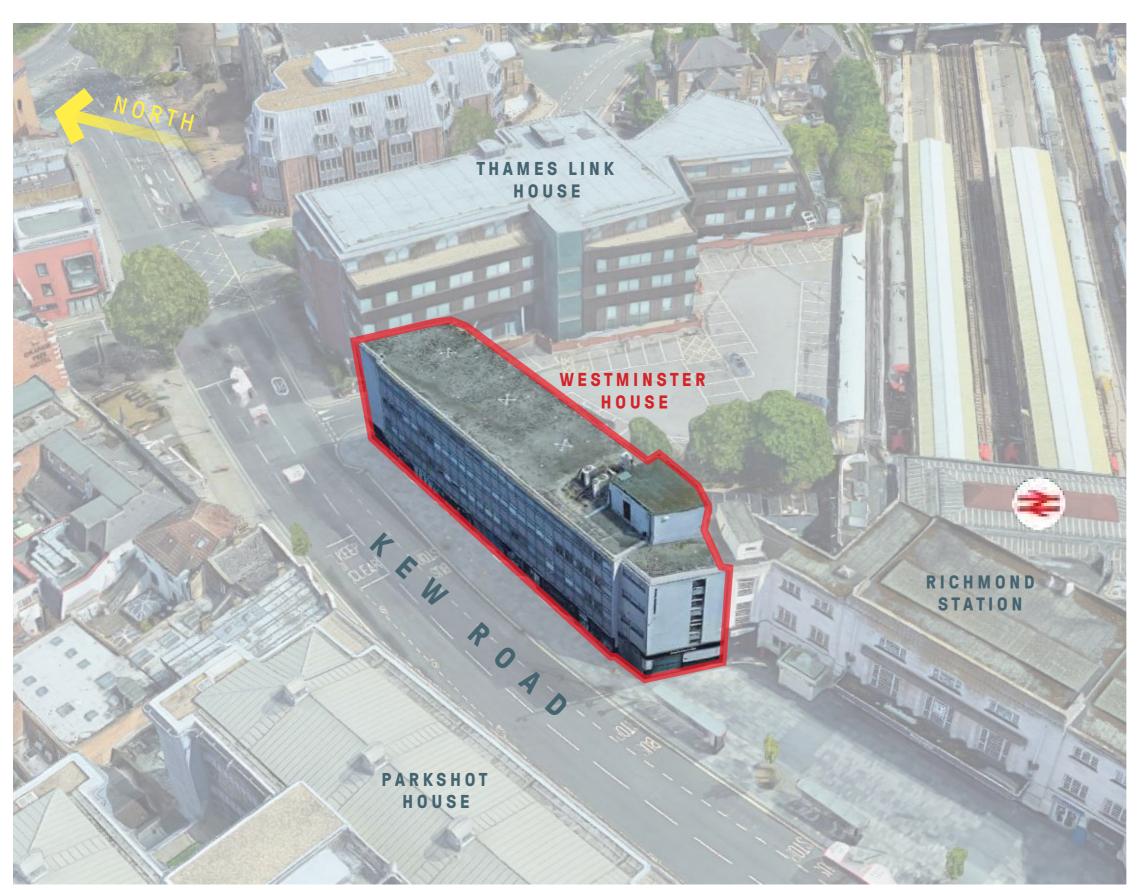
02

Existing Site & Context



### Existing Site & Context

**Westminster House** 



Westminster House is located on Kew Road (A307) in central Richmond, a suburban town within the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames in South West London.

The building is of mixed use, comprised of four storeys with retail units at ground floor, office accommodation on the upper levels and car parking at lower ground.

The building sits within the Central Richmond Conservation Area No.17 which was designated in 1969 and was extended in 1977, 1988, 2000, 2003 and 2005. The site also falls within the identified Secondary Shopping Frontage zone which extends to the south of Kew Road. This popular area has a wide mix of modern commercial architecture, ground floor retail, traditional and contemporary buildings.

The building was constructed in the 1950s and is linear and regular in appearance. The primary façades onto Kew Road to the west and to the station car park to the east have a strong horizontal emphasis and features grid-like cladding and glazing with lower solid spandrel panels at each floor. At the southern and northern ends, the building presents closed facades - predominantly solid with punched stairwell windows, currently finished in a drab grey painted render. There is a fourth floor plant room located towards the southern end adjacent to the station.

In its current form and appearance, Westminster House offers very little outward benefit to the local townscape, and in fact could be seen to detract from the visual experience of this key town centre location.



### Existing Site & Context

Context







Parkshot House



Richmond Station and forecourt, with Quadrant House to the right hand side

The surrounding area has a mix of commercial and retail buildings of varying age, height and materiality.

Some of the older buildings are noteworthy for their high quality design and exuberance either heritage listed or included in the local Buildings of Townscape Merit, such as the Art Deco Richmond train station (Circa 1937) constructed from Portland Stone which adjoins Westminster House. Other buildings within the immediate area are more modern in appearance, predominantly for office uses, and feature solid lower floors finished in stone or brick, with set back upper floors of a more lightweight construction and finish.

Notably the surrounding townscape has no one building dominating the landscape with a vast array of building heights that range from two-and-a-half to five storeys.

Being so close to Richmond Station for mainline and underground trains, and the bus stops immediately outside, the site has excellent access by public transport and a PTAL rating of 6b.



# Existing Building Photographs Site & Context







Northern end of the building on Kew Road



Route to rear of Westminster House from Kew Road



View from the north west



Typical ground floor retail in Westminster House



# Existing Building Photographs Site & Context



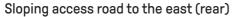




View from the north east

Sloping access road to the east (rear)







Basement level access from rear



Rear (eastern) elevation



03 Constraints & Opportunities



## Constraints & Opportunities

Having analysed the nature of the site and its surroundings, the key determinants for the design can be identified as constraints and opportunities:

#### **CONSTRAINTS:**

Tight site with no scope to extend laterally.

Requirement to visually respect and protect the neighbouring Richmond Station.

Multiple access routes required, including separate access for residential and office users.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES:**

Site located within a busy commercial and retail area, with opportunity to engage with the streetscape.

Chance to improve the relationship between Westminster House and the surrounding architecture.

Opportunity to address the imbalance of building heights either side of the station.

Existing northern end of the building offers little visual amenity to the street – opportunity to improve the public realm.

Neighbouring five storey building, The Quadrant, situated on the other side of Richmond Station – opportunity to mirror this scale and achieve a sense of balance around the station building.

The approved 19/0527/FUL two storey extension scheme demonstrated the appetite for, and the acceptance of, a taller building here, that sat well within its context.

Opportunity to introduce desirable residential accommodation in a well located and easily accessible location. The principle of residential accommodation here was deemed acceptable by Richmond Council through the recent pre-application for this scheme (23/P0133/PREAPP).

The existing building has an appearance that is tired and out of date. There is the opportunity to create a desirable place to live and to work.





04

Recent Planning History



2019 Planning Approval

In May 2019 the applicant obtained planning permission for the creation of two additional levels of Class B1 office accommodation (482 sqm), conversion of the existing basement into Class D2 gym use (288.5 sqm) together with green walls and associated external refurbishments (ref. 19/0527/FUL).

This scheme had been developed through a positive pre-application process, and had built on an earlier planning approval (gained by other architects) for a barrel-roofed two storey extension. The Officers at the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames recognised that the 2019 proposals presented a contextual and sensitive approach to the building and its setting, and that through the careful design the two storey addition was not out of proportion with the surrounding buildings and importantly did not adversely affect the visual importance of the station and its forecourt. The improvements proposed for the exterior of the building were positively encouraged, and it was recognised that Westminster House in its current state does not offer the finest example of a modern office building in this prominent location.



19/0527/FUL Approved Scheme - CGI as viewed from the north



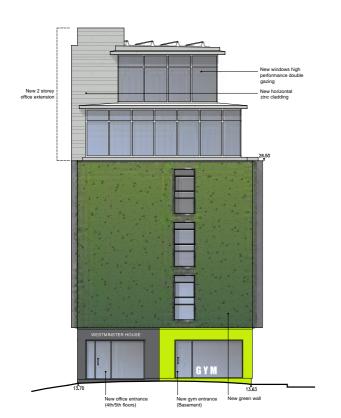
19/0527/FUL Approved Scheme – Proposed Contextual Elevation



2019 Planning Approval



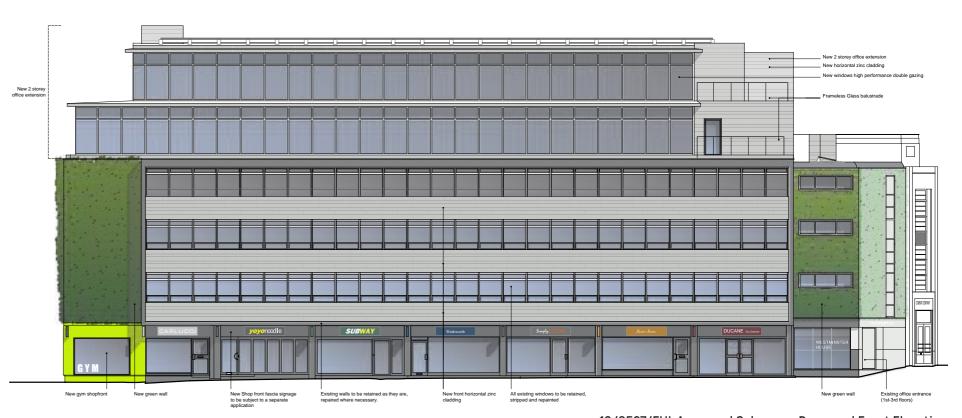
19/0527/FUL Approved Scheme – Proposed South Elevation



19/0527/FUL Approved Scheme – Proposed North Elevation



19/0527/FUL Approved Scheme – CGI as viewed from the south



19/0527/FUL Approved Scheme – Proposed Front Elevation



#### 2020 Residential Pre-App

A scheme involving a single storey roof extension containing one residential unit was put to the Council as a pre-application submission in 2020. This scheme received positive feedback from the officers, showing support for the principle of a residential addition to the existing building (ref. TP/DM/20/P0195/PREAPP).



Following the lapse of the original 2019 approval, the applicant re-applied and gained consent in December 2022 for the creation of a shopfront and access, elevational alterations, installation of louvres and associated works at basement and ground floor levels, regarding the conversion of the existing basement car park into a gym (ref. 22/2962/FUL).

This scheme largely echoed the original proposals for the basement gym, and the upgrade in both facilities and the activation of the streetscene to the north of the building were seen as positive contribution to the building and its context.



TP/DM/20/P0195/PREAPP - Proposed single storey residential extension



22/2962/FUL Approved Scheme - Proposed view from the north on Kew Road



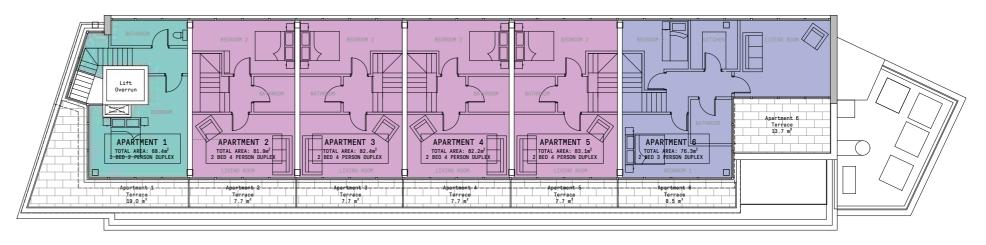
2023 Residential Pre-App

A pre-application submission regarding these emerging proposals was made in the summer of 2023, a meeting was had with the case officer, and subsequent written comments were received (Ref 23/P0133/PREAPP). The feedback was positive, and the principle of the development was agreed to. There were some comments regarding the detail of the proposals, however, and these have been incorporated into the proposals as presented here.

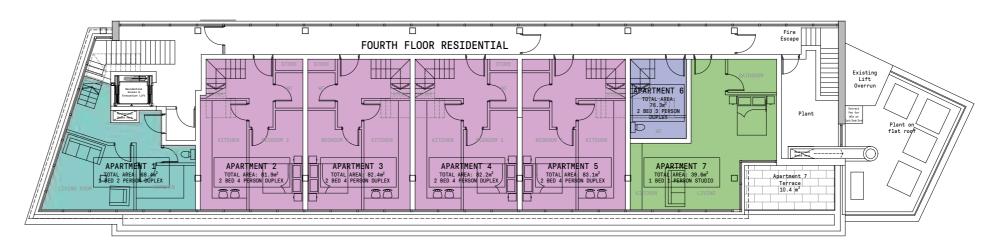
Below is a list of the design comments, with the design team's responses noted in blue:

Design adds bulk through the addition of a parapet, visually bolder fascias and in particular, more dominant massing on the elevation adjacent the Station through changes to the plant enclosure. While this appears to better integrate the plant/core, there is a lack of a side elevation to illustrate the treatment of the south elevation and therefore it is difficult to assess the impact of the amended scheme on the station, its forecourt, and the Conservation Area.

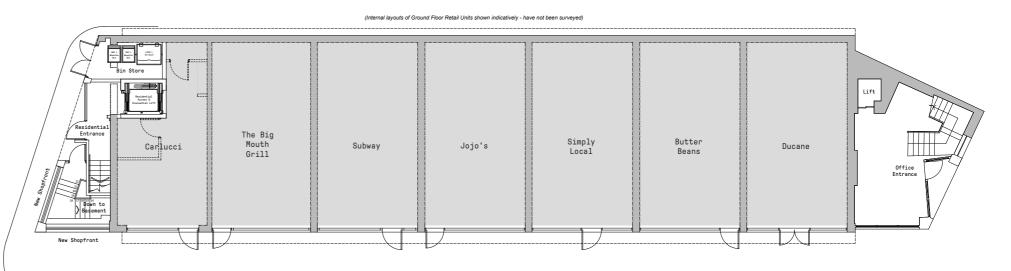
The plant enclosure has been removed from this part of the building, away from the Station, so that the roof level will be retained as it is currently at this end of Westminster House. The plant has been relocated to the roof where it will not be visible from street level, and an office terrace takes its place, with only a frameless glass balustrade providing the only additional built elements. In also reducing the height and mass of the existing rooftop plantroom so that it only



Pre-App 23/P0133/PREAPP - Proposed Fifth Floor Plan



Pre-App 23/P0133/PREAPP - Proposed Fourth Floor Plan



Pre-App 23/P0133/PREAPP - Proposed Ground Floor Plan

17



2023 Residential Pre-App

encompasses the lift overrun, the bulk at this end of the building is significantly reduced. A South elevation has also been provided as part of the drawing pack.

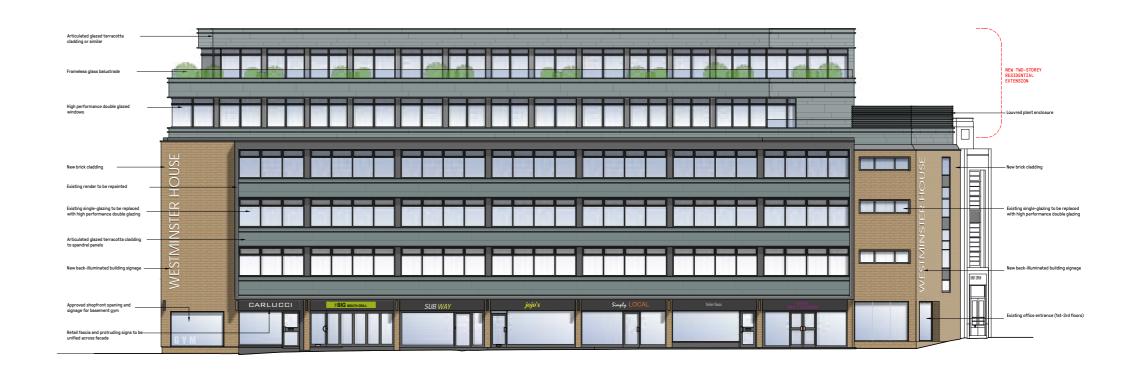
While the previous scheme had a non-integrated plant space, it was set further back from the parapet and of contrasting materials, so both legible and more dismissible, the current proposals do not appear to be a successful improvement. Initial thoughts are however that the originally proposed location would be favoured, providing that the plant is set back as far as practical from the elevation.

As above, the plant compound has been removed from this proposed location, and will now be invisible from street level.

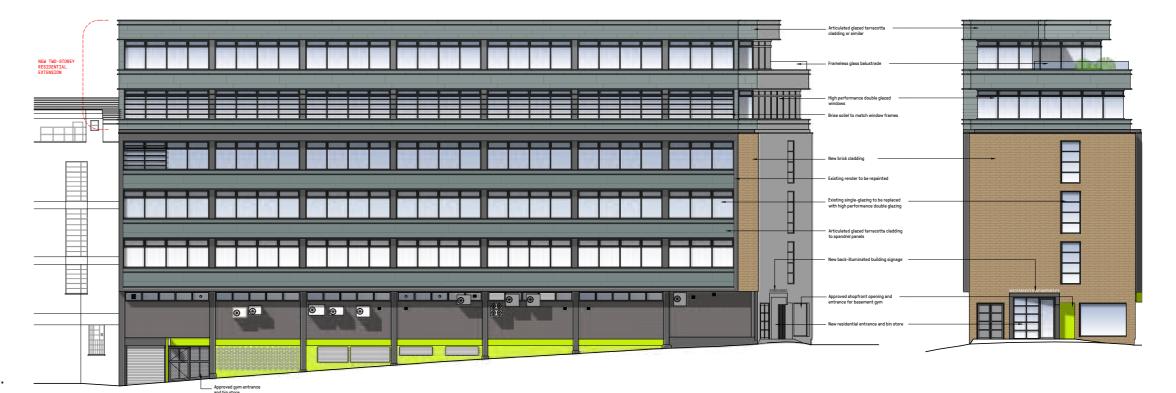
The additional width to the north elevation adds further bulk, and the insetting of the previous scheme helped differentiate the extension more so, and reduce the weight of the extension, albeit the removal of the angled upper storey has minimal impact.

The width of the proposed fourth and fifth floors is identical to that of the approved scheme. The small return in the north eastern corner that extended the northern side of the west elevation in the pre-app proposals has subsequently been removed to provide a reduced mass and a sleeker elevation, again that echoes the footprint of the approved scheme.

Conservation Officer opinion is that the proposals are too bulky, particularly the upper storey fascias.



Pre-App 23/P0133/PREAPP - Proposed front (west and south) elevation



Pre-App 23/P0133/PREAPP - Proposed rear (east) and side (north) elevations



2023 Residential Pre-App

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The previous scheme, while it had more of a vertical emphasis, and the horizontal emphasis is not objected to, was much more light weight in appearance and legible as a later addition. This benefit has been eroded here. It is suggested that the facias should be revised in detail and an alternative, lightweight solution proposed.

The comments are welcomed, and the submitted proposals now show a much lighter-weight design. The new upper storeys will be clad in a light metal finish that will contrast with the treatment to the existing lower storeys, which will be clad in terracotta and brick. The design of the upper storey fascias has also been amended to be a more simplified and elegant solution incorporating a defined horizontal fin accentuating the horizontal nature of the building, harking back to the approved 2019 scheme.

The proposed brickwork is not out of character, subject to the right colour and finish which would need to be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Council's Conservation Officers considers that the use of additional green paint to the rear elevation is overly contemporary and not characteristic to the character and appearance of the Area - the smaller amount used as detail in the previous application is more appropriate.

The grey/beige brickwork has been carefully considered to be sympathetic to the Conservation Area and the surrounding buildings and will be a vast improvement to the dull grey painted render that currently covers the building. The additional green paint has been taken out of the



Pre-App 23/P0133/PREAPP - Proposed view from Kew Road to the south



Pre-App 23/P0133/PREAPP - Proposed view from Kew Road to the north



2023 Residential Pre-App

proposals, and the existing brickwork to the rear will be painted dark grey to clearly define the subterranean levels and contrast with the new brick cladding above.

The large building signage is also not supported as being overly contemporary, dominant and uncharacteristic of the Conservation Area and should be omitted. In any case, signage would be subject to the separate advertisement consent process.

The scale of the proposed signage as shown in the CGIs has been vastly reduced, and is included for illustrative purposes only. It has been informed by similar signage in the area, in particularly that seen at 63 Kew Road. As noted on the drawings, the signage will be subject to separate advertisement consent applications in any case.

The use of green / brown roof is supported.

The proposals include a combination of PV cells and green roofing in order to maximise the surface area provided by the new roof for sustainability measures.

The scheme at present proposes only two small units and you are encouraged to explore whether a greater proportion of small units could be provided, or otherwise justify the mix.

The scheme has been redesigned to now provide three one-bed units, rather than the two shown at pre-app.

The proposals should accord with the Nationally

Described Space Standard, external space standards and requires compliance with Building Regulation M4 (2) regarding inclusive access.

The scheme as presented meets these requirements (please refer to the Access chapter of this document).

For the new dwellings, the applicant is proposing a secure refuse and recycling bin store off-street which must accommodate 1050l refuse, 2x 385l recycling and 7x 23 litre food waste, in accordance with the London Borough of Richmond's supplementary planning guidance.

The proposed scheme adheres to Richmond's guidance on refuse and recycling storage (please refer to the Access chapter of this document).



Pre-App 23/P0133/PREAPP - Proposed view of the service road from the north



Pre-App 23/P0133/PREAPP - Proposed aerial view from the north





Design



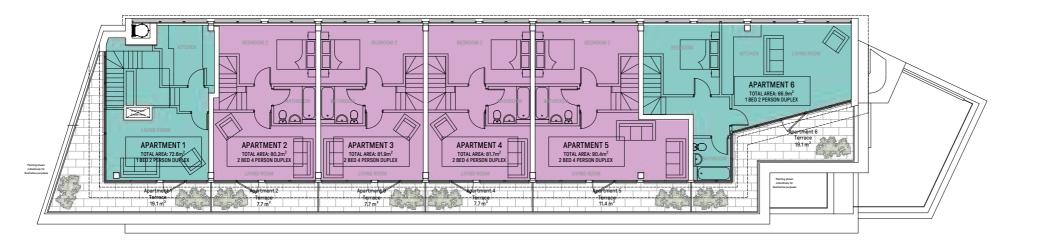
As a progression from the formerly approved application for two additional storeys above the existing building for office space, the proposal seeks to replace this new office space with residential apartments on the fourth and fifth floors. The scheme will also unify the ground floor shop fronts and enhance the building's street presence at ground level, thus improving its contribution to the public shopping area, and will upgrade the outward appearance of the upper floors to become a positive contributor to the building's setting in its wider context.

The proposals also build on the recently approved application to convert the basement into a gym, with associated alterations to the ground floor and basement entrances (22/2962/FUL). These latest proposals slightly amend the gym space and bike storage arrangements in the basement.

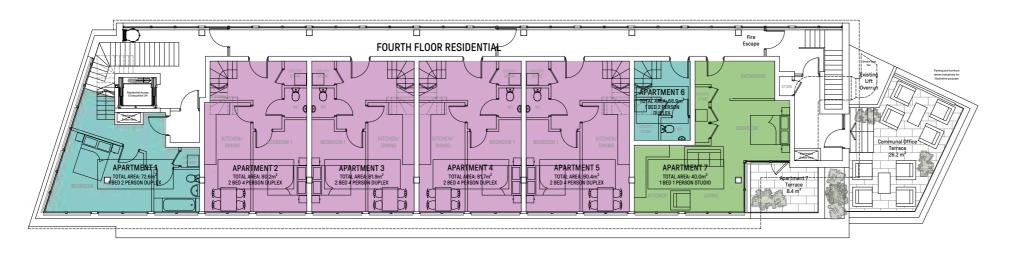
Given the building's highly accessible and desirable location in the heart of Richmond adjacent to the station, Westminster House offers a great opportunity for well-planned and desirable residential accommodation. The proposals demonstrate how this can comfortably sit alongside the existing office and retail provision within the building, and how the two-storey extension not only compliments the building and its setting, but improves the outward perception of Westminster House.



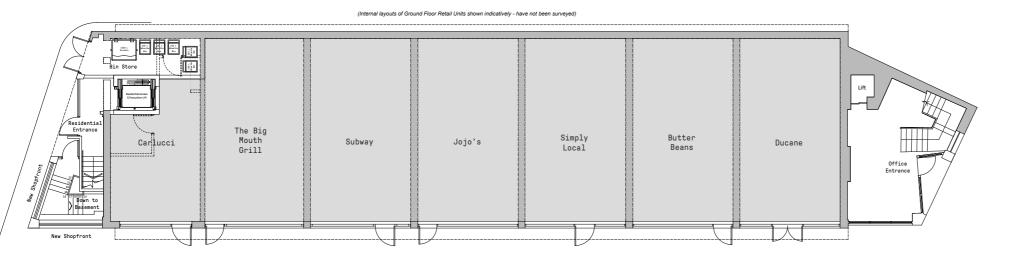
Design



Proposed Fifth Floor Plan



Proposed Fourth Floor Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

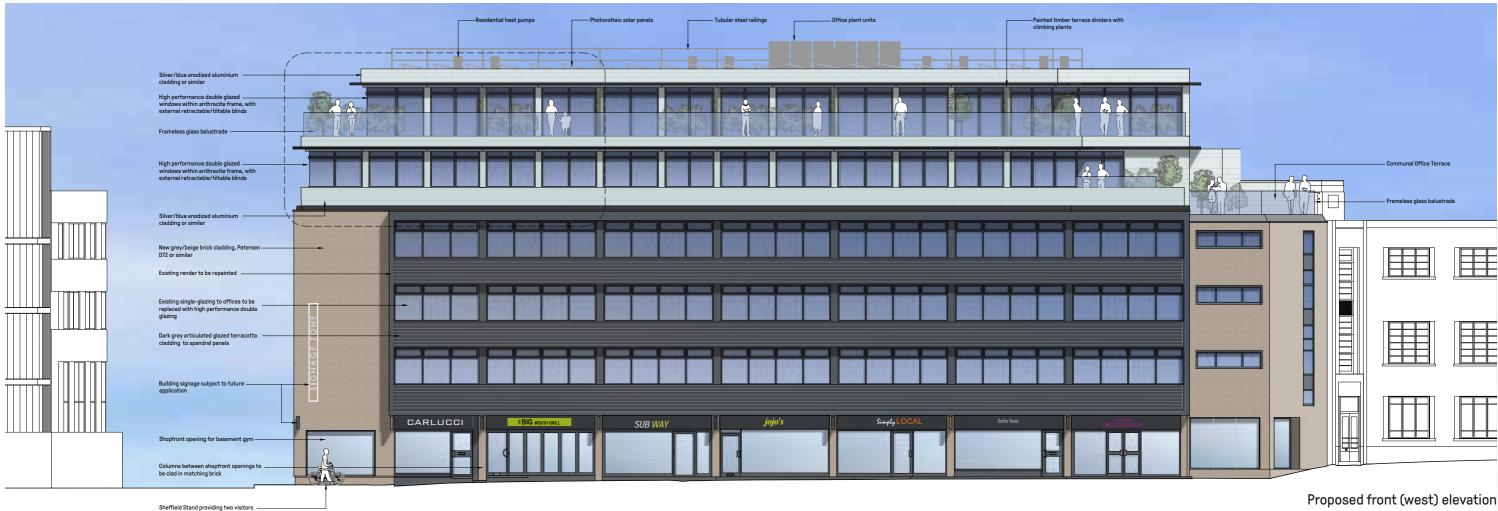


The new fourth floor would be accessed from a dedicated new entrance on the northern elevation of the building, via a new lift core and an extended and repurposed stairwell, thus remaining separate from the office entrance and circulation route at the southern end. This new floor offers access to seven apartments providing a mix of unit sizes, six of which are duplexes rising up to the fifth floor. The proposals offer 1 x 1Bed Studio, 2 x 1Bed 2Person apartments, and 4 x 2Bed 4Person apartments. Adjacent to the new residential entrance on the northern elevation will be a dedicated residential bin store offering convenient access to ample space for both refuse and recycling. Both the new residential lift and this bin store will take space previously occupied by the end retail unit.

Aside from one studio apartment on the fourth floor, all of the apartments will be duplexes over the fourth and fifth floors. Accessed via a corridor to the rear (east) on fourth floor, these apartments will all benefit from the dual aspect afforded them on the fifth floor, as well as the external terraces facing the afternoon and evening sun on the top level.

Where previously the external plant required for the offices and new residences was to be located within a screened area on the fourth floor, at the southern end of the building, this is now proposed to be relocated onto the roof. The southern end is the most prominent and important, abutting the station buildings and its approach, so avoiding the additional bulk and massing that a plant

#### Design



solar PV panels will be introduced to the generous existing office level facades will emphasise the **Appearance** 

compound would incur in this location is a benefit to the proposals and the surrounds. A communal office terrace is now proposed for this rooftop, imposing no additional built massing, providing external amenity space for the office workers that is currently unavailable, and bringing life and visual interest to this key end of the building, activating the public realm.

The plant has been designed and arranged on the roof to avoid it being visible from Kew Road of the station approach. A small upstand has been included in the upper parapet, and simple protective railings where access is required for maintenance would be the only visual marker of anything on the roof at all. Among the plant units, flat roof, spaced so as to enable the introduction of green roofs providing biodiversity and ecology to a building that currently has none.

#### Scale

As with the previous proposals, the massing of the additional floors will be moulded and designed to minimise the perceived scale of the building and will reference the forms of the adjacent properties. To achieve this both floors will be set back from Kew Road incrementally, and from both the northern and southern ends. The fenestration and facade treatment to these floors, and to the

horizontal nature of the building which will also decrease the extension's perceived height.

The footprint of the new fourth floor will be approximately 41.6m long by 10m wide, and the building will reach a height of 19.5m from the pavement at the northern end to the predominant roofline. In total, the proposed new storeys will increase the height of the existing building by 6.4m from the existing to the proposed predominant roof line, but only 3.3m from the top of the existing rooftop plant room.

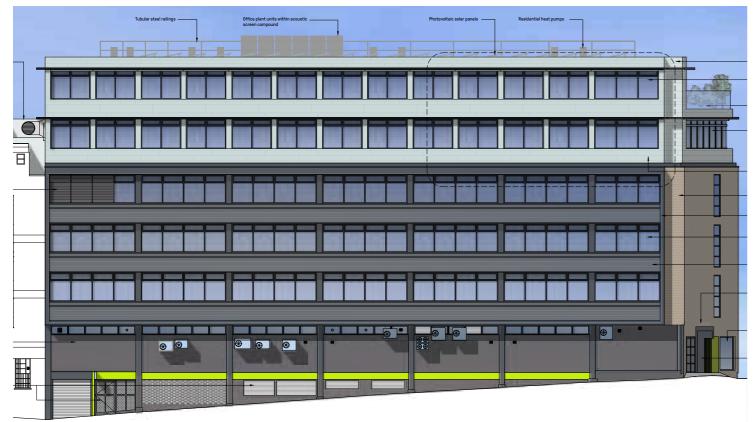
At ground floor level, the main façade is to be improved through the unification of the shop fronts with consistent signage (which will be subject to a future signage application), and the creation of additional glazing to activate the street on the northern corner (previously approved). At present, this corner of the building's main elevation is blank and therefore provides little to the streetscape.

The existing painted render finish of the expanses of blank wall will receive a grey/ beige brick finish, providing a warmer and more interesting appearance - likewise the columns

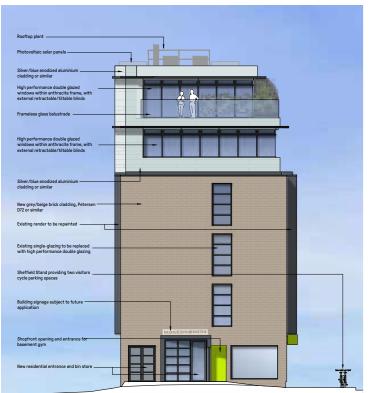
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Design



Proposed rear (east) elevation





Proposed side (north) elevation

Proposed side (south) elevation

between the retail shopfronts will be finished in brick to unify the facade as a whole.

The tired and outdated facades of the office floors will be improved in a similar way as previously proposed, through the replacement of the existing single-glazed windows with efficient double glazed units and the addition of ribbed terracotta cladding to the spandrel panels to accentuate the horizontal nature of the building. The existing basement-level brickwork to the rear will be painted dark grey to differentiate it from the main brickwork of the upper facades and to provide a more appropriate finish to this subterranean level. These proposed changes to the building's frontage seek to achieve a sense quality and modernity to this clearly out-of-date building, and will vastly improve its street presence and contribution to the wider public realm.

The same fenestration and facade treatment is proposed for the rear elevation. Oon the third floor, where internally a new plant room is proposed, three window bays will be converted to matching grey louvres providing natural ventilation.

The design of the additional storeys proposes to enhance and improve on the language of the existing building, while clearly denoting the different uses held within – while the office floors maintain their generous ribbon windows, the residential floor has its windows broken into smaller modules reflecting the smaller, human-scale residential spaces within. The horizontal bands of these upper floors will be treated differently than those of the existing office floors, using a reflective silver/blue anodised aluminium finish to provide a much lighter and contrasting

finish, lessening any overbearing effect that the additional massing might otherwise produce.

A sleek and thin horizontal line will be drawn along both floors through the introduction of a protruding fin wrapping around the building. This will assist with the elegance of the extension, will echo the techniques that other buildings in the vicinity have used for their set-back upper floors, will provide shade to the residential apartments, reducing overheating, and also reinforce a sense of horizontality; this horizontal emphasis is already established in the lower floors and will thus enhance the relationship between old and new.

#### Landscaping

Since the vast majority of the site area is built out and will remain that way, there will be minimal ground level works associated with these proposals – where the new bike stands will sit on the pavement the existing surfaces will be retained as they are. The residential and office terraces will have stone paving or similar resilient finishes, and will be populated with freestanding planters (shown indicatively in the application drawings).

On the roof, spaces between the plant units servicing the building will have green roof sections laid, and locations will be provided for bird, bat and swift boxes.



# Proposals Design



Proposed long (west) elevation



Sketch image from the south west on Kew Road



Sketch aerial image from the north



Comparison with Approved Scheme and Pre-App Scheme





---- Approved Scheme (2019)

---- Pre-App Scheme (2023)

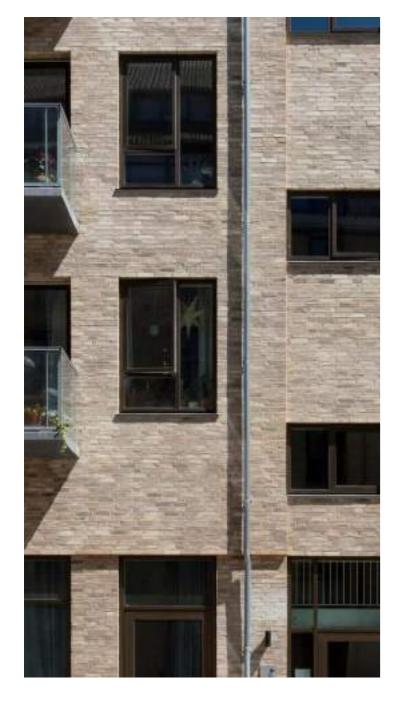
As can be seen in these diagrams, the proposed scheme has refined the design from both the approved 2019 proposals, and those presented for pre-app in 2023. Where there is a marginal extension from the approved scheme to the north, on the least sensitive end, this edge has contracted from that shown at pre-app.

The upper roof line has come down considerably from both the approved and the pre-app versions, and the lift overrun, prominent at the northern end in the approved scheme, has now been removed, and in contrast the plant area is located further away from the key boundaries in order to hide from view.

At the southern end, the outline of the approved scheme does reflect a lower lift overrun than that currently proposed, as the roof of this element is now being used to discreetly conceal a smoke extract duct, however the form of the proposed scheme is much less convoluted that previously approved, without slopes and multiple planes forming a complicating massing. Following the direction of the pre-app, the bulk at this end of the building has been considerably reduced by the removal of the plant compound.



Appearance & Key Materials



Grey/beige brick to the north and south facades – panellised brick slip system.



Ribbed terracotta rainscreen cladding to the office level spandrel panels, in glazed dark grey.



Silver/blue anodized aluminium (or similar) cladding to upper storey facades.



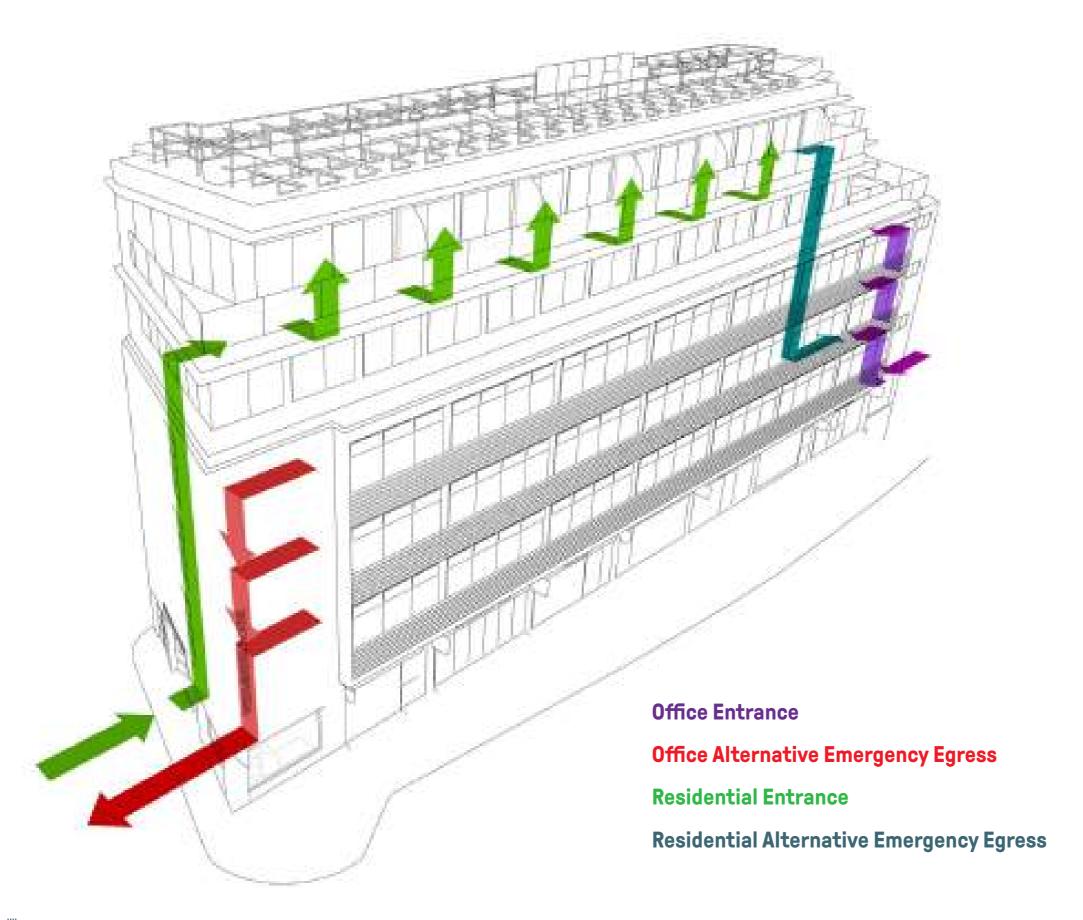
Retractable/tiltable external blinds to all residential windows (excluding circulation and corridors).





#### Access

#### General Access & Fire Egress



The existing pedestrian access from Kew Road, located on the south end of the building, will continue to serve the first to third office storeys with its existing lift and staircase. A new side entrance is proposed at the northern end, which will provide dedicated access to the residential apartments; installing a new lift and extending the existing escape stair to serve the fourth floor. As such the daily access arrangement for the office tenants and the residential occupants will be provided separately – however, the existing escape arrangement for the office floors will be maintained through the sharing of this northern staircase in the event of an emergency. Similarly, the main office access core to the south will provide the alternative escape route from the apartments.

A fire engineered approach is to be involved, including in the installation of the evacuation lift that will serve both the residents and also the offices in the event of an emergency, an advanced smoke detection system within the apartments linked to the offices (and vice versa), and sprinklers installed within the residential apartments. Internal lobbies will be added to the office floors at their junction with both cores at the north and south, which will be mechanically vented with shafts reaching up to the roof. The scheme as presented has been checked and coordinated with both the team's Fire Consultant and the Building Control Approved Inspector.



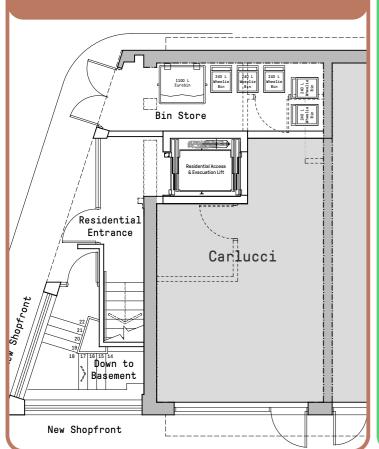
#### Access

#### Bins

The basement will continue to hold the offices' refuse and recycling storage, for collection via the replaced rear roller-shuttered door.

This store will be accessed by the tenants to deposit their waste via the new secure access gate into the basement.

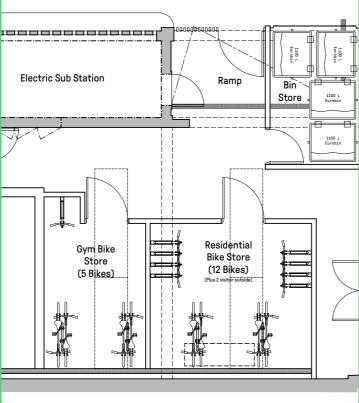
The residential apartments will have their own dedicated bin store at ground level adjacent to the new residential entrance, in order that the travel distance to depositing waste is minimised and convenient. Both sets of bins have been calculated to meet the Richmond requirements for general refuse, recycling and food waste.



#### **Bikes**

There will be two separate bike stores located in the basement, reached via the new basement access gate – one dedicated to the gym use, for staff and visitors, providing space for five bikes, and a second provided for residential tenants with space for twelve bikes. These numbers have been calculated on the basis of the local and national standards for the gym space and the number and mix of residential units.

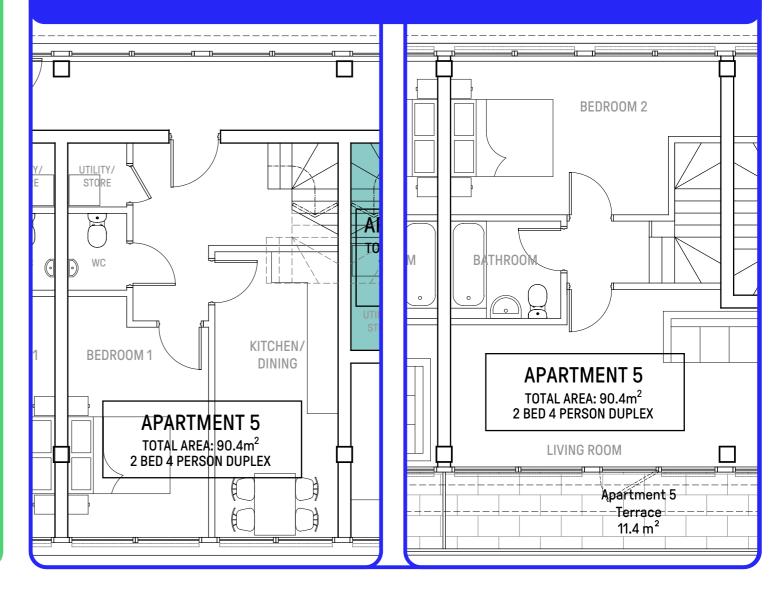
Additionally two visitor bike parking spaces will be located on the pavement on Kew Road through the addition of a Sheffield stand. Both cycle stores have each been designed to accommodate a larger accessible bike.



#### **Inclusive Access**

The new residential floors have been designed to benefit from lift access directly from the ground floor up to the fourth. Six out of seven of the apartments at this level are duplexes which have their own private stairs leading up to the fifth floor. The design of all of the apartments has been carried out with adherence to the guidance of Building Regulations Part M4(2) for inclusive access, as well as meeting National Space Standards.

All dimensions of corridors, doors, leading edges and stairs align with this guidance, and it is for this reason that the kitchen/diners are predominantly on the fourth floor, as this is required on the entrance storey. The one exception is Apartment 6, where the space available has determined that the entrance storey on fourth floor can only hold a lobby, WC and a utility/store room.





07
Areas



#### **Westminster House**

#### **Area Schedule**

D			

Site Area	0.04	2 hectares
Existing		GIA (m²)
Basement	Car Park & Ancillary	334.1
Ground Floor	Office Entrance	30.4
30000000000000000000000000000000000000	Retail	349.0
	Office Escape	17.7
First Floor	Office	430.7
Second Floor	Office	428.1
Third Floor	Office	435.6
Fourth Floor	Plant	35.3
TOTAL		2,060.9
As Approve	ed (22/2962/FUL)	GIA (m²)
Basement	Gym	271.1
	Ancillary	87.8
Ground Floor	Office Entrance	28.5
	Gym Entrance	6.8
	Retail	349.0
First Floor	Office	430.7
Second Floor	Office	428.1
Third Floor	Office	435.6
Fourth Floor	Plant	35.3
TOTAL		2,072.9

Proposed		GIA (m²)
Basement	Gym	259.7
400 CONTRACTOR (ACCOUNTS)	Class E Ancillary	52.1
	Resi Ancillary	48.8
Ground Floor	Office Entrance	35.8
	Gym Entrance	6.8
	Residential Entrance	17.4
	Retail	339.3
First Floor	Office	417.1
	Residential Access	10.7
Second Floor	Office	414.5
	Residential Access	10.6
Third Floor	Office (incl. Plant)	406.1
***	Resi. Access & Plant	29.5
Fourth Floor	Residential	329.8
	Office Access	19.5
Fifth Floor	Residential	279.6
TOTAL		2,677.3

Residential Breakdown		NIA (m²)	
Apartment 1	1 Bed 2 Person	72.6	
Apartment 2	2 Bed 4 Person	80.2	
Apartment 3	2 Bed 4 Person	81.9	
Apartment 4	2 Bed 4 Person	81.7	
Apartment 5	2 Bed 4 Person	90.4	
Apartment 6	1 Bed 2 Person	66.9	
Apartment 7	1 Bed 1 Person	40.0	

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Conclusions



#### Conclusions

The proposed new development will not adversely affect the character of the area and will considerably improve the look and usability of the existing building. In addition, the proposals will enhance and improve the provision to the local community, which will benefit the area as a whole. The design is sympathetic to the existing architectural language, both of Westminster House and its surrounding properties, and takes much from the approved 2019 scheme, while providing further improvements to the building as a whole, both functionally in the interior, and also visually externally.

The design has been composed with great consideration of scale and detail that is appropriate for, and respectful of, its surrounding context. Furthermore, the external improvements to the building would serve to enhance the visual environment of Kew Road. As such, the proposals seek to make a positive contribution to the existing streetscape and the wider local community.





Child Graddon Lewis

Irongate House 30 Dukes Place London EC3A 7LP