

# **99 City Road**

## Planning Statement



**99 City Road**

## PLANNING STATEMENT

**April 2023**

**DP9 Ltd.**

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**DP6104**

**99 City Road**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The existing office building (known as ‘Inmarsat’) (the Site) is currently occupied by a single tenant and is expected to become vacant in 2024. Having not been the subject of any widespread renovation or improvement works since its original construction in the 1990’s, the building is dated, inefficient in operation and sustainability, and no longer provides the high quality and flexible office floorspace that is essential to the needs and growth of Tech City.

This is a critically important site that is located at the heart of ‘Tech City’ and Old Street, where significant growth in floorspace and investment is directed to respond to London’s need and economic potential. Tech City itself is recognised to be of strategic national importance to consolidate London’s position as the tech capital of Europe. Old Street is considered a ‘central London hub’ and is envisaged to become an ‘iconic gateway’. This is a view supported by the Greater London Authority (GLA) who consider that the growth and development of Old Street is of critical importance for the City Fringe Opportunity Area. The past under-investment and restrained growth has contributed to Tech City failing to fulfill its true potential.

This vision for this growth is shared with the London Borough of Islington (LBI). The draft Local Plan highlights that the Borough has an unprecedented need to deliver additional office floorspace (443,000 sqm by 2036) and directs much of this growth to Tech City and Old Street. The draft Local Plan acknowledges that this need is unlikely to be met and encourages ‘maximisation of office floorspace’.

This Site forms a critical part of the renewed vision to accelerate the regeneration of Old Street and propel growth in Tech City. The Site is identified as being the focal landmark of the Old Street cluster and is allocated to become a ‘district landmark’. We have embraced this vision and our goal has been to create a building of outstanding architecture that reflects the status and character of Tech City and Finsbury, maximising its employment and social value potential. The objective has been to create a bespoke and modern building underpinned by an exemplar sustainability ethos that will foster an ecosystem of innovation and creativity and be seen as the exemplar workspace in the Tech world.

The Proposed Development is a 35 storey office building with a range of active commercial and community functions on the ground floor. In total, it will comprise 64,873sqm (GIA) of

floorspace, which includes 59,907sqm of office floorspace. This will contribute substantially to Islington's office needs.

Sustainability has been a key driver of the project from the outset. The design mindset has always been to maximise the retention of the existing building fabric insofar as the envisaged design rationale allows; whilst transforming its role and contribution to its locality. This design decision, whilst challenging and complicated, delivers a building with exemplary embodied carbon credentials. The project team has used cutting edge engineering and modern design solutions so that the vast majority of the structure is retained in the proposal. The new core has been located within the existing building's atrium. The majority of the proposed demolition material is envisaged to be reused in the creation of the new public square on Old Street or elsewhere; which in turn will further transform the relationship of the building to the surroundings.

With the principle of extension and redevelopment established, the project team has extensively examined the grain and character of this intriguing part of the Borough in order to ascertain the most sensitive and engaging massing. In this respect, the Site forms part of an intersection between areas of different character, colour and scales, such as Finsbury and Shoreditch, and despite its strategic importance, Old Street, currently lacks a focal point where the 'centre of gravity' is otherwise taken away by other nearby and potentially lesser-important centres and clusters. This Site therefore has an essential role to play in not only stitching together this urban tapestry; but in delivering a building that uniquely responds to its complex context and provides a focal landmark that is desperately needed on this strategic node. We set the following design objectives that we consider critical for a successful tall building on this Site.

- 1) A Building visually relating to Shoreditch but which does not turn its back on the other locales such as Finsbury, West End and the City;
- 2) Creating a real relationship with and an engaging frontage to the 'Squareabout'
- 3) Establishing an appropriate dialogue and counterpoint to the 'Atlas Building'
- 4) Creating a district marker that befits the status of Tech City and brings back the 'centre of gravity' to Old Street.
- 5) Sensitive connection to the Bunshill and Finsbury Conservation Area and understand on the impacts on setting of heritage assets.

- 6) Using intelligent design to minimise impacts, whilst maximising the benefits of the proposal.
- 7) Substantial enhancements to the public realm at the base of the building, to ensure that it is grounded in a high quality context that is welcoming, accessible and active.

The Proposed Development and these design principles have evolved through a highly collaborative and detailed pre-application engagement process with LBI planning and design officers, the GLA, local stakeholders and residents and through a Design Review Panel. This feedback has been critical to inform the Proposed Development, create a shared vision and carefully understand the impacts and benefits this Development can and should create.

The proposed design responds to its immediate context with increased and enhanced public realm. The currently narrow Old Street pavement will be widened from 2.6 metres to 7 metres with a colonnade. Cowper Street will be improved with a shared surface and a pocket garden. The proposals respond to the emerging public realm at the newly developed Old Street Station and offers a new public square to receive the approximately 35 million annual exit and entrances from the station (based on 2019 data).

The massing seeks to respond to immediate townscape as well as wider setting views with minimal to no harm. The façade articulation and terracotta materiality responds to the conservation areas in Finsbury and South Shoreditch whilst ensuring there is no “back” to the building. Careful consideration is given to local heritage assets such as Lowndes House and the Honourable Artillery Company (HAC) Grounds.

The tall building location, the width proportions, and the reduction of the building height at podium (compared to the existing building) have been carefully considered to reduce daylighting impacts on the surrounding residential buildings and public space. To achieve this, as the building gets taller, it folds upon itself to diminish in scale, whilst creating urban greening on numerous terraces. In the case of the Bezier apartments, directly adjacent to the Site, the vertical sky component (VSC) to the flats on the lower levels has been improved.

This careful and intelligent use of design has ensured the environmental, functional and visual impacts of this district landmark have been minimised. In parallel, we have worked with LBI and the local communities to maximise the potential benefits of the Proposed Development. The Applicant recognised from the outset the unique opportunity this building has to help connect and share the benefits of Tech City to the wider community in Islington. Whilst the

building will become the heart and focal point of an entrepreneurial and creative tech community, it is also imperative that the building becomes part of the identity of Old Street for residents and local groups. The Project Team has therefore worked closely with many stakeholders to devise a locally engrained and unparalleled public benefits package.

The wide-ranging benefits are listed below and explained in detail within the supporting documents, but the premise has been to create a ground floor and public realm that is largely dedicated to ensuring the building is transformational for the local community and forms part of a new identify for Old Street. It will help connect Tech City to all of Islington's residents and share synergies, opportunities, knowledge and creativity. Above the ground, the Proposed Development will deliver a substantial quantum of exemplar office space that will have a profound economic impact to the local area and Tech City. This will include a provision of affordable workspace delivered to a quantum of 10% of the office uplift. This will be offered at peppercorn rent; facilitating a wide ecosystem and network of entrepreneurs and allow small local businesses and local jobs to flourish. This affordable workspace will nearly double the current amount of affordable workspace in the Borough.

### Economic

1. Helping to **meet LBI's unprecedent need** for office floorspace (c443,000 sqm up to 2036). The current and emerging Local Plan acknowledges that this employment floorspace demand is unlikely to be met. It states "that the maximisation of business floorspace delivery is an absolute priority".
2. **Floorplates to promote variety of entrepreneur and economic activity.** Variety of floor plates to accommodate Small, Medium, and Established enterprises (SME's) at multiple scales and types (tech, creative, media etc).
3. Creation of **59,907 sqm of modern, flexible and world class office floorspace**.
4. Expected to **generate/ facilitate 3,900 jobs**. This will have a significant positive local economic impact. It will significantly increase local spending.
5. Creation of **affordable workspace** of a quantum equating to 10% of the office uplift. This will be designed to be a key part of the ecosystem of the building, allowing local entrepreneurs and small businesses to share facilities with the other occupiers.
6. Creation of a **community space** dedicated to allowing local artists and creatives to showcase their work and help embed the building into local community.
7. **Apprenticeships** to local residents.

### Architectural

1. **Transformation of a building long known to be detrimental to the surrounding cityscape.** Transformation of site and its relationship with Old Street by opening up Cowper Street Corner, placing a landmark on the roundabout, and reinforcing street wall and urban form.
2. **Removing poor architectural quality façade** and replacing with a highly sustainable façade that celebrates and innovates upon existing historic context.
3. Delivery of building of **outstanding architecture** that responds to varied and changing context while creating an elegant landmark at one of London and Islington's most important intersections. A tower with slender proportions, complex form, visual interest and use of materiality to reflect transitional location between the City and Shoreditch.
4. Significant improvement to **legibility and marking a key transport hub** through expanded public realm and tower that identifies a primary node.
5. An **architectural response that reflects national importance** of Tech City and is proportionate to importance of Old Street through urban form making but also through the provision of needed office space configured to respond to needs of tenants desirable to Islington and GLA at this location.
6. **Removal of inactive and closed off ground floor** into a very active, transparent and accessible one with important public realm benefits.

### Public Realm

- Significant widening of Old Street pavement through the creation of a new pedestrian arcade. This will **increase the public realm by 230%** along this currently constrained route. Pedestrian Comfort Level uplift.
- Enhanced, pedestrian friendly Cowper Street and creation of **new Pocket Garden**.
- Cowper Street established as a **pedestrian-priority street** that supports public realm activity.
- Delivery of 185 sqm new public realm by the station by way of the **City Road Public Square** strengthening the connection to the Old Street 'squareabout'.
- Enhanced landscape throughout with a **net creation of 505sqm high-quality, inclusive and accessible public realm**, by way of setting back the building line; removing

existing barriers; steps and pinch points and providing new amenity including seating, trees and planting.

### Social Value

- **New Pedestrian Link** through the building between Old Street and Cowper Street measuring 236 sqm in total.
- Creation of the 222sqm '**Great Room**'. A truly public 'front door' to the building for public benefit and community use. An entirely publicly accessible space with generous proportions and double height. This will be a spacious room to host public cultural programming and events.
- A 344 sqm **community space** will be provided free to the local community and will create a link between the tech industry in the area with the local community.
- Intelligent design and engineering to retain structure and **significantly reduce carbon impact**.
- Use of cutting edge design and technology to deliver a **highly sustainable building**.
- **Urban greening** and 127 additional trees.
- **Improvement of daylight/ sunlight** to homes in Bezier building. Improvement of daylight/sunlight to the new square at the heart of the roundabout.
- Supporting local artists by commissioning a local artist competition to use the flank façade fronting Old Street as a blank canvas.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by DP9 Ltd ('DP9') on behalf of Endurance LLP ('the Applicant') in support of an application for Full Planning Permission for the comprehensive refurbishment and extension of the existing building at 99 City Road, London, EC1Y 1AX ('the Site'). The Site is located within the administrative boundary of the London Borough of Islington ('LBI').

1.2 Full detailed planning permission is sought for (the 'Proposed Development'):

*Partial demolition and redevelopment to erect a building up to 35 storeys (plus basement), comprising increased office floor space (Class E[g]); commercial floorspace (Class E); a multi-purpose flexible space (Sui Generis); flexible Commercial / Community Uses (Class E/F1); alterations to and formation of new landscaping, public realm, plant, cycle storage, servicing and delivery space and other associated works.*

1.3 This Planning Statement sets out the planning case supporting the Proposed Development, assessing the development in the context of adopted and emerging planning policy and guidance at national, regional and local level.

1.4 This application is submitted following a comprehensive and collaborative pre-application consultation process with LBI Officers consisting of nine pre-application meetings and workshops dating back to June 2022, three Design Review Panel (DRP) meetings, and two pre-application meetings with the Greater London Authority (GLA). The full details of each of these meetings are included at Section 4 of this Planning Statement and within Section 3 of the submitted Design and Access Statement.

1.5 In addition, extensive public consultation has been undertaken which included briefings to local residents, community bodies and other interested stakeholder groups as further documented within Section 4.

### Structure of the Planning Statement

1.6 This statement provides the planning case in support of the development and is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the Site and the context of the surrounding area;

- Section 3 describes the Planning History at the site;
- Section 4 describes the pre-application discussions and feedback
- Section 5 details the proposal associated with the application;
- Section 6 sets out the relevant national, regional and local planning policies relevant to the planning application;
- Section 7 assesses the development against relevant planning policies;
- Section 8 sets out information relating to Community Infrastructure Levy and S106 Heads of Terms;
- Section 9 sets out the overall conclusions

### **Supporting Information**

1.7 This statement should be read in conjunction with the plans, drawings and documents submitted as part of the application, as summarised below:

- Application Form and Ownership Certificates, prepared by DP9;
- CIL Additional Information Form, prepared by DP9;
- Planning Benefits Summary Statement, prepared by KPF and DP9;
- Site Location Plan, prepared by KPF;
- Existing and Proposed Block Plan,
- Existing Drawing Pack, prepared by KPF;
- Demolition Drawing Pack, prepared by KPF;
- Proposed Drawing Pack, prepared by KPF;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by KPF;
- Construction Environmental Management Plan, prepared by AYPM;
- Air Quality Assessment, prepared by Waterman;
- Archaeology Assessment, prepared by Waterman;
- Contaminated Land Assessment, prepared by Waterman;
- Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment, prepared by Point 2;
- Fire Statement, prepared by Fire Surgery;
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, prepared by Waterman;
- Health Impact and Economic Regeneration Assessment, prepared by Volterra;
- Heritage and Townscape Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by Montague Evans;
- Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, prepared by Waterman;

- Circular Economy Statement, prepared by Twin Earth;
- Sustainability Statement, prepared by Twin Earth;
- Socio-economic Report, prepared by Volterra;
- Energy Assessment and Overheating Assessment, prepared by Atelier10;
- Statement of Community Involvement, prepared by Kanda;
- Whole Life Carbon Assessment, prepared by Twin Earth;
- Utilities and Foul Sewage Assessment, prepared by Atelier10;
- Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, prepared by Steer;
- Delivery and Servicing Management Plan, prepared by Steer;
- Ventilation and Extraction Statement, prepared by Atelier10;
- Pedestrian Level Wind Microclimate Assessment, prepared by RWDI;
- Building Management Plan, prepared by Endurance Land;
- Equalities Impact Assessment, prepared by Volterra; and
- Electric Interference / TV Reception Impact Assessment, prepared by G-Tech.

## 2. SITE CONTEXT

### The Site

- 2.1. The Site measures 0.32ha and is located on the south-eastern side of the major junction of the Old Street Roundabout. Whilst close to its boundary with the London Borough of Hackney, it sits wholly within the LBI.
- 2.2. Currently the Site is comprised of a 9 storey with basement office building of 21,667sqm (GIA), wholly in office (Class E) use. Constructed in the early 1990's, the building has a maximum height of 62.95m AOD and is stark in appearance. With the exception of the white stair core which projects up the primary façade, the building in its entirety is generally featureless, finished with dark glazing across the majority of its facades.
- 2.3. The Site, forming a key edge of the Old Street Roundabout, is bounded to the south by Cowper Street and to the north by City Road. To the east is the existing building's service yard which, accessed from Cowper Street, provides separation from other buildings along this road. With the exception of its adjacency to the neighbouring property at 250-254 Old Street, the existing building currently sits as a detached island site.

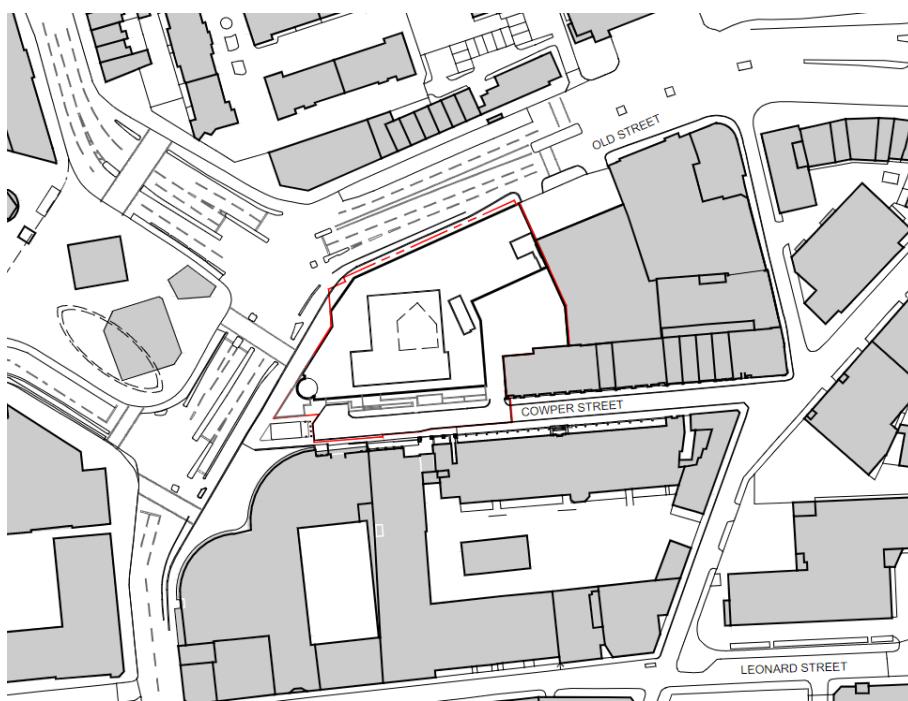


Figure 1 – Red Line Boundary of the Site

- 2.4. In terms of existing access points, the main entrance is located on the western frontage looking onto the Old Street Roundabout itself. There is a secondary entrance on Cowper Street, albeit accessed up a flight of stairs or a ramp and set back behind low quality planting.
- 2.5. Given the building is wholly in office use, it has no ground floor commercial or retail frontages. The result is an absence of active frontages, which creates a narrow and sterile interface with the existing public realm. This is most notable on the northern City Road frontage where, in spite of the heavy pedestrian traffic, the pavement is narrow with no relief from its exposure to road traffic. The current building contributes to what is currently a harsh and unwelcoming pedestrian experience around the Site and this part of Old Street.
- 2.6. Having undergone no substantial refurbishment works since it was constructed, it has poor internal spatial qualities, a heavily dated interior and inefficient and redundant mechanical and operating systems. The building in its current form is therefore at the end of its design life.
- 2.7. In light of its landmark location combined with the ongoing regeneration and public realm enhancement works to Old Street roundabout, there is now the opportunity to positively transform the pedestrian experience and perception of this part of Old Street. As set out below, the need for developments in this location to support both the positive transformation of this area, and wider growth goals, is reiterated in both the adopted Islington Local Plan and the emerging Local Plan where, in both instances, this Site is allocated for redevelopment and intensification of office uses.
- 2.8. The Site enjoys a PTAL rating of 6b, which is the highest possible rating of public transport accessibility. This is due to the Site's close proximity to several major transport hubs. A new entrance to Old Street station is located immediately adjacent to the Site's western corner, with Northern Line and National Rail services running frequently. Liverpool Street and Moorgate stations are located a short distance to the south, with National Rail and London Overground services, Circle, Hammersmith and City, Metropolitan and Northern line London Underground services running from these locations.

- 2.9. The Site is located within the Bunhill and Clerkenwell Ward. The existing building itself is not statutorily or locally listed and is not located within a Conservation Area. A small part of the Site's public realm on the Southern edge of Cowper Street however lies within the adopted highway located within the Bunhill Fields and Finsbury Square Conservation Area, where public realm enhancements are proposed. With reference to the HTVIA, the building is considered to have a negative contribution to the local character and townscape.
- 2.10. The Site is located near to a number of heritage assets. As illustrated in Figure 2 below, the building is immediately adjacent to the Bunhill Fields and Finsbury Square Conservation Area to the south (as noted above, part of the public realm within the Application red line falls within this) and within a short distance of the Moorfields Conservation Area to the north. Additionally, there are several listed buildings in relatively close proximity to the Site; the most significant of which being the Grade I Listed Bunhill Burial Ground to the south-west; the Grade I, II\* and II Listed Wesley's Chapel complex, the Grade II Listed Central Foundation School for Boys and the Shoreditch County Court to the south; and the Grade II Listed Former Leysian Mission to the north.

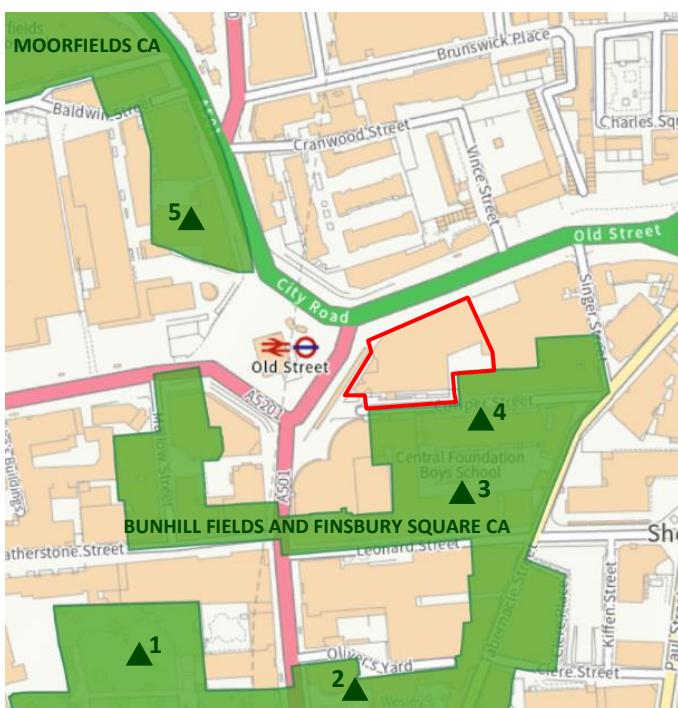


Figure 2 - Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

1. Grade I Listed Bunhill Burial Ground;
2. Grade I, II\* and II Listed Wesley's Chapel complex;
3. Grade II Listed Shoreditch County Court;

4. Grade II Listed Central Foundation School for Boys;
5. Grade II Listed Former Leysian Mission.

### Site Context

- 2.11. The Site is located within the City Fringe Opportunity Area and the Central Activities Zone. Opportunity Areas like this are the capital's reservoir of brownfield land with significant capacity to accommodate new growth and development. In terms of character, it is highly urban, with a diverse mix of land uses within its context which includes a substantial provision of commercial, community and education uses and residential. The Bezier Apartments are within close proximity to the Site on the other side of Cowper Street, and are the nearest residential properties to the Site. This development was completed in 2010, Tower 1 peaks at 16 residential storeys, while Tower 2 peaks at 14 residential storeys (incl. plant).
- 2.12. There is no prevailing built form within the immediate context. The architecture varies from lower scale mansion blocks; to larger industrial warehouses constructed between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, interspersed with more contemporary commercial and residential buildings which typify the area's intensification and regeneration.
- 2.13. In this respect, there is no prevailing or consistent pattern of built massing or scale. Reflective of this location as a prominent confluence between Islington, the City and Hackney as illustrated in Figure 3, there are examples of substantial height within the immediate context. This includes the 14 and 16 storey Bezier Apartments and the 17 storey plus plant (75.3m / 90m AOD) White Collar Factory on the other side of the Old Street Roundabout.
- 2.14. There is further general variety in height of buildings to the northwest along City Road (St Luke's Estate and Moorfields) and to the South along City Road – the Featherstone building and to the east along at the junction between Old Street and Great Eastern Street (18 storeys under construction at the Cylinder). This peaks with the Atlas Building to the north east standing at 40 storeys (incl. plant) in height. The lack of a landmark tall building adjacent to the transport node hinders legibility and identity for this area and results in the perceived 'centre of gravity' being taken away from this strategic location.

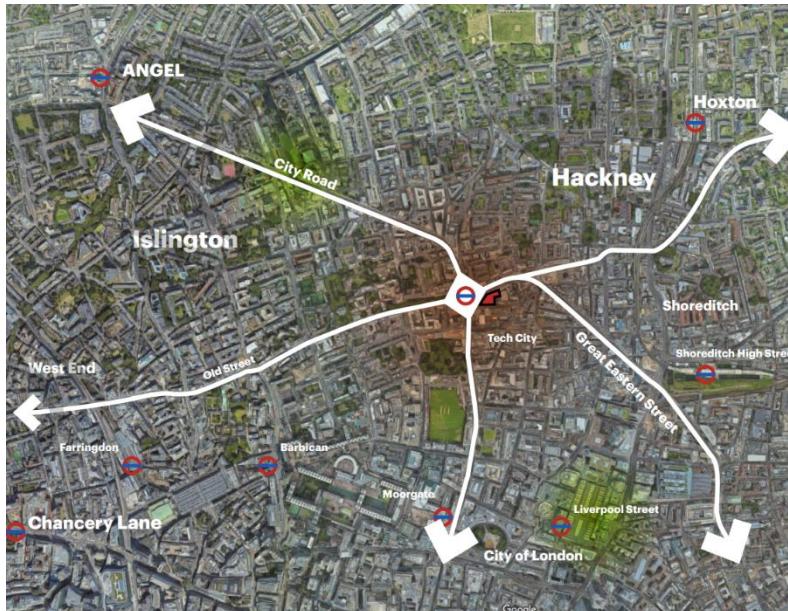


Figure 3 - The Site's Strategic Location as a Confluence

- 2.15. As set out above, the wider area is undergoing substantial regeneration and enhancement. This is typified with the ongoing works to the Old Street Roundabout – which are seeking to turn the former island roundabout into an extensive area of public open space; and enhancement to Old Street Station. The Site will therefore form a key enclosing frontage to this new open space, further highlighting the need for a design which fully befits the primacy of its location.
- 2.16. The Planning Policy Chapter below sets out in detail that both the London Plan and local planning policy directs a substantial amount of growth and regeneration to this part of London. The growth and development of Tech City is seen as being of national importance to consolidate London's position as the European capital of tech. The transformation of Old Street will help assist in meeting this vision. Similarly, there is a unique and substantial opportunity for this Site to play a vital role to the future of Tech City, the growth of jobs and businesses in this hub location and to transform perceptions and the pedestrian experience of this part of London. This opportunity formed a key driver to the Proposed Development.

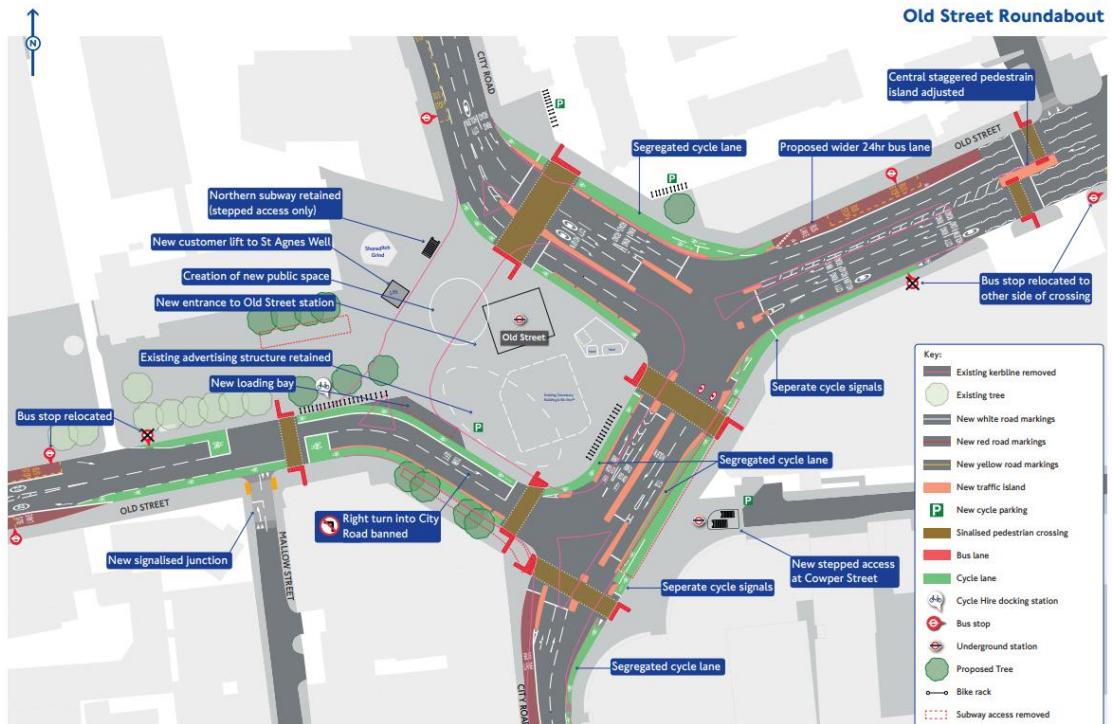


Figure 4 – Old Street Roundabout - Map of Proposed Changes



Figure 5 – Artist impression of Old Street Roundabout Public Domain (Source TfL)

### 3. PLANNING HISTORY

3.1. The Site itself has no relevant planning history beyond minor external amendments. The wider context however is subject to a substantial degree of new development (many of which include tall buildings) that have, or else are in the process of being constructed. These are set out below:

- 250 City Road, located in LBI. Consented under LPA Ref: P2013/1089/FUL, this includes a tower of 42 storeys (155m AOD) in height.
- 102-105 Bunhill Row, located in LBI. Consented under LPA Ref: P2016/3939/FUL, this comprised the erection of a 12 storey extension on top of an existing 16 storey building to provide a 28 storey development.
- The Grade II Listed Buildings of the Central Foundation School to the south of the Site on Cowper Street are currently undergoing enhancement and expansion to increase capacity. This includes the demolition of existing buildings on the corner of Tabernacle Street and Cowper Street and the erection of an 8-storey commercial building. Consented under LPA Ref: P2017/1046/FUL, the commercial element was recognized as causing less than substantial harm to the immediately adjacent listed buildings though as it was an enabling block cross-funding the school's expansion, the benefits were considered to outweigh the harms.





Figure 6 - Renders of Development - Source Hawkins/Brown (2017)

- White Collar Factory, 1 Old Street Yard is located in LBI opposite the Site on the Old Street Roundabout. Whilst occupied by a recently constructed commercial development up to 17 storeys (90m AOD) in height, this supersedes an earlier application (LPA Ref: P061277) for buildings up to 39 storeys (149m AOD) in height. The application was approved by the Secretary of State on the basis that the exemplar design would serve a positive contribution to the context. The prior inspector report noted that whilst the tower would be prominent in many views from within the surrounding conservation areas and the setting of various listed buildings, the effects would not be harmful to the architecture or historic interest of the setting within the site is located. The findings demonstrated that just because the proposal was visible in certain key views the principle was that this did not make the scheme unacceptable when considering the planning balance.



Figure 7 - Completed White Collar Factory

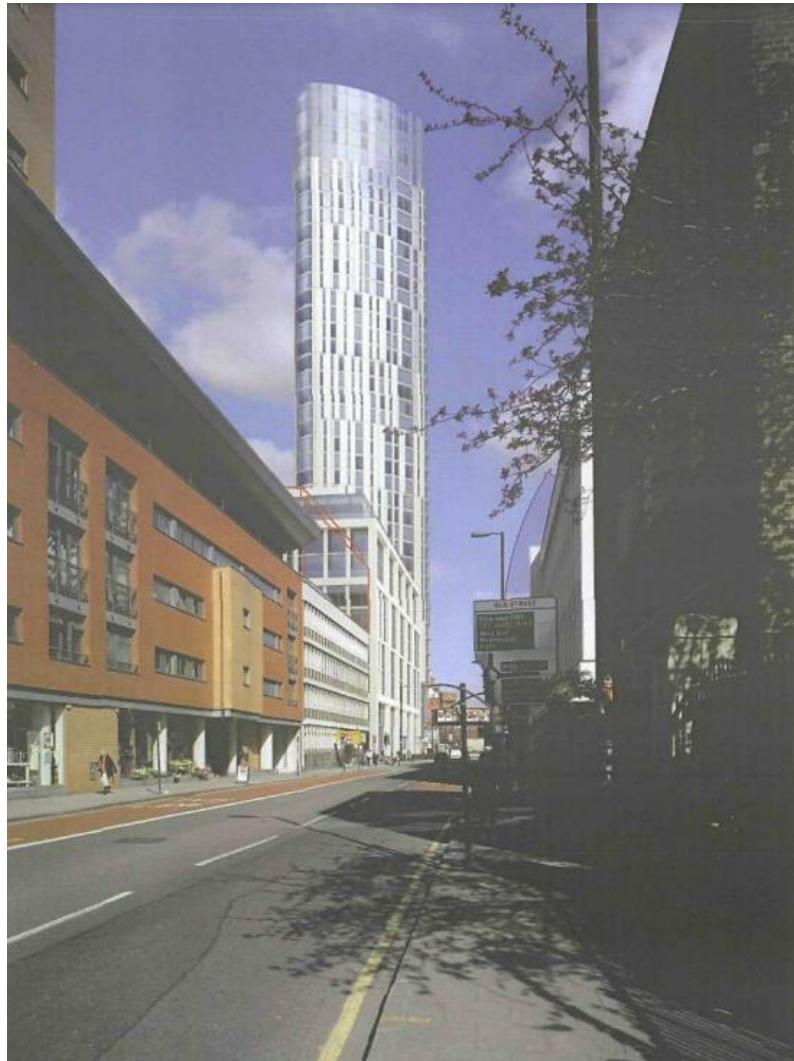


Figure 8 - Approved redevelopment of (LPA Ref: P061277) for buildings up to 39 storeys (149m AOD)

- The Atlas Building at 145 City Road, is located in the London Borough of Hackney. Consented under LPA Ref: 2012/3259 it includes a tower of 40 storeys (incl. plant) (134.5m / 152m AOD) in height and therefore, in spite of it not being located in LBI, it still provides a substantial contribution to the contextual setting of the Site.
- The Bower at 207-211 Old Street, is located in LBI to the north-west of both the Site and Old Street Roundabout. Consented under LPA Ref: P2013/1667/FUL, planning permission was granted for the extensive refurbishment of the site in part comprising the existing building at 207 Old Street, including three additional floors of office space increasing the total height of the building from 74.18m AOD to 82.12m AOD.

- Art'otel Hoxton at 84 - 88 Great Eastern Street, Hackney, is located in the London Borough of Hackney. Consented under LPA Ref: 2009/2405 in January 2011, it includes a part eighteen storey and part six storey building for use as a 352-room Hotel. The GLA Planning Report notes that '*the building is not considered to harm the setting of the surrounding Conservation Area and as set out above, the redevelopment of the car park site which has previously been a negative feature of the Conservation Area, positively enhances it*'.
- Hylo at 103-105 Bunhill Row is located in the LBI approximately 400m south-west of the Site. Consented in 2017 under LPA Ref: P2016/3939/FUL, the scheme involved a 12 storey extension to the original 16 storey building (29 storeys (incl. plant) – 105m), and a 3 to 6 storey extension to the existing podium block up to 7 storeys. The development, completed in 2021, delivered additional office floorspace (including affordable workspace), retail, restaurant/café uses and affordable housing. The Committee Report notes that while the proposal would deliver less than substantial harm to the significance of the adjacent and nearby listed items and conservation areas, the proposal is very finely balanced in planning terms given the substantial public benefits it proposed. *In particular, the scheme would deliver a significant amount of new and upgraded office floorspace in the CAZ and would maximise the provision of affordable housing and affordable workspace, alongside public realm improvements including the creation of new routes through the site.*

#### **4. PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS & CONSULTATION**

- 4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that '*good quality pre-application discussion enables better communication between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community*'. It encourages Applicants to take up pre-application advice services offered by Local Planning Authorities, as well as to engage with their local community.
- 4.2. Accordingly, and in order to shape the Proposed Development in a way that meets demands, addresses concerns and delivers the envisaged suite of benefits, the Applicant has undertaken detailed pre-application consultation with LBI as well as other stakeholders prior to submission of the application.

##### **London Borough of Islington Engagement**

- 4.3. The Applicant entered into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with LBI in August 2022. PPAs are a useful tool in setting out an efficient and transparent process in determining large and/or complex planning applications. They encourage collaborative working between the Applicant and Local Planning Authority in the build up to a planning application being submitted, and can be a focus of pre-application discussions and any potential issues that will need addressing.
- 4.4. The PPA underpinned a comprehensive engagement strategy with LBI that was focussed around a total of 9 pre-application meetings and workshops held with Officers from LBI; alongside three Design Review Panel (DRP) meetings and a Members Briefing. This was a highly collaborative process and discussions focused on the detailed site analysis and intriguing context that a scheme should respond to, the proposed height, massing and design and how this has minimised environmental and visual impacts, the range and type of substantial public benefits that this important landmark building could provide and a wide range of technical and design considerations. The list below provides more information on these meetings.

##### *Pre-application Meeting No. 1 (Kick-Off): June 2022*

- 4.5. Key discussion points included:
  - Comprehensive understanding of site analysis and policy context welcomed;

- The principle to seek to retain the existing building structure was supported with a view that more information would be provided on the existing condition;
- A discussion around what a successful tall building should achieve in this location.
- Tower configurations and initial daylight / sunlight impacts studied;
- Building design strategies explained;
- Public realm aspirations set out;
- Confirmation that a tall building in this location would be assessed against emerging Local Plan Policy DH3.

*Pre-application Meeting No. 2 (Massing and Townscape): July 2022*

4.6. Key discussion points included:

- Public Realm research and analysis. Proposed improvements presented;
- Massing Strategy explained with officers appreciating the level of detailed analysis and consideration that has gone into informing the proposed profile;
- More information required on how the design has evolved;
- Initial Set of white massing in townscape views were discussed;
- Lowndes House identified as a key asset to consider;
- Greater understanding required in relation to the impacts of the proposed building height compared to existing and a lower theoretical building.
- Folded facade concept presented as a method of providing visual interest and passive solar shading;
- Contextual materiality presented with details provided on how this will inspire the Proposed Development's façade.

*Pre-application Meeting No. 3 (Public Realm): August 2022*

4.7. Key discussion points included:

- Welcomed the Great Room concept, with a requirement that more detail be provided in terms of how it would operate;
- Research of the local context from a landscape and access perspective;
- Public realm design and colonnade principles set out;
- Initial design response presented;
- Discussion on cycle parking, servicing and vehicular access;

- Greater understanding of the proposed planning benefits of the scheme need to be understood.

*Pre-application Meeting No. 4 (Design Workshop): August 2022*

4.8. Key discussion points included:

- Additional context provided on heights rationale;
- Façade Expression and terracotta materiality shown to respond to adjacent conservation areas;
- Massing refinements to the building's multi-fronted façade presented;
- Agreement from LBI that the massing changes represented an improvement sufficient for the design to be ready for the first DRP.

*DRP No. 1: September 2022*

4.9. The presentation for this was structured around communicating the key guiding principles of the Proposed Development, alongside wider design and sustainability approach. Specific feedback included:

- Recognition of the slenderer profile at top of tower which allowed for an increase of green terraces;
- Addition of horizontal shading would be required on the southern façade as currently it appears that there is a lot of glazing;
- Daylight changes to school and surrounding sites would need to be assessed to support the heights;
- Questioned if there should be a variation in architectural language between podium and tower in order to provide better visual separation;
- The proposal should avoid harming residential quarters north of Old street
- Improve solid to glass ratio to meet energy goals;
- Ground Floor circulation and entrances need to be further developed and clarified.
- Need a wider understanding in regard to heritage impacts and the full set out townscape views should be considered in the next DRP. Initial concerns were raised in regard to potential impact from the Honourable Artillery Company ('HAC') Ground and/or Lowndes House.

*Members Briefing: October 2022*

4.10. The Proposed Development was then presented and discussed with LBI Local Councillors. The proposal was received positively, though key feedback included:

- The ratio of solid façade to glazing should be increased within the tower to ensure it is read as a more positive asset within the townscape;
- The ground floor uses should be relevant for the use of and appeal to the local community;
- A comprehensive environmental sustainability approach should be intrinsic to the scheme;
- Height should be well informed and justified within its context.

*Pre-application Meeting No. 5 (Response to DRP / Members Feedback): October 2022*

4.11. Key discussion points included:

- Officers recognised the success of the lower levels though queried the façade approach at the “back” and whether mirroring the front elevation is the correct design response;
- Rendered townscape views presented;
- Officers considered that the heritage impacts were localised given the scale of the development. At this stage it was considered the visibility would likely result in less than substantial harm with any resulting harm likely to be localised. This harm would need to be balanced against the planning benefits of the proposal;
- Greater clarity was provided on how the Proposed Development meets LBI’s guidance on tall buildings;
- A first draft of the planning benefits package was presented to Officers, which was welcomed.

*Pre-application Meeting No. 6 (Sustainability): December 2022*

4.12. Key discussion points included:

- Officers welcomed discussions on energy credentials at this stage in the project;
- Details provided on identifying the extent of structure retention;

- Appreciation that the extent of structure to be retained was an ongoing process.  
Retaining a high proportion of public fabric and the resulting reduction in loss of embodied carbon would be an important benefit of the proposal;
- Note that details of circular economy and embodied carbon would be required with any final application;
- Queries raised on connection to existing District Heating Network;
- Officers noted it would be useful to obtain details of drainage and ecology infrastructure.

*Pre-application Meeting No. 7 (Public Realm and Landscape): December 2022*

4.13. Key discussion points included:

- City Road public square designs were presented. . This was welcomed. It would help soften the built interface it creates;
- Pocket Park design presented for Cowper Street, which was welcomed by Officers;
- Cowper Street shared surface and its interface with the Proposed Development introduced and discussed in detail;
- More clarity provided on the use of the Great Room and how it would operate;

*Pre-application Meeting No. 8 (Heights and Townscape): January 2023*

4.14. Key discussion points included:

- Recognition was given by Officers on the number of other tall buildings within the immediate context and the need for a District Landmark in this strategic location;
- Impacts on Lowndes House were further explored through visuals and a animation;
- The proposed scale was reduced in height, which was acknowledged and welcomed by officers.
- Simplified & reduced width of South Facade with additional setbacks provided;
- Wall type design development and rationale presented;
- Materiality concept options discussed and direction agreed.
- Agreement from LBI that the façade changes were far enough advanced sufficient for the design to be ready for DRP 2.

*DRP No. 2: January 2023*

4.15. The presentation for this was structured around responding to the specific queries raised by the DRP 1. Specific feedback received in response includes:

- The ground floor and public benefits of the proposal were explained in greater detailing, including the collaboration with LBI.
- Welcomed the wider public realm enhancements proposed.
- Suggestion that the top of the building still required further refinements;
- The richness of architectural language is a positive step though this should be strengthened further as a justification on height;
- The solidity of the building should be increased in particular views where possible.
- Podium design should be better articulated to ensure it is read as a standalone feature.
- The Panel agreed that it makes sense to have a ‘marker’ building in this location and it does not necessarily need to adhere to the prescribed 106m. The current proposal acts more as a marker.
- The majority of the panel supported a height that exceeded 106metres and stated that the focus should be on ensuring the proposal is elegant, expressive and exceptional.
- There are notable impacts on heritage impacts that LBI will need to consider in relation to the public benefits.

*Pre-application Meeting No. 9 (Transport / DRP Feedback): February 2023*

4.16. Key discussion points included:

- Support of the finer detail added to facade in order to add solidity and provide another level of architectural detail;
- Route through building welcomed;
- More details requested on the on-street servicing arrangements;
- More details required on access arrangements for mobility impaired users and wider pedestrian comfort.

*DRP No. 3: March 2023*

4.17. The presentation for this was structured around responding to the specific queries raised by the DRP 2. Specific feedback received in response includes:

- Response to the DRP 2 comments on refinements to the crown of the building, architectural language, and podium design reading;
- Further detail provided around the wall types at the base of the building;
- A more detailed suite of benefits provided.

**GLA Engagement**

4.18. The information presented to DRP 1 and Pre-Application Meeting no.5 was presented to the GLA in November 2022. Formal feedback was received on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023, with the principle of the proposal considered acceptable in strategic planning terms with regards to the objectives of the CAZ and the land uses proposed. Notwithstanding this, the feedback noted that any future application should demonstrate any heritage impacts arising and how these impacts would be outweighed by the public benefits directly associated with the scheme.

**Historic England Engagement**

4.19. Comprehensive discussions were had with Historic England both to agree the existing heritage assets for assessment; and the key views to be analysed. This culminated in a pre-application meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023 where the design rationale of the Proposed Development and its impact in key views was comprehensively discussed.

4.20. The discussion focused on the pedestrian experience of London and has this varies throughout this location with contrasting tall buildings in the background to older buildings. It was agreed that further viewpoints should be considered within the HAC grounds and that the Bunhill Fields view should be a rendered visual, rather than wireline.

**Public and Stakeholder Engagement**

4.21. As set out in more detail in the submitted Statement of Community Involvement, a comprehensive communications strategy was employed throughout the pre-

application process to ensure that the concerns and demands of local residents, businesses and amenity groups were taken into account. Consultation activities included:

- Letters sent to key local stakeholders, which included 11 political stakeholders and 13 local groups, businesses and residents' associations.
- Two separate newsletters distributed to more than 2,500 addresses around the site which included a summary of key information about early design proposals; public consultation; and key contact details for the project team.
- The launch of a dedicated consultation website [www.99cityroad.info](http://www.99cityroad.info). This introduced the proposals through a 'Virtual Exhibition'; explaining how to provide feedback and setting out how to contact the team.
- Two 'on-the-street' engagement sessions with local residents and people working in the area; encouraging them to provide their feedback on the early proposals for the site.
- A public exhibition was held close to the site at Wesley's Chapel on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022, giving local residents the opportunity to speak to members of the project team and learn more about the proposals.
- A press release was published in both the Islington Gazette and Hackney Gazette on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022, sharing the key elements of the proposals for the site and encouraging people to visit the virtual exhibition and leave their feedback.

4.22. Overall, the feedback received throughout the public consultation process was supportive of the proposals for the site. There has been particular support for the publicly accessible ground floor and the improvements that the development would make to the public realm, including more greenery and the widening of the pavement on Cowper Street.

4.23. Where concerns were raised, they predominantly related to the height of the Proposed Development, with some local residents worried that it would impact their daylight / sunlight.

- 4.24. The Applicant has addressed these concerns within the submitted Application where possible through the following design outcomes:
- Reducing the height of the building from its original iteration and
  - Setting back the building to improve pedestrian experience alongside City Road and creating green spaces within the ground floor; and
  - Pushing back the existing building line to provide greater breathing space to the properties to the south.
- 4.25. The Applicant has demonstrated their commitment to being a good neighbour in Old Street. As explained in supporting documents and later in this Planning Statement, the sunlight and daylight levels are considered acceptable and to some properties are enhanced given the reduced footprint from existing and the sensitive approach to design and massing.
- 4.26. A particular aspect of the public engagement strategy involved liaising with the Bezier Apartments (as the nearest residential properties to the Application Site sharing servicing access from Cowper Street) and the Central Foundation Boys School to the south. As above, despite extensive consultation and wide distribution of newsletters and flyers, very few people shared any serious concerns with the proposals.

## 5. APPLICATION PROPOSAL

- 5.1. This section summarises the Proposed Development. Full details are provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and Proposed Drawings prepared by KPF Architects.
- 5.2. The proposed scheme comprises the retention of the majority of the existing 9 storey structure, where demolition is proposed only to those areas specifically required to achieve the wider design and construction aspirations. This is a significant sustainability benefit of the proposal that will reduce the embodied carbon of the proposal. It has been facilitated through the use of cutting edge technology and an innovative design. The retained floorspace would then be comprehensively refurbished and the existing atrium used as a new core to support a tall building that includes 26 storeys constructed above the existing building. As a whole, the building would embody wellness principles and exemplary sustainability credentials.
- 5.3. The existing building is wholly in office use. The Proposed Development, however, would deliver ground floor community and retail floorspace with a net uplift of high-quality office floorspace to a Category A standard; which would include affordable workspace.

### Description of Development

- 5.4. The Proposed Development comprises:

*Partial demolition and redevelopment to erect a building up to 35 storeys (plus basement), comprising increased office floor space (Class E[g]); commercial floorspace (Class E); a multi-purpose flexible space (Sui Generis); flexible Commercial / Community Uses (Class E/F1); alterations to and formation of new landscaping, public realm, plant, cycle storage, servicing and delivery space and other associated works.*

The proposed development is for majority retention and extension of the existing building to create a new mixed-use office-led building up to 35 storeys in height (169.26m AOD and 151.66m above Cowper Street ground level) with further basement below. It will provide the following:

- 59,907sqm (GIA) of high-quality Class E (g) office floorspace which would include a provision of affordable workspace;
- 210 sqm (GIA) of Class E (a) cafe floorspace;
- 222 sqm (GIA) of Sui Generis (Great Room) floorspace;
- 344 sqm (GIA) of Class E / F1 community space;
- 236 sqm of Class E / F1 Public Link from Cowper Street through to Old Street;
- The delivery of a dedicated off-street servicing yard accessed via Cowper Street;
- The provision of a dedicated cycle parking and end of trip facilities comprising showers and lockers;
- The provision of 1no. accessible car parking space in Cowper Street;
- The provision of high-quality landscaped roof terraces and expansion of the ground level public realm (by way of localised floorplate demolition) incorporating enhanced hard and soft, achieving an Urban Greening Factor score of 0.306 compliant with London Plan (2021) standards;

## Land Use

### *Office*

- 5.5. The proposal is for the office-led redevelopment of the Site, intensifying the office (Class E(g)) land use already located at the Site in line with adopted Finsbury Local Plan Allocation BC9 and emerging Clerkenwell and Bunhill Area Action Plan Allocation BC25.
- 5.6. The existing 9 storey building comprises a total of 21,667sqm (GIA) of floorspace which is wholly in office use. The refurbishment and extension will deliver a total of 64,873sqm GIA of floorspace, of which 59,907 sqm GIA comprises Class E(g) floorspace. This includes the 429sqm ground floor lobby though excludes the wider back of house and shared servicing areas. This would contribute positively towards LBI's need for additional office floorspace
- 5.7. The office floorplates are designed to be flexible and adaptable to ensure they are suitable for a range of tenants. Each office floorplate has been designed with genuine efficiency and sustainability in mind; with generous floor to ceiling heights; copious amounts of natural sunlight and daylight; and a façade articulation which provides natural passive shading and ventilation.

- 5.8. Alongside the office floorspace and by virtue of the stepped design of the tower element, a total of 1,454sqm of amenity space is provided for use by office tenants in the form of roof terraces. This will further advance wellness initiatives whilst providing opportunities for greening and ecological enhancement.

#### *Affordable Workspace*

- 5.9. The affordable workspace element of the proposals represents a significant quantum of floorspace, comprising 10% of the office uplift. This will be provided at peppercorn rent in accordance with the draft Local Plan. The affordable workspace will be finished to the same Cat-A standard as the market office floorspace and is intended to function alongside, sharing the internal and external amenity spaces.
- 5.10. The Applicant is committed to working further with LBI's Inclusive Economy team over the course of the determination period to ensure the best possible quality of affordable workspace is delivered.

#### *Café Floorspace*

- 5.11. At present, the building is in wholly office use with no active facades and no publicly accessible floorspace. It is critical that the Proposed Development remedies this current issue and gives back to the wider community and provides engaging and interesting frontages in such a well-visited and prominent location.
- 5.12. The Proposed Development includes a 210sqm café (Class E) on the southern frontage onto Cowper Street. This will introduce positive permeability and an active frontage along Cowper Street. It will carefully link to the Great Room and complement the Pocket Garden that is being created establishing a retail offer to those living and working in close proximity to the Site, as well as to those working at upper levels within the building itself, making a valuable contribution to the local area.

#### *Pedestrian Link*

- 5.13. At present, the existing building presents a large degree of severance in the public realm. Whilst positioned at a central location within a very busy context, it provides no through-routes or relief.

- 5.14. The Proposed Development recognises this and provides a new 236sqm Public Link that would connect City Road in the north to Cowper Street to the south. This substantial commitment and benefit is provided in response to the LBI officers and DRP feedback about the importance of creating a new route. This would connect the below referenced Community Space and Office Lobby, to the Café, cycle store and wider internal circulation – maximising accessibility and addressing a key desire line in this part of Old Street.
- 5.15. Whilst primarily a pedestrian and cycle connection through the building, it also serves as a space in its own right for informal community events and exhibitions. It is therefore being applied for as a Class E / F1 Use.

#### *Community Space*

- 5.16. On the north frontage providing an active façade onto City Road is a 344sqm Community Space (Class E / F1). This will be a programmable, fully flexible space for use by residents, businesses and members of the wider community.
- 5.17. In this respect, an engagement strategy has been ongoing as part of the pre-application process to understand the wider needs of the local community and to commence shaping relationships with those groups who would make the best use of it. The use and tenant for this space is actively being discussed with LBI to maximise the social value impact. It will be offered at peppercorn rent.

#### *The Great Room*

- 5.18. A fundamental principle of the Proposed Development is to strongly embed it within its context by way of softening its interface with the public realm.
- 5.19. Whilst the building will become the heart and focal point of an entrepreneurial and creative tech community, it is also imperative that the building becomes part of the identity of Old Street for residents and local groups. A key aspect of that vision is the delivery of the Great Room, which is envisaged as an informal extension to the wider public realm.

- 5.20. The Great Room would have a GIA of 222sqm and; by virtue of its programming to be completely flexible; would be suitable for events and functions; alongside more ad hoc food and drink based activities and as a wider public realm extension for informal public amenity. It is therefore being applied for as a Sui Generis Class Use. Further details of the Great Room are set out in this Planning Statement and other supporting documents.

### **Design and Scale**

- 5.21. The design of the scheme has evolved substantially over the course of the comprehensive pre-application process comprising 9no. design-based meetings and workshops with LBI Officers, and 3no. DRP meetings. The design team and officers have maintained a collaborative and constructive dialogue throughout this time and the feedback received to date has informed the proposals now subject of this application. The full details in relation to both Design and Access can be found within the DAS prepared by KPF and submitted in support of this application.
- 5.22. As set out in these submitted documents, the building's final form, scale and materiality has been fully influenced by its context, both at the lower levels by way of the base podium element; and within the wider townscape by way of the tower element.
- 5.23. At ground level, the existing building presents negatively within its context – comprising long dead frontages and little in the way of visual interest. The design rationale at lower level therefore has been to soften and transform this relationship through the maximisation of open frontages, active uses and large glazing. Along the north façade at Old Street, where currently the public realm is narrow and low quality, the building line has been set back to create an extensive colonnade.
- 5.24. The building articulation on the primary roundabout elevation has been set back with a view to both increasing the proportion of accessible public realm, and creating and a strong sense of arrival to the Great Room. Full height doors will allow this space to be fully open to members of the public and has its basis in the warehouse typology so prevalent in the area, which generally comprise of open bases for furniture showrooms and more solid upper floors where the workshops were located.

- 5.25. Along Cowper Street to the south, further active frontages are proposed by way of a new café – set back beneath an overhang above in order to provide natural shading and “spill out” space.
- 5.26. Above the ground floor uses and within the wider base podium element, transparency and visual reduction through articulation have been key. Large windows and folded facades provide a cohesive identity to this element, rooting it firmly in its context and providing a visually interesting frontage within closer views. The wider cladding would be terracotta, which relates visually back to the traditional industrial character of its context. At the podium’s eastern side, a blank façade is proposed to preserve the development potential of the adjacent site. However, in advance of any redevelopment in this location, there are identified opportunities for a cohesive public art strategy to be implemented, such as on this flank elevation. This is another public benefit of the proposal.
- 5.27. Whilst the base podium is heavily articulated on all facades to ensure a positive interface with the surrounding streetscape, its prevailing height is 9 storeys (54.96m AOD) which is lower than the massing of the existing building.
- 5.28. Above the 9 storey base podium element, the tower extends up by a further to 26 storeys to complete the total building height of 35 storeys (151.66m). The tower has been designed with the same materiality as the base but with varying levels of articulation and shoulders which have the dual benefit of not only providing rooftop space for external terraces; but also visually reduces the massing of the building in wider views. The use of folding within the upper storey facades allows the relationship between transparency and solidity to vary depending on the location of the viewer. This adds further visual interest to the building’s massing and ensures that, from wherever the view is located, the building takes on a different appearance.

### **Access**

- 5.29. As set out in more detail in the Design and Access Statement, transparency and with connection to the wider public realm has been the underpinning factor in the configuration of the base podium element.

- 5.30. The primary entrance to the office floorspace is achieved from the north west corner by way of the Office Lobby. There is a secondary entrance into the Office Lobby from the Pedestrian Link.
- 5.31. The café, being located on the southern façade, is accessed direct from Cowper Street and also from the Great Room – with the Great Room similarly benefiting from its own independent access by way of large doors direct onto a new open space on Old Street. The double height portal fronting the Great Room announces its position as the main public face of the building.
- 5.32. For cycle users, access to the long-stay cycle parking provided at basement level can be achieved through the Pedestrian Link that passes through the building.
- 5.33. Within the building, there are a total of 15no. passenger lifts, 2no. goods lifts, a cycle lift, an evacuation lift and a separate lift in the loading bay. This sits alongside 3 individual stair cores. Combined, this ensures that, rather than just meeting the minimum standards set out in the Building Regulations Approved Document Part M, in which compliance in itself is insufficient, best-practice guidance from BS8300-2018 ‘Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment’ has been incorporated.

### **Transport**

- 5.34. Full details in relation to transport and highways matters are detailed within the Transport Assessment, the Framework Travel Plan, and the Delivery and Servicing Plan prepared by Steer and submitted in support of this application.
- 5.35. As set out in the above, the existing building comprises a total of 30 cycle spaces and 15 car parking spaces within the basement. The proposed development seeks to remove these car parking spaces to ensure the Development is car free – with the exception of a single DDA compliant parking bay on Cowper Street.
- 5.36. In terms of cycle parking, a total of 881 long-stay spaces are provided in a secure internal store within the building’s basement. As part of this, 176 spaces will be provided as Sheffield Stands for use by non-standard bikes. Commensurate with this cycle parking provision, best in class end of trip facilities comprising lockers and shower facilities will also be provided.

- 5.37. In relation to short stay, a total of 40 spaces are proposed within the streetscape around the building, located in visible and heavily overlooked locations. This is in addition to the substantial provision of cycle hire stations within close proximity to the Site.
- 5.38. As set out above, there is an existing entrance to Old Street Station on Cowper Street. This has been fully integrated into the proposed wider landscape strategy to ensure accessibility and pedestrian capacity around its entrance are maximised.
- 5.39. In terms of servicing and deliveries, as is the situation at present, access to the servicing yard will be retained off Cowper Street. It has been designed to ensure that vehicles can both enter and leave the yard in forward gear – with the wider landscaping across Cowper Street designed to minimise potential vehicle / pedestrian conflict.
- 5.40. A further consideration in this respect was the collaboration required with the Central Foundation School (particularly around its starting and finishing times when children and parent movements are likely to be high) and the Bezier Apartments who also use Cowper Street for access and servicing. More details on the wider strategy can be found in the submitted Transport Assessment and Delivery and Servicing Plan.

### **Public Realm and Landscape**

- 5.41. Presently, the public realm around the base of the building is poor with the building itself presenting a negative interface. In collaboration with the wider public realm works around Old Street to create a generous provision of outdoor public amenity space on the existing roundabout, the Proposed Development has therefore been designed to “plug in” to these works.
- 5.42. A key strategy in this respect was a net reduction in the building’s built footprint, with the prevailing building line being setback to the north and west as a result. This has facilitated the creation of a wider pavement to the north along City Road, which will be sheltered beneath a generous colonnaded arcade. As an area of relief away from the road, this will encourage a greater degree of interaction from passers-by, whilst also providing shelter to the office lobby.

- 5.43. To the west, the existing building line was irregular and was further fronted by a provision of low quality, inaccessible landscaping. The pulling back of the building line in this location has facilitated the creation of the “Great Room”, where the underpinning principle is accessibility and transparency – with a view to this representing an informal extension of the public realm.
- 5.44. Whilst the building line to the south remains as existing, the wider landscaping strategy has been enhanced to soften the currently highly defensible planting strategy and better encourage passive surveillance and façade activity.
- 5.45. Cumulatively, within the application area there is a total public realm of 418sqm. This comprises 135sqm of accessible space and 283sqm of non-accessible space (which takes the form of raised planters and walled areas). Given the reconfiguring of the built footprint as set out above, the 418sqm of public realm will increase to 692sqm – of which 640sqm will be accessible and 52sqm non-accessible. This is a net uplift of 505sqm of accessible and landscaped open space which would connect into the wider Old Street public realm enhancement to create a cohesive, high quality streetscape.
- 5.46. At the upper levels of the building, by virtue of the articulated of the facades a total of 1,454sqm of outdoor terraces are proposed for use by the office tenants. These spaces will be heavily landscaped with a mix of intensive and extensive green roofs.
- 5.47. Combined, the ground level and terrace landscaping will deliver a total of 127 new trees (7no. at ground level and 120no. at terrace level), enhanced SuDS capacity and a substantial net increase in ecology and biodiversity. In this respect, the Urban Greening Factor generated would be 0.306.

### **Energy and Sustainability**

- 5.48. The creation of an energy efficient and sustainable building has been an underpinning factor through the design evolution of the project. Key to this is the retention of the majority of the built structure of the existing building in the interest of minimising embodied carbon outputs. Whilst works are still ongoing in this respect, it is envisaged that the majority of the existing structure can be retained.
- 5.49. The design itself similarly reflects the energy and sustainability led approach – with the articulated facades providing natural shading and opportunities for passive

ventilation. In this respect, a minimum of 20% of building materials will comprise of recycled or reused content with a view to further minimising embodied carbon outputs and achieving the aspirational embodied carbon target of <600kgCO<sub>2</sub>/m<sup>2</sup> (GIA) for A1-A5 emissions.

- 5.50. The Proposed Development as a whole will be SmartScore accredited “Platinum”; Well Core “Gold” as a minimum (with an aspiration for “Platinum”); and achieve BREEAM Outstanding for the office floorspace and BREEAM Excellent for the café and community floorspace.
- 5.51. Taking into account regulated emissions, the proposed development will comply with Part L 2021 on-site using SAP 10.2 carbon factors. This is equivalent to an overall 46% improvement over Part L 2013 on-site using SAP 10 carbon factors, and a 40% improvement over Part L 2013 on-site using SAP 2012 carbon factors. In this respect, it should be noted that the GLA “Energy Assessment Guidance Updates – Part L 2021 of Building Regulation” published in June 2022 acknowledges that *“Initially, non-residential development may find it more challenging to achieve significant on-site carbon reductions beyond Part L 2021 to meet both the energy efficiency target and the minimum 35% improvement. This is because the L baseline now included low carbon heating for non-residential developments.”*
- 5.52. Nonetheless, when combined with other energy and resource management strategies, such as a 55% reduction in water usage compared to the BRE baseline, the promotion of sustainable transport methods, wider construction and operational waste reduction techniques, and the net ecological and biodiversity enhancement around the Site, it is considered the Proposed Development as a whole achieves the exemplar sustainability and energy efficiency credentials envisaged.

## 6. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND OVERVIEW

- 6.1. This section of this Statement sets out the national, regional and local planning policy context relevant to the determination of the Application.
- 6.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

### **Adopted Development Plan**

- 6.3. The adopted Development Plan for the purpose of this application comprises the following:
  - The London Plan (2021);
  - Islington Core Strategy (2011);
  - Islington Development Management Policies (2013);
  - Finsbury Local Plan (2013); and
  - City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2015).

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 6.4. The NPPF provides planning policy at a national level and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF sets out the Government's approach to planning matters and is supported by online Planning Practice Guidance. The NPPF was first adopted in 2012, with updated versions in 2019 and a further revision in July 2021. Further, in late 2022 the Government consulted on further reforms to the NPPF associated with the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill. At the time of writing, this consultation has ended however no further updates have been released.

### **Emerging Development Plan**

- 6.5. In line with the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
  - The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
  - The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 6.6. LBI submitted its draft Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for examination in February 2020 and consulted on amendments to the Plan between March and May 2021. The Examination in Public (EiP) took place between 13 September and 1 October 2021. Since these hearings, LBI published further information, including an addendum to the Viability Assessment in respect of affordable workspace. In June 2022, LBI consulted on changes known as main modifications to the draft Local Plan and supporting documents.
- 6.7. In late December 2022, LBI published a summary of responses to the main modifications as well as Council's response for the draft Local Plan, Strategic and Development Management Policies document, Site allocations document and Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan.
- 6.8. The Inspector's Report to the draft Local Plan has not yet been published but is imminent. This will confirm whether the draft Local Plan is sound and if any changes to proposed policies are needed.
- 6.9. Given the advanced stage of the draft Local Plan it is expected to have moderate to significant weight in decision making. It is also possible that the draft Local Plan is adopted during the determination of this planning application. The then adopted policies would then be afforded full weight. Where relevant this Planning Statement and the submission materials have assessed the proposals against both the adopted and emerging development plan.
- 6.10. The emerging Development Plan documents of relevance are:

- Strategic and Development Management Policies - Reg. 19 draft (September 2019), proposed modifications (March 2021) and proposed modifications (May 2021 and June 2022); and
- Draft Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan (September 2019) and proposed modifications (March 2021 and June 2022).

### **Site Designations**

6.11. The adopted and emerging Development Plan for the Site includes the following designations:

*Adopted:*

- Central Activities Zone (CAZ)
- City Fringe Opportunity Area (OAPF) Key Site 9
- Finsbury Local Plan Site Allocation BC25, Inmarsat, 99 City Road (explained in more detail below).
- Archaeological Priority Area: Moorfields (Tier 2)
- Adjacent to (with public realm within) the Bunhill Fields and Finsbury Square Conservation Area
- Opposite Grade II listed buildings (Central Foundation Boys School – 15 Cowper Street and Shoreditch Country Court and Attached Railings – 19 Leonard Street)
- General Employment Area.

*Emerging:*

- Emerging Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan Site Allocation BC9, Inmarsat, 99 City Road (explained in more detail below).

### **Site Allocations**

6.12. Following its inclusion within the City Fringe OAPF as “Key Site 9” within the Old Street Area, the Site is subsequently subject to Site Allocation BC25 in the adopted Finsbury Local Plan. Notably, this allocation recognises that redevelopment of the existing building may be acceptable if it can be demonstrated that the existing building is no longer fit for office purposes. Specific to design, the allocation text notes that tall buildings may be appropriate on this site.

- 6.13. Emerging Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan is considered more relevant than the above as, whilst not formally adopted, it more accurately reflects current aspirations for the Site. In summary, draft Site Allocation BC9 recognises the potential for the existing building to be developed as a district landmark building of up to 26 commercial storeys (106m). As with BC25, redevelopment may be acceptable subject to the condition of the existing building.
- 6.14. In this respect, the supporting text notes that Inmarsat House forms a central part of the Old Street Tech City Cluster, though any height and form must be sensitively designed to ensure it does not detract from the view onto Lowndes House from City Road; and minimises overshadowing and other adverse environmental impacts.
- 6.15. Specific to the wider public realm quality, the allocation recognises that at present this is poor. Refurbishment or redevelopment therefore presents an opportunity to substantially improve the quality of the local environment.

## 7. PLANNING POLICY ASSESSMENT

7.1. This section outlines an assessment of the Proposed Development against the planning policy context identified in Section 6 of this document. Reference is made to other submitted documents where required that may contain further information of relevance, this section is structured as follows;

- Principle of development;
- Land use;
- Design;
- Public Realm;
- Townscape and Heritage;
- Amenity Impacts;
- Wind and Microclimate;
- Transport;
- Energy and Sustainability;
- Flood Risk and Drainage;

### **Principle of Development**

7.2. The Site currently consists of 9-storey office building that is currently the headquarters of Inmarsat. It is prominently located on City Road at its junction with the Old Street roundabout, with frontages onto Old Street to the north and Cowper Street to the south.

7.3. The Site's promotion for redevelopment is established through the OAPF, adopted Local Plan and Emerging Local Plan – where, in all documents, the current low-quality design of the existing building is noted as a missed opportunity. The subsequent adopted and emerging allocations for this Site all speak to an aspiration to create a building of exemplar quality to serve as a district landmark within a much-enhanced public realm.

7.4. The emerging Allocation BC9 recognises potential redevelopment subject to the current condition of the existing building. A key workstream in this respect therefore has been to review the integrity of the existing structure and its capacity to accommodate and meet modern demands. In response to this, whilst a degree of

demolition is proposed to the existing building – primarily in relation to pulling back the existing building lines to increase the provision of public realm; the majority of the structure would be retained with the new height and massing built above. This method would deliver substantial sustainability benefits such as ensuring wider embodied carbon targets can be met; and minimising waste and transport impacts associated with demolition.

- 7.5. The principle of redeveloping the Site for office use whilst retaining the majority of the existing structure is therefore entirely aligned with national, regional and local planning policy and will deliver new growth and office accommodation in a highly sustainable and accessible location.
- 7.6. And while the proposal exceeds the guidance around building height, it is demonstrated through this application that the proposed built form appropriately manages amenity and environmental impacts. In addition, significant public realm improvements around the entirety of the building are proposed, including widened and activated frontages to City Road and Cowper Street and importantly a new public square fronting Old Street Station greatly enhancing the pedestrian experience and safety around the site.
- 7.7. On the basis of the above, the principle of development is established and the Proposed Development is in accordance with emerging Site Allocation BC9.

### **Land use**

#### *Office*

- 7.8. The Proposed Development will provide 59,907sqm (GIA) of high-quality office floorspace, which includes a dedicated 429sqm ground floor lobby.
- 7.9. The NPPF states that an overarching objective of the planning system is to assist in building “*a strong, responsive and competitive economy*” (Paragraph 8a) and that decisions “*should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt*” (Paragraph 81), with “*significant weight*” to be placed on supporting the economic benefits of development (Paragraph 81).

- 7.10. London Plan Policy GG2 seeks to support development on brownfield land, particularly where located in Opportunity Areas and which are well-connected by existing public transport.
- 7.11. London Plan Policy SD5 supports the retention of office space within the CAZ stating that mixed-use development within the CAZ should not lead to a net loss in office floorspace. As stated above, the proposal will deliver 64,873sqm (GIA) of floorspace, which includes 59,907sqm of office floorspace. This will contribute substantially to Islington's office needs.
- 7.12. The London Plan also makes strong reference to Tech City, a nationally significant office location centered on the 'Silicon Roundabout', being Old Street Roundabout (Policy SD5, Policy E1 and Policy E8). Tech City has grown into the established and recognized City Fringe Opportunity Area (OAPF).
- 7.13. In this context, this is a hugely important and significant Site. On a national stage, the expansion of Tech City and the continued business growth in the City Fringe OA have been recognised by both the Mayor and the Prime Minister as being strategically important to the economy of London and the UK as a whole. The aim is to "*consolidate Tech City's position (and the position of London as a whole) as the tech capital of Europe.*" The growth and success of Tech City is therefore of 'national importance'.
- 7.14. This objective has fed into the City Fringe OAPF, which identifies the Site's significant development capacity to support London's critical mass of business services and also the diverse cluster of digital-creative businesses.
- 7.15. More specifically within the OAPF, the Site has long been identified as of key importance to the Opportunity Area being within the 'core growth area' connecting the City Fringe to the City.
- 7.16. The OAPF identifies key development opportunities within several strategic areas of the City Fringe. It states that these locations are of crucial importance to the tech-creative industries, now and as the Tech City cluster expands. Old Street to Shoreditch is identified as a Strategic Development Location and Old Street specifically as a focal point. The OAPF explains that Old Street roundabout needs to fulfil an important role as a high-quality gateway for Tech City, with tailored architecture and public realm.

The Roads Task Force identified that Old Street roundabout has a strategically significant movement and place function. The Site is then identified as a key development site to accommodate this growth and function in the OAPF.

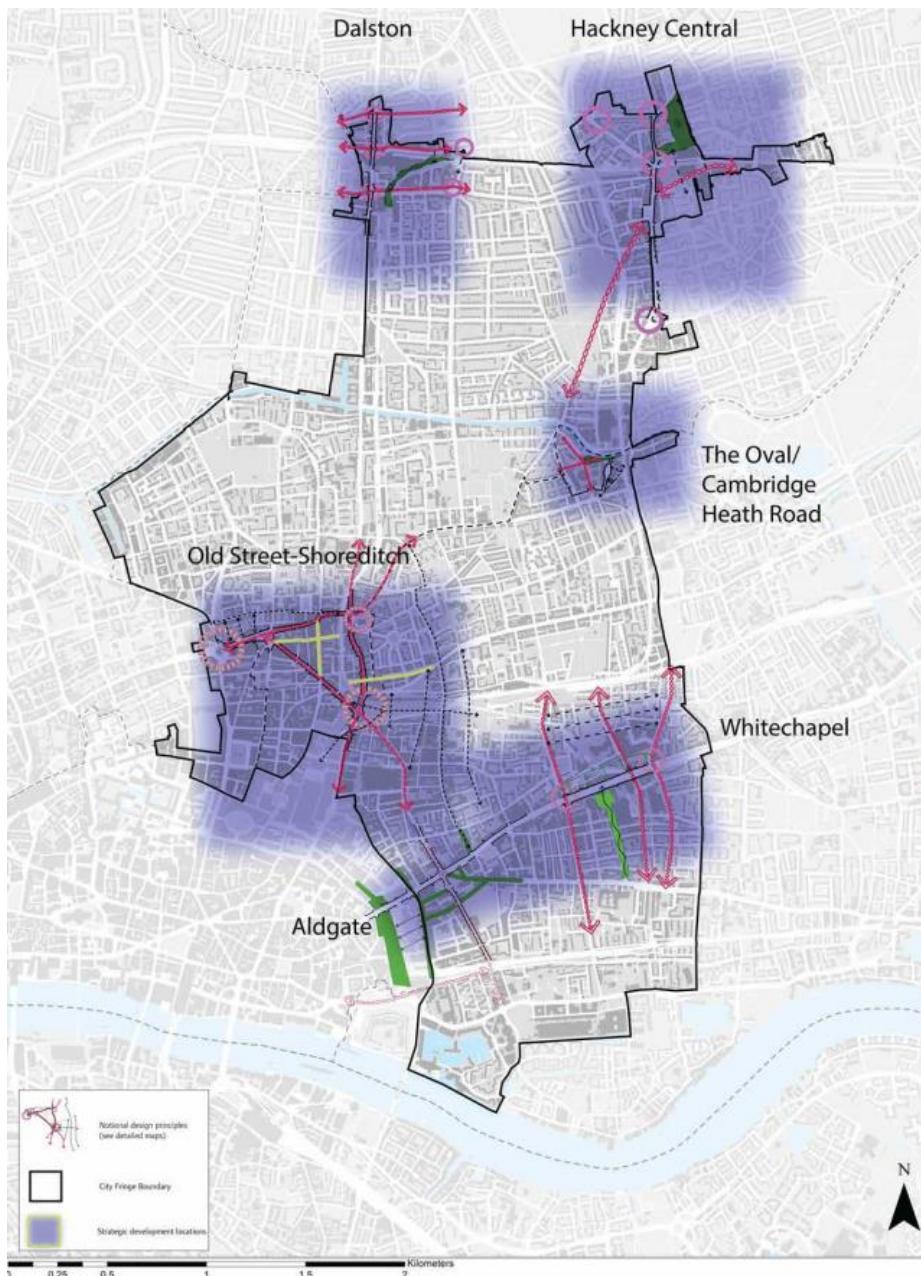


Figure 9 - City Fringe Opportunity Area (OAPF) highlighting Strategy Development locations (blue)

- 7.17. Seventy percent of the borough's employment is concentrated in the draft Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan (Draft AAP) area. This area, and the City Fringe specifically, will play a hugely important role in delivering a strong and robust economic future for the Borough. Draft policy states that the City Fringe OA will have

a specific focus for the tech sector and related businesses. It again requires proposals to ‘maximise’ business floorspace provision.

- 7.18. At a local level, the increased delivery of employment space is also directed to Old Street. The growth and regeneration of Tech City is seen as of critical importance to the future economic success of the Borough. Adopted LBI Core Strategy Policy CS7 encourages office-led mixed-use development that contributes to a diverse economy which supports and complements the central London Economy within Bunhill and Clerkenwell, in which the Site is located.
- 7.19. It is important to note that Policy CS13 in Islington Core Strategy also encourages widening the opportunity of providing more employment spaces, it states that new employment spaces are encouraged, particularly business floorspace “*to locate in the CAZ and town centres where access to public transport is greatest.*”
- 7.20. LBI Development Management Policy DM5.1 states that new business floorspace must be designed to allow for future flexibility for a range of uses, including future subdivision and/or amalgamation. This is further emphasised in emerging LBI Supplementary Development Management (SDM) Policy B2 which also states that all development proposals involving business floorspace “*must allow for future flexibility for a range of occupiers, including future subdivision and/or amalgamation, and provide a range of unit types and sizes.*” In recognition of these policies, the Site will be providing large office floorplates that are flexible and adaptable to create spaces suitable for a variety of future office tenants and users. Each individual floor is capable of being subdivided so they could be multi-tenanted, ensuring maximum flexibility throughout.
- 7.21. The draft Islington Local Plan reflects the emphasis and intent of the OAPF. It highlights that the Borough has an unprecedented high need for additional office floorspace – 443,000sqm up to 2036 in order to meet projected jobs growth. However, Islington’s pipeline of business floorspace has consistently shown a net loss in recent years and the draft Local Plan highlights there is a supply-demand imbalance. It states that the biggest threat to the supply of employment land is the lack of available sites. The draft Local Plan acknowledges that this employment floorspace demand is unlikely to be met, which means “*that the maximization of business floorspace delivery is an absolute priority*”.

- 7.22. The draft AAP highlights the ongoing ‘transformational’ works to the gyratory, where the vision has been to create an “iconic gateway at Old Street” and “reinforces the role of the area as a central London hub”. Development proposals must contribute positively to the character of the area and demonstrate a scale and massing that responds to adjacent public spaces. It identifies Old Street as a strategic location and paragraph 3.5 highlights that the prioritisation of office uses is of “*particular importance in this area due to the international significance of the cluster within the City Fringe Opportunity Area.*”
- 7.23. The draft Local Plan promotes the ‘gateway’ location of Old Street and states that new buildings that surround and front onto the Old Street roundabout must be of outstanding architectural quality, reflecting the gateway location. This Site is then identified as allocation BC9 for the creation of office floorspace.
- 7.24. Draft Site Allocation BC9 in the City Fringe Opportunity Area is defined within the emerging draft AAP. The APP designates the Site as a location that is specifically appropriate for the intensification of commercial space, and emerging LBI SDM Policy B1 states that proposals in the CAZ and Bunhill and Clerkenwell AAP area must maximise the amount of new business floorspace provided to be considered an efficient use of the site. The Site is recognised as an important part of the Tech City Growth strategy.
- 7.25. In summary, the Site forms a critical part of London’s economic growth strategy and has even greater importance to the future success and growth of Islington where there is acknowledged substantial gap in high-quality office floorspace that is unlikely to be met. Sitting at the heart of Tech City and adjacent to a strategic transport hub, it is identified as being the focal landmark of the Old Street cluster; forming a critical part of the vision to accelerate the regeneration of Old Street and the growth of Tech City. It has the potential to bring back the perceived ‘centre of gravity’ to this important part of the Borough and transform both the economic success of Tech City and the pedestrian experience and relationship to Old Street.
- 7.26. The delivery of office floorspace (including affordable workspace discussed below) with its respective generation of 3,900 new jobs in the operational phase of the development; is therefore fully compliant with all levels of planning policy.

*Affordable Workspace*

- 7.27. London Plan Policy E1 states that “*Development proposals related to new or existing offices should take into account the need for a range of suitable workspace including lower cost and affordable workspace.*”
- 7.28. London Plan Policy E3 also states that in defined circumstances affordable workspace should be secured at rents below the market rate for that space and used for specific social, cultural, or economic development.
- 7.29. London Plan Policy E3 goes on to state that consideration should be given to the need for affordable workspace “*in areas identified in a local Development Plan Document where the provision of affordable workspace would be necessary or desirable to sustain a mix of business or cultural uses which contribute to the character of an area*”. Policy E3 supporting paragraph 6.3.2 states that affordable workspace should be secured ‘*in perpetuity or for a period of at least 15 years by planning and other arrangements*’.
- 7.30. Emerging Local Plan Policy B1 seeks to ensure the delivery of an inclusive economy, requiring developments to provide “*a range of workspace types and unit sizes, which are affordable for a range of occupiers*”.
- 7.31. The draft Local Plan Policy B4 has evolved since the original submission in 2019 and we understand it was subject to considerable debate at the Local Plan Examination hearings. The latest main modifications to the policy state that Major developments involving 10,000sqm or more net additional office must incorporate 10% affordable workspace (as a proportion of proposed office and/or research and development and/or a Sui Generis use akin to office/research and development floorspace GIA) to be leased to the Council at a peppercorn rent in perpetuity.
- 7.32. Supporting Paragraph 4.46 states that the policy requirements will apply to net additional floorspace brought forward as part of new development, including redevelopment or extension of existing floorspace. This approach is in line with the Inspectors' note dated 21 December 2021 on emerging LBI SDM Policy B4<sup>1</sup>, (i.e. the

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the Inspectors' note changes references from Use Class B1 to Use Class E(g)(i).

amount of affordable workspace to be provided should be 10% of the additional office floorspace<sup>2</sup>).

- 7.33. The existing Site comprises 21,667sqm of floorspace which is understood to comprise 100% office use. Conversely, the Proposed Development will comprise 64,873sqm (GIA) of floorspace, which includes 59,907sqm of office floorspace. This will contribute substantially to Islington's office needs.
- 7.34. This planning application seeks to be in full compliance with the final version of Policy B4 that is adopted where 10% of the net office uplift will be provided as affordable workspace.
- 7.35. As set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, the proposed affordable workspace will be of an exemplary design quality; benefitting from a dedicated external terrace, allowing for the creation of an easily accessible and enjoyable workspace environment for the affordable workspace occupants. The tenants of the affordable workspace will also benefit from the same level of amenity as the market office occupiers, including the best in class cycle parking and end of trip facilities and access to the office lobby.
- 7.36. This is a substantial quantum of affordable workspace that, as explained in the Health Impact and Economic Regeneration Statement submitted in support of this application, it is expected to double the amount of affordable workspace that is currently available in the Borough and ensure that the building acts as an ecosystem for creativity, innovation and collaboration.
- 7.37. The provision of affordable workspace will also support local businesses and entrepreneurs in growing their business in the Borough - creating new jobs and enabling economic growth. This is therefore a substantial public benefit of the Proposed Development – having the potential to be transformational for the Borough and fully aligned with the vision and objectives set out in the OAPF for Tech City and also the vision set out in the draft Local Plan.

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<sup>2</sup> The worked example in the Inspectors' note states "For example, if a development proposal was providing 1,000 sqm (GIA) of net additional office floorspace, the policy requirement to provide 10% of office floorspace as affordable workspace at a peppercorn rent for a period for 20 years would be applied to 10% of the net additional office floorspace (i.e. 100 sqm)."

### *Retail Floorspace and Community Floorspace*

- 7.38. The Site does not currently contain any existing retail provision, nor any degree of public access or active frontage. The Proposed Development seeks to introduce 210sqm (GIA) of Class E Café floorspace and a further 802 sqm (GIA) of community and event space made up of the Great Room (222sqm – Sui Generis), dedicated Community Space 344sqm – Class E/F1) and a Public Through Block Connection (236sqm – Class E/F1). These uses, together with the widening of the external public realm will create a new active frontage on both major site frontages which will serve to enliven the pedestrian experience around the Site.
- 7.39. The Strategic Principles for Old Street set out in City Fringe OAPF confirm the northern façade of the Site as being a “Key Frontage” where active facades and passive surveillance should be delivered. This goes hand in hand with the wider OAPF Vision of supporting and delivering additional office, retail and leisure facilities. The need to deliver active ground floor frontages is reiterated in both the emerging Site Allocation BC9 and adopted Site Allocation BC25, where the delivery of ground floor uses which provide active facades and improved permeability and legibility should be delivered.
- 7.40. Specific to the delivery of retail and community uses that are not in town centre locations but are nonetheless within the CAZ, emerging Local Plan Policy R3 recognises that such uses may be acceptable where *the scale would not have an adverse individual or cumulative impact on the character, function, vitality and viability of Islington’s Town Centres. In this respect, the Proposed Development’s delivery of a café and community uses would neither affect the business function of the CAZ nor the functioning of other established retail. This is therefore fully compatible with its CAZ location.*

### **Design**

- 7.41. The Design and Access Statement prepared by KPF and submitted alongside this application outlines the design of the Proposed Development in detail and demonstrates how the scheme meets design requirements.

- 7.42. The design of the Proposed Development has evolved through the comments received at pre-application stage with planning and design officers from LBI and from the DRP meetings, and will deliver an exemplary standard of design, optimise the Site to deliver high-quality floorspace, and establish a strong sense of place whilst being sympathetic to the surrounding context.
- 7.43. Development of the highest architectural quality is required at all levels of planning policy. The NPPF states that "*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 helps make development acceptable to communities*" (Paragraph 126).
- 7.44. The entirety of Chapter 3 in the London Plan concerns the need for positive and active design of developments that are compatible with the existing context whilst also being safe, accessible, and attractive.
- 7.45. London Plan Policy D3 states that development proposals should follow a design led approach that makes the best use of land by optimising the capacity of sites, delivering the most appropriate form/land use for the site, and responding to a site's context/capacity for growth.
- 7.46. It should be noted that the existing building at the Site is of a poor design quality and is verging on *detracting* from the townscape and character of its context and the setting of the adjacent Conservation Areas. The design of the Proposed Development is considered to be of an extremely high-standard and seeks to skilfully reduce impacts through its sculptured and slender tower form. The Proposed Development has been developed to respond to its context and the National significance of the Tech City Opportunity Area within which it is located.
- 7.47. The Proposed Development has also been designed to positively respond to its context. The building form is designed to create a slender reading and dynamic from all angles which it is visible as well as responsive to local height datums. The site being located on the squareabout means that it is seen from axial street views from North / South / East / West. A design language of folding is adopted to ensure a proportionally

modulated tower that is also responsive to its immediate context as demonstrated in Figure 10.

A slender face on the North West corner of the massing creates a vertical reading from which the building folds away to allow the building to become more slender towards the top. This creates a dynamic play between the vertical north west facade and stepped natures of the north and west facades.

The tower is located at this corner to ensure a prominent dialogue with the new squareabout. The folds are set out to respond to surrounding context. The retained podium to the east is reduced in height by 2 levels at the street wall to be more aligned in height with Albert House adjacent.

This folding language of the north west is mirrored to the south east to ensure the tower emerges from the immediate context whilst respecting its scale.

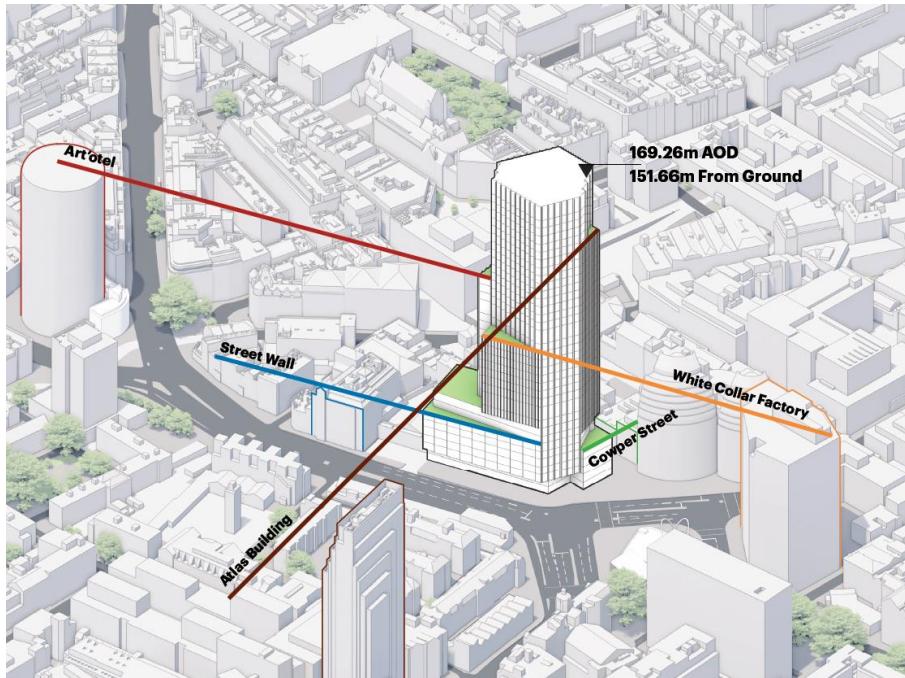


Figure 10 - Axonometric demonstrating how the various elements of the proposal relate to its context

- 7.48. The Proposed Development has responded positively and in accordance with the emerging Site Allocation BC9 in that it provides a district landmark building on the site. As previously noted in this report while the proposal exceeds the guidance around building height, it is demonstrated through this application that the proposed built

form appropriately manages amenity and environmental impacts. In addition, significant public realm improvements around the entirety of the building are proposed, including widened and activated frontages to City Road and Cowper Street and importantly a new public square fronting Old Street Station greatly enhancing the pedestrian experience and safety around the site. The proposal also includes community and events space and a through connection to Cowper Street. These improvements make the development much more welcoming and accessible for both workers and the public in contrast to the existing building which has limited access and appears defensive and unwelcoming.

- 7.49. The design team has undertaken an extensive analysis into the character, urban grain and feel of the surrounding local areas. Particular consideration has been given to how the proposal has responded to the feel, materiality and character of the adjacent Conservation Areas through its contextually sensitive design.
- 7.50. Adopted LBI DMP Policy DM2.1 states that "*All forms of development are required to be of high quality, incorporate inclusive design principles and make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of an area*". Policy DM2.1 goes on to state that for a development proposal to be considered acceptable it must:
- i. *"be sustainable, durable and adaptable;*
  - ii. *be safe and inclusive;*
  - iii. *efficiently use the site and/or building;*
  - iv. *improve the quality, clarity and sense of spaces around or between buildings;*
  - v. *enhance legibility and have clear distinction between public and private spaces;*
  - vi. *improve movement through areas, and repair fragmented urban form;*
  - vii. *respect and respond positively to existing buildings, the streetscape and the wider context, including local architectural language and character, surrounding heritage assets, and locally distinctive patterns of development and landscape;*
  - viii. *Reinforce and complement local distinctiveness and create a positive sense of place;*
  - ix. *sustain and reinforce a variety and mix of uses;*
  - x. *provide a good level of amenity including consideration of noise and the impact of disturbance, hours of operation, vibration, pollution, fumes between and within developments, overshadowing, overlooking, privacy, direct sunlight and daylight, over-dominance, sense of enclosure and outlook;*
  - xi. *not unduly prejudice the satisfactory development or operation of adjoining land and/or the development of the surrounding area as a whole;*

- xii. consider landscape design holistically as part of the whole development. Landscape design should be set out in a landscape plan at an appropriate level of detail to the scale of development and address the considerations outlined in Appendix 12 of this document; and
- xiii. not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on views of local landmarks.”

- 7.51. A more comprehensive assessment of the Proposed Development on design grounds is set out on the section below. However, in summary and in accordance with adopted LBI DMP Policy DM2.1(i) for design to “*be sustainable, durable and adaptable*” and DM2.1 (iii) for design to “*efficiently use the site and/or building*”, the Proposed Development has evolved to embody sustainability principles with the highest possible BREEAM rating ‘Outstanding’ targeted as a minimum for office uses and ‘Excellent’ for Retail and Community spaces, alongside ensuring flexibility is embedded from the outset through the flexibility and adaptability of the proposed floorplates.
- 7.52. The proposal also seeks to achieve sustainability through minimal demolition of the existing structure on site and retention and incorporation of structure into the new development. The Design and Access statement details this further, however Figure 11 provides a summary of how this is achieved.

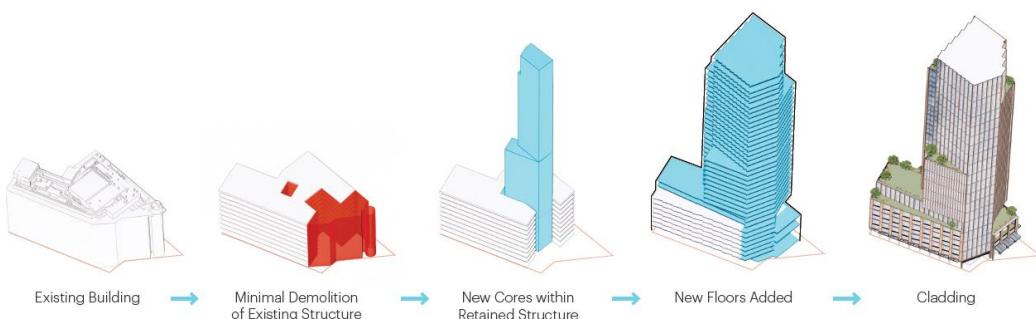


Figure 11 - Structural Retention in Proposed Scheme

- 7.53. In addition, the proposal optimises the density of the Site in line with sub paragraph (iii) of Policy DM 2.1, whilst delivering substantial improvements to the quantum and quality of public realm and improving pedestrian connectivity through the site in accordance with (v) and (vi).
- 7.54. Similarly, in line with sub paragraph (vii) requirements for design to “*respect and respond positively to existing buildings, the streetscape and the wider context*”, the

materials chosen for the exterior of the building and the articulation of these materials have been strongly influenced by the surrounding context of the Site throughout the ‘factory’ and ‘showroom’ typologies. This ensure that the Proposed Development responds positively to the existing context and streetscape rather than competing against it. Further consideration in relation to how the Proposed Development has taken datums and architectural ques from the surrounding context is set out in detail within the supporting Design and Access Statement.

- 7.55. In summary, the Proposed Development is a significant enhancement in design terms compared to the existing building. It will transform the Site in relation to design, public realm, permeability and the general experience of pedestrians in this part of Old Street. It is therefore considered to be of an exemplary design standard, and fully in accordance with London Plan and LBI Policy relating to design.

### ***Height and Massing***

- 7.56. The following section provides a detailed assessment of the proposals in accordance with key policy relating to tall buildings and design, specifically London Plan Policy D9 (Tall Buildings) and emerging Local Plan Policy DH3 (Building Height). This includes discussion on visual impacts, functional impacts, environmental impacts and cumulative impacts as required by each policy. This assessment is supported by a number of supporting documents including the DAS prepared by KPF, the HTVIA prepared by Montagu Evans, the Health Impact and Economic Regeneration Statement prepared by Volterra, and the Pedestrian Level Wind Microclimate report prepared by RWDI. These are referenced below as required.

### **Policy D9 (Tall Buildings)**

- 7.57. London Plan Policy D9 ('Tall Buildings') sets London-wide Policy in relation to the development of tall buildings. It is arranged in three parts as described below:

*Part A (Definitions):*

Explains that Development Plans should define what is considered a tall building. The draft Local Plan confirms this is 30+ metres (which is reiterated in the adopted Local Plan).

*Part B (Locations):*

Explains that Boroughs should determine the locations where tall buildings may be an appropriate form of development. The draft Local Plan identifies the Site as suitable for a tall building and the focal building of the Old Street Cluster. It is also located with the City Fringe Opportunity Areas where growth and high-density development is directed. The Site is therefore considered to be a plan-led tall building location.

*Part C (Impacts):*

Then explains that Development proposals should address a wide range of potential impacts. This includes visual impacts, functional impacts and environmental impacts.

*Part D (Public access):*

Then explains that Development proposals for tall buildings should seek to provide free to enter publicly accessible areas.

7.58. The following section considers each of the impacts noted in Part C and D in detail.

**1) Visual Impacts**

7.59. In accordance with Policy D9 - Part C, the visual impact of the Proposed Development has been carefully considered through the design process and evolution and discussions with LBI and the Design Review Panel. Montagu Evans has advised on the heritage and townscape impacts of the tall building and consider the building has an appropriate district landmark impact. A detailed Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA) has been prepared in support of this planning application and includes an assessment of 32 viewpoints. Each subparagraph of Policy D9, Part C, 1) (Visual Impacts) is reproduced below and considered in subsequent paragraphs respectively.

***(a)(i) Long-range views of the building require attention to be paid to the design of its top. It should make a positive contribution to the existing and emerging skyline and not adversely affect local or strategic views.***

- 7.60. Initial analysis demonstrates that visibility of the building is limited in long distance views. Where the building is visible in long distance views, this is principally viewed in the context of a wider cityscape context containing other tall buildings and modern development of a range of heights. Thus, where the building is visible from a longer distance, the building principally appears as an incidental element of the cityscape, with a modern and varied backdrop and typically with interposing development in the foreground and understood as an element in ‘another’ more distant part of the city. This is a characteristic of the general character of this part of London, with views of more distant tall building clusters on City Road itself, and within the City Cluster.
- 7.61. The HTVIA observes no confluence or coalescence of visual effects with other emerging building clusters in the City Fringe. Additionally, the proposed development does not affect any long distance strategic or local views.
- 7.62. Where the building is visible in longer distance views, it appears as a slender, elegant form sculpted by the building ‘folds’ to provide interest and reduce its apparent mass. This is the outcome of a detailed evolution of the building; the folded form of the building introduces green terraces, which ‘cut-back’ the form at the higher levels, providing a distinctly slender top of the building of well-considered proportions relative to the overall height of the building.
- 7.63. The folded form avoids large areas of blank faces, with the chamfered form of the building visible from all viewing angles, with a plain principal elevation facing on to the roundabout (see below under mid-range views).
- 7.64. The colour and tone of the building will be apparent from longer views, depending on the angle of view; the angled vertical piers provide a more or less ‘dense’ appearance of the facade of the building, combining denser and more transparent angles of the building in a single view, adding interest. The innovative façade treatment balances solidity in appearance with a lighter, more elegant treatment to ensure that the building does not appear overbearing.

***(a)(ii) Mid-range views of the building from the surrounding neighbourhood require attention to its form and proportions. It should make a positive contribution to the townscape in terms of legibility, proportions and materiality.***

- 7.65. The existing Old Street roundabout presents a poor-quality urban environment. The roundabout contains modern development of varying quality. The existing building on the Site is a detracting feature from the environment of the roundabout, and those heritage assets closest to the Site. Modern development on the roundabout itself and in the surrounding streets has stripped nearby heritage assets of their historic context.
- 7.66. The existing Inmarsat building itself has a poor-quality presence and presents a hostile frontage to both the roundabout and Cowper Street (within the Bunhill/Finsbury Square Conservation Area) to the south east. The existing building does not mitigate the gap in the townscape caused by the construction of the roundabout 40 years ago in terms urban design or heritage settings. The Proposed Development will deliver a high-quality replacement building and will perform various important townscape functions, including:
- The removal of the existing unattractive, detracting building;
  - The activation of frontages onto Cowper Street and Old Street and the street space in front facing the roundabout;
  - An improvement to the public realm on all three sides of the building, including the roundabout itself;
  - The improved proportions of the podium shoulder height relative to its surroundings;
  - A well-designed tower of appropriate proportions; elegant, slender and attractive in appearance;
  - High quality detailing, with materiality that reflects the character of South Shoreditch and other prominent buildings in the vicinity;
  - Improved pedestrian links from Old Street, the tube station and South Shoreditch;
  - A highly accessible Site which is therefore a sustainable location for high density development;
  - An appropriate location for a gateway building located at a key public transport interchange, a junction of key North-South and East-West routes, and therefore; and
  - The delivery of a building of a scale sufficient to form a counterpoint to the Atlas Building to the North – a policy requirement which does not indicate a building of

lesser status – as part of a cluster separate from the City Road tall buildings with the site as its focus.

- 7.67. While the orientation of streets and prevailing building height means that the building will not be visible from many locations in the surrounding street network, the building will at times come into view from the dense network of streets and perform a wayfinding function from mid distance locations, especially from within South Shoreditch.
- 7.68. This will be in the context of other tall buildings within the vicinity (such as the Cylinder at Atlas Building), but as a clearly distinct form and the focus of the Old Street roundabout. The careful design and materiality of the building will be more apparent at these closer views, reflecting the materiality of the surrounding area, especially the vernacular character of south Shoreditch.
- 7.69. Mid distance views from Street and the northern part of City Road will take in the adapted podium and improved shoulder height relative to its surroundings. The clear base of the building relates well to its surroundings and assists with the transition of the building to the surrounding streetscape. The building as a destination will be evident in the same views, the active and public facing elements of the building inviting exploration and interaction.

***(a)(iii) Immediate views of the building from surrounding streets require attention to its base. It should have a relationship with the street, maintaining pedestrian scale, character and vitality. Where the site's edges are adjacent to buildings of significantly lower height or parks there should be an appropriate scale transition to protect amenity or privacy.***

- 7.70. Much of the analysis of the building in mid-range views will apply at the immediate range.
- 7.71. The existing building presents a hostile face to the roundabout, Old Street and Cowper Street and the proposal presents a significant opportunity to enhance this immediate setting including that of the conservation area and listed building on Cowper Street. The proposals will result in a significant improvement to the public realm around the

building with public permeability and active uses. Pedestrian links to South Shoreditch from Old Street will be improved.

- 7.72. The retained and reduced podium provides a human scale for the ground level of the building and adopts a bayed form that reflects the grain and character of Old Street and the surrounding area.
- 7.73. As discussed above, the folded form of the façade gives the upper storeys of the building a sculpted and elegant form. Up close, the design of the building presents a narrow elegant ‘face’ onto the roundabout forming the front of the building from top to bottom. The chamfered form reduces the mass of the building from all close-range viewing points and avoids large blank areas of façade. The qualities of the materials and fine materiality.

***(b) Whether part of a group or stand-alone, tall buildings should reinforce the spatial hierarchy of local and wider context and aid legibility and wayfinding.***

- 7.74. The proposal is located at a key townscape and transport node identified in the Local Plan as a location for a tall building forming the focus of a cluster of tall buildings in this location.
- 7.75. The Site is one that is identified through planning policy as one to support significant growth in tech-related employment of strategic and national importance. A tall building in this location is consistent with these objectives and can also deliver the following objectives:
  - A building which engages more effectively with the surrounding context;
  - To reflect its position as a prominent gateway to Islington, at the junction between Islington, the City, Hackney and the West End;
  - To provide an effective connection to Shoreditch;
  - To be an effective marker for the tube station and plaza;
  - An improved public realm to the north and west edges of the site;
  - Improvements to Cowper Street Frontage;
  - A building of exemplary environmental performance, including the reduction of the release of embodied carbon by retaining and reusing as much of the existing structure as possible.

- 7.76. The proposed tall building is distinct from the tall building clusters to the north and through views testing we identify no visual coalescence of the building with other tall buildings in the vicinity.
- 7.77. The proposed building will enhance the legibility of this important node and aid wayfinding from South Shoreditch and provide superior pedestrian connections to Old Street tube station.

***(c) Architectural quality and materials should be of an exemplary standard to ensure appearance and architectural integrity is maintained through its lifespan***

- 7.78. The façade design has been developed to enhance the folded nature of the massing as well as emphasize the slender proportions of the tower. The folded façade provides a view through floor to ceiling glass in one direction and in the other direction glazed terracotta panels create shading from direct sunlight. This condition produces plenty of diffused daylight by reflecting the sun in between interior panels. This Glazed / Solid reading to the folded façade creates a dynamic effect of changing solidity as you navigate around the building. The solid terracotta façade is coloured by taking inspiration of the character of the adjacent furniture warehouse buildings within the south Shoreditch conservation area. The façade has been detailed and materials have been specified to ensure that the appearance and architectural integrity is maintained through its lifespan.

***(d) Proposals should take account of, and avoid harm to, the significance of London's heritage assets and their settings. Proposals resulting in harm will require clear and convincing justification, demonstrating that alternatives have been explored and that there are clear public benefits that outweigh that harm.***

- 7.79. Montagu Evans has undertaken an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of heritage assets. Whilst a small portion of public realm within the Application Site is within the Bunhill and Finsbury Square Conservation Area, the wider Site and built massing is not located within a conservation area – neither does it contain further heritage assets. Thus the potential impact of the development is by virtue of development within the setting of nearby conservation areas and listed buildings.

- 7.80. Careful analysis with the assistance of Miller Hare visualisers demonstrates that the potential impact on heritage assets is predominantly a local one and that the proposed development will appear as an incidental element in a wider cityscape in the setting of more distant heritage assets.
- 7.81. There are a number of heritage assets in the vicinity of the site, which are already experienced cheek-by-jowl with modern development, within a setting which comprises a busy commercial environment, traversed by major transport routes representative of a change from their original historic context. There are taller buildings within the wider spatial context, which form a characteristic backdrop to many locations in the environs of the site.
- 7.82. Well-designed modern buildings can form an appropriate backdrop to heritage assets, providing that they are of sufficiently high quality, in which case they can add interest and quality to a scene by way of juxtaposition and contrast. This is recognised by emerging policy, specifically allocation BC9, which anticipates a building of height (and plainly a 'tall building') that would result in a change in the setting of various assets nearby. The salient consideration in NPPF terms is how that townscape change will affect the significance of heritage assets. Where the significance of an asset in general terms is expressed through their form, architectural qualities and historic associations, setting change would not affect their intrinsic significance.
- 7.83. Thus, unless a major component of an asset's significance arises from its setting, then any resultant harm must necessarily be at the low end of the scale.
- 7.84. We consider that as a matter of principle, a tall building at the height being proposed can be achieved either a) without harm to heritage assets, or b) if harm is identified, the effect of the change to the setting of those assets would result in no more than a low level of 'less than substantial' harm that is capable of being outweighed by other planning benefits, articulated elsewhere in this submission.
- 7.85. There is plainly considerable scope to improve the contribution made by the site to the townscape character of the Old Street Roundabout and its environs through the replacement of the existing building with a development of high quality. This includes the immediate setting of the Site.

7.86. The analysis carried out by Montagu Evans has found that, where the proposed development is visible in the setting of nearby heritage assets, it appears as a well-proportioned, high-quality piece of architecture, in the context of other surrounding modern and tall development.

***(e) Buildings in the setting of a World Heritage Site must preserve its Outstanding Universal Value and the ability to appreciate it.***

7.87. This is not applicable. The building does not affect the setting of any WHS.

***(f) Buildings near the River Thames, particularly in the Thames Policy Area, should protect and enhance the river's open quality and the riverside public realm and not contribute to a canyon effect along the river.***

7.88. This is not applicable. The building does not affect any aspect of the setting of the River Thames.

***(g) Buildings should not cause adverse reflected glare.***

7.89. To consider any potential glare, Point 2 undertook calendar graph solar glare assessments on the likely sensitive receptor locations. These locations are typically nearby vehicle junctions and any train line signally equipment. If any adverse glare is identified as being likely, the design of the façade material (the reflective component of the material), or the design of the massing, can normally be adjusted to mitigate the effect.

7.90. In the context of the proposed scheme, Calendar graph assessments have therefore been carried out at 15 assessment points. This assessment identified that any instances of flare are not considered to be a material concern given they occur well away from road users main field of vision. The report concludes that overall, Solar Glare effects are unlikely to cause a material impact to road users and the overall scale of the effect is considered to be negligible to minor adverse which is not significant.

***(h) Buildings should be designed to minimise light pollution from internal and external lighting.***

- 7.91. To ensure any light pollution from internal and external lighting sources is mitigated, the designers would follow the guidance set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guidance Note 01/20 entitled 'Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light'.
- 7.92. External lighting proposals for the Proposed Development are limited to the public realm inside and around the development; and amenity lighting on the terraces and tower crown. In this respect, all lighting will be designed to minimise light spill with light sources concealed within the architectural / landscape detailing wherever possible.

## **2) Functional Impacts**

- 7.93. The functional impacts are explained in detail in the Design and Access Statement, the Transport Assessment and other supporting documents. Each subparagraph of policy D9, Part C 2) (functional impacts) is reproduced below, considered in subsequent paragraphs respectively.

***(a) Internal and external design, including construction detailing, materials and its emergency exit routes must ensure the safety of all occupants.***

- 7.94. The design, construction and operation of the building will be as such to ensure the safety of all occupants throughout the lift of the building. As part of the application a management plan and fire statement has been provided demonstrating the processes in place to ensure that, in the event of an emergency, occupants can escape safely.

***(b) Buildings should be serviced, maintained and managed in a manner that will preserve their safety and quality and not cause disturbance or inconvenience to surrounding public realm. These should be considered at the start of the design.***

- 7.95. The existing off-street service yard will be retained with sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed uplift to occupancy. The Transport Assessment (TA) presents all relevant trip rate analysis and servicing analysis to justify the requirement for loading bay provision. This has also been discussed with LBI during pre-application discussions.

7.96. A Delivery and Servicing Management Plan (DSMP) has also been submitted with the TA and provides context relating to policy and operation of the servicing strategy. These submitted documents demonstrate how the wider transport narrative has been embedded in the design from the start.

***(c) Entrances, access routes, and ground floor uses should be designed and placed to allow for peak time use and to ensure there is no unacceptable overcrowding or isolation in the surrounding areas.***

7.97. An Active Travel Zone Assessment (ATZA) has been conducted to identify potential constraints regarding access within the existing context of the Application Site. The ATZA identifies specific measures to improve the public realm (where necessary) to mitigate against potential impacts arising from the emerging development proposals. The assessment includes consideration of the pedestrian movement around the public realm including a Pedestrian Comfort Level (PCL) assessment based non forecast movements.

7.98. The results of this have directly fed into the design and layout of the ground floor, which comprises a net increase of 505sqm of accessible public realm and landscaping and vegetation that allow for the suitable channelling of pedestrians through and around the Site – avoiding bottle necks and pinch points. This will transform the pedestrian experience around the Site.

***(d) The capacity of the area and its transport network must be capable of accommodating the quantum of development in terms of access to facilities, services, walking and cycling networks, and public transport for people living or working in the building.***

7.99. The TA assesses the forecast uplift in trips associated with the development proposals, and includes a multi modal assessment of the impact of trips on the surrounding networks. It concludes that there is sufficient capacity within the wider transport network to accommodate the intensification of the Site. The reduction in on-site car parking, and the wider public realm enhancement along City Road, Cowper Street and Old Street will ensure the Proposed Development can operate safely and with no adverse impacts on the wider transport network.

***(e) Jobs, services, facilities and economic activity to be provided and the regeneration potential it might provide should inform the design in order to maximise the benefits and act as a catalyst for further change.***

- 7.100. The Proposed Development will provide a large quantum of office and affordable office floorspace, supporting office jobs for LBI residents, business growth and skills development. The Proposed Development will also include community floorspace, publicly accessible facilities, and much enhanced public realm - the end use of which is expected to be aligned to local community need. The Applicant is considering local partners through which the skills and community benefits of the scheme can be maximised.
- 7.101. A detailed and comprehensive package of benefits the Proposed Development would bring is submitted with the application. Details of these benefits are summarised in the Executive Summary and Conclusion of this report; with more granular details and their respective positive impacts from a regeneration perspective are provided within the submitted Health Impact and Economic Regeneration Statement prepared by Volterra.

***(f) Buildings, including their construction, should not interfere with aviation, navigation or telecommunication, and should avoid a significant detrimental effect on solar energy generation on adjoining buildings.***

- 7.102. The Site with proposed development and luffing crane would peak at approximately 556 feet AMSL so this falls short of where we understand there would be conflicts with aviation / aerodrome operation.
- 7.103. With regards to likely effect on any on solar energy generation devices installed on the adjoining buildings, an assessment can be undertaken following the guidance set out in the Building Research Established (BRE) report entitled "Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: A guide to good practice" (2022).

### **3) Environmental Impacts**

- 7.104. The planning application is supported by a whole suite of technical assessments and reports that outline the limited environmental impact of the Proposed Development. This is summarised below, but the limited impact has been facilitated by an early

understanding and testing on the potential impacts in relation to daylight and microclimate and devising a carefully considered design response. This represents a sound design process. Each subparagraph of policy D9, Part C, 3) (environmental impacts) is reproduced below and considered in subsequent paragraphs respectively.

***(a) Wind, daylight, sunlight and temperature conditions around the buildings and neighbourhood must be considered and not compromise comfort and the enjoyment of open spaces, including water spaces, around the building.***

- 7.105. In the devising of the final design, the impacts of the building on microclimate have been comprehensively assessed with the scale and massing shaped accordingly. In this respect, RWDI have undertaken wind-tunnel testing for the Proposed Development in situ both within the context of cumulative schemes and in isolation. In both scenarios, the assessment did not identify the creation of winds that would be unsuitable for the desired uses i.e., a mix of sitting and standing in public areas. Some occurrences of strong winds were identified within the upper terraces in the building though designed-in mitigation measures will ensure a safe and comfortable environment. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable with regard to wind conditions in and around the site.
- 7.106. From a sunlight and daylight perspective, the impacts of the building on surrounding sensitive receptors have been assessed by Point2. The results have been compiled into the Sunlight and Daylight Report that is submitted as part of the wider application, and demonstrates that its resulting sunlight, daylight (both within the Proposed Development and into surrounding existing windows) and overshadowing impacts are acceptable.

***(b) Air movement affected by the buildings should support the effective dispersion of pollutants, but not adversely affect street-level conditions.***

- 7.107. The Development has been designed to avoid creating a 'street canyon' which may otherwise trap pollutants. In this respect, the design of the Development includes folding terraces and urban greening at different levels which would in turn support the effective dispersion of pollutants and would therefore not adversely affect street-level air quality conditions. More detail in this regard is provided in the Air Quality Assessment provided by Waterman.

*(c) Noise created by air movements around the buildings, servicing or uses should not detract from the comfort of open spaces around the building.*

- 7.108. New buildings can change the way in which wind moves through an area, especially with tall buildings. The impact of this on the comfort in open spaces around the building has been assessed and confirmed as acceptable in the Wind and Microclimate Assessment provided by RWDI. Should it be deemed necessary, they can also do a preliminary assessment as to whether this would result in wind generated noise, taking account of façade and rooftop elements.
- 7.109. Noise from the servicing area would be controlled through a servicing and delivery management plan so as to not adversely impact on the open spaces around the building.

#### **4) Cumulative Impacts**

- 7.110. Policy D9, Part C, 4) (Cumulative Impacts) states:

*(a) The cumulative visual, functional and environmental impacts of other consented and planned tall buildings must be considered when assessing tall building proposals. Mitigation measures should be identified as integral features from the outset to avoid retro-fitting.*

- 7.111. All reports submitted in support of this planning application have considered the visual, functional and environmental impacts of the Proposed Development both in isolation and cumulatively alongside other consented and planned tall buildings, with any respective conclusions and mitigations set out within.

#### **5) Public Access**

- 7.112. This part of policy D9 states:

*Free to enter publicly-accessible areas should be incorporated into tall buildings where appropriate, particularly more prominent tall buildings where they should normally be located at the top of the building to afford wider views across London.*

- 7.113. The Applicant recognised from the outset the unique opportunity this building has to help connect and share the benefits of Tech City to the wider community in Islington. Whilst the building will become the heart and focal point of an entrepreneurial and creative tech community, it is also imperative that the building becomes part of the identity of Old Street for residents and local groups. The Project Team has therefore worked closely with many stakeholders to devise a locally engrained and unparalleled public benefits package.
  
- 7.114. The full range of the public benefits strategy is outlined in detail elsewhere within this Planning Statement. However, the approach to transform the pedestrian experience and public perception of this part of Old Street has been a key design driver.
  
- 7.115. The building has been set back from its current building line to create a generous public space that connects the squareabout across Old Street to Cowper Street. This new public space eases pinch points that have been created at the end of Cowper Street, acts as a place of respite, and a meeting point adjacent to the busy new tube entrance.
  
- 7.116. Opening onto this public space is a new c. 3,000sqft multi-functional, Great Room. Large doors open onto Cowper Street and the new public square on Old Street, becoming unified with the public realm. The Great Room will aid in transforming the site into a high quality, permeable, and active public realm. It will enhance identity, legibility and strengthen sense of place. The Great Room will be accessible to the public and will host a wide variety of social and cultural events throughout the year and the Applicant is liaising with LBI in relation to how this will be secured in a Section 106 legal agreement.
  
- 7.117. A north / south pedestrian connection between Cowper Street and Old Street is also proposed, which has been provided in direct response to the Design Review Panel feedback and will transform the permeability of the Site and public connection to the ground floor. Sitting adjacent to the pedestrian link will be a new flexible community space that will be provided at peppercorn rent and the Applicant is liaising with LBI in regard to the preferred tenant in order to maximise the social value impact.
  
- 7.118. Finally, the existing pavement on Old Street along the Site is currently narrow and inactive. In response to this, the Proposed Development will be set back from its

current building line by 5m by way of the creation of a new, double height arcade. This space would extend into the building through extensive active frontages so sense of space and increased opportunities for passive surveillance are considerably more generous.

- 7.119. Alongside the Great Room, community space and pedestrian link, these commitments would be transformational – delivering a significant enhancement to the public's relationship to the Site and Old Street as a whole. This is therefore fully compliant with Policy D9.

***Summation of Policy D9 Response***

- 7.120. In summary, the Proposed Development complies with all criteria within London Plan Policy D9, insofar as it is a tall building located in area identified as being appropriate for tall buildings by the borough – and meets the respective qualitative criteria in terms of visual, functional and environmental impacts

***Policy DH3 (Building Heights)***

- 7.121. Parts A and B of Draft Local Plan Policy DH3 includes similar criteria to London Plan Policy D9 assessed above.
- 7.122. Part C however (as amended in the June 2022 Main Modifications) states that development on identified tall building sites must not exceed the maximum building heights. In this respect, the draft Site Allocation refers to an envisaged building up to 106 meters. Whilst the Proposed Development exceeds this reference, there are clear and compelling material considerations that support this, which are outlined below.
- 7.123. Parts D and E of Draft Local Plan Policy DH3 are not relevant to this planning application whilst Part F explains that all tall buildings must mitigate visual, functional and environmental impacts. The majority of Part F is therefore consistent with London Plan Policy D9 so a full assessment is not repeated here. However, Part F also includes additional criteria that are not otherwise referenced in London Plan Policy D9, so these are referenced below.

- 7.124. Part (iv) of Part F refers to a tall building being proportionate and compatible to their surroundings and the character of the area. As outlined in the DAS, the scale, massing and materiality has been comprehensively developed to respond to, and be compatible with, the unique and varied character of the context. Key to this is the folded nature of the massing which not only emphasises the slender proportions of the tower but also varies its appearance depending on the angle from which it is viewed. In this respect, the glazed / terracotta reading to the folded façade creates a dynamic effect of changing solidity as the viewer navigates around the building.
- 7.125. The solid terracotta façade is coloured by taking inspiration of the character of the adjacent warehouse buildings within the south Shoreditch conservation area, with a level of detail and materiality to ensure that its architectural integrity is maintained through its lifespan. At its lower portion, the improved proportions of the podium shoulder height by way of localised fabric remove provide relief relative to its surroundings; where currently the massing is bulky and oversized. This is alongside activation of frontages onto Cowper Street and Old Street (where currently no such activation exists) and the significant enhancement of the street space in front facing the roundabout. In all therefore, the portions of the proposal are reflective of and compatible with the context.
- 7.126. Part (v) of Part F requires exceptional design that positively contributes to the skyline and immediate locality, and Part (vi) requires an appropriate transition from the taller section to the lower volume.
- 7.127. In response, the façade design has been developed specifically to the varied and unique townscape. This includes the prevailing folded typology of the massing which not only serves as a tool to emphasize the slender proportions of the tower; but also ensures a degree of fluidity and transience in how the building appears depending on the location of the viewer. In this respect, the shifting proportion of glazing to solid terracotta would create a dynamic effect to ensure the building would never look out of place in these respective viewpoints.
- 7.128. The solid terracotta façade has been detailed and materials specified to ensure that the appearance and architectural integrity is maintained through its lifespan. The careful design and materiality of the building will be more apparent at these closer

views, reflecting the materiality of the surrounding area, especially the vernacular character of South Shoreditch.

- 7.129. A transition is created as the tower element is sufficiently visually distinct from the base to not be read as unwieldy, whilst also visually rooted into its location. The podium itself comprises much of the original building, though localised fabric removal would see this reduced in height and stepped back from the public highway in order to provide a more appropriate scale and increase the provision of public realm.

#### ***Summation of Policy DH3 Response***

- 7.130. In summary, the Proposed Development complies with all criteria within draft Policy DH3 except in relation to one criterion. We consider that the Proposal therefore complies with draft Policy DH3 when the policy is correctly assessed as a whole (despite exceeding the height referenced). This is consistent with recent case law<sup>3</sup> that has demonstrated that failing to satisfy one part of a policy does not mean the application breaches the entirety of the policy.
- 7.131. Notwithstanding the above policy review, there are nonetheless extensive material considerations that are relevant with regards to the deviation from the maximum height parameter referenced in emerging Policy DH3 (106 metres). These considerations include:
- (1) An understanding of the evidence base that supported the derivation of the 106m height cap;
  - (2) The sensitive and iterative design process that has been undertaken in the Proposed Development to minimise environmental impacts;
  - (3) The relative success of the Proposed Development at meeting wider tall building objectives; and
  - (4) The hugely substantial planning benefits that a scheme of this height can deliver.
- 7.132. All of these combined would deliver a building of exceptional architectural quality that reflects the ambition and clear urban design objective to create a landmark that is

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<sup>3</sup> *R(Hillingdon) v Mayor of London [2021] EWHC 3387 (Admin)*

worthy of this gateway location into Tech City (and Opportunity Area) of recognised national importance. These material considerations are explained in detail below.

**1) *Understanding the evidence base to the draft Local Plan***

- 7.133. The subject site is allocated for redevelopment for new office development under adopted Finsbury Local Plan (2013), identified as BC25 (Inmarsat, 99 City Road). This allocation is carried forward and updated in draft Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action as BC9. Both allocations nominate the site as potentially being appropriate for a tall building subject to meeting the relevant criteria. It is emerging Site Allocation BC9 however which specifically refers to the creation of a ‘district landmark’ and a height of 106 metres.
- 7.134. The 106 metres referenced was informed by the LBI Tall building Study (2018). This study made Borough wide assumptions to help set out a broad approach to tall building locations across a large area. The Study did not however (due to its breadth) include detailed assessments for individual sites and local contexts.
- 7.135. Conversely, the 106m height was informed by two key assumptions.
- 1) That the existing context was 22m metres in height (6 storeys), taken as an average across the CAZ area; and
  - 2) The Site is suitable for a ‘District Landmark’, which is identified as being approximately 5 times the height of the ‘existing context’. It states that a District landmark has notably effects on the skyline at a ‘district-wide’ scale, whereas a Metropolitan landmark has significant effects on the skyline on a ‘London-wide scale’.
- 7.136. Our detailed site-specific analysis shows that the actual existing context height is approximately c.32.5 metres. The Proposed Development is therefore actually broadly 5 times taller than this context. The scheme still performs a ‘District Landmark’ function; as it is not visible over a very large metropolitan area.
- 7.137. Additionally, the Tech City Opportunity Area (OA) is of ‘national significance’. Old Street roundabout is a focal point in the OA and this Site is identified as the marker/

landmark of the Old Street cluster. The Site is therefore the centre of a nationally significant OA. This is an important material consideration.

### ***2) Undertaking a sensitive and iterative process to minimise impacts***

- 7.138. In close consultation with LBI, the design team has explored the respective impacts of an illustrative lower scheme and compared these to the Proposed Development. This process was undertaken to demonstrate that the proposed height does not result in significantly greater impact.
- 7.139. In relation to daylight, the Proposed Development has significantly set back from the Bezier apartments (which are the most sensitive nearby use) from the existing building footprint to allow greater daylight to reach these residential homes. This is a significant public benefit of the scheme. These design moves have been facilitated by the wider design strategy to provide an appropriate response in scale and creating a more elegant and slimmer tall building design. Point 2 has undertaken initial daylight testing of the Proposed Development and a lower building of 106 metres. This demonstrated that the impacts are broadly similar and that the losses are in effect greater for a 106m scheme for the Central Foundation Boys School and the Bezier Apartments because of the increased footprint and lower level massing.
- 7.140. A similar exercise was undertaken in relation to the micro-climate impacts. This demonstrated that both proposals have an acceptable impact. Finally, the heritage impacts of the Proposed Development were considered against a lower illustrative building. This analysis is set out in the HTVIA but concluded that whilst the additional height of the proposal clearly increases the visibility, when considered in detail in relation to individual heritage assets, Montagu Evans do not consider it results in any increased harm.

### ***3) Meeting Tall Building Objectives***

- 7.141. Actual building heights should be informed by a detailed understanding of actual impacts and how successful a building is at achieving the objectives of a tall building. Whilst the Study should be important guidance in this process, it should be considered in the context of additional research and assessment of a specific scheme. This further

research and assessment within the wider suite of documents supporting this planning application.

- 7.142. The Tall Buildings Study itself acknowledges its limitations and explains that "*it is recognised that other contextual factors may also influence how the relationship of a taller building with its context is perceived.*"
- 7.143. In developing this scheme, a comparison study was undertaken which carefully considered the design principles of what a tall building should achieve, alongside the guidance for a 106m scheme per emerging updated Policy allocation BC9.
- 7.144. It is considered that the proposal is entirely successful at achieving the objectives for a Tall Building in the following ways:
  - 1) The new tower will assist with legibility, reflects the strategic importance of this gateway site, provides a meaningful and appropriate response to the Atlas Building and allows for an elegant form. The building folds and is omnidirectional. It will significantly enhance the quality of architecture in the local area and become an important and distinct landmark adjacent to Old Street roundabout.
  - 2) The daylight and sunlight impacts are very similar for both schemes. The increase in height has a negligible impact. It is the footprint and girth of the building that are critical. The Proposal has reduced the footprint on the lower floors and provides an elegant form above. This increases the daylight received for the most sensitive neighbouring homes (Bezier apartments). The 106m proposal, as envisaged by the allocation guidance, results in similar impacts and in many cases higher losses (due to the form/ mass needed for a lower building). The proposed scheme provides good sunlight levels to the Old Street public space which was a critical driver and design principle set out in the Site Allocation. In short, the Proposal does not result in any additional harm compared to a 106m scheme.
  - 3) Montagu Evans have prepared a Heritage and Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA). It concludes that a tall building of this height can be achieved either a) without harm to heritage assets, or b) if harm is identified as a result of the change to the setting of those assets it would result in no more than a low level of 'less than substantial' harm that is capable of being outweighed by other

planning benefits outline in this planning application. The HVTIA also notes that “well-designed modern buildings can be an appropriate addition in the setting of, or forming a backdrop to heritage assets, providing that they are of sufficiently high quality, in which case they can add interest and quality to a scene by way of juxtaposition and contrast.”

#### **4) Maximising public benefits and social value impact of the building**

- 7.145. Working closely with LBI officers, the project team has explored all opportunities to maximise the social value impact of the Proposed Development. The result is a locally engrained and unparalleled public benefits package that will 1) transform the pedestrian experience and perception of this part of Old Street; 2) connect Tech City to local communities and share the benefits; 3) form part of a new identity for Old Street and create new places for residents and communities; and 4) substantially increase the affordable workspace provision within the Borough. These benefits are facilitated by the Proposed Development. The wide-ranging and substantial public benefits are important material considerations of this planning application.
- 7.146. In conclusion, the Proposed Development fully complies with London Plan Policy D9 and complies with draft policy DH3 when it is correctly assessed as a whole. Whilst the Proposed Development is greater than 106 metres and does not comply with Part C, there are significant material considerations that need to be considered as part of this planning applications. It is clear that the Proposed Development meets and exceeds the vision, intent and principles of the draft Local Plan and its policies.
- 7.147. We consider that the Proposal therefore complies with draft Policy DH3 when the policy is correctly assessed as a whole (despite exceeding the height guidance). This is consistent with recent case law<sup>4</sup> that has demonstrated that failing to satisfy one part of a policy does not mean the application breaches the entirety of the policy.

#### ***Overall Summation***

- 7.148. In summary, we consider that the Proposal complies with London Plan Policy D9 and with draft Policy DH3, despite it exceeding the 106m figure referenced. This is based on a full assessment of the principle and intent of the policy as a whole and the clear

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<sup>4</sup> *R(Hillingdon) v Mayor of London [2021] EWHC 3387 (Admin)*

and significant material considerations. In addition, any breach of the draft Policy does not result in a failure of the Development Plan as a whole. This is a matter of planning judgement and we consider it is clear the Proposal meets and exceeds the vision, intent and principles of the draft Local Plan and its policies.

## Public Realm

- 7.149. Policy D8 of the London Plan encourages development proposals to create new public realm where appropriate and ensure that this maximises the contribution that it makes to encourage active transport and is based on an understanding of how public realm in a particular area functions.
- 7.150. Emerging Local Plan Policy T1 also states that "*the design of developments, including building design and internal layout, site layout, public realm and the provision of transport infrastructure, must prioritise practical, safe and convenient access and use by sustainable transport modes, namely walking, cycling and public transport*".
- 7.151. Emerging Bunhill and Clerkenwell APP notes in Policy BC3: City Fringe Opportunity Area that new development proposals should enhance permeability across the area and with adjacent areas, and ensure ease of access via walking and cycling.
- 7.152. The Design and Access Statement prepared by KPF provides detail of the significant public realm contribution that the proposed developments seeks to deliver. Including:
- a. Public footways along City Road and Cowper Street have been widened along City Road and Cowper Street;
  - b. A new public fronting Old Street Station allowing generous pedestrian permeability around the site
  - c. A new large multi-functional, publicly accessible Urban Room, known as the Great Room is located fronting Old Street with access directly to the new Public Square and becoming unified with the public realm. The DAS states that the urban room will "aid in transforming the site into a high quality, permeable, and active public realm.
  - d. A through block connection seeking to improve site permeability in a north-south direction which will connect Old Street with Cowper Street and will be completely open to the public 7 days a week within the hours of 8am to 8pm.

- 7.153. Transformational improvements to the public realm are central to the success of the scheme and its contribution to the broader National significance of the Tech City Opportunity Area within which it is located.

### **Townscape and Heritage**

- 7.154. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that, when considering applications for planning permission which affect a listed building or its setting, local authorities should have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72 of the Act also requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
- 7.155. The NPPF states that developments are required to be sympathetic to their local character and history (Paragraph 130c) and that planning decisions should consider the ability of new development to make "*a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*" (Paragraph 190c).
- 7.156. Adopted LBI CS Policy CS9 supports innovative, high-quality architecture to meet the challenge of protecting and enhancing Islington's built environment and unique character. This policy also states that historic significance will be conserved and enhanced whether designated or not.
- 7.157. A HTVIA has been prepared by Montagu Evans and is submitted in support of this application to demonstrate the impact of the Proposed Development on surrounding townscape and heritage, which are addressed individually below.

#### *Townscape*

- 7.158. London Plan Policy D9 states that development "*should make a positive contribution to the local townscape in terms of legibility, proportions and materiality*".

- 7.159. Emerging LBI SDM Policy DH3 similarly states that development should “protect *the legibility and identity of the area by creating a positive landmark within the townscape and creating a strong sense of place*”.
- 7.160. The HTVIA carries out an independent design evaluation of the Proposed Development and how it relates to the existing townscape context through its form and character. In addition, the HTVIA demonstrates the poor townscape performance of the existing building, noting that its contribution ‘*detracts from its current setting insofar as its forms part of the setting of nearby heritage assets*’. It also notes that ‘*the existing building does not mitigate the gap in the townscape caused by the construction of the roundabout some 40 years ago in terms urban design or heritage settings*’.
- 7.161. The Townscape baseline at Section 7.0 of the HTVIA identifies seven areas of distinct townscape character within a 1km radius of the Site, including principal axial routes, areas of commercial development, more intimate spaces around Shoreditch, and wider residential development.
- 7.162. The Site lies within Character Area 1, which encompasses the Old Street roundabout and its immediate environs. This is characterised by the traffic routes, central void space within the roundabout, and the varied commercial development focussed on the interchange.
- 7.163. The HTVIA concludes that the Proposed Development will have a positive effect upon townscape significance and quality, reinforcing visual interest and supporting the areas’ historical grain. The HTVIA reiterates that the Proposed Development will turn the Site from an underperforming space in townscape terms, to one that makes a highly positive contribution through the delivery of an attractive, high-quality development which serves to greatly enhance the townscape when compared with the existing condition.
- 7.164. As demonstrated within the HTVIA, the Proposed Development is a progressive step in urban design terms, responding strongly and sympathetically to its surrounding context, in accordance with London Plan Policy D9 and emerging LBI SDM Policy DH3.

### *Heritage and Views*

- 7.165. London Plan Policy HC1 states that "*Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets*" and that "*Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process*".
- 7.166. Adopted LBI DMP Policy DM2.3 stresses the irreplaceable nature of Islington's heritage assets stating that "*the council will ensure that the borough's heritage assets are conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance*".
- 7.167. Notwithstanding a small area of public realm that is within the Bunhill Fields and Finsbury Square Conservation Area, the wider Site and its built massing does not sit within a Conservation Area.
- 7.168. Adopted LBI DMP Policy DM2.3 states that development within the setting of a conservation area must conserve or enhance its significance. Similarly, emerging LBI SDM Policy DH2 states that development within the setting of conservations areas "*must conserve or enhance the significance of the area and must be of a high-quality contextual design*".
- 7.169. The HTVIA concludes that the Proposed Development will result in the enhancement of the settings of both Conservation Areas, due to the considerable improvement in the appearance of the Site.
- 7.170. In relation to listed buildings, the HTVIA identifies a number of statutory and non-statutory listed buildings within the Bunhill Fields & Finsbury Square Conservation Area surrounding the site, some of which are Grade I listed and therefore representing the highest level of importance in heritage terms. The HTVIA also identifies registered Parks and Gardens within the Conservation Areas. The HTVIA identifies the following above ground heritage assets in the vicinity of the Site as follows:

#### *Grade I*

- Wesley Chapel
- John Wesley's Hose and attached railings

- Bunhill Fields Burial Ground

*Grade II*

- Lowndes House
- Central Foundation School for Boys
- Wesley's Chapel memorial to Susannah Wesley in foreground
- Entrance Gates to Wesley's Chapel
- Gates to John Wesley's House
- Statue of John Wesley in the forecourt of Wesley's Chapel
- The Manse, 49 City Road
- Benson Building abutting Wesley's Chapel
- Finsbury Barracks and attached Railings
- 20, 21-29 Bunhill Row

*Grade II\**

- Tomb of John Wesley in the Burial Ground of Wesley's Chapel
- Armoury House

7.171. In addition to the above statutorily listed buildings, the following assets in the vicinity of the Site have been locally listed by LBI, and on this basis are classed as '*non-designated heritage assets*':

- George Loveless House
- James Hammett House.

7.172. The HTVIA outlines that the Proposed Development has been informed by careful contextual analysis and has culminated from the assessment of viewpoints (which are included within the submission pack) agreed with LBI and Historic England during the pre-application period.

7.173. For the avoidance of doubt, the assessment is not based on a static frame, but on the experience of a visual receptor (pedestrian, road user etc), with static views to assist the reader. In practice, the experience of any Proposed Development would change as the viewer moved around the Site or locality, and the narrative in this section seeks to provide a description of that experience.

7.174. The Site does not lie within any viewing corridors identified in the LVMF, or other adopted guidance.

- 7.175. Visual analysis demonstrates that visibility of the building is limited in long-distance views. Where the building can be seen, this is principally within the context of a wider cityscape containing other tall buildings and modern development of a range of heights, as part of which the Proposed Development appears as an incidental element with a modern and varied backdrop. Typically, it is understood as an element in ‘another’ more distant part of the City, with interposing development in the foreground. This is characteristic of the general character of this part of London, with views of more distant tall building clusters on City Road itself, and within the City cluster.
- 7.176. The HTVIA does however recognise that the Proposed Development would have potential interactions with Lowndes House (grade II), insofar as it would change the setting of the building as appreciated from distant views south. However, this would not affect the building’s intrinsic significance given our ability to admire and appreciate it is primarily achieved from up close. The change would therefore be experienced over a limited extent, causing a low level of less than substantial harm which is mitigated by the fine design qualities of the Proposed Development.
- 7.177. The Proposed Development would also be seen in the setting of Armoury House. Whilst visible behind this building, its existing setting already includes tall buildings in every direction, particularly as a backdrop. As part of the White Collar Factory appeal referenced above for a tower of 160m AOD, the Inspector and Secretary of State both opined on the effect on the listed building, finding the addition of a tall building in its setting to be acceptable. Accordingly, it is concluded in the HTVIA that one’s ability to appreciate the setting of this asset is not substantially undermined – with a resulting very low level of less than substantial harm concluded.
- 7.178. A very low level of less than substantial harm is also identified to the Manse, within the Wesley Chapel complex by virtue of glimpsed views of the building above the roofline from a small portion of the chapel courtyard.
- 7.179. The acknowledged benefits of the scheme include public benefits, which are set out and considered in the Planning Statement which accompanies this Application.

In summary, whilst the proposals do lead to some heritage impacts, they do not introduce a new influence within the setting of the existing buildings; which are already experienced in the context of a large number of tall buildings.

- 7.180. Whilst three very limited harmful impacts to the significance of heritage assets are identified, the resulting a net improvement to the character and setting of the Bunhill Fields/ Finsbury Square Conservation Area; alongside the much wider acknowledged benefits the Proposed Development are considered to outweigh these harms in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 202. On this basis, the proposals accord with London Plan Policy D9, Adopted LBI CS Policy CS9 and emerging LBI SDM Policy DH3.

## **Archaeology**

- 7.181. The NPPF states that plans should set out a positive strategy for conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats (Paragraph 190). The NPPF goes on to note that in determining applications, applicants should be required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting including those where heritage assets have archaeological interest. As noted previously, the subject site is designated as Archaeological Priority Area: Moorfields (Tier 2).
- 7.182. Waterman have prepared an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment which assessed the potential for impact to archaeology on the site. As the scheme involves the retention of the steel frame of the building and construction of a new tower connecting to the existing structure with limited excavation, it is not anticipated that new impacts are likely to arise from the development and any impacts are likely to be localised. It is also stated that any potential remains are unlikely to have remained in situ, with displacement of all deposits likely to have been caused by the development of the basement of the existing building on the site.
- 7.183. The report concludes that the discovery of as yet unknown archaeological remains within the site to be low for all past periods. Given the low potential for significant archaeological remains to have survived modern development and the low archaeological impacts arising from current scheme proposals, Waterman have

confirmed that no further archaeological work is suggested to inform a decision on planning consent.

### Amenity Impacts

- 7.184. The NPPF states that developments should maintain a high standard of amenity for existing and future users (Paragraph 130f). The London Plan Policy D3 similarly states that development proposals should deliver appropriate outlook, privacy and amenity. Adopted LBI DMP Policy DM2.1 states that development proposals should "*provide a good level of amenity including consideration of noise and the impact of disturbance, hours of operation, vibration, pollution, fumes between and within developments, overshadowing, overlooking, privacy, direct sunlight and daylight, over-dominance, sense of enclosure and outlook*".
- 7.185. As outlined within Section 2 of this Planning Statement, the Bezier Apartments are located to the south-west of the Site, and are considered to be the most sensitive receptors in relation to amenity impacts. Notwithstanding, a series of other surrounding residential users have also been assessed. As a result, the design team and the Applicant have sought to optimise the Site's potential whilst preserving surrounding residential amenity. Exemplary design has therefore been incorporated to mitigate any adverse effects on surrounding properties. It is not that that site is located in a highly urbanised environment and at a major transport junction which has an existing microclimatic condition.
- 7.186. In order to assess the impact of the Proposed Development on surrounding uses, several documents (as referred to in the following sub-sections of the 'Amenity' section) have been produced and submitted as part of this application. These documents show that the proposals will not cause demonstrable harm to the amenities of adjoining occupiers and is therefore in accordance with adopted LBI DMP Policy DM2.1 outlined above.

#### *Daylight, Sunlight, Transient Overshadowing and Solar Glare*

- 7.187. London Plan Policy D9 states that developments for tall buildings should address daylight and sunlight penetration and ensure that these do not compromise comfort and the enjoyment of open spaces around the building. Emerging Local Plan Policy

DH3(vii) seeks to resist development which would cause an unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent occupiers by reducing the amount of daylight, sunlight or privacy they enjoy.

7.188. Adopted LBI DMP Policy DM2.1 states that developments should provide a good level of amenity and that this includes consideration of direct sunlight and daylight. Emerging Local Plan Policy DH3 Part F also requires assessment of Functional Impact on surrounding development in accordance with Policy D9 of the London Plan.

7.189. A Daylight and Sunlight Assessment has been prepared by Point2 and is submitted in support of this application. The detailed assessment focuses on neighbouring buildings containing residential and education uses in closest proximity to the Site, and specifically analyses the following:

- 101-103 Great Eastern Street
- 97 Great Eastern Street
- 95 Great Easter Street
- 93 Tabernacle Street
- 91 Tabernacle Street
- 87-89 Tabernacle Street
- City Loft 112-116 Tabernacle Street
- 25 Cowper Street
- Central Foundation Boys School
- Bezier Apartments
- Galaxy House
- 24 Leonard Street
- Newland Court
- Imperial Hall, 104-122 City Road
- 125 City Road
- 123 City Road
- 121 City Road
- Adeyfield House
- Shoreditch Training Centre
- Chaulden House
- Kensworth House
- Gaddesden House
- Cranwood Court Vince Street

7.190. The report concludes that whilst there are some alterations in light to the above properties which do occur below the BRE's base target criteria, these are generally within the BRE guidelines and therefore are unlikely to be noticeable. The report notes that where reductions beyond the BRE guidelines do occur, the rooms/windows are considered to either retain adequate daylight/sunlight for an urban area, or the windows are already 'self-obstructed'. i.e. they are located beneath

a balcony or already obstructed by other parts of the same neighbouring development.

- 7.191. With regard to overshadowing, the studies show that the surrounding amenity spaces are unlikely to experience any notable effects.
- 7.192. With regard to solar glare, the report notes that there is unlikely to be any significant effects on the nearby road users (cyclist and vehicle drivers etc).
- 7.193. Overall, the effects of the proposal are considered acceptable when regard is had to the context of the dense urban setting in which the Site sits, and should be balanced against the benefits that the Proposed Development provides.

#### *Noise*

- 7.194. The NPPF states that new developments should "*mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impact resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life*" (Paragraph 185a).
- 7.195. London Plan Policy D14 requires that developments reduce, manage and mitigate noise to improve health and quality of life, by:
  - 1) *avoiding significant adverse noise impacts on health and quality of life;*
  - 2) *reflecting the Agent of Change principle as set out in Policy D13 Agent of Change;*
  - 3) *mitigating and minimising the existing and potential adverse impacts of noise on, from, within, as a result of, or in the vicinity of new development without placing unreasonable restrictions on existing noise-generating uses;*
  - 4) *improving and enhancing the acoustic environment and promoting appropriate soundscapes (including Quiet Areas and spaces of relative tranquillity);*
  - 5) *separating new noise-sensitive development from major noise sources (such as road, rail, air transport and some types of industrial use) through the use of distance, screening, layout, orientation, uses and materials – in preference to sole reliance on sound insulation;*
  - 6) *where it is not possible to achieve separation of noise-sensitive development and noise sources without undue impact on other sustainable development objectives, then any potential adverse effects should be controlled and mitigated through applying good acoustic design principles; and*

- 7) *promoting new technologies and improved practices to reduce noise at source, and on the transmission path from source to receiver.*
- 7.196. Adopted LBI DMP Policy DM2.1 similarly states that proposals should include a consideration of noise and the impact of disturbance.
- 7.197. A Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment has therefore been prepared alongside this application by Waterman. The report establishes the policy requirements that the building services plant must comply with, and outlines design recommendations that will be incorporated to ensure the Proposed Development aligns with the requirements set by policy. In addition, it is anticipated that the hours of operation within the Proposed Development will be subject to a condition which ensures they do not cause any disturbance during antisocial hours.

#### *Air Quality*

- 7.198. Air Quality is a material consideration at all spatial levels. London Plan Policy SI 1 states that in an effort to tackle poor air quality and protect health, development proposals should at a minimum be Air Quality Neutral and should use design solutions to prevent or minimise increased exposure to existing air pollution and make provision to address local problems of air quality.
- 7.199. Adopted LBI DMP Policy DM6.1 similarly states that developments in locations of poor air quality should be designed to mitigate the impact of poor air quality to within acceptable limits, and that where adequate mitigation is not provided and/or is not practical planning permission may be refused.
- 7.200. Emerging LBI SDM Policy S7 also requires that all development proposals "*mitigate or prevent adverse impacts on air quality and investigate and implement all reasonable opportunities to improve air quality*" and that Major developments, minor new build developments, and larger minor extensions must be at least Air Quality Neutral through provision of on-site measures.
- 7.201. An Air Quality Impact Assessment has therefore been carried out by Waterman which concludes that the Proposed Development will satisfy the London Plan's requirement for new developments to be "*air quality neutral*" in accordance with Emerging LBI

SDM Policy S7. This is a result of the development being car free and not including a centralised combustion plant.

### **Wind and Microclimate**

- 7.202. London Plan Policy D3 comments about optimising site capacity through the design-led approach, including considering a comfortable pedestrian environmental regarding levels of wind.
- 7.203. London Plan Policy D8 on Public Realm states that consideration should be given to the local microclimate created by buildings and ensuring that wind is taken into account in order to encourage people spending time in a place.
- 7.204. London Plan Policy D9 sets out the need for tall buildings to be considered in the context of wind microclimate effects.
- 7.205. Emerging Local Plan Policy DH3 also requires that development does not adversely impact, either individually or cumulatively, the microclimate of a surrounding area.
- 7.206. The Applicant engaged RWDI as important design team members involved through the design development process. The scheme has been subject to ongoing wind testing and refinement through design development.
- 7.207. RWDI prepared a Pedestrian Level Wind Microclimate Assessment which focused on understanding whether any undesirable wind conditions would be created on site and in the surrounding area as a result of the development. Undesirable wind speeds may result in pedestrian comfort conditions unsuitable for the intended site use.
- 7.208. Areas within and around the site have therefore been tested; which included areas where outdoor seating is proposed; public areas surrounding the site such as pedestrian thoroughfares, crossings and bus stops; and roadway locations where cyclists and pedestrians may traverse. The quality and useability of the upper terraces was also assessed.
- 7.209. In summary, the current situation displays calm conditions (below the thresholds of the comfort criteria relative to the target use). With the development in place, conditions become slightly windier in certain locations but these are nevertheless

suitable for the desired uses. The assessment of cumulative schemes did not significantly alter the wind effects.

7.210. Areas of stronger winds were identified on the upper terraces but design-led mitigations measures would ensure these spaces remain comfortable and useable.

## Transport

7.211. The NPPF (Paragraph 110) states that in assessing sites it should be ensured that:

- i) *"appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;*
- ii) *safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;*
- iii) *the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and*
- iv) *any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree".*

7.212. The NPPF goes on to state that "*development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe*" (Paragraph 111).

7.213. Chapter 8 'Transport' of LBI's Development Management Policy promotes sustainable transport choices in order to mitigate the impact of developments on the environment, to respond to congestion affecting roads and public transport, and to promote healthier lifestyles.

7.214. A Transport Assessment (TA), a Travel Plan and a Delivery and Servicing Management Plan have been prepared by Steer and is submitted alongside this application, which provide further details on the proposal's transport provision and an analysis of the transport implications of the Proposed Development. The reports conclude that the impact of the Proposed Development will be beneficial in a number of ways, including:

- The removal of the 13 existing car parking spaces at the Site to create a 'car free' development which will result in overall fewer vehicle trips generated by the

Proposed Development when compared with the existing building, representing a benefit to the local highway network;

- Enhanced access for cyclists through the introduction of a dedicated cycle entrance accessed off Cowper Street;
- Increased cycle parking provision (in line with London Plan requirements) and end of trip facilities; and
- The servicing and delivery requirements can be sufficiently and efficiently accommodated at the Site, with the creation of a dedicated servicing yard in which vehicles enter and exit in a forward gear.
- Provision of safe, direct and coherent walking and cycling routes within the Site and connections to the local area and amenities for all users.

7.215. Overall, the Transport Assessment concludes that the Proposed Development is a sustainable scheme which supports both the Mayor's Healthy Streets initiative and Vision Zero approach to road safety. Furthermore, it is not considered to have any significant adverse impacts on the capacities or safe operation of the surrounding transport networks.

#### *Cycle Parking*

7.216. Emerging Local Plan Policy T2 states that all new developments in LBI should be designed to incentivise cycling.

7.217. London Plan Policy T5 establishes minimum requirements for cycle parking and requires cycle parking to be designed and laid out in accordance with London Cycling Design Standards as outlined within Table 10.2 of the London Plan.

7.218. The table below outlines the minimum cycle parking requirements for the Proposed Development:

7.219. The Proposed Development delivers a total of 881 long-stay cycle parking spaces in line with the minimum standards stipulated by the London Plan. Of this, 176 would be delivered as Sheffield Stands for non-standard bikes. These spaces will be provided in internal stores accessed via a dedicated cycle parking entrance off Cowper Street.

- 7.220. In addition, best in class end of trip facilities are proposed incorporating lockers in accordance with the recommendations of the London Plan and to ensure these are BREEAM compliant, alongside male and female showers. On this basis the long-stay cycle parking provision fully accords with London Plan Policy T5.
- 7.221. In respect of short stay cycle parking, a total of 40 spaces are proposed, complying with London Plan requirements. The location of the proposed short stay cycling is subject to ongoing design development of the wider urban realm.

#### *Car Parking*

- 7.222. The proposal seeks to remove the existing 15 car parking spaces from the site. Given the Site's PTAL of 6a, the proposed development will be car free with the exception of one disabled on-street parking bay.
- 7.223. It is noted that LBI's 'Planning Obligations' SPD and Draft Local Plan Policy T3 Part G require an accessible on-street parking space for every 33 employees. There is extensive on-street parking on Cowper Street and a "Diplomatic cars only" bay directly outside the building. On this basis, it is proposed that the blue badge parking space is incorporated in to the existing on-street parking provision.

#### *Servicing and Delivery*

- 7.224. London Plan Policy T7 states that development proposals should facilitate safe, clean, and efficient deliveries and servicing. Developments should be designed and managed so that deliveries can be received outside of peak hours and in the evening or night-time.
- 7.225. Adopted LBI DMP Policy DM8.6 similarly states that delivery and servicing should ideally be secured off-street, to mitigate impacts upon pedestrian/road safety and the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- 7.226. Emerging LBI SDM Policy T5 also states that delivery and servicing arrangements must be provided off street wherever feasible, especially for commercial development over 200sqm GEA.

- 7.227. In accordance with these policies, the Proposed Development incorporates a dedicated off-street servicing area comprised of two loading bays for vehicles up to 7.5m in length and accessed by a single vehicular access from Cowper Street. The proposed servicing arrangement ensures vehicles can access and exit in a forward gear.
- 7.228. A Delivering and Servicing Management Plan has been prepared and contains more detailed analysis of servicing trip generation and the rationale behind the two loading bays.

### ***Waste***

- 7.229. Adopted LBI CS Policy CS11 requires that developments “*provide waste and recycling facilities which fit current and future collection practices and targets and are accessible to all.*”
- 7.230. Similarly, emerging LBI SDM Policy ST2 states that Development proposals must provide waste and recycling facilities which:
  - (i) *fit current and future collection practices and targets;*
  - (ii) *are accessible to all;*
  - (iii) *are designed to provide convenient access for all people, helping to support people to recycle; and*
  - (iv) *provide high quality storage and collection systems in line with Council guidance.*
- 7.231. The Waste section of the TA outlines the provisions incorporated within the Proposed Development in respect of waste and waste storage, in accordance with the policies outlined above.

### ***Energy and Sustainability***

- 7.232. The NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (Paragraph 7). This is echoed in the London Plan which sets out a number of policies to ensure the delivery of sustainable development. London Plan Policy SI2 requires all major developments to be net zero-carbon and London Plan Policy SI4 requires proposals to minimise adverse impacts on the urban heat island through design, layout, orientation, materials and the incorporation of green infrastructure.

- 7.233. Adopted LBI CS Policy CS10 states that “*the council will seek to minimise Islington’s contribution to climate change and ensure that the borough develops in a way which respects environmental limits and improves quality of life.*” Policy CS10 goes on to state that the council will therefore require the promotion of zero carbon development, the meeting of the highest feasible level of nationally recognised sustainable building standards, the meeting of best practice water efficiency targets, the protection of existing site ecology and the fullest contribution to enhancing biodiversity, the demonstration that buildings are designed to be adapted to climate change, the minimisation of the environmental impact of materials, the promotion of sustainability through buildings ongoing operation and the encouragement of sustainable transport choices.
- 7.234. Emerging LBI SDM Policy S1 similarly requires that sustainable design is considered from the start of the design process and that all development proposals demonstrate how they will comply with all relevant sustainable design standards and policies during design, construction and operation of the development and that all development proposals must maximise energy efficiency and minimise on-site greenhouse gas emissions. Emerging Policy S1 goes on to require that all developments reduce water demand and meet best practice water efficiency targets, are designed to be flexible and adaptable to changing requirements over their lifetime and be designed, constructed and operated to limit contribution to air pollution and to improve air quality as far as possible.
- 7.235. Adopted LBI DMP Policy DM 7.4 states that all major non-residential developments need to achieve “*Excellent under the relevant BREEAM or equivalent scheme and make reasonable endeavours to achieve Outstanding*”. Similarly, emerging LBI SDM Policy S3 states that all non-residential and mixed-use developments proposing 500sqm or more net additional floorspace are required “*to achieve a final (post-construction stage) certified rating of Excellent as part of a fully fitted assessment within BREEAM New Construction 2018 (or equivalent scheme), and must make reasonable endeavours to achieve an Outstanding rating. A ‘verification stage’ certification at post occupancy stage must also be achieved, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible*”.

7.236. In accordance with London Plan and LBI policy, the following energy and sustainability related documents have been prepared are submitted alongside this application:

- Energy Statement incl. Green Performance Plan prepared by Aterlier Ten;
- Sustainability Statement incl. BREEAM Pre-assessment prepared by Twin and Earth;
- Circular Economy Statement prepared by Twin and Earth;
- Whole Life Cycle Carbon Assessment; and
- GLA Carbon Emission Reporting Spreadsheet; and
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

7.237. The above referenced documents demonstrate how the Proposed Development accords with the strategic aims of London Plan policy, alongside emerging LBI SDM Policy S1 and adopted LBI DMP Policy DM 7.4, concluding the following:

- The design of the Proposed Development is based on sustainable design and construction principles as informed by planning requirements and industry best practice;
- The Proposed Development is targeted to achieve a rating of BREEAM ‘Outstanding’, for the office floor space and Excellent for the retail and community floorspace. This is compliant with, and for the majority of the floorspace, a betterment against Adopted LBI DMP Policy DM 7.4;
- The Proposed Development achieves net-zero carbon through energy efficiency on-site, an all-electric energy strategy, and a green power purchase agreement;
- Biodiversity net-gain is achieved on-site through the greening with a substantial uplift when compared to the baseline position. In this regard, the Urban Greening Factor is 0.306.

#### *Greenhouse Gas*

7.238. Both London Plan Policy SI2 and emerging LBI SDM Policy S4 focus on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

7.239. London Plan Policy SI2 states that all Major development should be net zero-carbon meaning that they reduce greenhouse gas emissions in operation and minimise both annual and peak energy demand. Policy SI2 goes on to require that a minimum on-

site reduction of at least 35 per cent beyond Building Regulations is required for major development and where this cannot be fully achieved on-site, any shortfall should be provided, in agreement with the borough.

- 7.240. Emerging LBI SDM Policy S4 requires that all major development demonstrates how greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced in accordance with the energy hierarchy and are required to calculate whole life-cycle carbon emissions through a nationally recognised whole life-cycle carbon assessment and demonstrate actions taken to reduce life-cycle carbon emissions. Major non-residential development must also achieve at least 15 per cent out of the overall reduction target through energy efficiency measures in order to reduce energy demand.
- 7.241. The Energy Statement for the Proposed Development has been developed in line with the GLA's energy hierarchy, and is based on energy efficient optimised facades, efficient building services systems and controls, and the use of Air Source Heat Pump technology and a Building Integrated Photovoltaic system (BIPV).
- 7.242. The electricity -led strategy will result in not only a low carbon scenario at present, but continuous improvement as the grid decarbonises. This approach will also enable the scheme to be combustion free, facilitating a shift towards clean energy systems, with the associated benefit s in local air quality and human health.
- 7.243. As demonstrated within the Energy Strategy, the Proposed Development will comply with Part L 2021 on-site using SAP 10.2 carbon factors. This is equivalent to an overall 46% improvement over Part L 2013 on-site using SAP 10 carbon factors, and a 40% improvement over Part L 2013 on-site using SAP 2012 carbon factors. In this respect, it should be noted that the GLA "Energy Assessment Guidance Updates – Part L 2021 of Building Regulation" published in June 2022 acknowledges that "*Initially, non-residential development may find it more challenging to achieve significant on-site carbon reductions beyond Part L 2021 to meet both the energy efficiency target and the minimum 35% improvement. This is because the L baseline now included low carbon heating for non-residential developments.*"

## Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.244. The NPPF seeks to direct development away from areas of higher fluvial Flood Risk and towards low-risk locations (e.g., Flood Zone 1).
- 7.245. Policy S8 within the Emerging Strategic and Development Management Policies ('Flood Risk Management') requires major development proposals to submit Flood Risk Assessments setting out the anticipated flood risk in relation to the proposals.
- 7.246. Policy S9 within the Emerging Strategic and Development Management Policies notes that all developments are required to demonstrate that appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems have been implemented in accordance with the drainage hierarchy'. It also notes that 'Green roofs are particularly effective SuDS measures as they provide interception storage and will typically intercept the first mm or more of rainfall depending on the depth and type of substrate'.
- 7.247. The planning application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy prepared by Waterman which confirms that the site is low risk in terms of all forms of flooding. It concludes that the Proposed Development can appropriately and safely manage the risk of flooding to the Site and that surface water and foul water can be managed sustainably to ensure there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere as a result of the development.

## 8. PLANNING OBLIGATIONS & SECTION 106

### Community Infrastructure Levy

- 8.1. The Mayor of London's Community Infrastructure Levy 2 (MCIL2) is a tariff chargeable by the GLA on new development. It was introduced on 1st April 2019 and replaces the Mayoral CIL charging schedule which was adopted in April 2012. The adopted chargeable Mayoral CIL rates for office floorspace in Islington is £185/sqm and for the retail, food and beverage floorspace £165/sqm.
- 8.2. At a local level, LBI's CIL is split into two separate zones and came into effect from 1 September 2014. The Site falls within 'Charging Area A' which is £80/sqm for office floorspace, £175/sqm for retail and food and beverage.

### S106 Obligations

- 8.3. The details of the legal obligations to be agreed within the S106 Agreement will be subject to further discussions during the course of the determination of the application.
- 8.4. Obligations will be in accordance with Regulation 122(2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) which states that obligations may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if they are:
  - Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - Directly related to the development; and
  - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 8.5. For the Proposed Development, heads of terms are anticipated to cover the following:
  - S106 Obligations Monitoring Fee;
  - Highways and Public Realm Works;
  - Compliance with the Code of Employment and Training;
  - Facilitation, during the construction phase of the development, of work placements;
  - Compliance with the Code of Local Procurement;

- Compliance with the Code of Construction Practice;
  - Carbon offsetting Contribution;
  - Submission and adherence to a Green Performance Plan;
  - Provision of affordable workspace; and
  - Provision of Community Space;
  - Provision of the Great Room ;
  - Provision of Pedestrian Link;
  - Public Arts Opportunities;
  - Public Realm Improvements;
  - Local skills, training and employment contribution.
- 8.6. In addition to the above it is envisioned that a highways agreement will be required for the Proposed Development in order to secure the delivery, management and maintenance of the proposed public realm works.
- 8.7. These draft Heads of Terms are provided without prejudice and are subject to detailed discussions with officers during the process of determination of the application.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf Endurance Land in support of an application for full planning permission for the comprehensive refurbishment and extension of the existing building at 99 City Road, London, comprising the partial demolition of the existing ‘Inmarsat’ building and the construction of an office-led mixed-use scheme.
- 9.2. This application is submitted following a comprehensive and collaborative pre-application consultation process with LBI Officers consisting of nine pre-application meetings and workshops dating back to June 2022, three Design Review Panel (DRP) meetings, and a Members Briefing. In addition, consultation with the GLA and Historic England was also undertaken in preparing this application. The full details of each of these meetings and consultations are included at Section 4 of this Planning Statement. This feedback has been critical to inform the building, create a shared vision and carefully understand the impacts and benefits this building can and should create.
- 9.3. This is a critically important site that is located at the heart of ‘Tech City’ and Old Street, where significant growth office floorspace and investment is directed to respond to London’s need and economic potential. Tech City itself is recognised to be of strategic national importance in order to consolidate London’s position as the tech capital of Europe. Old Street is considered a ‘central London hub’ and is envisaged to become an ‘iconic gateway’. This is a view supported by the Greater London Authority (GLA) who consider that the growth and development of Old Street is of critical importance for the City Fringe Opportunity Area. The past under investment and restrained growth has contributed to Tech City failing to fulfill its true potential.
- 9.4. This vision for this growth is shared with the LBI. The draft Local Plan highlights that the Borough has an unprecedent need to delivery additional office floorspace (443,000 sqm by 2036) and directs much of this growth to Tech City and Old Street. The draft Local Plan acknowledges that this need is unlikely to be met and encourages ‘maximisation of office floorspace’.
- 9.5. This Site forms a critical part of the renewed vision to accelerate the regenerate of Old Street and propel growth in Tech City. The Site is identified as being the focal landmark of the Old Street cluster and is allocated to become a ‘district landmark’. We have

embraced this vision and our goal has been to create a building of outstanding architecture that reflects the status and character of Tech City and Finsbury and maximises its employment and social value potential. The objective has been to create a bespoke and modern building underpinned by an exemplar sustainability ethos that will foster an ecosystem of innovation and creativity and be seen as the exemplar workspace in the Tech world.

- 9.6. The Proposed Development is a 35-storey office building with a range of active commercial and community functions on the ground floor. In total, it will comprise 64,873sqm (GIA) of floorspace, of which, 59,907sqm would be dedicated office floor space. This will contribute substantially to Islington's office needs.
- 9.7. Sustainability has been a key driver of the project from the outset. Our design mindset has always been to maximise the retention of the existing building fabric insofar as the envisaged design rationale allows; whilst transforming its role and contribution to its locality. This design decision, whilst challenging and complicated, delivers a building with exemplary embodied carbon credentials. The project team has used cutting edge engineering and modern design solutions so that the vast majority of the structure is retained in the proposal. The new core has been located within the existing building's atrium. The majority of the proposed demolition material is envisaged to be reused in the creation of the new public square on Old Street; which in turn will further transform the relationship of the building to the surroundings.
- 9.8. With the principle of extension and redevelopment established, the project team has extensively examined the grain and character of this intriguing part of the Borough in order to ascertain the most sensitive and engaging massing. In this respect, the Site forms part of an intersection between areas of different character, colour and scales, such as Finsbury and Shoreditch, and despite its strategic importance, Old Street, currently lacks a focal point where the 'centre of gravity' is otherwise taken away by other nearby and potentially lesser-important centres and clusters. This Site therefore has an essential role to play in not only stitching together this urban tapestry; but in delivering a building that uniquely responds to its complex context and provides a focal landmark that is desperately needed on this strategic node. We set the following design objectives that we consider critical for a successful tall building on this Site.

- 1) A Building visually relating to Shoreditch but which does not turn its back on the other locales such as Finsbury and the West End;
  - 2) Creating a real relationship with and an engaging frontage to the ‘Squareabout’
  - 3) Establishing an appropriate dialogue and counterpoint to the ‘Atlas Building’
  - 4) Creating a district marker that befits the status of Tech City and brings back the ‘centre of gravity’ to Old Street.
  - 5) Sensitive connection to the Conservation Area and understand on the impacts on heritage.
  - 6) Using intelligent design to minimise impacts, whilst maximising the benefits of the proposal.
  - 7) Substantial enhancements to the public realm at the base of the building, to ensure that it is grounded in a high quality context that is welcoming, accessible and active.
- 9.9. The proposed design responds to its immediate context with increased and enhanced public realm. The currently narrow Old Street pavement will be widened from 2.6m to 7 metres with a colonnade. Cowper street will be improved with a shared surface and a pocket garden. The proposals respond to the emerging public realm at the newly developed Old Street Station and offers a new public square to receive the approximately 35 million annual exit and entrances from the station (based on 2019 data).
- 9.10. The massing seeks to respond to immediate townscape as well as wider setting views with minimal to no harm. The façade articulation and terracotta materiality responds to the conservation areas in Finsbury and South Shoreditch whilst ensuring there is no “back” to the building. Careful consideration is given to local heritage assets such as Lowndes House and the HAC Grounds.
- 9.11. The tall building location, the width proportions, and the reduction of the building height at podium (compared to the existing building) have been carefully considered in order to reduce daylighting impacts on the surrounding residential buildings and public space. To achieve this, as the building gets taller, it folds upon itself to diminish in scale, whilst creating urban greening on numerous terraces. In the case of the Bezier apartments, directly adjacent to the site, the vertical sky component (VSC) to the flats has been improved.

- 9.12. This careful and intelligent use of design has ensured the environmental, functional and visual impacts of the district landmark have been minimised. In parallel, we have worked with LBI and the local communities to maximise the potential benefits of the project. The Applicant recognised from the outset the unique opportunity this building has to help connect and share the benefits of Tech City to the wider community in Islington. Whilst the building will become the heart and focal point of an entrepreneurial and creative tech community, it is also imperative that the building becomes part of the identity of Old Street for residents and local groups. The Project Team has therefore worked closely with many stakeholders to devise a locally engrained and unparalleled public benefits package.
- 9.13. The wide-ranging benefits are listed below and explained in detail within the supporting documents, but the premise has been to create a ground floor and public realm that is largely dedicated to ensuring the building is transformational for the local community and forms part of a new identify for Old Street. It will help connect Tech City to all of Islington's residents and share the synergies, opportunities, knowledge and creativity. Above ground, the Proposed Development will deliver a substantial quantum of exemplar office space that will have a profound economic impact to the local area and Tech City. This will include 10% of the office uplift being delivered as affordable workspace offered at peppercorn rent. This will facilitate a wide ecosystem and network of entrepreneurs and allow small local businesses and local jobs to flourish. This affordable workspace is expected to double the current amount of workspace in the Borough.

#### Economic

- Helping to **meet LBI's unprecedent need** for office floorspace (c443,000 sqm up to 2036). The Local Plan acknowledges that this employment floorspace demand is unlikely to be met. It states "that the maximisation of business floorspace delivery is an absolute priority".
- **Floorplates to promote variety of entrepreneur and economic activity.** Variety of floor plates to accommodate Small, Medium, and Established enterprises (SME's) at multiple scales and types (tech, creative, media... etc)
- Creation of **59,907 sqm of modern, flexible and world class office floorspace**.

- Expected to **generate/ facilitate 3,900 jobs**. This will have a significant positive local economic impact. It will significantly increase local spending
- Creation of **affordable workspace** of a quantum equating to 10% of the office uplift. This will be designed to be a key part of the ecosystem of the building, allowing local entrepreneurs and small businesses to share facilities with the other occupiers.
- Creation of a **community space** dedicated to allowing local artists and creatives to showcase their work and help embed the building into local community.
- **Apprenticeships** to local residents.

#### Architectural

- **Transformation of a building long known to be detrimental to the surrounding cityscape.** Transformation of site and its relationship with Old Street by opening up Cowper Street Corner, placing a landmark on the roundabout, and reinforcing street wall and urban form.
- **Removing poor architectural quality façade** and replacing with a highly sustainable façade that celebrates and innovates upon existing historic context.
- Delivery of building of **outstanding architecture** that responds to varied and changing context while creating an elegant landmark at one of London and Islington's most important intersections. A tower with slender proportions, complex form, visual interest and use of materiality to reflect transitional location between the City and Shoreditch.
- Significant improvement to **legibility and marking a key transport hub** through expanded public realm and tower that identifies a primary node.
- An **architectural response that reflects national importance** of Tech City and is proportionate to importance of Old Street through urban form making but also through the provision of needed office space configured to respond to needs of tenants desirable to Islington and GLA at this location.
- **Removal of inactive and closed off ground floor** into a very active, transparent and accessible one with important public realm benefits.

### Public Realm

- Significant widening of Old Street pavement through the creation of a new pedestrian arcade. This will **increase the public realm by 230%** along this currently constrained route. Pedestrian Comfort Level uplift.
- Enhanced, pedestrian friendly Cowper Street and creation of **new Pocket Garden**.
- Cowper Street established as a **pedestrian-priority street** that supports public realm activity.
- Delivery of 185 sqm new public realm by the station by way of the **City Road Public Square** strengthening the connection to the Old Street ‘squareabout’.
- Enhanced landscape throughout with a **net creation of 505sqm high-quality, inclusive and accessible public realm**, by way of setting back the building line; removing existing barriers; steps and pinch points and providing new amenity including seating, trees and planting.

### Social Value

- **New Pedestrian Link** through the building between Old Street and Cowper Street measuring 236 sqm in total.
- Creation of the 222sqm '**Great Room**'. A truly public 'front door' to the building for public benefit and community use. An entirely publicly accessible space with generous proportions and double height. This will be a spacious room to host public cultural programming and events.
- A 344 sqm **community space** will be provided free to the local community and will create a link between the tech industry in the area with the local community.
- Intelligent design and engineering to retain structure and **significantly reduce carbon impact**.
- Use of cutting edge design and technology to deliver a **highly sustainable building**.
- **Urban greening** and 127 additional trees.
- **Improvement of daylight/ sunlight** to homes in Bezier building. Improvement of daylight/sunlight to the new square at the heart of the roundabout.
- Supporting local artists by commissioning a local artist competition to use the flank façade fronting Old Street as a blank canvas.

- 9.14. The evaluation of the Proposed Development against planning policies and feedback from pre-application meetings shows that the Proposed Development strongly aligns with relevant planning policy at a local, regional and national level.
- 9.15. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development should be granted planning permission.

