



PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT



PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE A		AGENDA ITEM NO: B3
Date:	Planning Committee 14 January 2020	

Application number	P2019/2576/FUL and P2019/2605/LBC
Application type	Full Planning Application and Listed Building Consent
Ward	Highbury East
Listed building	Grade II
Conservation area	St Mary Magdalene Conservation Area
Development Plan Context	Adjacent to Lower Holloway Local Shopping Area.
Licensing Implications	None
Site Address	Islington Central Library, 2 Fieldway Crescent, Islington, London, N5 1PF
Proposal	Refurbishment of the ground and first floor of the building reinstating the public foyer from Holloway Road entrance to provide a link to the main library at ground floor level. Change of use of the north western portion of the building at ground and first floor levels in association with the creation of a rehearsal room/ theatre (D2) and associated office at ground and first floor levels. Work includes demolition of internal partitions and mezzanine floor, minor structural alterations to form new doorways, new partitions at ground and first floor level and installation of a new ventilation fan with an accompanying external louvre window which would replace the existing sash window above the loading bay doors at ground floor level upon the Fieldway Crescent Elevation. Installation of a ramp to the side elevation of the Holloway Road entrance to provide inclusive access to the building.

Case Officer	Alex McCombie
Applicant	Mr Gareth Jenkins (London Borough of Islington)
Agent	Haworth Tompkins

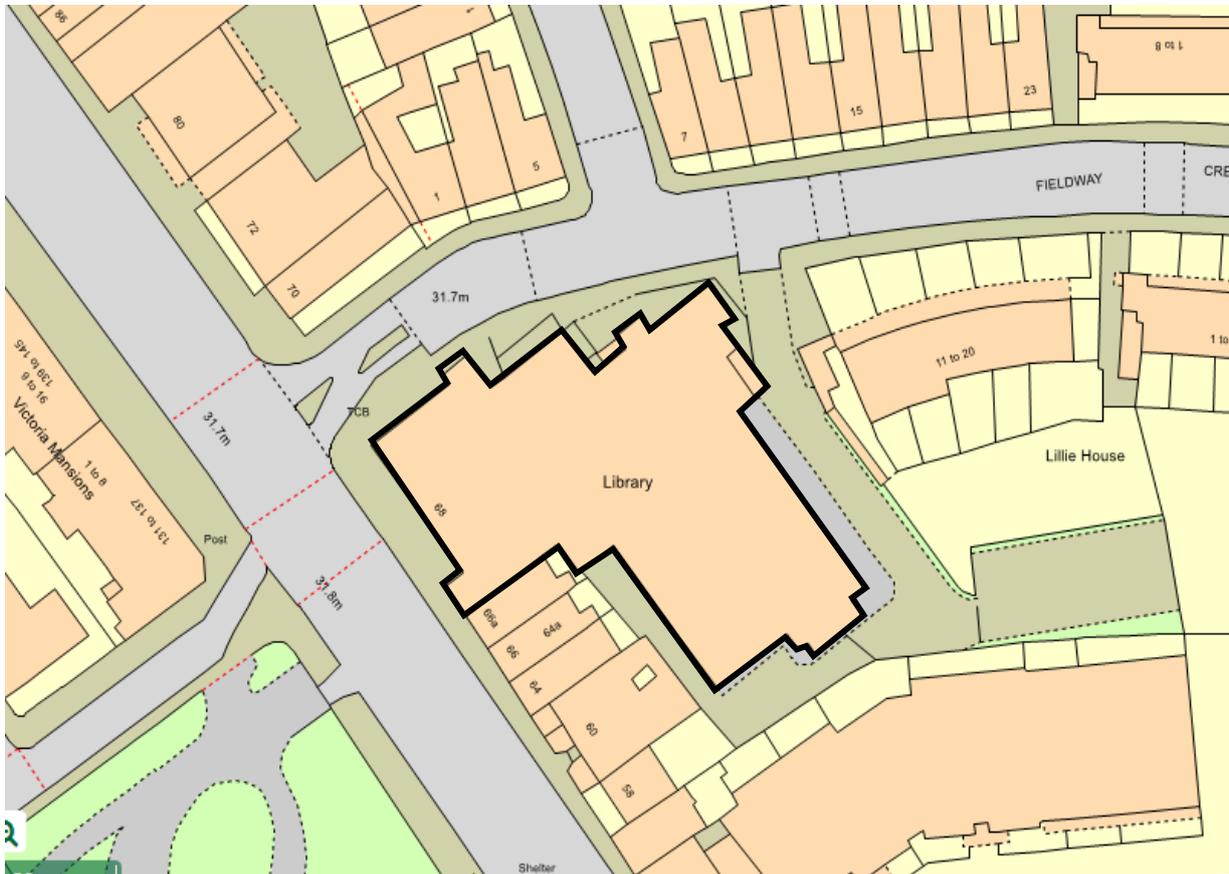
1. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to resolve to **GRANT** planning permission:

1. for the reasons for approval;
2. subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1;

- conditional upon the completion and signing of a directors level agreement to secure the relate public benefits of the scheme for the borough.

2. SITE PLAN



3. PHOTOS OF SITE/STREET

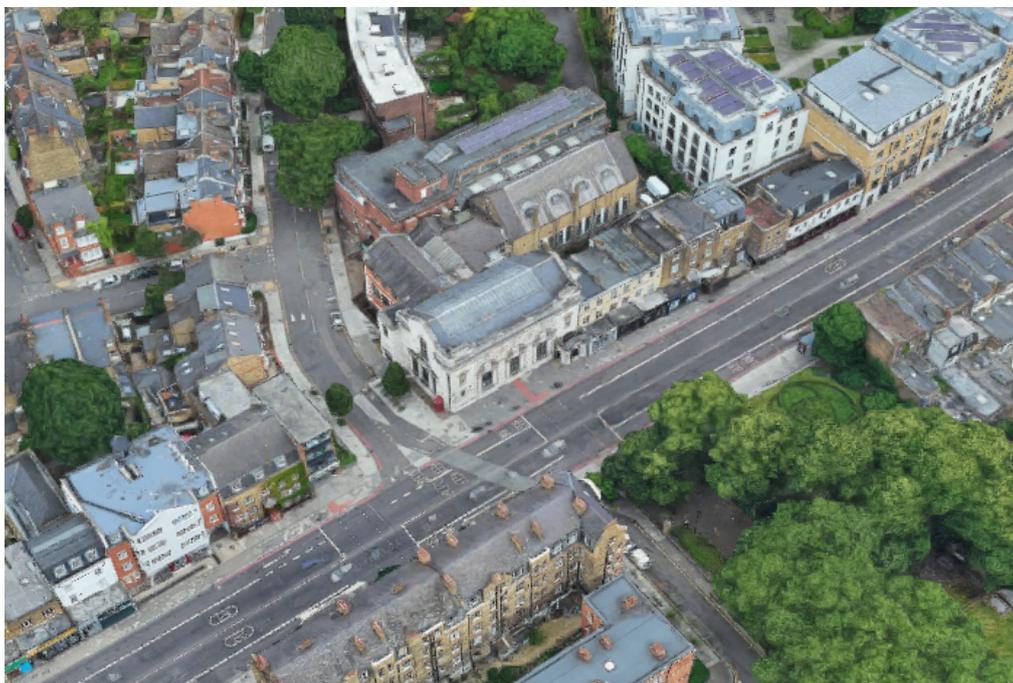


Image 1: Aerial view of site (from north west)



Image 2: Holloway Road Elevation



Image 3: Fieldway Crescent Elevation



Image 4: Aerial view to the rear of the site



Image 5: Internal view of double height space subject to change of use from Library (D1 use) to Theatre (D2 use)- top left, top right and bottom left. Internal view of Holloway Road entrance/ proposed foyer (bottom right)

SUMMARY

- 3.1 The application for full planning and listed building consent proposes the refurbishment of the ground and first floor of the building, reinstating the public foyer from the Holloway Road entrance providing a link to the main library at ground floor level and the creation of a ramp to the side elevation of the Holloway Road entrance. Change of use of the north western portion of the building at ground and first floor levels in association with the creation of a rehearsal room/ theatre (D2) with an ancillary office. Associated internal works comprising the demolition of internal partitions and mezzanine floor, minor structural alterations to form new doorways, new partitions at ground and first floor level. Installation of a new ventilation fan with an accompanying external louvered window replacing the existing sash window above the loading bay doors at ground floor level upon the Fieldway Crescent Elevation.
- 3.2 The application therefore predominantly relates to the internal changes necessary to convert the north western portion of the Grade 2 listed building at ground and first floor level from its current library use (D1) to a rehearsal room/ theatre for use by the Tall Stories Theatre Group (D2) with associated internal and external alterations to improve access, to and through the building.
- 3.3 This change of use of Library Floorspace (D1) to a rehearsal theatre (D2) is considered acceptable in this instance, the last use of this part of the building was as the First Steps Learning centre which forms part of the Library's adult Education offer and this facility has since been re-provided at the second floor level of the library. Policy 4.12, Part A establishes that the Council will not permit any loss or reduction in social infrastructure uses unless: (i) a replacement facility is provided on site, which would, in the council's view, meet the need of the local population for a specific use.
- 3.4 In this case it is considered that the relocation of the First Steps learning centre to the second floor would ensure that the Library's Adult Education Offer could continue and that Tall Stories outreach programme with local schools and the Library would support the function of the Library as an important piece of social infrastructure.
- 3.5 The building is to be occupied by Tall Stories Theatre Company who are a charitable theatre company who produce a mixture of large and small scale storytelling shows. Larger productions are performed at Internationally and Nationally recognised theatres and fund the organisations performances and outreach work with schools and communities. It is intended that Tall Stories will form a partnership with the Library service to offer an outreach programme which will include 15 free performances a year to be secured through the Heads of terms for the accompanying section 106 agreement. In addition, the company will arrange free themed workshops to help encourage reading and participation in Library reading events such as the Summer Reading Challenge, Reading ahead for adults and Islington Reads. The company will also provide free educational materials for schools and Free exhibitions at Libraries based on Tall stories productions.
- 3.6 The scope of the proposed works resulting in some alterations to the external appearance of the building and more extensive alterations to the internal appearance of the building have been identified by the Design and Conservation Team as resulting in some harm to the historical fabric of the listed building. However, this harm has been weighed against the public benefits of the scheme which includes the outreach programme outlined above which secures a meaningful future working partnership between Islington Central Library, Islington's Schools and the Tall Stories Theatre company.

- 3.7 The scheme for the change of use of Library floorspace to a rehearsal theatre has been subject to several revisions during the course of the consideration of the application to ensure that any alterations to the building are as sympathetic as possible to minimise the harm to the historic fabric of the listed building.
- 3.8 The views of the Inclusive Access Officer have been sought and revised plans have been provided to ensure that the proposed works achieve the highest standards of accessibility, to ensure that the building is fully accessible to all groups.
- 3.9 Public Protection have also been consulted to ensure that the proposed theatre use and operation of the theatre does not give rise to undue noise and disturbance. Subject to conditions, no objections have been raised on this basis.
- 3.10 The proposed development particularly the provision of a well-known and valuable charitable use, is welcomed in principle, brings the original entrance of the building back into use and improves access to the building from the Holloway Road entrance. The application has been considered in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 3.11 The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of land use, design, inclusive design, sustainability, waste, recycling and landscaping. Taking all material considerations into account, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable on balance, and that the application should be approved.

4. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 4.1 The site is located on the north eastern side of Holloway Road on a corner plot at the junction with Fieldway Crescent. The application building is a part two, part three storey building, comprised of a two storey Portland stone design to the Holloway Road elevation, with a two storey red brick rear and side projecting wing to the Fieldway Crescent Elevation. The building also features a three storey 1970's Brutalist Style dark red brick and concrete extension to the rear of the original rear and side projecting wing.
- 4.2 The site is well served by Public transport being situated between Highbury and Islington and Holloway Road underground stations and is served by a number of bus routes. On this basis, it therefore has an excellent Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6a (with 1 being the lowest rating and 6a being the highest rating).
- 4.3 The building is Grade 2 listed and is located within the St Mary Magdalene Conservation Area. The listing on the Historic England Website is as follows:

' Public Library. Dated 1906 on the foundation stone and elsewhere, altered and enlarged to Fieldway Crescent front in 1973-6. By Henry T. Hare. The principal front of Hare's building faces Holloway Road, and is faced in Portland stone, and there is a 1906 wing in Fieldway Crescent of red brick set in English bond with stone dressings; roof of slate so far as visible. Two storeys over basement; the first floor not windowed on Holloway Road, but the front reads as five bays, the outer bays projecting slightly. Deep single-storey porch of rusticated stone to right-hand bay with engaged Roman Doric columns carrying a segmental open pediment with datestone and floral drops in the tympanum; flat-arched entrance with double keystones; wrought iron gates to entrance and wrought iron grille to left return; dated lead rainwater head in angle of porch and principal front. The principal front has a base of ashlar, the rest decorated with banded rustication; three window bays to centre set in round, hollow-chamfered

arches, the windows flat-arched and flanked by engaged Ionic columns carrying entablature with double keystone and broken pediment enclosing a cartouche; the windows have original slim wooden mullions and transoms with leaded glazing; rising out of each cartouche, a scrolled bracket each carrying a different emblematic female head; circular niches with architraves between the brackets and linked to them by festoons; fascia over all three windows lettered 'ISLINGTON CENTRAL LIBRARY'. The outer bays have, to the right, the porch and an aedicular niche with a statue of Bacon to the first floor, and, to the left, the foundation stone with small flat-arched window above, and first-floor niche with a statue of Spenser. Pulvinated frieze to the outer bays; mutule cornice, balustrade to central bays, stepped parapet with wreathed ornament to outer bays. The return of the principal facade to Fieldway Crescent has a tripartite window to the ground floor with Ionic pilasters and engaged Ionic columns carrying entablature and central segmental pediment; and a round-arched first-floor window with eared architrave, keystone, and scrolled outer mouldings; a lower, two-storey pedimented wing projects to the left with flat-arched entrance and first-floor flat-arched window under an open segmental pediment. Rear wing of two storeys and four-window range stepped back in Fieldway Crescent: flat-arched windows, stone dressings, moulded stone eaves cornice and bracketed gutters.

INTERIOR: : the block facing into Holloway Road has been largely gutted internally; but the rear wing retains the large former reading room on the ground floor with tall paired windows to the south-west separated by engaged Doric columns, a four-light window to the south-east similarly treated, and a coffered ceiling; above this the former reference library with original panelling incorporating bookcases in six bays, eccentrically large scrolled brackets rising from piers to support entablature to panelled and barrel-vaulted ceiling; segmental sidelights, rooflights and circular windows at either end with archivolt, foliage drops and festoons.'

- 4.4 The area surrounding the site comprises a mix of residential and commercial uses. To the north of the site along Holloway Road the townscape is varied in nature with a mix of 2, 3 and 4 storey buildings with some of these units possessing a commercial use at ground floor level with residential accommodation at upper floor levels. Directly to the east of the site is a residential neighbourhood comprising three storey properties, situated between the St Mary Magdalene and Highbury Fields Conservation Areas.
- 4.5 Directly to the south the built form consists of three storey properties with a range of building heights with a commercial nature at ground floor level and residential flats above.
- 4.6 To the west and north west is St Mary Magdalene Church and its associated grounds (Grade II star listed) and a five storey mansion block comprising commercial units at ground floor level with residential accommodation above.
- 4.7 All the areas to the north, west and immediate south of the property are located within the St Mary Magdalene Conservation Area.

5. PROPOSAL (IN DETAIL)

- 5.1 In this case the application for full and listed building consent proposes the refurbishment of the ground and first floor of the Grade II listed Library building to reinstate the public foyer from the Holloway Road entrance providing a link to the main library at ground floor level and the creation of a ramp to the side elevation of the Holloway Road entrance. Change of use of the north western portion of the building is proposed at ground and first floor levels in association with the creation of

a rehearsal room/ theatre (D2) with an ancillary office. Associated internal works comprising the demolition of internal partitions and mezzanine floor, minor structural alterations to form new doorways, new partitions at ground and first floor level. Installation of a new ventilation fan with an accompanying external louvered window replacing the existing sash window above the loading bay doors at ground floor level upon the Fieldway Crescent Elevation.

- 5.2 The proposed works are sought predominantly to facilitate the change of use of the North Western portion of the building, currently 189.6 sqm of Library floorspace to a rehearsal room/ theatre (D2 use). This represents a change of use of 14.5 % of the total library floorspace which is approximately 1308.4 sqm.
- 5.3 The north western portion of the building subject to the change of use is to be occupied by Tall Stories a charity theatre company that specialises in storytelling performances for all ages and creates large and small touring shows. The company has produced shows that tour in the UK and Internationally with performances shown in the West End, Broadway and the Sydney Opera House such as the critically acclaimed Gruffalo show and uses the profits from these shows to cover the costs of other work such as performing for free in schools, workshops, access performances and small tours in the UK. The proposed rehearsal studio/ theatre space would serve as an operating base for the Theatre company and will be a rehearsal room equipped to work on theatrical productions from the initial idea through to full dress rehearsal with set, props, costume and lighting, an ancillary office for a small staff team and a small store for costumes.
- 5.4 Tall Stories will form a partnership with the Library Service. It is envisaged that the working space for the theatre company and what the company is making, will be an inspiration for free education workshops, behind the scenes tours, open rehearsals and exhibitions, using sets and costumes that bring to life both the story the production is based on, as well as revealing how a theatrical production is made.
- 5.5 The Library Service will target this new, free activity for children, families and our schools. In addition, the library service will work with Tall Stories to provide targeted outreach activities to ensure there is wider borough benefit.
- 5.6 The Library Service and Tall Stories outreach work will include:
 - **Free performances by Tall stories in 20 Islington Schools**
 - **The provision of 15 Free performances a year by Tall Stories with the Library targeting priority groups to engage 1200 residents**
 - **Tall Stories run free themed workshops to help increase participation with the Summer reading challenge for children aged 4-12. Reading ahead for adults and Islington reads which take place annually, to engage 300 residents.**
 - **Provision of free educational materials to all Islington schools within the borough.**
 - **Free exhibitions based on Tall Stories productions to be showcased at Central Library and other borough libraries**
- 5.7 Further information about Tall Stories is provided in the Planning Statement accompanying the application.

5.8 Figure 1 and 2 below shows that Tall Stories will occupy the large room in the north western portion of the Library which is a double height space and occupies approximately 189.6 sqm (14.5%) of the overall 1308.4 sqm metre footprint. This large room (labelled studio) will be converted into a rehearsal room/ theatre with seating, to the southern portion of this room. An ancillary office will be located at ground floor level, with the current mezzanine relocated to provide a costume store at first floor level which would be accessed through a relocated staircase. See figure 3 (Proposed Sections).

5.9 The proposed studio (as marked on the plans) will be used by Tall Stories predominantly as a rehearsal theatre for developing theatrical productions from the initial idea through to full dress rehearsal with set, props, costumes and lighting. Through the partnership with the Library service, the company will also run other events including free educational workshops, behind the scenes tours, open rehearsals and exhibitions.

5.10 The proposals will also include the removal of internal partitions within the foyer leading from the Holloway Road entrance to open up this space to the public and will include the provision of 1 x fully accessible combined WC and shower and a further WC in the small wing to the south of the entrance foyer. A space currently used as a library storeroom.

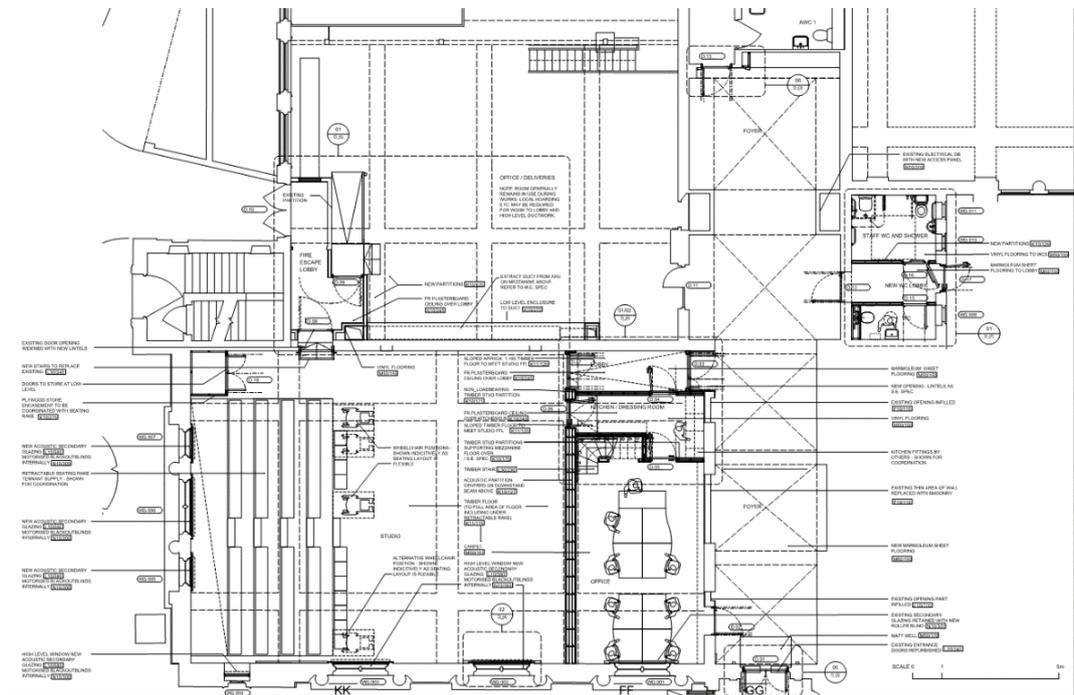


Figure 1: Proposed Ground floor layout

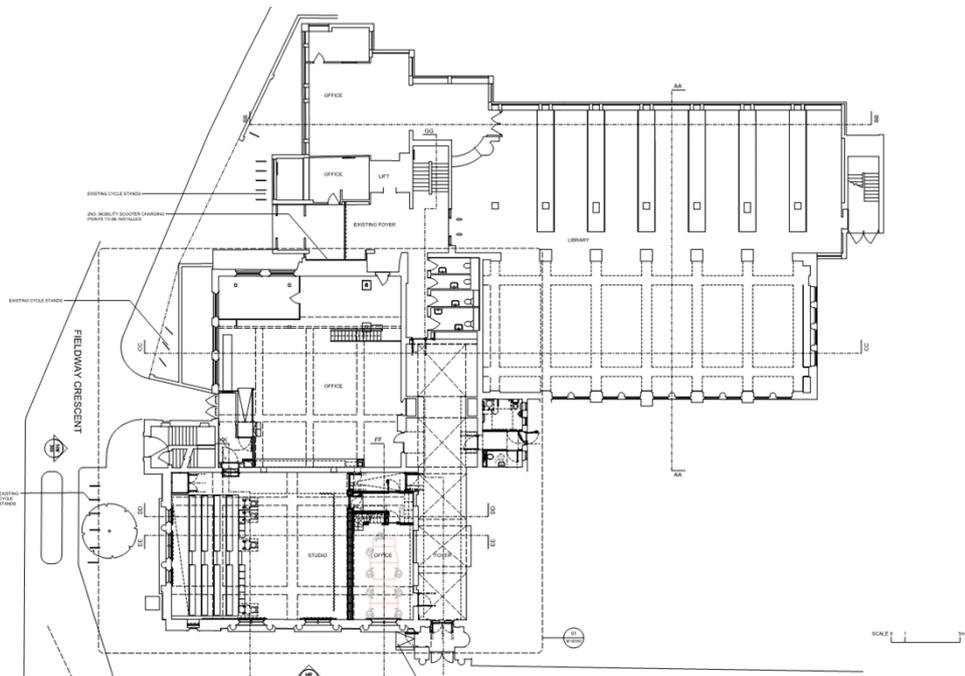


Figure 2: Proposed Rehearsal Studio (Ground floor plan) in context of wider Library

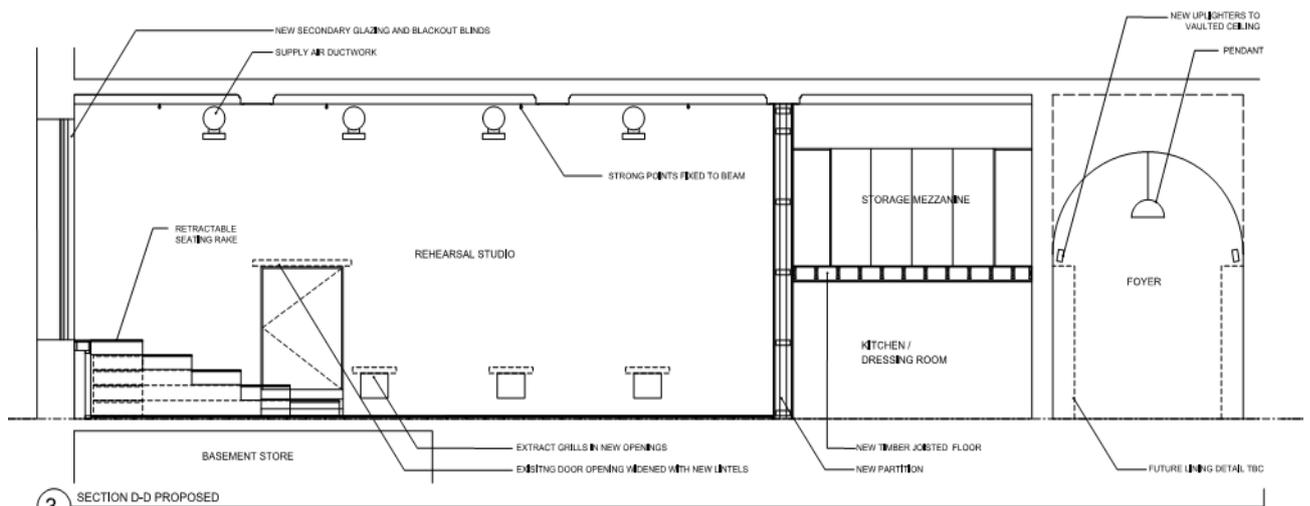


Figure 3: Proposed Section Drawing

5.11 The external alterations associated with the change of use of the north western part of the building and opening up of the foyer and Holloway Road entrance include the provision of a ramp to the side elevation of the Holloway Road entrance (shown in Figure 4) in order to provide accessible access to the Holloway Road entrance.

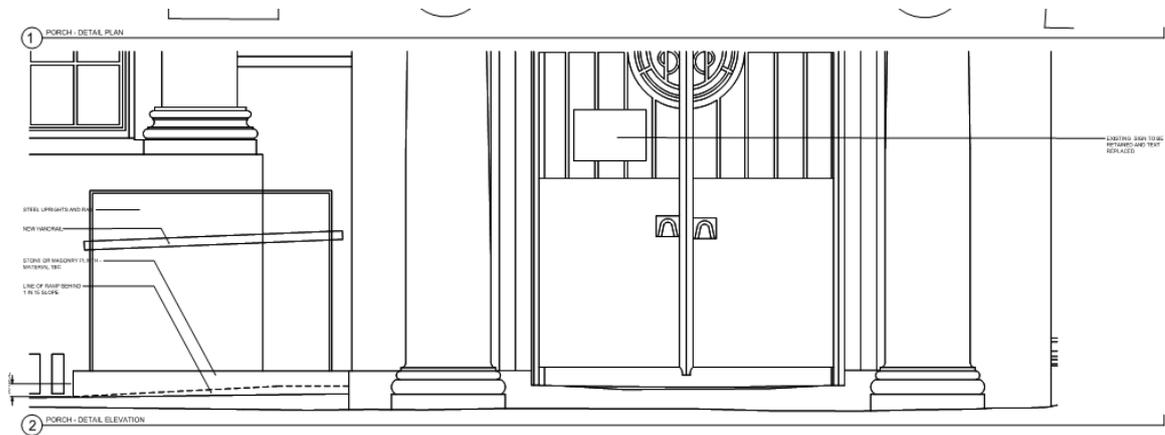


Figure 4: Holloway Road Elevation (Ramp Detail)

5.12 Further, to the Fieldway Crescent Elevation an existing window at ground floor level would be replaced by louvres that would provide an outlet for the ventilation ducts required to provide ventilation to the proposed theatre space. See Figure 5.



Figure 5: Fieldway Crescent Elevation

- 5.13 The proposals follow a previous application for listed building consent (P/2019/0242/LBC) relating to the refurbishment of the ground floor entrance lobby, creation of 2 new staff WC's at first floor level. Refurbishment of the second floor reference library and creation of two new classrooms at second floor level. This comprised the first phase of works relating to the refurbishment of the building and upgrading of Library services.
- 5.14 As a result of this previous listed building consent the First Steps learning centre which was part of the Library's Adult Education Centre offer and occupied the ground floor of the double height space in the north western portion of the building (subject to the current application) has been relocated to the one of the two new classrooms at second floor level.

Revision

- 5.15 During the course of the consideration of the application Officer have requested further information to be submitted in the form of a planning statement and revised Heritage, Design and Access Statement to fully justify the public benefits of the proposed change of use. A robust justification is required in this instance given that the proposed change of use to a rehearsal room/ theatre would in this instance result in the loss of library space, the principle of which the Council would seek to resist in most circumstances.
- 5.16 Amended plans have been submitted to address concerns relating to the scale of the proposed internal alterations and their impact on the historic fabric of the listed building and to seek improvements in relation to the accessibility of the building including the provision of a ramp to the Holloway Road entrance.

6. RELEVANT HISTORY:

- 6.1 P2019/0242/LBC: Refurbishment of ground floor entrance lobby, creation of two new staff WCs at first floor level. Creation of two new classrooms at second floor level. Refurbishment of second floor reference library. Approved with conditions 01 May 2019.

Pre- application advice

- 6.2 A pre application request was submitted in August 2018 (REF: Q2018/3162/LBC) in relation to Internal alterations including the refurbishment of the first floor panelled former reference library room, refitting of the 1970's first floor reading room and alterations to the ground floor lobby entrance and first floor entrance and gallery.
- 6.3 This pre application advice request related to the proposals submitted for application P2019/0242/LBC and no suggestions were made in relation to the works proposed within the current application.

7. CONSULTATION

Public Consultation

- 7.1 Letters were sent to occupants of 119 adjoining and nearby properties on 11 September 2019. A site notice and press advert were displayed on 19 September 2019. The public consultation of the application therefore expired on 13 October 2019, however it is the Council's practice to continue to consider representations made up until the date of a decision.
- 7.2 At the time of the writing of this report no objections have been received from the public with regard to the application.

External Consultees

- 7.3 Historic England: No comments to make
- 7.4 Theatres Trust: Support the proposals and consider that the proposed theatre will help to increase the strength and diversity of the cultural provision within Islington as well as providing a much needed rehearsal space and support to an existing community facility (The Library).
- 7.5 Transport for London: No comments

Internal Consultees

- 7.6 **Design and Conservation Officer:** The proposals would cause neutral and in some cases limited harm to the historic fabric of the listed building. However, weighed against the public benefits of the proposals and the existing internal condition of the building in particular it is not considered that the harm caused would be sufficient enough to recommend refusal of the application.
- 7.7 **Public Protection Officer:** No objections, subject to a condition. The public protection officer has requested a condition in relation to the proposed louvres at ground floor level to the Fieldway Crescent elevation to ensure that the noise generated from the ventilation ducts is at least 5db (A) below the background noise level.
- 7.8 **Inclusive Design Officer:** Initially objected on the basis of a failure to provide a ramp to allow access to the building from the Holloway Road entrance, failure to provide sufficient wheelchair audience seating in the rehearsal studio and due to the lack of an accessible shower, where the new WCs/ showers are due to be provided on the ground floor. Amended plans have now been received to address these concerns and the Inclusive Design Officer raises no concerns on this basis.
- 7.9 **Planning Policy:** Initially had concerns that the net loss of library space and replacement of library space (D1 use) with the proposed theatre use had not been sufficiently justified. However, the applicant has since provided a Planning Statement and revised the Heritage, Design and Access Statement to provide more detailed justification in relation to the public benefits of the scheme. It is considered that

sufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate compliance with Policies DM4.4 and DM 4.12 of the Development Management Policies (2013).

8. RELEVANT STATUTORY DUTIES & DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONSIDERATION & POLICIES

- 8.1 Islington Council (Planning Sub Committee), in determining the planning application has the following main statutory duties to perform:
- To have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application and to any other material considerations (Section 70 Town & Country Planning Act 1990);
 - To determine the application in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) (Note: that the relevant Development Plan is the London Plan and Islington's Local Plan, including adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance.)
- 8.2 National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF): Paragraph 10 states: "at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 8.3 The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 seeks to secure positive growth in a way that effectively balances economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. The NPPF is a material consideration and has been taken into account as part of the assessment of these proposals.
- 8.4 Since March 2014 Planning Practice Guidance for England has been published online
- 8.5 In considering the planning application account has to be taken of the statutory and policy framework, the documentation accompanying the application, and views of both statutory and non-statutory consultees.
- 8.6 The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates the key articles of the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law. These include:
- Article 1 of the First Protocol: Protection of property. Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.
 - Article 14: Prohibition of discrimination. The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, or other status.
- 8.7 Members of the Planning Sub-Committee must be aware of the rights contained in the Convention (particularly those set out above) when making any Planning decisions. However, most Convention rights are not absolute and set out circumstances when an interference with a person's rights is permitted. Any interference with any of the rights contained in the Convention must be sanctioned by law and be aimed at

pursuing a legitimate aim and must go no further than is necessary and be proportionate.

8.8 The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers. The Committee must be mindful of this duty inter alia when determining all planning applications. In particular, the Committee must pay due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.9 In accordance with Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in assessing the proposals hereby under consideration, special regard has been given to the desirability of preserving the Listed Building, its setting and any of its features of special architectural or historic interest. Regard has also been given in line with Section 72 of the same act to the impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Development Plan

8.10 The Development Plan is comprised of the London Plan 2016, Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013 and Site Allocations 2013. The policies of the Development Plan are considered relevant to this application and are listed at Appendix 2 to this report.

8.11 Some weight is attributed to the Draft London Plan.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) / Document (SPD)

8.12 The SPGs and/or SPDs which are considered relevant are listed in Appendix 2.

9. ASSESSMENT

9.1 The main issues arising from this proposal relate to:

- Land use
- Design and assessment of any heritage impacts to the listed building.
- Inclusive Design
- Impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- Highways and transportation
- Other issues: sustainability, waste and recycling, landscaping, contaminated land and fire safety.

Land-use

- 9.2 The proposals would in this case see the loss of 189.6 sqm of Library (D1) floorspace to change to a Theatre (D2) use.
- 9.3 Policy 4.6 (Support for and enhancement of arts, culture, sport and entertainment) of the London Plan (2016) states that the Mayor will and boroughs and other stakeholders should support the continued success of London's diverse range of arts, cultural, professional sporting and entertainment enterprises and the cultural, social and economic benefits that they offer to its residents, workers and visitors.
- 9.4 Policy DM 4.4 (Promoting Islington's Town Centres) states that the Council will seek to maintain and enhance the retail and service function of Islington's Town Centres.
- 9.5 Part A of Policy DM 4.4 states that for applications proposing more than 80 sqm of floorspace for uses within the A Use Classes, D2 Use class or Sui Generis main Town Centre uses should be located within designated Town Centres. Where suitable locations within Town Centres are not available, Local Shopping area or edge of centre sites should be chosen. Where this is not possible, out of centre sites may be acceptable where:
- (i) Alternative sites within Town Centres, Local Shopping Areas and edge-of – centre sites have been thoroughly investigated
 - (ii) The development would not individually, or cumulatively with other development, have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of Town Centres and Local Shopping Areas with Islington or in adjacent boroughs, or prejudice the prospect for further investment needed to safeguard their vitality and viability; and
 - (iii) The development would be accessible to all by a sustainable means of transport and would not prejudice the overall aim of reducing the need to travel;
- 9.6 Additionally, Policy DM 4.12 (social and strategic infrastructure and cultural facilities) states at Part A that:
- 9.7 The council will not permit any loss or reduction in social infrastructure unless:
- (i) A replacement facility is provided on site which would in the council's view, meet the need of the local population for the specific use; or
 - (ii) The specific use is no longer required on site. In such circumstances, the applicant must provide evidence demonstrating:
 - (a) That the proposals would not lead to a shortfall in provision for the specific use within the local catchment
 - (b) That there is either no demand for another suitable social infrastructure use on site, or that the site/premises is no longer appropriate for social infrastructure uses; and
 - (c) Any replacement/relocated facilities for the specific use provide a level of accessibility and standard of provision at least equal to that of the existing facility.

Part C also states that new social infrastructure and cultural facilities must:

- (i) Be located in areas convenient for the communities they serve and accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes, including walking, cycling and public transport
- (ii) Provide buildings that are inclusive, accessible, flexible and which provide design and space standards which meet the needs of intended occupants
- (iii) Be sited to maximise shared use of the facility, particularly for recreational and community uses; and
- (iv) Complement existing uses and character of the area, and avoid adverse impacts on the amenity of surrounding uses.

Loss of Library floorspace and provision of replacement theatre (D2) floorspace

- 9.8 In this this instance the proposed change of use of the north western portion of the building at ground and first floor levels to a theatre (D2) would result in the loss of 189.6sqm of library use floorspace (D1). The double height space subject to the change of use had previously been used as a First Steps learning centre which forms part of the Library's adult education offer and this first steps learning centre has been relocated to as second floor classroom as part of an earlier application for listed building consent (P2019/0242/LBC).
- 9.9 Criteria (i) of Part A of Policy DM 4.12 establishes that the council will not permit any loss or reduction in social infrastructure uses unless:
- (i) a replacement facility is provided on site which would in the council's view, meet the need of the local population for the specific use;
- 9.10 As noted above the First Steps learning centre which last occupied the north western portion of the Library subject to the proposed change of use formed part of the Library's Adult Education Offer and this facility has been relocated to the second floor of the Library. The proposals would subsequently avoid the loss of this part of the Library's services. It is noted that the proposals would however result in a net loss of library floorspace which has potential to be used in a variety of ways by the Library service.
- 9.11 In total, the proposals would result in the loss of 189.6 sqm of library floorspace comprising 14.5 % of the total floorspace of the library. This subsequently means that 88.5 % of the library would be untouched by the proposals. On basis that the first steps learning steps learning centre (a replacement facility) has been relocated to the second floor and the amount of remaining floorspace it is considered that the proposals would not result in undermining the use of the building as a library.
- 9.12 Tall Stories Theatre company is a registered charity that seeks to use the proposed theatre in a rehearsal space capacity and the company has a strong reputation of working with schools and other education bodies to deliver storytelling in a creative manner.

9.13 The supporting application documents submitted confirm that Tall Stories theatre company will undertake an extensive outreach programme which will work in tandem with the Library service and local schools. In this first 12 months this outreach commitment would include for instance include:

- **The provision of free performances in 20 Islington schools to engage 100 children**
- **The provision of 15 free performances per year, working with the Library service to target priority groups to engage a further 1200 residents**
- **The arrangement of free themed workshops to help encourage participation in Library mass reading events, such as the Summer Reading Challenge for children aged 4-12, Reading ahead for adults and Islington Reads which all take place annually to engage a further 300 residents**
- **The provision of free educational materials by Tall Stories to all Islington Schools.**
- **Arrangement of free exhibitions based on Tall Stories productions which will be showcased at the Central Library as well as a number of other Libraries within the borough. The aim of the exhibition programme is to enhance work with children and their families to engage 200 residents.**

9.14 In the context of the re-provision of the First Steps learning Centre elsewhere in the Library and the operations of the rehearsal theatre which will work in partnership with the Library service to diversify the Library's activities offer. It is considered that the loss of Library floorspace would not the ability of the Library to function as a Library. The replacement first steps learning centre would in the Council's view meet the need of the local population and the proposed rehearsal theatre would also support and secure the future operation of the Library.

9.15 Overall, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with Part A, criteria (i) of Policy 4.12 of the Development Management Policies (2013).

9.16 Part C of Policy 4.12 requires that new social infrastructure and cultural facilities must be:

- (i) Located in areas convenient to a range of sustainable transport modes
- (ii) Provide buildings that are inclusive, accessible, flexible and which provide design standards that meet the needs of intended occupants
- (iii) Sited to maximise the shared use of the facility, particularly for residential and community uses, and
- (iv) Complement existing uses and the character of the area and avoid adverse impacts on the amenity of surrounding uses.

9.17 The site is located between Holloway Road and Highbury and Islington Underground stations, is served by a number of bus routes and has an excellent PTAL of 6B. Appendix A of the Planning Statement details the opportunities that the Tall Stories Theatre company will offer throughout its yearly programme of events for schoolchildren and local residents to watch dress rehearsal performances and for events such as Q & A answer sessions with set designers. Amended plans have been sought during the course of the application to ensure through the provision of

measures such as ramps and wheelchair seating within the rehearsal studio to ensure that the building is accessible to all. The proposals also offer a degree of flexibility in the operation of the building, as the works re-establish a Holloway Road entrance which could for example be used for access for theatre users outside of Library opening hours.

- 9.18 In respect to criteria (iii) which seeks to maximise the shared use of the facility, the planning statement establishes that there is likely to be opportunities for the rehearsal studio to be shared with other community uses. It's also considered that the proposals complement the existing uses and character of the area. With regard to criteria (iv) it is noted that Holloway Road is generally lined with shops, restaurants and cafes, but at the stretch of Holloway Road on its eastern side opposite St Mary Magdalene Church there are a number of civic and community uses which the proposed rehearsal theatre would complement. Further the extent of the scale of the proposed external alterations are minimal and would present a null impact on the amenities of neighbours.
- 9.19 Overall, the proposed change of use of the north western portion of the building from Library floorspace to a theatre rehearsal space is considered to meet the tests of Policy DM 4.12 of the Development Management Policies (2013).

Alternative sites

- 9.20 The application site in this instance is adjacent to the Lower Holloway Local Shopping area and is as noted above outside the Council's preferred Town Centre location for new theatre (D2) uses. Notwithstanding this, the application is accompanied by a supporting planning statement detailing that a search has been undertaken by the Tall Stories Theatre company to find a permanent home comprising a rehearsal space with ancillary office and costume store since 2016.
- 9.21 Sites have been considered in South London such as at the Embassy Gardens development which would have provided a purpose built theatre within a community space but this application was unsuccessful.
- 9.22 However, the theatre company has stronger ties to North London having rented offices within the area for a number of years and Tall Stories are keen to establish links with Islington's existing theatre scene comprising the Almeida, Little Angel, Sadler's Wells and Barbican Theatres.
- 9.23 Sites were considered at other locations within Islington including at:
- Methodist Church Hall, Archway Town Centre
 - Tetherdown Hall, Muswell Hill
- 9.24 Methodist Church Hall was discounted on the basis that the purchase of the building was too expensive, combined with the need for extensive refurbishment and that the building was too operationally large in scale for the Tall Stories Theatre company.
- 9.25 Tetherdown Hall in Muswell Hill was considered more operationally suitable however the theatre company were outbid on this site.
- 9.26 Paragraph 92 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

(a) plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;

b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

c) guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;

d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and

e) ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

9.27 Islington Library was selected after a meeting with Islington Council. The double height space to the north western portion of the building was considered to meet the operational requirements of the Theatre company. The location of a permanent home within a library (a building already dedicated to stories) was reasoned to be an ideal-fit for a storytelling Theatre Company.

9.28 Policy DM 4.4 (Promoting Islington's Town Centres) states that the Council will seek to maintain and enhance the retail and service function of Islington's Town Centres.

9.29 Part A of Policy DM 4.4 states that for applications proposing more than 80 sqm of floorspace for uses within the A Use Classes, D2 Use class or Sui Generis main Town Centre uses should be located within designated Town Centres. Where suitable locations within Town Centres are not available, Local Shopping area or edge of centre sites should be chosen. Where this is not possible, out of centre sites may be acceptable where:

(i) Alternative sites within Town Centres, Local Shopping Areas and edge-of – centre sites have been thoroughly investigated

(ii) The development would not individually, or cumulatively with other development, have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of Town Centres and Local Shopping Areas with Islington or in adjacent boroughs, or prejudice the prospect for further investment needed to safeguard their vitality and viability; and

(iii) The development would be accessible to all by a sustainable means of transport and would not prejudice the overall aim of reducing the need to travel;

9.30 In line with the requirements of criteria (i) of Part A of Policy DM 4.4 Officers have assessed the information provided on the consideration of alternative sites. It has demonstrated that other sites have been considered across London and within Islington which were discounted on the basis of operational requirements or due to financial considerations.

9.31 Overall, it considered that the consideration of alternative sites as described in the accompanying planning statement constitutes a thorough investigation complying with the requirements of criteria (i) of Policy DM4.4.

- 9.32 Criteria (ii) and (iii) of Part A of Policy DM 4.4 relates to development that would have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of Town Centres and Local Shopping Area within Islington and other boroughs, with criteria (iii) aiming to provide development that is accessible to all through public transport.
- 9.33 The proposed theatre model seeks to use the theatre space predominantly for rehearsals and is not considered to be development that would impact on the vitality or viability of Town Centres or the adjacent local shopping centre. With respect to access to the site via public transport the site is between Holloway Road and Highbury and Islington Station and is served by a number of bus routes. The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 6b indicating an excellent level of accessibility by public transport.
- 9.34 Part A, criteria (i) Policy 4.12 (Social and strategic infrastructure and cultural facilities) establishes that the Council will not permit any loss or reduction in social infrastructure unless a replacement facility is provided on site which would in the council's view meet the need of the local population for a specific use.
- 9.35 Overall, the proposed rehearsal theatre is not considered to provide a use that would undermine the predominant retail and service function of the Lower Holloway Local Shopping area. The location of the proposal adjacent to a Local Shopping area rather than with a Town Centre is considered justified in this instance given the provision of evidence in the application supporting documents that alternative sites within the borough have been extensively considered. As such the proposals are considered to accord with Policy DM 4.12 of the DMP Policies (2013).

Design, Conservation and Heritage Considerations

- 9.36 Central Library is listed at Grade II, it dates from 1906 by Henry T Hare and was part funded by Carnegie. It has an imposing Portland stone façade to Holloway Road with large leaded cross casement windows containing top opening lights and a decorative scroll design. The currently unused original entrance is a projecting bay on this elevation.
- 9.37 To Fieldway Crescent, the rear side and projecting wing are in red brick with Portland Stone banding beyond which is 1970's Brutalist- style dark red brick and concrete extension. The list description explains that the interior to the Holloway Road frontage is largely gutted. The main room has been subdivided with an enclosed mezzanine extension and the entrance foyer has been partially boxed in, but still survives behind it. In the room facing Fieldway Crescent where the ventilation changes are proposed, the room has few internal features although it retains its timber entrance door from the foyer corridor and has retained its original windows (with one partially adapted to form a loading bay entrance).
- 9.38 The building has strong architectural, historic and communal heritage values. It is an accomplished architectural design with a strong streetscape presence; it has interest as being one of the Carnegie funded libraries in the old Islington borough and has communal significance as being a public library, historically with lecture spaces as well as reading rooms.
- 9.39 Local Planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the proposals taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when

considering the impact of a proposals on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

- 9.40 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 9.41 Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 9.42 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, and notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
- 9.43 London wide planning policies relevant to design and conservation are set out in Chapter 7 of the London Plan, and the Mayor of London's character and Context SPG is also relevant.
- 9.44 At the local level, Policy CS 8 and 9 of Islington's Core Strategy (CS) 2011 and Policy DM2.1 of Islington's Development Management Policies 2013 accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in seeking to sustain and enhance Islington's built environment. Taken together, they seek to ensure that proposed development responds positively to existing buildings, the streetscape and the wider context, including local architecture and character, surrounding heritage assets, and locally distinctive patterns of development.
- 9.45 Policy DM2.3 states that Islington's historic environment is an irreplaceable resource and the council will ensure that the borough's heritage assets are conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 9.46 Section 16 and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, establishes that in assessing the proposals hereby under consideration, special regard has been given to the desirability of preserving the listed Building its setting and any of its features of special architectural or historic interest. Section 72 of the same act sets out the statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Internal alterations

- 9.47 In this instance the proposed internal alterations to the listed building involves adapting the main Holloway Road frontage room to a rehearsal room with a new subdivision, re-opening the original entrance to serve both the theatre and the library in addition to the existing main entrance on Fieldway Crescent and reinstating the foyer and entrance corridor. The proposed alterations would also seek to rearrange the ground

floor level WC accommodation, to install motorised blinds, replacement secondary glazing and noise attenuation measures to the front Holloway Road) elevation windows and to provide a mechanical air handling system to include louvres on the Fieldway Crescent Elevation in place of an existing window.

- 9.48 Design and Conservation Officers have been consulted on the proposals and involved since pre application stage.

Large double height room subject to change of use to theatre (north western corner of the building)

- 9.49 In respect to the rearrangement of the large double height room due to be converted into a rehearsal theatre the Design and Conservation Officer considered that the reorganisation of the subdivision of the room moving the existing mezzanine floor from the northern to the southern side of the room would have a neutral or marginally beneficial impact on the historic fabric of the listed building.

- 9.50 In this room it is also proposed to install 4 ventilation ducts which would form part of the air handling unit for the theatre space which would terminate via louvres above a window to the Fieldway Crescent elevation.

- 9.51 The impact of the air handling unit on the historic fabric of the listing building is considered to be regrettable by the Design and Conservation Officer. Further details have been sought through amended plans during the course of the application as some of these ventilation ducts hang directly in front of the front elevation windows. However, the amended plans confirm that these ducts would be set in 1.5 metres from the front elevation windows and located at a high level limiting their visibility.

- 9.52 On this basis it is considered that given the current condition of the space, the impact of the air handling unit ducts on the theatre space are considered neutral.

- 9.53 Replacement secondary glazing to the front elevation windows is also proposed and is similarly considered to be of neutral impact considering the presence of the existing secondary glazing. The internal motorised box blinds accompanying the secondary glazing are considered to be regrettable additions, but would have a neutral impact in the view of the Design Officer.

Internal Foyer leading from the Holloway Road entrance and WC's

- 9.54 The removal of the subdividing elements in the entrance foyer is welcomed and further the reinstatement of an entrance way from Holloway Road and reshaping of the groin vaulted corridor is considered to be of heritage benefit to the historic fabric of the listed building.

- 9.55 The proposed position of the WC's in the side room is a reversion to their original location and again would be welcomed.

External Alterations

9.56 In association with the internal works to the building comprising the change of use of the large double height room on the Holloway side of the building from library space (D1) to a rehearsal theatre (D2). A small number of external alterations are proposed.

Ramp

9.57 At the Holloway Road Elevation, it is proposed to install a ramp to the side elevation of the proposed Holloway Road entrance.

9.58 Discussions on the design of this ramp have been ongoing through the consideration of the application and amended plans were initially sought to move the location of the ramp from its position to the side of the Holloway Road entrance to instead ramp internally to reduce the visual impact of the ramp on the listed Building.

9.59 However, the applicant was unable to achieve a suitable gradient through ramping internally and subsequently a further set of amended plans have been sought to propose the ramp in its initial position and to remove all but the essential handrails to limit the impact on the historic fabric of the listed.

9.60 The proposed ramp is now considered to have a less than substantial harm on the historic fabric of the listed building.

Louvered window

9.61 Upon the Fieldway Crescent elevation it is also proposed to install a louvered window which would replace the top portion of the existing window above the loading bay and associated ramp to the side elevation of the building.

9.62 The louvres are required as an exit point from the ventilation ducting which would be installed inside the building at ground floor level. Design and Conservation Officers consider the loss of the remaining part of the historic window to inclusive of a row of metal louvres to be harmful to the historic fabric of the building.

9.63 Overall it is considered that the acceptability of the scheme in listed building terms is finely balanced and the extent of harm to the listed building needs to be carefully weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

Impact of the proposal upon significance of designated heritage assets

9.64 As noted previously, the application site is Grade II listed and is located within the boundaries of the St Mary Magdalene Conservation Area.

9.65 Therefore, in the determination of the application, the assessment of the proposal must consider the impact on these heritage assets in accordance with the legislation set out in Section 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which is outlined below:

- Section 66(1) provides that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall 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(1) provides that in the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of (amongst others) the planning Acts, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character.
- 9.66 The South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State for the Environment case and the Barnwell Manor case (East Northamptonshire DC v SSCLG) establish that “preserving” means “doing no harm”.
- 9.67 The decision of the Court of Appeal in Barnwell Manor confirms that the assessment of the degree of harm to the heritage asset is a matter for the planning judgement of the decision-maker. However, where the decision-maker concludes that there would be some harm to the heritage asset, in deciding whether that harm would be outweighed by the advantages of the proposed development, the decision-maker is not free to give the harm such weight as the decision-maker thinks appropriate. Rather, Barnwell Manor establishes that a finding of harm to a heritage asset is a consideration to which the decision maker must give considerable importance and weight in carrying out the balancing exercise.
- 9.68 There is therefore a “strong presumption” against granting planning permission for development which would harm a heritage asset. In the Forge Field case the High Court explained that the presumption is a statutory one. It is not irrefutable. It can be outweighed by material considerations powerful enough to do so. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF provides that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. A local planning authority can only properly strike the balance between harm to a heritage asset on the one hand and planning benefits on the other if it is conscious of the statutory presumption in favour of preservation and if it demonstrably applies that presumption to the proposal it is considering.
- 9.69 The case-law also establishes that even where the harm identified is less than substantial (i.e. falls within paragraph 134 of the NPPF), that harm must still be given considerable importance and weight.
- 9.70 When more than one heritage asset would be harmed by the proposed development, the decision-maker also needs to ensure that when the balancing exercise is undertaken, the cumulative effect of those several harms to individual assets is properly considered.
- Islington Central Library
- 9.71 In assessing the proposals hereby under consideration, special regard has been had to the desirability of preserving the historic fabric of the Grade II listed application building.
- 9.72 The listing details for Islington Central Library are as follows:

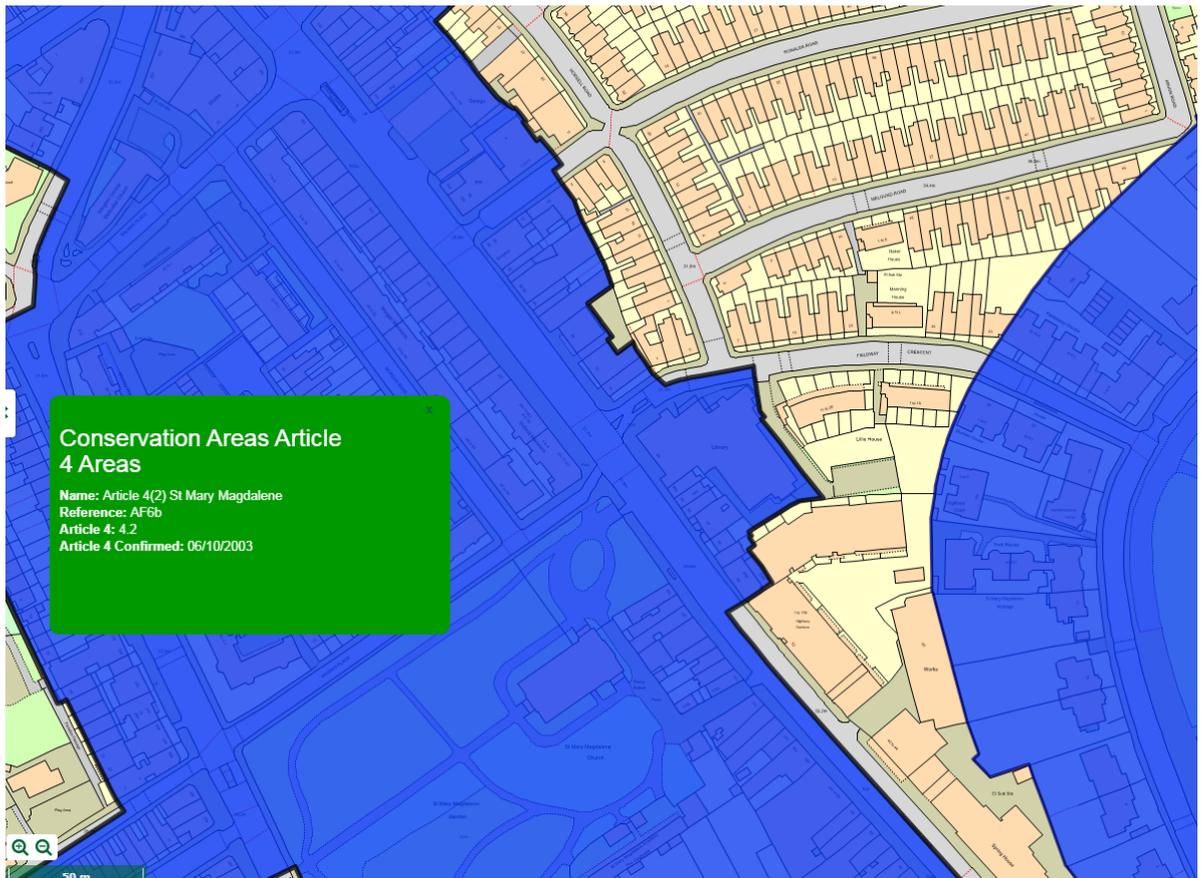
Public Library. Dated 1906 on the foundation stone and elsewhere, altered and enlarged to Fieldway Crescent front in 1973-6. By Henry T. Hare. The principal front of Hare's building faces Holloway Road, and is faced in Portland stone, and there is a

1906 wing in Fieldway Crescent of red brick set in English bond with stone dressings; roof of slate so far as visible. Two storeys over basement; the first floor not windowed on Holloway Road, but the front reads as five bays, the outer bays projecting slightly. Deep single-storey porch of rusticated stone to right-hand bay with engaged Roman Doric columns carrying a segmental open pediment with datestone and floral drops in the tympanum; flat-arched entrance with double keystones; wrought iron gates to entrance and wrought iron grille to left return; dated lead rainwater head in angle of porch and principal front. The principal front has a base of ashlar, the rest decorated with banded rustication; three window bays to centre set in round, hollow-chamfered arches, the windows flat-arched and flanked by engaged Ionic columns carrying entablature with double keystone and broken pediment enclosing a cartouche; the windows have original slim wooden mullions and transoms with leaded glazing; rising out of each cartouche, a scrolled bracket each carrying a different emblematic female head; circular niches with architraves between the brackets and linked to them by festoons; fascia over all three windows lettered 'ISLINGTON CENTRAL LIBRARY'. The outer bays have, to the right, the porch and an aedicular niche with a statue of Bacon to the first floor, and, to the left, the foundation stone with small flat-arched window above, and first-floor niche with a statue of Spenser. Pulvinated frieze to the outer bays; mutule cornice, balustrade to central bays, stepped parapet with wreathed ornament to outer bays. The return of the principal facade to Fieldway Crescent has a tripartite window to the ground floor with Ionic pilasters and engaged Ionic columns carrying entablature and central segmental pediment; and a round-arched first-floor window with eared architrave, keystone, and scrolled outer mouldings; a lower, two-storey pedimented wing projects to the left with flat-arched entrance and first-floor flat-arched window under an open segmental pediment. Rear wing of two storeys and four-window range stepped back in Fieldway Crescent: flat-arched windows, stone dressings, moulded stone eaves cornice and bracketed gutters. INTERIOR: : the block facing into Holloway Road has been largely gutted internally; but the rear wing retains the large former reading room on the ground floor with tall paired windows to the south-west separated by engaged Doric columns, a four-light window to the south-east similarly treated, and a coffered ceiling; above this the former reference library with original panelling incorporating bookcases in six bays, eccentrically large scrolled brackets rising from piers to support entablature to panelled and barrel-vaulted ceiling; segmental sidelights, rooflights and circular windows at either end with archivolt, foliage drops and festoons.

- 9.73 An assessment of the impact of the proposals on the listed building has been undertaken under paragraphs 9.47 to 9.65 of this report.

St Mary Magdalene Conservation Area

- 9.74 Special attention has also been paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the St Mary Magdalene Conservation Area. A map of the CA is provided below:



- 9.75 The conservation area is characterised by the Grade II star listed ST Mary Magdalene Church and its grounds, largely commercial frontages on Holloway Road and residential side streets. The significance of this conservation area appears to be held in the church and its grounds and in the Victorian era commercial and residential buildings.
- 9.76 The external alterations required in relation to the proposed change of use of library floorspace (D1) to a rehearsal theatre are of a small scale and of limited visibility with exception of the proposed ramp to the side of the Holloway Road entrance.
- 9.77 It is considered that the limited scale and bulk of the external alterations would cause some harm to the conservation area, but this harm would be less than substantial and should be weighed against the public benefits arising from the development.

Benefits of the proposal and balance of identified harm

- 9.78 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF 2019 states:

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

- 9.79 Public benefits are defined within the National Planning Practice Guidance, which advise that public benefits:

'may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework. Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature of scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.'

9.80 As noted above, the proposal is considered to cause less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Grade II listed building and ST Mary Magdalene Conservation Area.

Overall public benefits (not including benefits specific to residents of the London Borough of Islington)

9.81 A number of benefits to arise from the proposal have previously been outlined within the report above. The proposal would support the diversification of the Library's service offer and Tall Stories theatre company would offer an outreach programme which would include:

- **The provision of free performances in 20 Islington schools to engage 100 children**
- **The provision of 15 free performances per year, working with the Library service to target priority groups to engage a further 1200 residents**
- **The arrangement of free themed workshops to help encourage participation in Library mass reading events, such as the Summer Reading Challenge for children aged 4-12, Reading ahead for adults and Islington Reads which all take place annually to engage a further 300 residents**
- **The provision of free educational materials by Tall Stories to all Islington Schools.**
- **Arrangement of free exhibitions based on Tall Stories productions which will be showcased at the Central Library as well as a number of other Libraries within the borough. The aim of the exhibition programme is to enhance work with children and their families to engage 200 residents.**

Benefits specific to the London Borough of Islington

9.82 Tall Stories are a storytelling theatre company for all ages that creates both large and small scale touring shows with tours shown in the UK and internationally.

9.83 They are a registered charity that are not reliant on regular funding, instead the profits from their large scale shows such as the Gruffalo cover the costs of other areas of their work such as performing free in schools, workshops, access performance and small scale tours in the UK.

9.84 The Theatre company will draw up a creative Service agreement with the Council with the additional benefits to residents of the building including:

The 11 by 11 programme

Tall Stories will provide

- Opportunities for Islington schools and residents to watch dress rehearsals of Tall Stories productions within the rehearsal / performance space. Subject to our rehearsal

schedule, approximately 10-15 preview performances could take place a year for schools, community groups and Islington residents.

- Opportunities for Islington schools to find out how work is made by meeting members of the Tall Stories team (office and creative) for a question and answer session. (With a minimum of 4 sessions per year.)
- Opportunities for Islington schools to attend performances of 'Future Perfect' (and/or other similar schools touring shows) in the rehearsal / performance space and/or in local schools (applicable if Tall Stories is touring the show to schools).
- On all the above opportunities priority will ideally be given to Islington schools that have a high proportion of students eligible for free school meals.

Encouraging the love of reading

Tall Stories will provide where possible:

- Opportunities for local adult and family groups to watch dress rehearsals of Tall Stories productions within the rehearsal / performance space.
- Tall Stories will work alongside Islington to create an exhibition in the new entrance to the library with a love of stories and storytelling at its heart.
- Tall Stories will provide existing educational materials that accompany our shows for library and school use within the borough.

Adding Firepower to other existing programmes of work:

- Tall Stories will add firepower to Islington Council's existing work where possible, enhancing at least one major promotion a year as agreed, such as the adult or summer reading challenge, national libraries week, etc.

9.85 Whilst the proposal is considered to cause less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the heritage asset, the public benefits gained from the proposal as outlined above, including improvements to the accessibility of the building are significant. Officers are mindful of the statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the heritage assets, and place great weight on this.

9.86 It is considered that these public benefits tip the balance in favour of permission being granted, noting the great weight placed on the desire to preserve the conservation area character. The proposal is therefore considered on-balance to be acceptable in design and conservation terms, providing these public benefits are secured with suitable planning obligations within an associated Section 106 agreement.

9.87 Officers acknowledge that the public benefits gained from the proposal are exclusively linked to the use of the building by Tall Stories, and therefore should members resolve to grant planning permission,

9.88 Overall, subject to the planning obligations agreed, the proposal is considered to bring public benefits to be secured that weigh in favour of the scheme, and to outweigh the

less than substantial harm caused to the Grade II listed building and the St Mary Magdalene Conservation Area including the harm caused to the host building and the streetscene. The proposal therefore accords with the NPPF 2019, policies 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 of the London Plan 2016, policy CS9 of the Islington Core Strategy 2011, and policies DM2.1 and DM2.3 of the Islington Development Management Policies (2013).

Accessibility

- 9.89 Policies 3.5 and 7.2 of the London Plan require all new development to achieve the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design, and meet the changing needs of Londoners over their lifetimes. These aims are reflected in Policy DM2.2 of the Development Management Policies (2013) which requires developments to demonstrate that they provide for ease or and versatility in use, produce places and spaces that are convenient and enjoyable to use for everyone and bring together the design and management of a development from the outset and over its lifetime. Policies on inclusive design are also supported by the Inclusive Design in Islington SPD, adopted in 2014.
- 9.90 A ramp is proposed in this instance to the side elevation of the Holloway Road entrance to provide step free access to the building. This is considered to be a considerable enhancement in terms of the overall accessibility of the building and would ensure that the Holloway Road entrance of the building is accessible to all users.
- 9.91 The Council's Inclusive Design Officer provided comment on the original plans stating concerns in relation to the gradient of the proposed ramp at the Holloway Road entrance, requesting two wheelchair seats/ spaces in the seating area of the proposed theatre and noting that mobility scooter charging points and an accessible shower would be required to improve the accessibility of the proposals to all users.
- 9.92 By way of amended plans these aspects have all been incorporated within the proposals and it is considered that the proposed scheme is compliant with the Council's aims for accessibility as set out in Policy DM 2.2 (Inclusive Design).

Neighbouring Amenity

- 9.93 All new development is subject to an assessment of their impact on neighbouring amenity in terms of loss of daylight, sunlight, privacy and an increased sense of enclosure. A development's likely impact in terms of air quality, dust, safety, security, noise and disturbance is also assessed. The proposal is subject to London Plan Policy 7.14 and 7.15 as well as Development Management Policies DM2.1 and DM6.1 which requires for all developments to be safe and inclusive and to maintain a good level of amenity, mitigating impacts such as noise and air quality. Moreover, London Plan Policy 7.6 requires for buildings in residential environments to pay particular attention to privacy, amenity and overshadowing.
- 9.94 Notwithstanding this, in this instance the limited scale of the external works would present a null impact on the amenities of neighbours.

Noise

- 9.95 Associated with the proposed rehearsal theatre it is proposed to install acoustic secondary glazing on the Holloway Road façade and Fieldway Crescent faced to

prevent the ingress of noise from outside and to provide a suitable acoustic environment for the use and a satisfying experience for the audience this will also work to minimise the outbreak of sound from performances.

9.96 Public Protection Officers have reviewed this element of the scheme and raise no objections subject to the following condition:

- Full particulars and details of a scheme for sound insulation for the rehearsal room/theatre shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to superstructure works commencing on site.

The sound insulation and noise control measures shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details so approved, shall be implemented prior to the operation of the rehearsal room/theatre use hereby approved, shall be maintained as such thereafter and no change therefrom shall take place without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.”

9.97 The proposals also include a ventilation system which would terminate upon the Fieldway Crescent elevation. Again, Public Protection Officers raise no objections to this aspect of the proposals, but the following condition is requested to protect the amenities of neighbouring residents:

- “The design and installation of new items of fixed plant shall be such that when operating the cumulative noise level LAeq Tr arising from the proposed plant, measured or predicted at 1m from the facade of the nearest noise sensitive premises, shall be a rating level of at least 5dB(A) below the background noise level LAF90 Tbg. The measurement and/or prediction of the noise should be carried out in accordance with the methodology contained within BS 4142: 2014.”

9.98 Overall, the proposed theatre use and associated ventilation is considered acceptable in noise impact terms, subject to the conditions attached which will also require acceptance in Listed Building terms.

Highways and Transportation

9.99 Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy (2011) encourages sustainable transport choices through new development by maximising opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport use, and requiring that all new developments are car free.

9.100 Policy DM 8.1 of the DMP Policies (2013) provides that the design of new development is required to prioritise the transport needs of pedestrians, public transport users and cyclists above those of motor vehicles. Policy DM 8.2 of the Development Management Policies provides that development proposals are required, inter alia, to maximise safe and convenient access to, from and within developments for pedestrians and cyclists, provide equal access for all, and adequately address delivery, servicing and drop-off requirements. Policy DM8.6 requires that provision for delivery and servicing should be provided off street and that delivery vehicles should be able to enter and exit the site in forward gear. Policy DM 8.4 requires cycle parking to be provided in accordance with the minimum standards set out in Appendix 6 of the Islington Development Management Policies, for theatres this is 1 space per 50 sqm.

9.101 The proposed development is located in an area with a PTAL rating of 6b (excellent). It is highly accessible by public transport, bicycle and on foot, and it is therefore

considered that the vast majority of visitors to the site, particularly in the daytime, will arrive via one of these three forms of transportation.

- 9.102 The applicant is not providing any vehicle parking as part of the proposals and no cycle parking is to be provided. However, details have been submitted in the application's accompanying planning statement of 34 cycle spaces in proximity to the Library including 9 Sheffield stands on the Central Library's demise and 25 racks in the surrounding public realm.
- 9.103 The proposed theatre is approximately 189.6 sqm in size and therefore 4 spaces are required to be provided.
- 9.104 There are no new cycle spaces proposed in this instance due to site constraints, however the applicant has offered to provide a financial contribution to support more cycle racks in the public realm.
- 9.105 In this instance this approach is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy DM 8.4.
- 9.106 Deliveries and Servicing will take place off street using the existing loading bay at Fieldway Crescent. It is considered that due to the scale and nature of the proposal, the delivery and servicing requirements would not be particularly intensive, but may become more frequent during periods where productions are being shown, but nevertheless existing provision is acceptable.

Other issues

- 9.107 Sustainability: Policy CS10 of the Islington Core Strategy (2013) requires developments to address a number of sustainability criteria such as climate change adaptation, sustainable construction and enhancement of biodiversity. Development Management Policy DM 7.1 requires development proposals to integrate best practice sustainable design standards (provided with Islington's Environmental Design SPD and underpinned by the Mayor's Sustainable Design and Construction Statement SPG). Policy DM 7.2 requires developments to best practice energy efficiency standards in terms of design and specification, and Policies CS15 and DM 6.5 require development to maximise opportunities to 'green the borough through measures such as planting and green roofs. As this proposal is of a small scale and relates to a change of use rather than the construction of new buildings, it is not considered reasonable to impose the level of sustainability measures expected for new buildings. However, it is noted that the general refurbishment of the site is likely to improve the energy efficiency of the building, including installation of secondary glazing to windows.
- 9.108 Waste and recycling: Policy CS11 of the Islington Core Strategy (2013) requires developments to provide waste and recycling facilities which fit current and future collection practices and are accessible to all. The proposals have not provided any details of refuse or recycling provision; a condition will therefore be attached requiring further details of waste storage to be provided.

- 9.109 Subject to a condition it is considered that the proposals comply with Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy (2013)
- 9.110 Landscaping: Policy DM6.5 (A) stipulates that developments must protect, contribute to and enhance the landscape, and are required to maximise the provision of soft landscaping, including trees, shrubs and other vegetation. In this instance the proposals relate to a change of use of the building. The Library is surrounded by hard landscaping and it is considered that it would be unreasonable to request any tree planting or soft landscaping as part of the proposals.

10. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

- 10.1 A summary of the proposal is set out at paragraphs 3.1 to 3.11 of this report.

Conclusion

- 10.2 It is recommended that planning permission and listed building consent be granted subject to conditions and completion of service level agreement as set out in Appendix 1 – RECOMMENDATIONS.

APPENDIX 1 – RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION A

That planning permission and listed building consent be granted subject to the prior completion of a Service Level Agreement in order to secure the following planning obligations to the satisfaction of the Head of Law and Public Services and the Service Director, Planning and Development / Head of Service – Development Management or, in their absence, the Deputy Head of Service.

The following Heads of Terms are to be secured:

A. Minimum Commitments:

- **Free performances by Tall stories in 20 Islington Schools**
- **The provision of 15 Free performances a year by Tall Stories with the Library targeting priority groups to engage 1200 residents**
- **Tall Stories run free themed workshops to help increase participation with the Summer reading challenge for children aged 4-12. Reading ahead for adults and Islington reads which take place annually, to engage 300 residents.**
- **Provision of free educational materials to all Islington schools within the borough.**
- **Free exhibitions based on Tall Stories productions to be showcased at Central Library and other borough libraries**

List of Conditions:

1	Commencement (Compliance)
	<p>CONDITION: The development hereby permitted shall not be begun later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission</p> <p>REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section (91 (1) (a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended b the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</p>
2	Approved plans list
	<p>CONDITION: The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:</p> <p>Proposed Basement Plan 1651-HT-P-00099; Proposed GF Plan- 1651-HT-P-00100-REV P2; Proposed FF Plan- 1651-HT-P-00101; Proposed Sections- 1651-HT-S-00200; Studio Windows- 1651-HT-D-(4) 02; Louvered window- 1651-HT-D- (4)03; Detailed room sections- 1651-HT-D-(4) 05; Proposed Elevations- 1651-HT-E-00300-REV P2; GF Whole Building- 1651-HT-P-01100; Ductwork- 19001-M-101-1; High level ducts detailed drawing- 1651-HT-D-(4)05 REV P2; Ramp- 1651-HT-E-00302 REV P3; Ramp-1651-HT-E-00303 REV P2;</p>

	<p>Heritage Report and Design and Access Statement REV A November 2019; and Haworth Tompkins Planning Statement- November 2019;</p> <p>REASON: To comply with Section 70(1) (a) of the Town and Country Act 1990 as amended and the Reason for Grant and also for the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.</p>
3	Detailed Drawings and Samples
	<p>CONDITION: Detailed drawings or samples of materials as appropriate, in respect to the following shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the local planning authority before the relevant part of the work is begun, and the works shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the details so approved and shall thereafter be so maintained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Details of the decorative colour scheme (b) Details of the signage to be placed on the Holloway Road Entrance gate including its method of fixing. (c) Details of the lighting scheme for the foyer (d) Details of the flooring for the theatre space and its means of fixing (e) Details of the fixing of the raked seating into the building (f) Detailed drawings of the external louvres and a sample to include proposed colour finish. <p>REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset.</p>
4	Hours of operation (Compliance)
	<p>CONDITION: The D2 use hereby approved shall not operate at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays.</p> <p>On days where rehearsals are taking place, the use shall not operate outside of the hours of 08.00 to 22.30. All visiting members of the public must vacate the building before 22.00.</p> <p>On all other days, the use hereby approved shall not operate outside the hours of 08.00 to 22.00.</p> <p>REASON: To ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity.</p>
5	Deliveries and servicing
	<p>CONDITION: Deliveries, collections, loading and unloading shall only take place between the hours of 08.00 and 20.00 Monday to Saturday. No deliveries, collections, loading or unloading shall take place on Sundays or Bank Holidays.</p> <p>REASON: To ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity.</p>

6	Refuse facilities
	<p>CONDITION: Details of storage for refuse and recycling shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation of the development. The works shall be carried out in accordance with these details prior to first occupation of the development and shall be maintained as such thereafter into perpetuity.</p> <p>REASON: To ensure that the refuse enclosure is of acceptable capacity for the effective functioning of the use.</p>
7	Sound insulation
	<p>CONDITION: "Full particulars and details of a scheme for sound insulation for the rehearsal room/theatre shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to superstructure works commencing on site. The sound insulation and noise control measures shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details so approved, shall be implemented prior to the operation of the rehearsal room/theatre use hereby approved, shall be maintained as such thereafter and no change therefrom shall take place without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority."</p> <p>REASON: To ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity.</p>
8	Fixed plant controls
	<p>CONDITION: The design and installation of new items of fixed plant shall be such that when operating the cumulative noise level $L_{Aeq,Tr}$ arising from the proposed plant, measured or predicted at 1m from the facade of the nearest noise sensitive premises, shall be a rating level of at least 5dB(A) below the background noise level $L_{AF90, Tbg}$. The measurement and/or prediction of the noise should be carried out in accordance with the methodology contained within BS 4142: 2014."</p> <p>REASON: To ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity.</p>
9	No obscure windows
	<p>NO OBSCURING OF GROUND FLOOR WINDOWS (COMPLIANCE) CONDITION: The window glass of all ground floor windows shall not be painted, tinted or otherwise obscured and no furniture or fixings which may obscure visibility above a height of 1.4m above finished floor level be placed within 2.0m of the inside of the window glass.</p> <p>REASON: In the interest of securing passive surveillance of the street, an appropriate street frontage appearance and preventing the creation of dead/inactive frontages.</p>
10	Fire safety strategy details
	<p>FIRE SAFETY STRATEGY (DETAILS) CONDITION: Prior to commencement of the development hereby approved, a Fire Safety Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Authority.</p> <p>The Fire Safety Strategy must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that the proposal is capable of providing adequate Fire Brigade access to the building (with reference to Approved Document B, volume 2 or relevant code of practice). The arrangements for Fire Brigade access to the building must be acceptable to the Fire Brigade (such as the installation of a sprinkler system within the building).</p> <p>The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Fire Safety Strategy approved under this condition and shall be maintained as such thereafter.</p>

	REASON: To ensure appropriate fire safety measures, in particular adequate access for Fire Brigade appliances.
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That the grant of listed building consent be subject to **conditions** to secure the following:

List of Conditions:

1	Commencement
	<p>CONDITION: The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Chapter 5).</p>
2	Approved plans list
	<p>CONDITION: All new works and works of making good to the retained fabric, whether internal or external, shall be finished to match the adjacent work with regard to the methods use and to colour material, texture and profile.</p> <p>REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset.</p>

List of Informatives:

1	S106
	<p>SECTION 106 AGREEMENT</p> <p>You are advised that this permission has been granted subject to a legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.</p>
2	Superstructure
	<p>DEFINITION OF 'SUPERSTRUCTURE' AND 'PRACTICAL COMPLETION'</p> <p>A number of conditions attached to this permission have the time restrictions 'prior to superstructure works commencing on site' and/or 'following practical completion'. The council considers the definition of 'superstructure' as having its normal or dictionary meaning, which is: the part of a building above its foundations. .</p>
3	Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (Granting Consent)
	<p>INFORMATIVE: Under the terms of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), this development is liable to pay the Mayor of London's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This will be calculated in accordance with the Mayor of London's CIL Charging Schedule 2012.</p> <p>Pre-Commencement Conditions:</p> <p>These conditions are identified with an 'asterix' * in front of the short description. These conditions are important from a CIL liability perspective as a scheme will not become CIL liable until all of these unidentified pre-commencement conditions have been discharged.</p>

APPENDIX 2: RELEVANT POLICIES

This appendix lists all relevant development plan policies and guidance notes pertinent to the determination of this planning application.

1 National Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 seeks to secure positive growth in a way that effectively balances economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations. The NPPF is a material consideration and has been taken into account as part of the assessment of these proposals.

2. Development Plan

The Development Plan is comprised of the London Plan 2011, Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013, Finsbury Local Plan 2013 and Site Allocations 2013. The following policies of the Development Plan are considered relevant to this application:

A) The London Plan 2016 - Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London

Chapter 3: London's People

Policy 3.1- Ensuring Life chances for all
Policy 3.2- Improving health and addressing health inequalities
Policy 3.6- Protection and enhancement of social infrastructure

Chapter 5: London's response to climate change

Policy 5.2- Minimising carbon dioxide emissions
Policy 5.3 Sustainable design and construction
Policy 5.10- Urban Greening
Policy 5.13- Sustainable Drainage
Policy 5.15 Water use and supplies
Policy 5.18 Construction, excavation and demolition waste

Chapter 6: London's transport

Policy 6.3- Assessing effects of development on transport capacity
Policy 6.9- Cycling
Policy 6.10- Walking
Policy 6.13- Parking

Chapter 7: London's living spaces

Policy 7.1- Lifetime neighbourhoods
Policy 7.2 An inclusive environment
Policy 7.3 Designing out crime
Policy 7.4 Local character
Policy 7.5 Public realm
Policy 7.6 Architecture
Policy 7.8 Heritage assets and archaeology

B) Islington Core Strategy 2011

Policy CS8- Enhancing Islington's Character

Policy CS9- Protecting and enhancing Islington's built and historic environment

Policy CS10- Sustainable Design

Policy CS11- Waste

C) Development Management Policies June 2013

Policy DM2.1 Design

Policy DM2.2 Inclusive Design

Policy DM 2.3 Heritage

Policy DM4.12 Social and Strategic infrastructure and cultural facilities

Policy DM 6.5 Landscaping, trees and biodiversity

Policy DM 7.1 Sustainable Design and construction

Policy DM 7.2- Energy Efficiency and carbon reduction in minor schemes

Policy DM 7.4- Sustainable design standards

Policy DM 7.5- Heating and Cooling

Policy DM8.1 Movement Hierarchy

Policy DM< 8.2 Managing transport impacts

Policy DM 8.4 Walking and Cycling

Policy DM 8.5 Vehicle Parking

Policy DM 8.6 Delivery and servicing for new developments

5. Designations

The site has the following designations under the London Plan 2016, Islington Core Strategy 2011 and Development Management Policies 2013

- St Mary Magdalene Conservation Area

6. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) / Document (SPD)

The following SPGs and/or SPDs are relevant:

- Islington Urban Design Guide (2017)
- Inclusive Design in Islington (2014)
- Inclusive Landscape Design (2010)
- Environmental Design (2012)
- ST Mary Magdalene Conservation Area Design Guidelines (2002)