



## PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT



<b>PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE A</b>		<b>AGENDA ITEM NO:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	12 July 2021	<b>NON-EXEMPT</b>

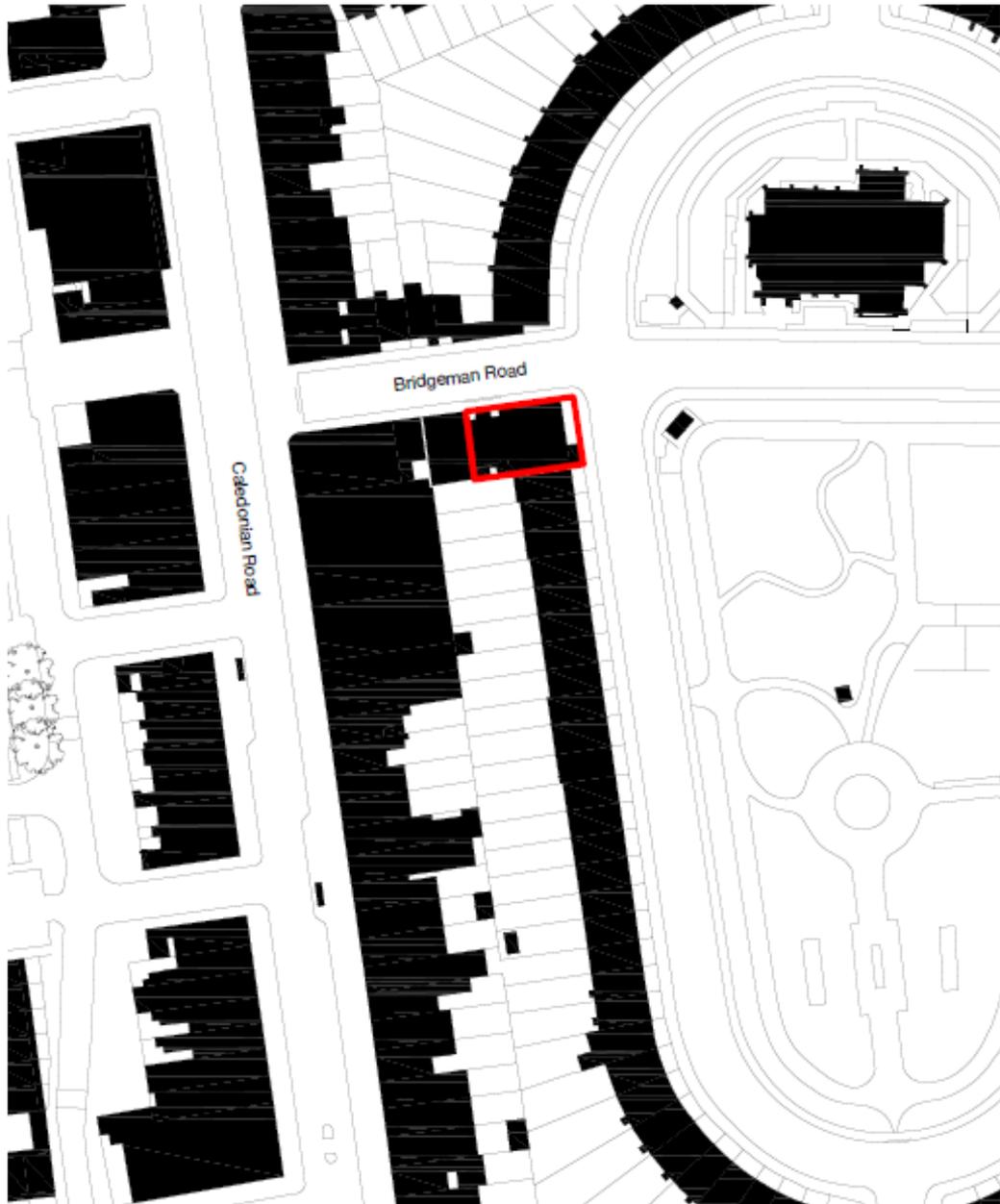
Application number	P2021/1470/LBC
Application type	Listed Building (Council's Own)
Ward	Caledonian
Listed building	Grade II
Conservation area	Barnsbury
Development Plan Context	Conservation Article 4(2) Barnsbury (2) Article 4 Direction A1-A2 (Rest of the borough)
Licensing Implications	None
Site Address	West Library, 107 Bridgeman Road, Islington, London, N1 1BD
Proposal	Refurbishment of the West Library vacant first floor room (135sqm) into a youth employment and support hub, including lift access, toilets and associated works.

Case Officer	Claire Sutton
Applicant	Jerry Dillon
Agent	Public Works Group

### 1. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to resolve to **GRANT** listed building consent subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1;

2. SITE PLAN (site outlined in red)



### 3. PHOTOS OF SITE/STREET



**Image 2:** View from junction of Thornhill Square and Bridgeman Road



**Image 3:** Entrance lobby viewed from stairs (proposed lift location to right of entrance stairs)



**Image 4:** proposed lift location



**Image 5:** First floor reading room, front elevation windows



**Image 6:** First floor reading room, rear elevation



**Image 7:** Existing first floor lobby, proposed lift location (behind radiator, panelling to be removed)



**Image 8:** Existing first floor staff room (proposed toilets location)

### **3. SUMMARY**

- 3.1 The application seeks listed building consent for refurbishment to facilitate the conversion of the existing first floor reading room to create a youth employment and support hub. It also proposes the insertion of a glass lift to enable access from ground to first floor for those with limited mobility, and associated alterations to the toilet facilities.
- 3.2 The proposal is considered to be compliant with the objectives of Policy CS9 of the Islington Core Strategy (2011), and DM2.3 of Development Management Policies (2013). It is therefore considered to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building, and is acceptable in design terms.
- 3.3 The proposal is considered to be acceptable and it is recommended that the application be approved subject to conditions.
- 3.4 The application is brought to committee because the site is owned by Islington Council.

### **4. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 4.1 The site is a Grade II listed building and lies within the Barnsbury Conservation Area.
- 4.2 The building was constructed in 1906 and was funded by the Carnegie Foundation. It is located on the western edge of Thornhill Square, occupying an important corner site, and can be seen from Caledonian Road, to which it is connected by Bridgeman Road.
- 4.3 The building is significant for its architecture and retained floor plan, both of which reflect its status and continued use as a public library. It also has communal value within the locality and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.
- 4.4 The building retains a high degree of its architectural detailing, including decorative ceilings, panelling, and flooring. Minor alterations to the building have occurred over the years, including a lift from ground to lower ground floor in 2009, and the doors to the reading room. These changes have enabled a greater number of visitors to access the library.

## 5. PROPOSAL (IN DETAIL)

- 5.1 The application seeks to refurbish the first floor reading room and convert it to a youth employment and support hub. This includes the addition of toilet facilities to the first floor and the insertion of a glass lift within the lobby from ground to first floor for those with limited mobility.
- 5.2 The proposed use of the reading room as a youth employment and support hub does not constitute a change of use (remaining within Use Class F.1) and therefore does not require planning permission.

### Revision 1

- 5.3 Minor alterations to the originally submitted plans have been accepted in order to enable level access to the lift, and to alter the opening at first floor level to avoid competing with the status of the reading room.

## 6. RELEVANT HISTORY:

- 6.1 There have been many applications associated with this building. Those relevant are:
- 6.2 P043117 Listed Building Consent application for Works in connection with modifications to West Library to comply with Disability Discrimination Act. GRANTED 16 May 2005.
- 6.3 P081233 Listed Building Consent application in connection with the installation of a passenger lift from ground to basement. GRANTED 5 January 2009.
- 6.4 P091583 Planning Permission application for Alterations to the front elevation to provide direct access to new lift. GRANTED 10 November 2009.
- 6.5 P091584 Listed Building Consent applications for Alterations to the front elevation to provide direct access to new lift. GRANTED 1 February 2010.

## 7. CONSULTATION

### Public Consultation

- 7.1 The proposal has undergone a statutory consultation period of 21 days. A notice and press advert were displayed on site and in the press. The public consultation of the application therefore expired on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2021, however it is the Council's practice to continue to consider representations made up until the date of a decision. At the time of the writing of this report no responses had been received from the public with regard to the application.

### External Consultees

- 7.2 **Historic England:** Notified as the proposal included relevant demolition to a Grade II listed building; HE considered that they did not need to be notified and had no comments on the proposal.
- 7.3 **Joint Committee of National Amenity Societies:** no comments received.
- 7.4 **The Islington Society, The Upper Street Association, and the Thornhill Square Association:** no comments received

## **Internal Consultees**

- 7.5 **Access & Inclusive Design Officer:** the principle of a new lift to access the first floor was acceptable; some amendments to the proposal were needed to comply. These are discussed at point 9.10.
- 7.6 **Building Control Officer:** no comments
- 7.7 **Town Centre Inclusive Economy:** no comments
- 7.8 **Planning Policy:** no comments

## **8. RELEVANT POLICIES**

Details of all relevant policies and guidance notes are attached in Appendix 2. This report considers the proposal against the following development plan documents:

### **National Guidance**

- 8.1 Islington Council (Planning Sub-Committee A), in determining the listed building consent application has the main following statutory duties to perform:
- To 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 16 Planning [Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas] Act 1990 as amended).
  - 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 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.
- 8.3 Since March 2014 Planning Practice Guide for England has been published online.
- 8.4 In considering the listed building consent 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.
- 8.5 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.

8.6 Members of the Planning Sub-Committee A 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.

8.7 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.

### **Development Plan**

8.8 The Development Plan is comprised of the London Plan 2021, Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013, Finsbury Local Plan 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.

### **Designations**

8.9 The site has the following designations under the London Plan 2011, Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013, Finsbury Local Plan 2013 and Site Allocations 2013:

- Grade II listed building
- Barnsbury Conservation Area
- Article 4 Direction Barnsbury Conservation Area

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) / Document (SPD)**

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

### **Emerging Policies**

#### **Draft Islington Local Plan 2019**

8.11 The Regulation 19 draft of the Local Plan was approved at Full Council on 27 June 2019 for consultation and subsequent submission to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination. From 5 September 2019 to 18 October 2019, the Council consulted on the Regulation 19 draft of the new Local Plan. Submission took place on 12 February 2020 with the examination process now in progress. As part of the examination, consultation on pre-hearing modifications took place from 19 March to 9 May 2021.

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

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);

- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

8.12 Emerging policies relevant to this application are set out below:

- Policy DH1 – Fostering innovation and conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- Policy DH2 – Heritage Assets

## 9. ASSESSMENT

9.1 The main issues arising from this proposal relate to:

- Design and Conservation

### Design and Conservation

9.2 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF (2019) states that ‘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). Furthermore, at paragraph 196: ‘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.

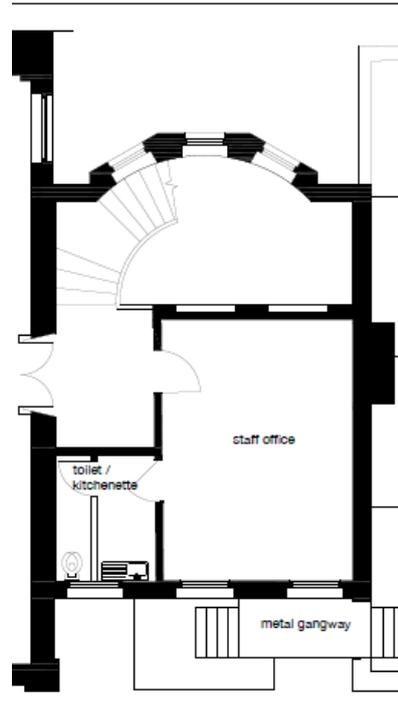
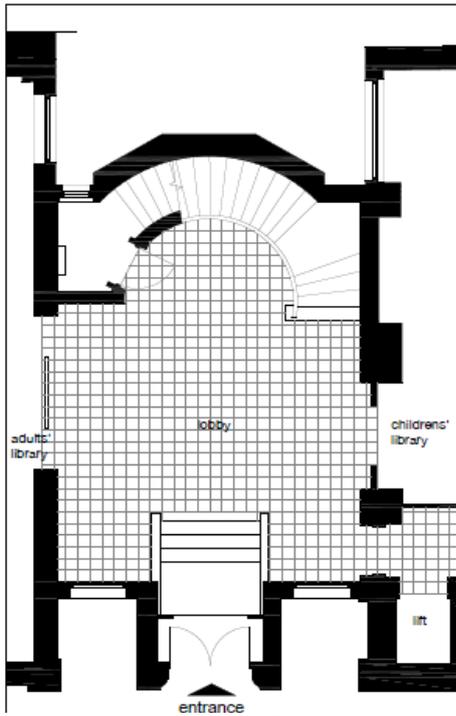
9.3 London-wide planning policies relevant to design and conservation are set out in Chapter 7 of the London Plan, and the Mayor of London’s Character and Context SPG is also relevant. At the local level, Policy CS9 of Islington’s Core Strategy (CS) 2011 and Policy DM2.3 of Islington’s Development Management 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 works respond positively to existing heritage assets.

9.4 Policy DM2.3 seeks to ensure that the borough’s heritage assets are conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance. Development that makes a positive contribution to Islington’s local character and distinctiveness will be encouraged. It seeks to ensure developments within the setting of a listed building are of good quality contextual design. It also seeks to retain, repair and reuse of non-designated heritage assets. Proposals that unjustifiably harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will generally not be permitted.

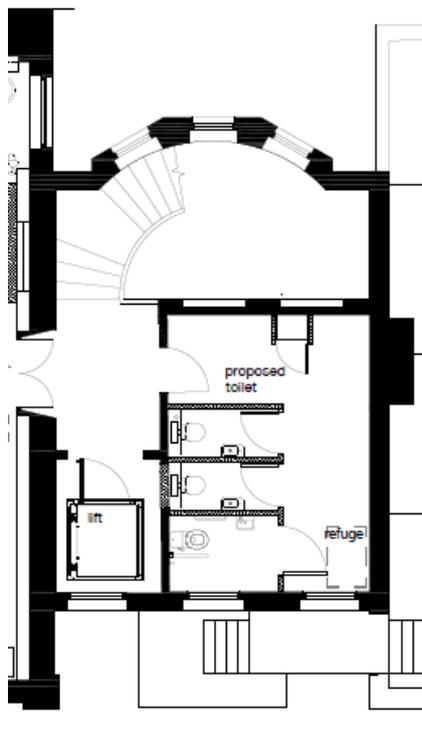
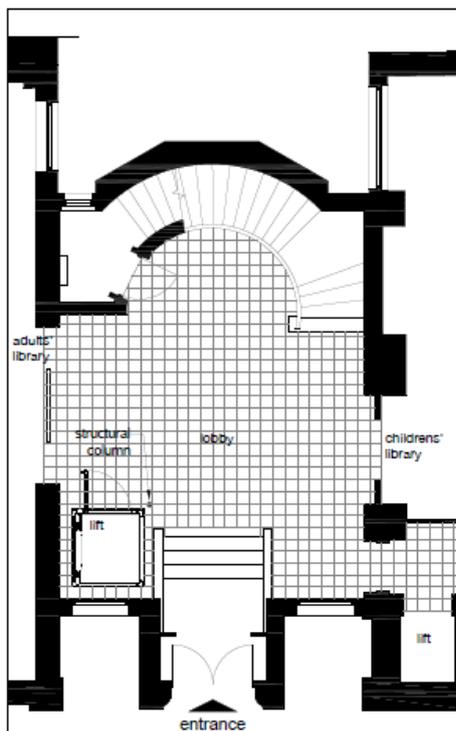
9.5 In accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in assessing the proposals hereby under consideration, special regard has been paid to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

9.6 Policy DM2.3 seeks to ensure that the Borough’s listed buildings are conserved or enhanced

9.7 The proposal includes a number of different internal alterations with an assessment of these elements set out below, followed by the weighing of harm vs. public benefit, as required by NPPF para 196:



**Plan 1:** Existing Ground Floor entrance lobby (left); Existing First Floor lobby and staff room (right)



**Plan 2:** Proposed Ground Floor entrance lobby (left); Proposed First Floor lobby and toilets (right)

*Internal lift*

9.8 The entrance hall has not been radically altered since its construction. It retains the wall panelling and decorated ceiling, as well as the original staircase opposite the entrance. There is an element of symmetry to the hall which is apparent when leaving the building, and this would be eroded by the insertion of the lift. However, the wall materials would be unaffected, and the largely glazed lift would enable these to still be appreciated.

- 9.9 There would be harm to the ground floor ceiling and both floors, as the historic fabric here would be lost. In addition, the wall to the existing toilet and kitchenette at first floor level would be largely removed in order to enable access to the lift. This wall retains historic panelling, which would be removed in its entirety. This would enable light from the front elevation to enter the landing area, which is currently very dark. The architrave details to the reading room and staff room would be retained.
- 9.10 The lift would be visible through the front elevation windows, and these are not proposed to be obscured. At first floor level, this is currently dissected by an internal modern partition wall, which would be removed. The lift is proposed to be mainly glass with structural metal elements, the details of which would be determined under condition. Small alterations to the originally submitted plans were requested by the Council's Access and Inclusive Design Officer to enable the lift to be accessed easily without the necessary structural column hindering progress, and to achieve level access from each floor.



**Image 9:** Indicative image of lift in proposed location (left)

#### *Refurbishment of reading room*

- 9.11 The reading room has had much of its historic detailing removed from the walls, retaining only its segmented barrel-vaulted ceiling and tympanum (internal pediment) over the large windows as points of interest. The heating system is elderly, consisting of high wall-mounted heaters, and the lighting system also needs updating in terms of both style and efficiency. Underfloor heating would be more efficient, and shutters/secondary glazing would reduce heat loss. The refurbishment of the room would be subject to condition, including a full schedule of works with materials.
- 9.12 The room would be repurposed as a fully-accessible youth employment and skills hub. This would require significant updating of services, together with movable furniture to enable the room to be reconfigured as needed.



**Image 13:** Proposed layout for reading room

#### *New toilets*

- 9.13 The existing first floor staff room would be converted to three new toilets, one being accessible. The existing would be retained in situ as a feature within the toilets. A toilet and kitchenette already exist in the proposed lift location; the existing soil pipes can be reused meaning there would be no additional visual clutter to the front elevation.

#### *Weighing harm vs. public benefit*

- 9.14 The loss of historic ceiling, walling, and flooring would be an irreversible harmful alteration to the listed building. Where harm is proposed, there is a requirement for clear and convincing justification to be provided, together with a discussion of alternatives considered. The benefit is required to outweigh the harm, not merely balance it.
- 9.15 Alternative locations for a lift were considered at length, including a lift to the rear of the existing stairs, one within the reading room and lending library, and continuation of the existing lift to avoid having to change lifts when moving between floors. However, these options were considered to be more harmful to the existing plan form, and require at least the same amount of internal fabric loss. The continuation of the existing lift would also have involved an external element on the front elevation, which would have been a significant and detrimental addition.
- 9.16 The building is a significant structure and well-known in the vicinity, already utilised by a variety of users, and the proposed use for the first floor would be an expansion of those community uses within an under-utilised historic space. The opportunity would be taken to improve the energy efficiency of the reading room at the same time, and refurbish the retained historic elements for their continued longevity.

### *Conclusion*

- 9.17 Overall, due to the mitigation measures and public benefits identified above, the proposal is considered to be compliant with Development Management Policy DM2.3.

## **10. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

### **Summary**

- 10.1 The proposed alterations are considered acceptable in principle. The works would enable the building to continue in use as a public building with all areas being fully accessible.
- 10.2 The proposals would cause harm to the heritage asset as historic fabric would be lost through the provision of the lift. However, this is considered to be outweighed by the public benefit of providing access for all to the entire building, including accessible facilities, and reopening the reading room for use as part of a public building.
- 10.3 In accordance with the above assessment, it is considered that the proposed works are consistent with the policies of the London Plan, the Islington Core Strategy, the Islington Development Management Policies and associated Supplementary Planning Documents and should be approved accordingly.

### **Conclusion**

- 10.4 It is recommended that listed building consent be granted subject to conditions as set out in Appendix 1 - RECOMMENDATIONS.

## APPENDIX 1 – RECOMMENDATIONS

That the granting of listed building consent be subject to conditions to secure the following:

### List of Conditions:

<b>1</b>	<b>Commencement</b>
	<p>CONDITION: The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than three years from the date of this consent.</p> <p>REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 18(1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Chapter 5).</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Works to Match (Compliance)</b>
	<p>CONDITION: All new external and internal works and finishes and works of making good to the retained fabric shall match the existing adjacent work with regard to the methods used and to material, colour, texture and profile. All such works and finishes shall be maintained as such thereafter.</p> <p>REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Demolition by Hand (Compliance)</b>
	<p>CONDITION: The demolition works hereby approved shall be carried out by hand or hand tools. No power driven tools shall be employed.</p> <p>REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Protection of Internal Features during Construction (Compliance)</b>
	<p>The interior features of the building shall be protected against accidental loss or damage during building work, and no features may be disturbed or removed temporarily or permanently except if so identified on the drawings forming part of this consent.</p> <p>REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset.</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>Schedule of Works First Floor (DETAILS)</b>
	<p>CONDITION: The refurbishment of the first floor hall (reading room) hereby permitted shall not commence until a schedule of works for the repair and restoration of the room has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the schedule so approved.</p> <p>REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset.</p>
<b>6</b>	<b>Schedule of Works Lift (DETAILS)</b>
	<p>CONDITION: No works to install the lift hereby permitted shall commence until a schedule of works for all works relating to the lift, including demolition, has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the schedule so approved.</p> <p>REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset.</p>

<b>7</b>	<b>Submission of Details (DETAILS)</b>
	<p>Detailed drawings at a scale of no less than 1:10 in respect of the following shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the relevant part of the works commencing on site:</p> <p>a) Full structural details for the lift including over/underrun, appearance, ramp (if necessary) including method for fabric removal  b) Details of new signage including locations and fittings  c) Details of the new plumbing and servicing for the first floor toilets  d) Details of the plumbing and electrical servicing to the first floor hall (reading room) including light and heating fittings  e) Details of any new shutters, acoustic panelling, blinds, or secondary glazing to the existing windows</p> <p>The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details so approved and maintained as such thereafter.</p> <p>REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset.</p>

**List of Informatives:**

<b>1</b>	<b>Other Consents</b>
	<p>INFORMATIVE: This consent relates solely to listed building matters. Should it become necessary to make alterations to the consented scheme in order to comply with other legislation, such as Building Regulations, a further consent may be required. Such a consent should be sought and obtained prior to the relevant works being undertaken.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Retention of Historic Fabric</b>
	<p>INFORMATIVE: You are reminded that the original historic fabric of the listed building should be retained unless specifically authorised for removal by the Council as part of a listed building consent. Historic fabric which must be retained would include lath and plaster ceilings and walls, floor boards, original skirting boards, dado rails, doors, architraves, historic cupboards, cornices, fireplaces, staircases, windows, etc. Where these elements are in poor condition, repair and restoration could be undertaken by competent workmen, with the minimum amount of intervention to the historic fabric.</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 2012 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 2021, 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 2021 - Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London**

- Policy HC1 Heritage Conservation and Growth

#### **b) Islington Core Strategy 2011**

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

#### **c) Islington Development Management Policies 2013**

- Policy DM2.3 – Heritage

### **3. Designations**

The site has the following designations under the London Plan 2011, Islington Core Strategy 2011, Development Management Policies 2013, Finsbury Local Plan 2013 and Site Allocations 2013:

- Grade II listed building
- Barnsbury Conservation Area