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DRAWINGS
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Statement is prepared to accompany the application for the regeneration of Grenfell Tower, which includes the complete overcladding of the exterior, changes to the arrangements of the lowest four levels, the creation of new floor area and some changes and enhancements to the area immediately adjacent to the tower.

The regeneration of Grenfell Tower is an extension of, and integral to the Kensington Academy and Leisure Centre project (KALC), Planning Application Reference PP/12/01833 which is for a new Secondary Academy and rebuilt Leisure Centre and upgraded public realm to the north, east and west; These public realm works include new play areas, a share surface connecting Grenfell Road and Silchester Road, new pedestrian routes and new planting. The three projects represent a significant investment and make-over for the area.

OBJECTIVES

This Application is being made by the K&C Tenant Management Organisation (TMO), following Cabinet Approval for the funding on 2 May 2012. This statement will demonstrate how the TMO’s key objectives have been realized with these proposals:

• Respond to the Supplementary Planning Guidance for the site.
• Find a long term solution which is both efficient and economically viable for the Communal heating to the tower.
• Extend the life of the building and bring the standard of the external envelope in line with current standards.
• Optimise the use of space in the tower.
• Exploit any “hidden homes” opportunities to deliver additional affordably housing for the Borough.
• Improve the entrance and appearance of the block and the Lancaster West Estate generally.

This statement comprises an appraisal of the site and the local context, a description of the proposed changes internally and what key points have come up in resident and community consultation, a discussion of layout and the appearance of the Proposals, together with the Sustainability and Accessibility sections.

This needs to be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement prepared by Taylor Young, Sustainability Statement, Housing Needs and Noise Assessment. Extensive consultation has been undertaken with local residents and this is documented the Consultation Statement.
2.0 SITE

Grenfell Tower sits at the Northern end of the Lancaster West 1 Estate, in the Notting Barns Ward of North Kensington. The Estate consists of the tower and three “finger blocks” – Testerton, Hurstway and Barandon Walks – 3 and 4 storey linear residential blocks which extend 150m south from the Tower enclosing two large green spaces.

The area to the immediate east of the tower is Lancaster Green and there are children’s play areas to the immediate west. While these are retained and remodelled as part of the KALC project the open space to the north which is currently all-weather football pitches is the site of the proposed Kensington Academy. The London Underground viaduct is 70m to the west and Latimer Road Tube station is 200m walk from the entrance to the tower. The new Leisure Centre is situated beyond Lancaster Green.

HISTORY

Lancaster West was built in the early 1970’s, completely erasing the previous street pattern and replacing properties without internal plumbing which had become to be regarded as slum housing. The estate was designed around a network of elevated pedestrian streets. Parking and service access are at a lower ground level and all pedestrian access is at first floor deck level. This was originally freely accessible: raised streets extended north to south down the centre of each finger block, with ramped access at either end. The deck originally extended right through the base of the tower. The streets – referred to as Walkways – are linked together into a single network at the northern end and the connection to Grenfell Tower is via a bridge at its south-west corner.

In the early 1990’s various improvements and changes were made across the estate, the most significant being access control. New glazed screens and doors with key-fob access now secure the blocks individually, restricting the use of the streets as thoroughfares. Whereas Grenfell Tower once had more than one point of access, including at Walkway level, it is now only accessible via a small reception at ground level on the south side of the tower.

One of the changes made at the time was the closing off of the single public lift to Grenfell tower which serves Ground, Walkway and Walkway +1 levels. The latter originally served as a Doctor’s Surgery and most recently it was occupied by RBKC Social Services. There is now no lift access between the ground floor parking level and the Walkway anywhere across the estate. The original concept of the elevated street is unchanged for the residents of the finger blocks and it is still the level at which they gain access to their front doors. The service yard and lower ground parking was intended to be out of site and to achieve this the lower ground level was artificially dropped by approximately 2m from the surrounding grade level. All traffic accessing this undercroft – refuse trucks, maintenance vehicles, residents – is directed to the lowest point in this “site bowl” – directly opposite the Grenfell tower entrance. For the residents of Grenfell tower the yard is very much in view, not tidily concealed. It is a hostile environment for pedestrians and a dark unpleasant space to be in. While it is not possible to fundamentally alter the system of refuse collection or vehicle movement the TMO intend reducing the amount of traffic in this area and this application proposes transforming it into a pedestrian priority zone.
The Special Planning Guidance (SPD) for this site deals primarily with the siting of the proposed Academy and Leisure Centre and the Public Realm. It is this last aspect which is most important because of the fractured nature of the KALC site, a consequence of its historic piecemeal development. The SPD seeks to improve the pedestrian (and visual) links across the site, beginning with a new north-south shared surface, starting at Grenfell Road at its southern end and connecting with Silchester Road on the north. The new north-south route is part of the KALC Planning Application and will be controlled by retractable bollards at both ends.

An improved east/west link is also indicated on the SPD on the south side of the tower because this is currently not a level direct pedestrian route. It is the shortest route from Station Walk and the tower entrance, and a natural desire line for anyone crossing the site by foot.

The area to the west of Grenfell Tower was originally a walled garden and for residents’ use only (figure 8). A youth club and Tenant’s Association meeting areas at the base of the tower both (figure 9) opened directly onto the garden and there were several means of access from Walkway level. It was not a public thoroughfare. One route down from Walkway is a stepped and curved ramp on the west side of the tower. This does not extend down to grade, perhaps because of the limited space available for the ramp. This intermediate ground level and the position of the ramp blocks the direct east-west connection highlighted in the SPD. One has to walk up, change direction and walk down another stair to pass.

Over the years the garden has been opened up. The Youth Club is no more and the current tenants at the base of the tower – a nursery and amateur boxing club – need public access. The SPD sees the removal of the stepped ramp and the area levelled and opened up.
KENSINGTON ACADEMY AND LEISURE CENTRE

The proposed site plan of the reconfigured KALC public realm is shown below.

The organizing north-south route required in the SPD has been overlaid with a new east-west pedestrian route that runs between the new Academy and Grenfell Tower and kinks south-eastwards to link to the cafe and main entrance to the Leisure Centre and Bomore Road. The open space of Lancaster Green has been extended eastwards with the new green space opened up to the south west of the Leisure Centre. The children’s play area on the west has been reconfigured to provide the same area currently does. The stepped ramp and external stair to Walkway level are shown removed.

The loss in means of access between Walkway and ground level is addressed in the design and discussed under section 4.0, Layout.

The Academy hugs the northern boundary to keep as much distance as possible between it and Grenfell Tower, rising from a two-storey block on the Sports Centre end (west) to a four-storey mass at the main entrance on the north east.

GRENFELL TOWER

Grenfell Tower comprises 20 storeys of residential flats and four storeys of community/office spaces at podium level. It is roughly square in plan and the residential floors are identical: 4no. 2-bed flats – one on each corner – and 2no. 1-bed flats – one facing east and the other west. The north and south elevations are almost identical, as are the east and west.

The structural frame: columns, core, stairs and floor plates are in-situ poured concrete. Pre-cast concrete panels form the cladding to the residential floors: one panel type serves as a horizontal structural spandrel, spanning column to column and the other is a facing to the columns, each panel a full storey height.
3.0 USE

RESIDENTIAL

This proposal sees no change to the 20 floors of existing flats. New residential properties are proposed at the Walkway +1 and Mezzanine levels. Large family homes have been identified as a priority need and four are proposed at Walkway +1 and three at Mezzanine – seven in total.

NURSERY

The Grenfell Under 3’s nursery currently occupies the Mezzanine level. This space is unfortunate for a nursery because:

- It is above ground level, has no lift and the small stair makes access and egress difficult. Young children especially need easy access to the outside.
- The space is divided into two disconnected areas which makes managing the nursery and moving between the two spaces awkward.
- The high windows block views out, especially for children and the low canopy which extends on all four sides of the tower make the spaces very dark. As part of these proposals the nursery is moved to ground floor with the entrance on the west elevation, close to the reprovided and fenced play area. Our solution to this is described under “Layout”.

BOXING CLUB

The Dale Boxing club is currently occupying the ground floor; it is a very small facility for a vibrant and successful club that has produced several champions and a gold medallist at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The proposal is to relocate the club to a new space at Walkway level, in part created from enclosing the unused and ex-Walkway area on the north half of the tower. The club will enjoy more space, better facilities and high ceilings across the gym – something their existing space does not afford – so all of it can be used for sparring and training.

OFFICE

The existing TMO Estate Management office on Walkway level will be re-located to the proposed extension of the baseline under the walkway at ground level.

The new flexible office space is to be created from the conversion of five garages opposite the Grenfell Tower entrance. This office could be used, EMB staff, Estate contractors or potentially private tenants.
The proposed and existing internal areas covered under this application are summarized in the table opposite.

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5.0 LAYOUT

The key changes proposed to the internal organization of the tower are:

- Removal of the external concrete stair on the south east corner to make way for new floor space at ground, mezzanine, walkway and Walkway+1.
- Creation of a new stair and lift on the south west corner of the tower, connecting the lower three levels.
- Infill of voids and extension to the mezzanine floor slab to create extra space to become residential properties.
- A remodelled reception to be larger, more welcoming and provide surveillance to the doors, new lift and stairs.

The proposal is that the new stair would be generally accessible to residents, therefore replacing the external stepped ramp as a means of getting between ground and Walkway level. A new bridge connection on the walkway is created to achieve this. The proposed stair also provides the last two flights of stairs down to ground for residents in the floors above. The original fire escape strategy involves leaving the building at Walkway level and escaping via the bridge or one of the two existing external stairs to be removed as part of the works.

Given the location of the Electrical switch room at Ground and the greater floor-to-floor heights it is not possible to extend the original escape stair directly down to ground level so the new stair has to become the necessary protected route out in the event of an emergency.

The location of the transformer Room, lifts and refuse chute are fixed and relocating them is beyond the scope of this project. Within the given footprint (roughly 22x22m square) and the concrete structure we are proposing the following at each level:

**GRENFELL TOWER - GROUND FLOOR**

- Enlarged entrance foyer, new stair and Part M compliant lift
- Concierge / reception desk with view of main entrance, new lift and stair and the entrance to the main lift core.
- New office for the EMB (Estates Management Board) / RA (residents association) use.
- Relocated nursery in an L-shaped configuration with a dedicated ground level entrance on the west elevation with direct connection to the play area. The strip of paving to the immediate north of the tower is not part of the east-west route across the KALC site. By virtue of being at grade and not being a thoroughfare, combined with the replacement of the existing canopy the space lends itself to becoming a dedicated outdoor area for the nursery separate from the more public play area.

**MEZZANINE**

This level is not served by the existing central stair core and lifts and it is proposed that only the new lift stops at mezzanine level. The proposed change of use necessitates a new infill slab in what is a lift lobby on the floor above and below to give access to the three new 2bed, 5 person dwellings laid out in accordance with the London Housing Guide.
WALKWAY LEVEL

The boxing club occupies the majority of the existing and proposed internal enclosure of the floorplate. Access to the boxing club will be via the walkway only with alternative means of escape through the residential lobby to a ground floor final exit via the new stair and lift or to the walkway via a new bridge connection.

WALKWAY +1 LEVEL

A new “shell and core” arrangement similar to the 20 floors above is proposed with some structural changes: new floor slab, new lift door openings to the existing lift core, new connection to the refuse chute and a new connection to the escape stair.

Four 4-bed units arranged in a quadrant of the floor plate with the structural module having a strong influence on the layout: the bedrooms are situated on the North and South elevations and the living spaces face East and West where the structural module is wider. The kitchens are stacked directly below the kitchens to the existing two-bed units above, which is important to maintain a vertical continuity of services such as gas and water.

GARAGES

The five garages opposite Grenfell Tower are proposed as new office space for community use by the TMO (tenants management organisation) or temporary office space for contractors working on the estate. The current situation of recycling bins being parked directly outside Grenfell tower is improved with a dedicated location adjacent to their collection point reducing movement of the bins across the shared pedestrian / vehicle routes.