

You may already be aware of Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust's plans to redevelop its existing community mental health facility at 1 Lowther Road. We want to provide accessible, fit-for- purpose, non-stigmatising buildings that support mental health recovery and wellbeing. The redevelopment will provide a new, modern building, with a range of mental health and support services, to enable people to live well in their communities

Project Brief / Scope

The proposed new build community centre will provide improved mental health outpatient facilities, community spaces and agile working areas for healthcare professionals. Facilities for community users and staff, such as cafe, collaboration zones, hot desking, group and meeting rooms will be located on the ground floor. The first and second floor will accommodate mental health services with consultation and treatment rooms and further support facilities. The third floor will be dedicated to agile working accessed only by staff and will include hot desking, meeting rooms and pods along with a refreshment zone. There will be two accessible roof terraces with soft seating and planting.

Existing Context

The proposed site lies on the corner of Lowther Road and Liverpool Road. It is outside of but adjacent to a conservation area. It is also opposite St Mary's House, a grade II listed building on Chillingworth Road. The plot area is 0,11 Ha. The existing community centre, built in the 1980s, occupies half of the site with parking and landscaped areas to the remainder. The existing construction is timber frame with brick cladding.

The existing entrance to the site is situated to the south, through a green landscaped area with large and medium trees and low planting. It is proposed to retain three high value trees and remove the rest to enable the development of a new pocket park, which will include new trees and planting, walkways and seating, enhancing the public realm on Liverpool Road.

The surrounding area is predominately occupied with new build residential flats and some semi detached terraced houses, with one sharing the site boundary. The average height of buildings in the area varies from three to four storeys. There are some retail shops on Holloway Road, which are one to two storeys and several community buildings.

Existing Accommodation

The existing building on the site has an inefficient layout due to constraints of the existing structure and fabric and does not provide the quantity or quality of space required for a modern mental health community facility.

Opportunities

The area buildings offer a mixed range of architectural styles with no one style dominant. This gives an opportunity to create a new building using vernacular materials in a contemporary manner to optimise the site accommodation in a more efficient way while respecting the scale and mass of the urban context.

Constraints

The proximity to residential buildings and Grade II listed St Mary's House poses some interesting design challenges that must be sensitively addressed.

The east and west elevations are treated with careful consideration due to its adjacency to the residences. The design maintains the privacy and amenity space of the neighbours and avoids overlooking.

The north elevation responds sensitively to St. Mary's House to protect and enhance the heritage asset.

Design Narrative – Concept

The proposed new build community centre responds to the needs identified by The Trust and promotes a more suitable and sustainable solution.

Position

The orientation of the building enables the main entrance as a focal point to the corner junction of Lowther Road and Liverpool Road. A secondary entrance is also provided on Chillingworth Street for staff and home treatment team if required. The building offsets to the east, allowing for an entrance to be provided for deliveries and access to the bicycle store, which will be accessed from Liverpool Road.

Massing

The building is spread across two, three and four storeys, with the highest points situated in the corners of the site, stepping down to two storeys on the east side to respect the adjacent residential buildings and three storeys on Lowther Road. The entrance on the ground floor is set back, allowing the retention of three existing trees and the introduction of a new public realm / pocket park with additional planting and external seating. The elevations are broken down by vertical large windows and curtain walling, grouping across two floors, providing natural light and views out.

Accommodation

The ground floor opens up to community users and staff providing a cafe, meeting and group rooms, collaboration zone and hot desking area. The first and second floors are dedicated to outpatient services which include consultation, treatment and exam rooms with further support facilities. The third floor will accommodate flexible working / office spaces including a hot desk area, meeting rooms and various support spaces, accommodating the outpatient facilities provided below.

Two accessible roof terraces are incorporated on the third floor for access to fresh air, natural light and green breakout spaces. These aim to promote well being for staff and visitors, enhancing their experience and comfort within the building. Careful consideration of the parapet walls will be made to maintain the privacy of the neighbouring residential properties.

Our upcoming Public Consultation

A formal public consultation on our estate transformation plans took place between July and October 2018 and findings showed overall support for our proposal to redevelop our building at 1 Lowther Road. The Trust was given the go-ahead to progress its plans in December 2018 and since then we have been working with our architect, staff, service users, carers and the local planning authority to discuss the requirements of our new buildings.

Before we apply to the local authority for full planning permission, we want to speak to people who live and work near 1 Lowther Road. We want to listen to your views, ideas and any concerns so that this feedback can be considered as we progress our plans. To do this, we are carrying out pre-planning application engagement to give you as much information as possible before the formal planning application is submitted (which will also invite your views).

Given the Covid-19 pandemic, it is not possible to carry out face-to-face events, as we would have done previously. Instead, two events will take place via video link at the following times:

- Tuesday 29 September, 6pm
- Thursday 1 October, 6pm

Please email planning@cundall.com stating the session you would like to join, as well as your name, postal and email addresses. We will send you, by email, a video conferencing link that you can use to join the event from your device on the date and time you have chosen. Please send any questions you have in advance to the same email address. There will be an opportunity to ask questions during the online event through a text function.