

Section 7

Townscape and Visual Assessment.

Townscape Assessment

Crouch End Conservation Area

7.1 The effect on the significance and setting of the conservation area is addressed separately within the Heritage Assessment. From a townscape perspective, the proposal would reinforce the role of the Site within the urban structure of Tottenham Lane and respond positively to the prevailing scale, grain and character of the wider centre.

Hillfield Conservation Area

7.2 The effect of the Proposed Development on the significance and setting of the Hillfield Conservation Area is considered in detail within the Heritage Assessment. The Site lies outside the conservation area and has a limited relationship with it, being experienced only in a small number of distant and filtered views. Given the limited visibility of the Proposed Development from within the conservation area, and the absence of any material influence on its character or appearance, a separate assessment as a townscape receptor is not considered necessary.

Late 19th - Early 20th Century Residential Character

7.3 The Proposed Development would have a direct relationship with the surrounding Victorian and Edwardian residential streets, particularly along Elmfield Avenue and Rosebery Gardens where the Site forms a transition between the town centre and adjoining residential areas. Whilst the proposed building would remain larger in scale than the prevailing residential grain, the Site is already occupied by a substantial institutional building and therefore does not currently reflect the prevailing character of these streets. The proposal would provide a more considered interface with the surrounding residential townscape through improved articulation, materiality and architectural quality. The existing pattern of streets, enclosure and domestic scale would remain legible and appreciable. The magnitude of change is considered to be Low, resulting in a Minor Beneficial effect.

Mid-Late 20th Century Residential Character

7.4 The Proposed Development would be experienced within a character area already defined by larger plots, lower-density urban grain, apartment buildings and estate-style development. The proposed height and

massing would sit comfortably within this broader townscape context and would not fundamentally alter its established character. Whilst the development would be discernible in certain views, it would broadly reflect the scale and pattern of development already present within this character area. As such, the magnitude of change is assessed as Low, resulting in a Minor Neutral effect.

Larger Scale and Footprint Civic and Commercial Buildings

7.5 The Proposed Development aligns most closely with this character area, which includes larger-scale institutional, commercial and civic buildings occupying substantial plots along key routes. The existing YMCA already forms an important component of this character area by virtue of its scale, footprint and institutional function. The proposal would reinforce these established characteristics whilst replacing a building of limited architectural merit with a higher-quality and more coherent design. Although the proposal would slightly increase height and massing, this would occur within a townscape that already accommodates larger structures and varied building forms. The magnitude of change is therefore considered to be Low-Medium, resulting in a Minor to Moderate Beneficial effect.

Townscape Receptor	Magnitude of Impact	Description of Effect	Classification of Effect
Crouch End Conservation Area	-	Assessed within Heritage Assessment	-
Hill Field Conservation Area	-	Assessed within Heritage Assessment	-
Late 19th - Early 20th Residential Character	Low	The proposal would introduce a slightly larger building at the interface with this character area. However, the scheme responds to the existing transitional condition of the Site and provides a more considered design to surrounding residential streets.	Minor Beneficial
Mid - Late 20th Century Residential Character	Low	The proposal would be consistent with the broader scale and pattern of development already evident within this character area and would not fundamentally alter its character.	Minor Neutral
Larger Scale and Footprint Civic and Commercial Buildings	Low-Medium	The proposal would reinforce the established pattern of larger-scale development associated with this character area whilst delivering a notable uplift in architectural quality and townscape presence.	Minor to Moderate Beneficial

Table 7.1: Effects on Townscape Character

Visual Assessment

- 7.11

The Proposed Development would be visible primarily within the immediate surroundings of the Site, particularly along Tottenham Lane, Elmfield Avenue and Rosebery Gardens, where the existing YMCA building already forms a prominent component of the townscape. In these views, the proposal would be experienced as a replacement for an established larger-scale institutional building rather than the introduction of a new or unexpected element. The most noticeable change would arise from the increased height and the enhanced architectural articulation of the proposed building.
- 7.12

Within the commercial centre of Crouch End, including views from around the Clock Tower and along Tottenham Lane, the building would be experienced within a varied urban context comprising historic commercial frontages, civic landmarks and larger modern buildings. The proposal would gently reinforce the prominence of the Site as a corner building and would introduce a more coherent architectural response through its articulated elevations, varied roofscape and strong vertical rhythms that reflect characteristics of nearby Tottenham Lane frontages. Whilst the building would appear as a modest increase in scale relative to the existing YMCA in some views, it would remain clearly subordinate to established landmarks such as the Clock Tower and Hornsey Town Hall. Importantly, the articulation of the building into a series of legible vertical elements, together with the stepping of upper storeys and varied roofscape, would reduce the perception of bulk and ensure that the development responds positively to the prevailing townscape grain. As a result, the proposal would provide a more coherent and considered architectural response to this prominent corner site, improving its contribution to the streetscape whilst remaining appropriately subservient to the area’s principal landmarks.
- 7.13

From surrounding residential streets, visual effects would be more localised. The proposal would remain visible at the ends of certain streets and from locations immediately adjoining the Site. However, the dense urban grain, existing built form and mature street trees would continue to limit wider visibility. The design responds to this interface through a modulation of massing, articulated facades and a transition in scale towards adjoining residential streets, reducing the perception of bulk when experienced from nearby public realm locations.

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Impact	Description of Effect	Classification of Effect	Views
Users of Crouch End Commercial Centre	Low-Medium	Low Users of the commercial centre would experience a discernible change to views towards the Site arising from the increased height, massing and architectural articulation of the proposed building. However, the proposal would be experienced within a varied townscape containing established landmarks, larger-scale buildings and active commercial frontages, limiting the extent of visual change	The proposal would increase the prominence of the Site within views from the commercial core, but would be experienced within a varied townscape containing established landmarks, larger-scale buildings and active commercial frontages. The development would reinforce the role of the Site as a prominent corner building and introduce a higher quality architectural response to Tottenham Lane.	Minor Beneficial	Views 1 and 2
Users of Tottenham Lane	Low-Medium	Low-Medium Users of Tottenham Lane would experience the most noticeable change in views, particularly in the vicinity of the Site where the proposed building would appear larger and more prominent than the existing YMCA. Nevertheless, the Site already accommodates a substantial institutional building and the proposal would be experienced as an evolution of an established townscape element rather than the introduction of a wholly new feature.	The proposal would be most noticeable within views along Tottenham Lane where the Site is already a prominent element. Increased height and massing would be evident; however, the building would be experienced as an evolution of an established institutional presence. The articulated elevations, corner treatment and varied roofscape would improve visual quality within the streetscape.	Minor Beneficial	Views 3, 4, 5, 7
Users of Surrounding Residential Streets	Low-Medium	Low Users of surrounding residential streets would experience localised changes in views towards the Site, particularly from Elmfield Avenue and Rosebery Gardens. Whilst the proposal would be discernible and more prominent in some views, changes would be contained by the existing urban grain, surrounding built form and mature vegetation.	The proposal would be visible within local views from Elmfield Avenue, Rosebery Gardens and adjoining residential streets. Whilst larger in scale than some surrounding buildings, the existing YMCA already occupies a prominent position. The proposed development would provide a more considered and architecturally coherent interface with the surrounding residential townscape.	Minor Neutral	Views, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12
Users of Open Green Space including Priory Park	Medium	Very Low Users of Priory Park and other areas of open space would experience little change to existing views. Visibility of the proposal would be limited by distance, topography, vegetation and intervening development, with the building forming a minor component of the wider urban backdrop where visible.	Visibility would be limited by distance, topography, vegetation and intervening development. Where visible, the proposal would form part of the wider urban backdrop and would not alter the appreciation of open space or key landmarks.	Negligible Neutral	View 9

Table 7.2: Effects on Visual Receptors

- 7.14

Within longer-distance views and from areas of open space, including Priory Park, visibility would be limited by topography, intervening development and vegetation. Where visible, the proposal would form part of the established urban backdrop and would be experienced alongside a range of existing buildings of varying scale and form. It would not appear isolated or visually dominant and would not disrupt the appreciation of recognised landmarks or key views.

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184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 1



Existing



Proposed



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184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 2



Existing



Proposed



7 | Townscape and Visual Assessment

184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 3



Existing



Proposed



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184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 4



Existing



Proposed



7 | Townscape and Visual Assessment

184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 4



Existing



Proposed CGI Render



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184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 5



Existing



Proposed



7 | Townscape and Visual Assessment

184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 5



Existing



Proposed CGI



7 | Townscape and Visual Assessment

184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 6



Existing



Proposed



7 | Townscape and Visual Assessment

184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 7



Existing



Proposed



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184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 8



Existing



Proposed



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184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 9



Existing



Proposed



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184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 10



Existing



Proposed



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184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 11



Existing



Proposed



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184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 12



Existing



Proposed



7 | Townscape and Visual Assessment

184 TOTTENHAM LANE | LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

View 12



Existing



Proposed CGI



Summary

- 7.6

The proposed development would replace the existing YMCA building with a new building of increased height and massing on a long-established institutional site. Whilst the proposal would introduce a discernible change to the appearance of the Site, this change would occur within a location already occupied by one of the largest buildings in the immediate townscape and within a context characterised by a mixture of commercial, institutional, civic and residential development. The principal townscape effect therefore arises not from the introduction of a new building typology, but from the replacement of an existing large institutional building with a more architecturally coherent and visually prominent form of development.
- 7.7

Overall, the proposed development would result in a series of localised and generally beneficial townscape effects. The scheme would preserve the defining characteristics of nearby conservation areas whilst enhancing the architectural quality of a prominent corner site currently occupied by a building of limited townscape merit. Although the proposal represents an increase in height and massing, it would be experienced as an evolution of an established larger-scale institutional presence rather than the introduction of an uncharacteristic form of development.
- 7.8

The design has been informed by the prevailing character of Tottenham Lane and the wider Crouch End townscape, drawing upon the vertical rhythm, articulated facades, strong corner buildings and varied roofscape that characterise the surrounding Victorian and Edwardian streets. Through the use of a robust brick-based material palette, clearly expressed bays, a legible ground floor and an emphasis on the corner condition, the proposal responds positively to the local townscape through the reference to these architectural cues.
- 7.9

The scheme would reinforce the role of the Site as a prominent marker within the townscape, improve the quality of the transition between the commercial core and surrounding residential neighbourhoods, and contribute to the ongoing evolution of Crouch End in a manner that respects its established character whilst accommodating positive change. Overall, the proposal would result in positive townscape effects.
- 7.10

Overall, visual effects would be largely confined to the immediate and local townscape surrounding the Site. The proposed development would slightly increase the visual prominence of the YMCA site; however, this would occur within a location already occupied by a substantial institutional building and within a townscape characterised by variation in scale, form and architectural expression. The proposal would replace a visually utilitarian building with a more coherent and architecturally refined form of development that responds positively to its corner location and the character of Tottenham Lane. As a result, visual effects are assessed as generally neutral, with no significant adverse effects on visual amenity identified.

Section 8

Tall Building Statement.

Tall Building Statement

8.1	As part of the validation requirements of the London Borough of Haringey, a Tall Building Statement has been prepared to accompany this application. This statement should be read in conjunction with the Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA), including the verified views and three-dimensional modelling (supported by Vu.City), which together provide a comprehensive assessment of the visual, townscape and heritage considerations associated with the proposed development.	8.5	As the proposed development falls within the definition of a tall building for planning purposes and is therefore accompanied by this assessment. However, it should be recognised that the proposal sits at the lower end of the spectrum typically associated with tall building development.	8.9	Relevant area-specific planning guidance where applicable including the conservation area appraisals for Crouch End and Hillside. This framework has been used to inform an understanding of the relationship between townscape character, emerging context and the suitability of the Site for accommodating additional height.	Design Response to London Plan Policy D9 and Local Plan DM6	
8.2	However, it is important to recognise that the proposal sits at the very lowest end of what is currently defined as a tall building in Haringey policy terms. The Proposed Development comprises a building of approximately six storeys and only falls within the current tall building assessment framework by virtue of local policy definitions. It does not exhibit the characteristics typically associated with tall building development in strategic planning terms.	8.6	The Site is already occupied by a substantial institutional building that is notably larger in scale and footprint than much of the surrounding residential townscape, and the proposed development represents a continuation of this established pattern rather than the introduction of a markedly different building typology. Accordingly, the assessment has been undertaken in a proportionate manner, with particular emphasis placed on the relationship between the proposed height and massing, the existing built context, and the degree of change that would arise from existing conditions.	Site Context and Suitability for Height	8.14		The proposed development has been informed by the requirements of London Plan Policy D9 and Haringey Policy DM6, which together require that taller buildings: • Are of exemplary architectural quality • Are appropriately located and proportionate to their context • Respond positively to heritage assets and key views • Contribute to a coherent and legible townscape
8.3	This distinction is reinforced by the emerging Draft London Plan (2026), which proposes a threshold of 30 metres for tall buildings across London. The Proposed Development falls comfortably below this threshold and would not constitute a tall building under the emerging London-wide definition. Instead, it would sit within the mid-rise building category that characterises much of the surrounding urban context.	8.7	When considering the optimisation of a site and the potential for additional height from a townscape perspective, it is necessary to establish whether the location is appropriate for taller development and, if so, the extent of height that can be accommodated without giving rise to unacceptable townscape, visual or heritage effects. In this instance, the assessment focuses not solely on whether the proposal exceeds a numerical threshold for a tall building, but on how it relates to the established character of the Site and its surroundings, including the presence of existing larger-scale institutional and commercial buildings within the local townscape.	8.10	The Site is located within a highly accessible and established town centre location, at the junction of Tottenham Lane, Elmfield Avenue and Rosebery Gardens. It sits within a mixed and transitional townscape, characterised by: • A combination of historic Victorian and Edwardian development • Mid-20th century and more recent interventions • Larger institutional buildings, including the existing YMCA complex • A varied urban grain reflective of incremental change	8.15	The scheme responds to these policy requirements in the following ways: Scale and Proportion • The building has been designed with a height and massing that respond proportionally to the Site and its context. The articulation of the façade into vertical bays, combined with a varied roof profile, reduces the perceived scale of the building and aligns it with the established rhythm of the high street.
8.4	Accordingly, the Tall Building Statement should be read on a proportionate basis. The assessment focuses on the actual townscape, visual and heritage effects arising from what is, in practice, a modest increase in height relative to the existing YMCA complex, rather than the effects typically associated with substantially taller forms of development. The key consideration is therefore not whether the proposal marginally falls within a local tall building definition, but whether the proposed scale, massing and design can be accommodated appropriately within its context.	8.8	A townscape-led framework has been applied to this assessment, drawing on the principles established within; • London Plan (2021) – particularly Policy D1 (London’s Form, Character and Capacity for Growth) and Policy D9 (Tall Buildings) • National Design Guide (2021) and National Model Design Code • Haringey Local Plan Strategic Policies (2017) • Development Management DPD (2017) (including Policy DMD 6 – Tall Buildings)	8.11	The Site occupies a prominent corner position within this context and forms part of a wider area where variation in scale and building form is already evident. As demonstrated within the HTVIA, the surrounding townscape is not uniform, but instead reflects multiple phases of development and adaptation.	Relationship to Existing Development • The proposal takes account of the varied built context, including larger-scale institutional buildings and more modern development within the area. The presence of these elements demonstrates that variation in scale is an established characteristic of the locality, and the scheme builds upon this context in a coherent manner.	
				8.12	While the Site lies adjacent to the Crouch End Conservation Area, it is not located within a designated cluster of tall buildings. However, policy does not preclude increased height outside such areas where it can be demonstrated that proposals are: • Contextually appropriate • Of high design quality • Responsive to townscape, heritage and visual considerations	High Quality, Design-Led Approach • A strong emphasis has been placed on architectural quality, materiality and detailing, ensuring that the scheme represents a design-led response to its setting. The treatment of the corner, the articulation of the façade, and the composition of the roofscape all contribute to a visually coherent and contextually responsive building.	
				8.13	The Site is therefore considered to have capacity to accommodate additional height, particularly where this supports the optimisation of a well-located brownfield site and responds sensitively to its surroundings.		

Townscape Integration and Composition

- As demonstrated within the HTVIA, the proposed development has been designed to sit comfortably within the wider townscape. The building is positioned and articulated to respond to key views, reinforce the established building line along Tottenham Lane, and define the corner condition in a manner consistent with local precedent. Taller elements are used strategically to emphasise prominent townscape features rather than appearing as isolated or dominant interventions.

Relationship to Emerging Context

- The Site is located within a townscape that is subject to incremental change and emerging character, where a number of more recent developments have introduced variation in scale and architectural expression. While not part of a strategic tall building cluster, the area demonstrates:

Increasing diversity in building typologies

- The incorporation of contemporary design within a historic context
- A gradual shift towards more intensive uses in accessible locations

8.16 The proposed development responds to this emerging context, representing a continuation of the area’s evolution rather than a departure from it.

Criteria for Locating Tall Buildings	Does the Site meet this criteria?	How?
Area identified for tall buildings in local plan or design code	No - (However only marginally falls within the definition of a tall building)	The Site is not located within an area specifically identified for tall buildings within the Development Management DPD or other adopted planning guidance. However, neither national nor development plan policy imposes an absolute restriction on tall buildings outside designated locations. Policy DMD 6 establishes a criteria-based approach, requiring proposals to demonstrate a high standard of design, respond positively to local character, protect important views and preserve the significance of heritage assets. The Site occupies a town centre edge location characterised by a mixture of residential, institutional and commercial uses, including several larger-scale buildings. Furthermore, the proposal sits only marginally within the definition of a tall building and represents an evolution of an established larger-scale institutional use rather than the introduction of a distinctly new tall building typology. The assessment therefore focuses on the actual effects of the proposed height and massing, having regard to the existing townscape context and the degree of change arising from the existing YMCA complex. In this regard, the proposal demonstrates that additional height can be accommodated without unacceptable harm to townscape character, strategic or local views, or the significance of heritage assets. Whilst policy directs tall buildings towards identified locations where appropriate, case law and appeal decisions have consistently confirmed that the absence of a site from a designated tall building area does not automatically preclude taller development. The key consideration is whether a proposal responds appropriately to its context and whether any resulting townscape, visual and heritage effects are acceptable in planning terms. This principle was reinforced in the Master Brewer decision (London Borough of Hillingdon, R (On the Application Of) v Mayor of London [2021] EWHC 3387 (Admin)., where the assessment focused on the specific effects of the proposed development and the planning balance rather than solely on the fact that the site lay outside an identified tall building cluster.
Existing or emerging context of taller or larger buildings	Yes	The Site is already occupied by one of the largest buildings in the immediate townscape, with an established institutional presence that differs from, but coexists alongside, the surrounding residential grain. Whilst the surrounding area contains extensive Victorian and Edwardian terraces, the local context is also characterised by a number of larger-scale commercial, institutional and residential buildings of comparable height and massing. As a result, the Site does not sit within a uniformly low-rise environment and the proposed development would be experienced within a townscape where variation in scale is already an established characteristic.
Area identified for growth or regeneration	Yes - Partially (town centre intensification context)	Whilst not located within a strategic Opportunity Area such as Wood Green, the Site lies within a well-established and accessible town centre. Local and London Plan policy supports the optimisation of sites in such locations, particularly where they can deliver housing and community uses. The proposal aligns with Policy D1 and D3 in making efficient use of a brownfield site within a sustainable urban location.
High connectivity or accessibility to public transport	Yes	The Site benefits from good public transport accessibility, with a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) understood to be in the moderate range. It is well served by bus routes along Tottenham Lane and within walking distance of rail connections. Its location within a walkable town centre further enhances accessibility to services and facilities.

Conclusion

- 8.17

Drawing on the townscape analysis and policy framework, it is concluded that the Site represents an appropriate location for a development of increased height, subject to high-quality design and careful integration into the surrounding context. The proposed scheme:

 - Responds positively to London Plan Policies D1 and D9, as well as Haringey Policy DMD 6
 - Is of a high design quality, with a strong architectural and townscape rationale
 - Relates appropriately to the existing and emerging urban context
 - Avoids harm to heritage assets, key views and visual amenity, as demonstrated within the HTVIA
- 8.18

Overall, the proposal represents a policy-compliant and contextually appropriate development, which optimises the Site while contributing positively to the evolving townscape of Crouch End. The assessment demonstrates that whilst the Site is not located within a designated tall building cluster, it barely meets the threshold for a tall building and satisfies a number of key criteria relating to accessibility, town centre location, urban hierarchy and existing townscape character. Importantly, the proposals represent an efficient and design-led optimisation of a previously developed site within a highly sustainable location. The scale of development proposed responds to the site’s strategic position within the commercial centre of Crouch End whilst making more effective use of land in a manner consistent with the objectives of both the adopted and emerging planning policy framework. The varied and evolving nature of the surrounding context, combined with the Site’s prominent corner position, indicates that additional height can be appropriately accommodated where supported by high-quality design. As such, the proposed development represents a contextually responsive and policy-compliant approach to optimising the Site.

Criteria for Locating Tall Buildings	Does the Site meet this criteria?	How?
Within an established or emerging urban hierarchy, such as a centre of activity (i.e. city, district or town centre), or important street junction/transport interchange	Yes	<i>The Site is located within Crouch End District Centre as shown in the townscape mapping in Figures 4.1-4.4. It occupies a prominent corner position at the junction of Tottenham Lane, Elmfield Avenue and Rosebery Gardens. As part of an established district centre, the Site sits within an area characterised by a concentration of commercial, community and service uses, together with higher levels of pedestrian activity and movement than the surrounding residential neighbourhoods. The existing YMCA complex already forms a substantial and visually prominent component of this urban environment by virtue of its scale, footprint and institutional function. Its location within the District Centre, combined with its position at a key local junction, provides an appropriate context for a degree of additional height and prominence, subject to achieving a high standard of design and demonstrating acceptable townscape, visual and heritage effects.</i>
Close to a mix of uses, services and amenities	Yes	<i>The Site is located within the Crouch End commercial centre and is within immediate walking distance of a wide range of uses, including retail, cafés, community facilities and services. The proposal maintains and enhances this mixed-use character, aligning with policy objectives to support vibrant and sustainable town centres.</i>
Would not have an adverse effect on a protected view or setting of a heritage asset	Yes	<i>The Site is located adjacent to the Crouch End Conservation Area; however, the HTVIA demonstrates that the proposed development preserves its character and setting. The surrounding context already includes buildings of varied scale, and the proposal has been carefully designed to respond to local townscape, key views and heritage sensitivities. It is not located within any strategic protected views and does not harm locally important views.</i>

Section 9

Conclusion.

Summary

9.1 The Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment has considered the likely effects of the Proposed Development on the historic environment, townscape character and visual amenity of the Site and its surroundings. The Site occupies a long-established institutional location within Crouch End and is currently occupied by a substantial post-war building that already forms a prominent component of the local townscape. The existing building makes a limited contribution to the architectural quality of the area, with its significance deriving principally from the continued YMCA presence and community function of the Site rather than the architectural merit of the building itself.

Heritage

9.2 The heritage assessment concludes that the Proposed Development would preserve the significance of all designated heritage assets considered within this assessment, including the Crouch End Conservation Area, Hillfield Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings. The proposal would not harm those elements of significance derived from architectural quality, historic street patterns, landmark status, townscape relationships or setting. Whilst the proposed building would be taller than the existing YMCA, it would replace a building of limited architectural merit and would be experienced within a location already characterised by an established institutional presence and a varied townscape context. The proposal would therefore preserve heritage significance and, in several instances, would provide a modest enhancement to the setting of nearby heritage assets through the delivery of a higher quality architectural response.

Townscape

9.3 From a townscape perspective, the proposal represents a positive evolution of a long-established institutional site. The development would reinforce the role of the Site as a prominent corner building whilst delivering a significant uplift in architectural quality. The design has been informed by key characteristics of the surrounding townscape, including the vertical rhythm of Tottenham Lane frontages, the articulation of traditional corner buildings, varied roofscapes and the predominance of brick architecture. Although the proposal introduces additional height and massing, it would

be experienced within a townscape that already accommodates larger civic, commercial and institutional buildings. The assessment concludes that the proposal would contribute positively to local character, improve the transition between the commercial centre and surrounding residential streets, and result in positive townscape effects overall.

Visual

- 9.4 The visual assessment demonstrates that effects would be concentrated within the immediate surroundings of the Site, particularly for users of Tottenham Lane, the Crouch End commercial centre and adjacent residential streets. These receptors would experience a noticeable change in views arising from the increased height, massing and architectural articulation of the proposed building. However, the Site is already occupied by a substantial institutional building and forms an established feature within the local townscape. The proposal would therefore be experienced as an evolution of the existing condition rather than the introduction of a wholly new or unexpected element.
- 9.5 The proposal would replace a visually utilitarian building with a more coherent and architecturally refined form of development that responds positively to its prominent corner location. Through its articulated elevations, vertical rhythm, varied roofscape and robust brick-based material palette, the scheme would enhance the visual quality of the Site and reinforce its role within the townscape. Overall, the visual assessment concludes that the proposal would give rise to localised and generally neutral visual effects, with no significant adverse effects on visual amenity identified.

Summary

9.6 Overall, the Proposed Development represents a high-quality, design-led redevelopment of a long-established institutional site within Crouch End District Centre. The scheme would preserve the significance of nearby heritage assets, enhance the architectural quality of a prominent corner plot, and respond positively to the varied townscape character of its surroundings. Whilst introducing Whilst representing a modest increase in height and massing, the proposal would be experienced as an evolution of an existing larger-scale institutional presence rather than the introduction of an uncharacteristic form of development. The assessment demonstrates that the proposal can be accommodated within its townscape context without giving rise to unacceptable heritage, townscape or visual effects. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant objectives of national, London-wide and local planning policy.

Policy Compliance

9.7	The Proposed Development has been informed by the legislative framework established by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the London Plan (2021) and the London Borough of Haringey Development Plan. The assessment demonstrates that the proposal would preserve the significance and setting of nearby designated heritage assets, including the Crouch End Conservation Area, Hillside Conservation Area and surrounding listed buildings. As such, the proposal accords with the objectives of NPPF Chapter 16, London Plan Policy HC1 and Haringey Policy DM9, which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment through well-designed and contextually responsive development.		
9.8	From a townscape and design perspective, the proposal responds positively to the Site's prominent location within Crouch End District Centre and reflects the design-led principles established by London Plan Policies D1, D3 and D9, together with Haringey Policies SP11, DM1 and DM6. The scheme optimises a well-located brownfield site whilst responding to local character through the articulation of its façades, strong corner composition, varied roofscape and material palette. Although the proposal falls within the definition of a tall building, the assessment demonstrates that it represents a proportionate increase in height relative to the existing YMCA complex and can be accommodated without unacceptable townscape, visual or heritage effects.		
9.9	The proposal would also support the continued provision of an important community use within a sustainable and accessible location. By delivering a replacement facility of significantly improved quality whilst maintaining the long-established YMCA presence, the scheme contributes to wider objectives relating to town centre vitality, housing provision, social infrastructure and sustainable growth.		
		<i>Tall Buildings</i>	
		9.10	Whilst the proposal falls within the current local definition of a tall building, it represents only a modest increase in height relative to the existing YMCA complex and sits substantially below the 30 metre threshold proposed within the Draft London Plan (2026). In emerging strategic policy terms, the proposal would be more appropriately understood as a mid-rise building within an accessible town centre location.
		9.11	The proposed development has been assessed against the requirements of London Plan Policy D9 and Haringey Policy DM6 and is considered to represent an appropriate and proportionate response to its context. Whilst the proposal falls within the local definition of a tall building, it sits at the lower end of the spectrum typically associated with tall building development and should be understood in the context of the existing YMCA complex, which already forms one of the largest and most visually prominent buildings in the immediate townscape. The proposal therefore represents an evolution of an established larger-scale institutional presence rather than the introduction of a fundamentally new townscape
		9.12	The Site occupies a sustainable and accessible location within Crouch End District Centre, at a prominent junction where commercial, community and residential character areas converge. It forms part of a townscape that already exhibits variation in scale, form and building type, including a number of larger civic, commercial and institutional buildings. Although the Site is not located within a designated tall building cluster, the assessment demonstrates that the principle of additional height can be accommodated without unacceptable effects on townscape character, visual amenity, strategic or local views, or the significance of nearby heritage assets.
		9.13	The design responds positively to its context through a strong corner composition, articulated elevations, a varied roofscape and a material palette informed by the surrounding brick-built character of Crouch End. The building draws upon established characteristics of Tottenham Lane, including vertical rhythms, clearly expressed bays and prominent corner buildings, helping to integrate the increased scale within the existing townscape. The proposal therefore satisfies the key policy objectives relating to design quality, townscape integration and contextual response.
		9.14	Overall, the assessment concludes that the Site represents an appropriate location for a building of this scale. The proposal accords with the design-led principles of London Plan Policies D1, D3 and D9 and Haringey Policies SP11, DM1 and DM6, demonstrating that additional height can be successfully accommodated whilst preserving heritage significance and delivering positive townscape and visual outcomes.
		9.15	The assessment concludes that the Proposed Development accords with the relevant heritage, townscape, design and growth objectives of national, regional and local planning policy. The proposal would preserve heritage significance, deliver a positive townscape outcome and result in localised and generally beneficial visual effects. It therefore represents a policy-compliant and contextually appropriate form of development.

Appendix 1

Methodology.

Heritage Assessment

This report provides an assessment of the significance of identified heritage assets and the potential effects of the proposed development. It has been informed by:

- Relevant legislation, and national and local planning policy (see Section 2); and
- Best practice guidance set out in:
 - Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK (IEMA/IHBC/CiFA, 2021)
 - Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (Historic England, 2008)
 - Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (Historic England, various).

Under the requirements of the above policy and guidance, the process of heritage impact assessments can be summarised as involving three parts:

- Understanding the cultural significance of identified designated and non-designated heritage assets and their setting;
- Understanding the nature and extent of potential effects on significance and settings of identified heritage assets; and
- Making a judgement on the impact that the Proposed Development may have on significance and setting.

There are two ways in which the Proposed Development can affect heritage assets:

- by physical changes to the fabric, use and visual appearance of designated or non-non-designated heritage assets (known as direct effects); and
- by changes to the setting of designated or non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity (known as indirect effects).

Understanding Significance

Heritage assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: ‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’.

The setting of a heritage asset is defined as: ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral’ (NPPF, Annex 2).

Non-Designated Heritage Assets (‘NDHAs’) are defined as buildings, structures and places which have a degree of heritage significance but do not meet the criteria for designation: ‘Only a minority [of buildings] have enough heritage significance to merit identification as non-designated heritage assets’ (PPG paragraph 039).

NPPF paragraph 207 requires the significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the Proposed Development to be described in a proportionate manner. The methodology used here for understanding the significance draws from the approach set out in Historic England’s Conservation Principles and NPPF Annex 2 by defining heritage interests. As defined in the PPG (Historic Environment, para 06), the heritage interest may be:

- Archaeological;
- Architectural and artistic; and/or
- Historic.

It is important to note that understanding significance is primarily a descriptive exercise. However, guidance by IEMA, IHBC and CiFA identifies that ‘importance’ can be defined and scaled as ‘high’, ‘medium’ or ‘low’ or any other simple scale that offers a form of gradation. This is done in broad terms, as per Table H1. The ability to scale assets, including differentiating those of ‘highest significance’ is also established in the NPPF (i.e. para.213).

As identified in NPPF paragraphs 207 and 208, significance can also derive from the setting of a heritage asset. HE’s GPA3 guidance gives general advice on understanding setting and how it may contribute to significance. This assessment follows the staged approach set out in GPA3 guidance to identifying the level of contribution that setting makes to the significance of heritage assets.

Assessing Effects

Legislative and policy requirements for the assessment of effects on heritage assets require the assessor to establish whether the value is preserved, better revealed/enhanced or harmed as a result of the Proposed Development.

Beneficial effects occur when the Proposed Development would enhance the value or contribution of the setting to value of heritage assets.

Should harm arise to the significance or contribution of setting to significance of designated heritage assets, there is a requirement in NPPF paras.212-215 to determine whether the level of harm amounts to ‘substantial harm’ or ‘less than substantial harm’. Any harmful impact to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require a clear and convincing justification and be weighed against the public benefits of the Proposed Development. Great weight should be given to asset’s conservation, the greater the harm, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.

For any harm to NDHAs, NPPF paragraph 216 requires balanced judgement with regard to scale of harm or loss and significance.

As established in Bramshill (2021) and Whitechapel Bell Foundry (2021) , when assessing effects, it is possible to undertake an internal heritage balancing exercise where relevant heritage harms and heritage benefits can be balanced to come to a ‘net’ position.

Significance	Designation of Receptor
Very High	Site acknowledged of international importance World Heritage Site
High	Grade I or Grade II* Listed Asset Scheduled Monument
Medium	Grade II Listed Asset Conservation Area
Low	NDHAs of higher local importance (including local listing) Designated Heritage Assets compromised by poor preservation
Very Low	NDHAs of lower local importance or compromised by poor preservation.

Table H1: Heritage Significance

Townscape & Visual Assessment

The purpose of the townscape and visual appraisals is to determine the likely townscape and visual effects of the proposal by considering a combination of the townscape or viewer’s sensitivity, and the magnitude of change that will be experienced.

The methodology used by Icení Projects to assess the likely townscape and visual effects of the proposal is based on best practice guidance set out by the Landscape Institute in:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA, Third Edition, 2013);
- Townscape Character Assessment Technical Information Note (TIN 05/17, 2018); and
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note (TGN 06/19, 2019).

GLVIA states in para. 1.1 that when identifying landscape/ townscape and visual effects there is a *‘need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of the likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional.’*

GLVIA recognises within para. 2.23 that professional judgement is at the core of LVIA/TVIA, and that while some change can be quantified, *‘much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements’*. The Landscape Institutes Technical Committee has advised that the 2013 revision of GLVIA *‘places greater emphasis on professional judgement and less emphasis on a formulaic approach’*.

Townscape Character

Townscape is defined in GLVIA at para.2.7 as *‘the landscape within the built-up area, including the buildings, the relationship between them, the different types of urban open spaces, including green spaces, and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.’*

The assessment of townscape character provides an understanding of the distinctive qualities and characteristics that make up an area of townscape, including an understanding of how a place has evolved over time. Character analysis is supported by materials such as maps, illustrations and photographs.

Townscape Sensitivity

Establishing townscape sensitivity involves combining judgments about: (i) the value of the townscape character; and (ii) the susceptibility of the townscape to the change caused by the proposal.

The value of a townscape character area is defined in TIN 05/17 as its *‘relative importance’* to *‘different stakeholders’*. Value can be influenced by a range of factors including its intactness/condition, scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interests (i.e. heritage or environmental designations), recreational value, perceptual qualities or communal associations.

The susceptibility of townscape character areas to change is the ability of the townscape receptor to accommodate change without undue consequences for the maintenance of the aspects of the baseline condition that are of townscape value.

Value and susceptibility to change will be described in line with Tables T1 and T2. Overall sensitivity will be calculated by combining the two resulting judgements.

Visual Sensitivity

Assessments of visual effects focuses on the likely effects to visual receptors, i.e. people experiencing townscape views, and considers changes in visual amenity as a result of the proposal.

Establishing visual sensitivity involves combining judgments about: (i) the value of the view; and (ii) the susceptibility of the visual receptor to the change caused by the proposal.

The value attached to views relates to planning designations or their identification in tourist guidebooks, literature, art etc.

For visual receptors (i.e. people), susceptibility to change depends on their circumstances (location, time of day, season, length of exposure to view) and reason for being at this viewpoint (i.e. passing through while commuting or using the area for recreation).

Value and susceptibility to change will be described in line with Tables V1 and V2. Overall sensitivity will be calculated by combining the two resulting judgements.

Townscape Value	Typical Criteria
High	Often featuring or contributing positively to national heritage designations (i.e. conservation areas, listed build-ings), protected view corridors/skylines, designated green spaces or award-winning design. Generally of high quality urban design or amenity value and in good condition, with very few detracting features (if any). A rare example of, or representative of, a particular characteristic townscape element or feature.
Medium	Often featuring or contributing positively to local heritage designations (i.e. locally listed buildings, areas of town-scape value), locally identified view corridors, or locally designated green spaces. In relatively good condition, with areas of high quality urban design or amenity value, or containing some particularly characteristic features. Generally few detracting features overall.
Low	Generally without designations, of low quality and in poor condition with scope for enhancement in terms of appearance and amenity. May contain some positive features, but these do not characterise the whole.
Very Low	Of very low quality and in very poor condition with notable scope for enhancement in terms of appearance and amenity.

Table T1: Townscape Value

Townscape Susceptibility to Change	Typical Criteria
High	Townscapes with a little ability capacity to accommodate the type of change proposed, owing to the interaction of the proposed development with the prevailing character, built form, topography etc, and the limited presence of screening effects (if applicable)..
Medium	Townscapes with a good capacity to accommodate the type of change proposed as it might be reflective of the scale and character of parts of the surrounding townscape. There are opportunities for enhancement that proposals may address and/or some existing screening effects (vegetation, density of development, orientation of streets etc.).
Low	Townscapes with a very good capacity to accommodate the type of change proposed, as the proposed devel-opment may comprise only a small part of the wider townscape, or being in-keeping with the overarching char-acter of the surroundings. There may be distinct opportunities for enhancement and/or a high level of existing screening effects (vegetation, density of development, orientation of streets etc.).

Table T2: Townscape Susceptibility to Change

Visual Value	Typical Criteria
High	Designated or protected viewpoint, vista or panorama. Views related to highly graded heritage designations (i.e. World Heritage Sites, Grade I or II* listed buildings or registered parks and gardens, or of high importance to a conservation area), identified tourist spots or with well-known cultural associations.
Medium	Locally identified viewpoint, vista or panorama. Views related to heritage designations (i.e. conservation areas, Grade II listed buildings, locally listed buildings) or from within designated green/amenity spaces.
Low	General townscape view without designation, although may have some amenity value for local residents.
Very Low	General townscape view without designation, and likely of no amenity value for local residents.

Table V1: Visual Value

Magnitude of Change

The magnitude of change is considered to be a combination of (i) the size and scale of the potential change; (ii) the geographical extent of the area affected; and (iii) the duration of the change of the proposal in operation and its reversibility. Magnitude of change will be described in line with Table M1.

Overall Effect

Table E1 provides a matrix for determining the overall effect based on the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of impact. Consideration is given to the extent mitigation and/or enhancement has been achieved through design and whether the qualitative nature of the resultant effect is, therefore, ‘beneficial’, ‘adverse’ or ‘neutral’.

Many urban developments provide an opportunity to enhance the condition, appearance and functionality of an existing townscape. Urban developments of quality, therefore, often have mitigation built into them by design and are designed to be visible. This can differ somewhat from the approach to Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (as outlined in GLVIA3) where, generally, the visibility of a scheme can be inherently harmful when it is built development in a rural landscape.

Beneficial effects occur when the Proposed Development would give rise to:

- enhancement of the overall townscape quality or reinforcement of the key characteristics of townscape character; and/or
- enhancement of visual amenity of receptors.

Adverse effects occur when the Proposed Development would give rise to:

- harm to the overall townscape quality or the key characteristics of townscape character; and/or
- harm to the visual amenity of receptors.

As per GLVIA para. 5.37, it is possible for effects to be neutral and this a matter of professional judgement. These include:

- the degree to which the proposal fits with, or preserves, an existing character;

- where a fine balance occurs between beneficial and adverse effects, ‘neutral’ is considered the centre point of the nine-point scale. This assessment is on occasion adopted where a discernible impact is identified but other benefits are also delivered through the Proposed Development, for example, high-quality design in its own right even if contrasting to existing character.

The meaning of ‘neutral’ is distinct from the meaning of ‘negligible’ and these terms should not be conflated by the reader.

Cumulative Effect

The assessment takes the following approach as set out in GLVIA: “the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments” (paragraph 7.3). This “additional” approach focuses on the additional effects of the project being assessed, on top of the cumulative baseline (as per paragraph 7.18) and has been selected to ensure that the scope of the assessment is reasonable and proportionate to the nature of the project (as per paragraph 7.5 and paragraph 7.18).

Visualisation

The visualisations within this report have been prepared in general conformance with the Landscape Institute’s TGN 06/19. This advocates a proportionate and reasonable approach, which includes professional judgement, in order to aid informed decision making. In this case, Vu.city views were prepared equivalent to AVR2.

Visual Susceptibility to Change	Typical Criteria
High	Users of public rights of way, open spaces or outdoor recreational facilities where the purpose of the recreation is the enjoyment of visual amenity, such as visitors to heritage assets (such as National Trust properties, Conservation Areas), tourist spots or parks with generally open or unspoilt views.
Medium	Users of public rights of way, open spaces or outdoor recreational facilities where visual amenity is secondary to activity (e.g. sports pitches, golf courses, shopping). Open views but from less sensitive areas. Residents of an area more likely to notice change in their surroundings when travelling to or from home.
Low	Users of public rights of way, open spaces or outdoor recreational facilities where the view is restricted or incidental to the activity. People in transit (pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, public transport) or undertaking activities (i.e. commuting, working) where any views are incidental to the activity or capacity to take in views is restricted.

Table V2: Visual Susceptibility to Change

Magnitude of Impact	Typical Criteria
High	Total loss, major alteration or fundamental change to key characteristics or features of the baseline.
Medium	Partial loss, material alteration or visible but contextual change to key characteristics or features of the baseline.
Low	Minor loss, alteration or discernible but non-material change to key characteristics or features of the baseline.
Very Low	Barely distinguishable or very limited change from baseline conditions.
No Change	No change from baseline conditions

Table M1: Magnitude of Impact

Overall Effect	Magnitude of Impact				
Sensitivity	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	No Change
High	Major	Moderate	Moderate / Minor	Minor	No Effect
Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minor / Negligible	No Effect
Low	Moderate / Minor	Minor	Minor / Negligible	Negligible	No Effect
Very Low	Minor	Minor / Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	No Effect

Table E1: Overall Effect



Delivery | Design | Engagement | Heritage | Impact Management | Planning
Sustainable Development | Townscape | Transport

Edinburgh : 11 Alva Street | Edinburgh | EH2 4PH

Glasgow : 177 West George Street | Glasgow | G2 2LB

London : Da Vinci House | 44 Saffron Hill | London | EC1N 8FH

Manchester : This is The Space | 68 Quay Street | Manchester | M3 3EJ

Birmingham : The Colmore Building | 20 Colmore Circus Queensway | Birmingham | B4 6AT

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