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1. Executive Summary
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Louisa Ryland House is a key strategic asset for Birmingham City Council given its proximity to the Council House and having previously been occupied by the local authority. Louisa Ryland House comprises what were originally three buildings, all of which are statutory listed. The existing office accommodation was developed by facade retention in the 1980s, which retained the original stair case centrally within the building and created two level changes as one moved between the line of the original buildings.

The purpose of this Brief is to provide additional planning and development information in order to assist with the marketing and disposal of the property. The Brief identifies potential future use(s) for the property and highlights risks and constraints associated with redevelopment. The objective of the brief is to set clear parameters to guide future development.

Louisa Ryland House forms part of Birmingham’s traditional office core and is situated within the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area. The property is located on Newhall Street and benefits from a prominent corner position with frontages to Edmund Street and Cornwall Street. The property has a number of access points including a service access on Cornwall Street.

The property is Grade II and Grade II* statutory listed and consequently, there are significant planning policy restrictions on reuse / redevelopment of the house. The implications of the relevant planning policies are reviewed in Section 4 of the Brief.

It has been agreed with the Local Planning Authority that the following uses are likely to be acceptable for Louisa Ryland House in principle subject to matters of detail:

- Office (Class B1a)
- Residential (Class C3) - within Edmund Street Buildings and only above ground floor within original Louisa Ryland House building
- Retail (Class A1) - ground floor only
- Financial and Professional Services (Class A2) - ground floor only
- Restaurant/Cafe (Class A3) - ground floor only
- Drinking establishment (Class A4) - ground floor only
- Hotel (Class C1)
- Education (Class D1)

DTZ and Lathams have reviewed the previous conservation assessments of the property, which clarify the areas with the potential to accommodate intervention and possible new development and uses. We have discussed the implications with the Local Planning Authority and it is concluded that the property is capable of adaption to suit a variety of uses, as the building is a 1980’s facade retention.

Proposals must not have an adverse impact on the facade. Any amendments to the upper floor (i.e. mansard roof floor) must be sympathetic to the property and the adjoining Grade I listed building.

A series of indicative development options for the property have been prepared by DTZ and Lathams, which were informed by a market assessment, heritage value and review of policy and development constraints.

These development options were developed following consultation with the Local Planning Authority and are appended to the report.

A series of development principles to guide any redevelopment proposals have been agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The principles were established through the evolution of development options for the site. Their purpose is not to be overly prescriptive, but to set out the parameters that development proposals can follow with confidence of in-principle support. Proposals that differentiate from the principles will require justification, but may be ultimately acceptable in planning terms.
2. Introduction
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2.1 Background
Louisa Ryland House has been declared surplus to Birmingham City Council’s (BCC) requirements. As part of a review of its operational portfolio approval has been given to dispose of the property.

A number of studies have previously been carried out for Louisa Ryland House, which have reviewed its capacity to accommodate alternative public sector occupiers, including Birmingham City University’s Conservatoire.

These studies have not been progressed; therefore the Council now wishes to dispose of the property on the open market.

2.2 Purpose of the Brief
It is acknowledged that the number of constraints associated with conversion/ refurbishment of the property may potentially deter interest from purchasers. Consequently, this report contains an assessment of the property that has been undertaken in consultation with the Local Planning Authority to examine the constraints and how they can be addressed through reuse/redevelopment.

This Brief analyses the physical and policy constraints of the property and the surrounding area and has been informed by an overview of the market for each of the uses that could be accommodated within the building.

The purpose of this Brief is to provide additional information in order to assist with the marketing and disposal of the Louisa Ryland House site. Specifically it delivers the following:

- Clarification of areas of heritage significance within the property (i.e. what fabric can and cannot be altered and what areas can or cannot be developed).
- Identification of appropriate uses that can form possible development options for property.
- Identification of further work that is likely to be required as part of any redevelopment proposal.

This report has been prepared with recognition that the overarching objective for the City Council is to ensure the long term preservation and re-use of Louisa Ryland House.

3.1 Site Analysis

Louisa Ryland House is located on Newhall Street and benefits from a prominent corner position with frontages to Edmund Street and Cornwall Street. The property has a number of access points including a service access on Cornwall Street. The property forms part of Birmingham’s traditional office core and is situated within the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area.

Louisa Ryland House was built as three separate buildings in the late nineteenth century. The Medical Institute was built at 96 Edmund Street in 1879, followed by the Board School offices at 98 Edmund Street in 1881-2, and the Parish Offices building at 100-102 Edmund Street in 1882-5. The first two sites on Edmund Street were listed in 1970, followed by 100-102 Edmund Street in 1982.

In the 1980s the buildings were united and redeveloped behind a retained façade and a steel framework and new rear wall plus extensions were created to provide open plan office space, as part of a desire to concentrate the staff of Birmingham City Council in the area of the Council House.

The City Council vacated Louisa Ryland House in 2012, and the property has been vacant since then. The fit-out is a myriad of temporary partition walls and there are numerous changes in level. The property has not been maintained to an institutional standard and therefore we do not consider the space to be lettable in its existing condition.

Plan 1 – Existing access plan

Legend
- Grade II* listed section of Edmund Street Building
- Grade II listed Louisa Ryland House / Section of Edmund Street Building
- Grade I listed building
- Surrounding buildings
- Entrance/access
3.2 Planning Policy Review
Planning Law requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Louise Ryland House the Development Plan comprises the adopted Birmingham Plan (2005). The Birmingham Plan will be replaced by the emerging Birmingham Development Plan when it is adopted. The Birmingham Development Plan Pre-Submission draft was published for consultation in January 2014 and the policies contained within the document are a material consideration in determining planning applications.

This section reviews the key policies contained within the Development Plan and emerging Birmingham Development Plan that are relevant to proposals for the reuse or redevelopment of Louisa Ryland House.

3.2.1 The Birmingham Plan (2005)
Louisa Ryland House comprises a range of Grade II listed buildings and a Grade II* listed building, which is located within the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area. Accordingly, Policy 3.25 is relevant and states that applications affecting Listed Buildings will be considered in the light of the following:

- Special regard will be given to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of the buildings of special architectural or historic interest.
- Listed Building Consent will not normally be granted for the demolition or partial demolition of a Listed Building unless it can be demonstrated that every possible effort has been made to preserve the structure of the building and to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use.
- The change of use of a listed building should not have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building.
- Any external or internal alteration or addition to a listed building should not adversely affect its architectural or historic character.
- The setting of listed buildings will be preserved and enhanced by the exercise of appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features.

The Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan is adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance and provides additional policy that is relevant to the consideration of planning applications in the Conservation area. The policies that are relevant in addition to listed building policy (above) are summarised below:

Change of Use
The Council will not permit changes of use to buildings where the new use would adversely affect their character and appearance or that of the conservation area.

Roofscape
In order to preserve the integrity of the historic roofscape the Council will not permit additional storeys on existing buildings where these would prove detrimental to the character of the immediate and/or surrounding roof forms and rooflines.

The Council will have particular regard for the maintenance of the vertical emphasis characteristic of the conservation area. In this context the introduction of dominant horizontal elements such as brise-solis will be resisted.
Plan 2 – Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area

New Uses for Vacant Buildings

The Council will actively encourage beneficial and creative new uses for vacant buildings, where these respect the character of the building and the conservation area.

Appropriate Uses - Birmingham UDP Policies

Policy 4.38 is firmly supportive of the continued use of Louisa Ryland House as an office use and states that offices are one of the core activities that make up the City Centre. The future prosperity of the City Centre is dependent on the continued growth of office and service sector employment and, in turn, the City Centre is the key to the future success of the office sector in Birmingham.
Policy 4.46 recognises that tourism uses will also be supported in principle in the City Centre. It states that: **Tourism** represents one of the most buoyant sectors of the economy and in terms of jobs and wealth creation is particularly important to Birmingham. Birmingham takes a positive attitude to the promotion of tourism with its associated spin offs in terms of accommodation, travel and local spending.

The City’s Tourism Strategy aims to maintain Birmingham’s position as a top visitor destination, and also to exploit opportunities for leisure tourism. In addition it aims to improve Birmingham’s image as a visitor destination and to reinforce Birmingham’s role as a regional centre for tourism, culture and events.

Linked to tourism **Policy 7.32** states that the City Council is keen to encourage diversity of uses within centres, and recognises the important role which **leisure and entertainment uses** can play in achieving this. **Leisure and entertainment uses** will therefore be encouraged to locate in existing centres and particularly the City Centre.

Policy 5.32B supports the introduction of residential accommodation in the City Centre. It states: **Increasing the amount of residential accommodation in the City Centre will beneficial** for a number of reasons. It will create homes near where large numbers of people work, and in locations well served by public transport. It will help reduce pressures for greenfield development in suburban and peripheral locations. It will also help to create lively 24 hour activity and a safer environment.

The construction of new dwellings, conversions to residential from other uses, and the bringing back into use of vacant properties and spaces above shops will be encouraged.

The policy actively encourages a residential element of mixed use schemes and states that: Developers will also be encouraged to provide an element of residential accommodation within other commercial developments in the City Centre where this would not undermine the primary economic function or historic character of the area. Similarly, Policy 15.8 states: Development within the City Centre will by its very nature be of a concentrated form. The emphasis will be on the provision of a mixture of activities, both within and between buildings, in order to provide variety and reflect the unique characteristics of the various quarters which are the hallmark of a major metropolitan centre.

Policy 5.37B sets the trigger for affordable housing provision, which has since been updated by the adopted Affordable Housing SPD. The trigger for affordable housing provision is for housing developments (including conversion schemes) of 15 dwellings or more. This will be secured through Section 106 Agreements.

Retail development within the City Centre core is firmly supported by the UDP. **Policy 7.18** explains that **appropriate new retail development** or renewal within the Regional Shopping Centre will be encouraged.
3.2.2 Birmingham Development Plan - Pre Submission Consultation Draft (2011)

The key policies contained within the emerging Birmingham Development Plan largely replicate those within the adopted Development Plan. Specifically, a range of town centre uses are supported in principle and development affecting listed buildings and within conservation areas is required to protect and enhance the heritage asset.

Policy TP12 (Historic environment) states that: The historic environment, consisting of archaeological remains, historic buildings, townscapes and landscapes, including locally significant assets and their settings in addition to designated and statutorily protected features, will be valued, protected, enhanced and managed for its contribution to character, local distinctiveness and sustainability.

- Great weight will be given to the conservation of the City’s heritage assets. New development affecting a designated or non-designated heritage asset or its setting, including alterations and additions, will be expected to make a positive contribution to its character, appearance and significance.

- Applications for development affecting the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset, including proposals for removal, alterations, extensions or change of use, or on sites that potentially include heritage assets of archaeological interest, will be required to provide sufficient information to demonstrate how the proposals would contribute to the asset’s conservation whilst protecting or where appropriate enhancing its significance and setting. This information will include desk-based assessments, archaeological field evaluation and historic building recording as appropriate.

- Initiatives and opportunities to mitigate the effects of climate change by seeking the reuse of historic buildings, and where appropriate, their modification to reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development - without harming the significance of the heritage asset or its setting - will be supported.

- Innovative design which retains the significance of the heritage asset(s) and integrates the historic environment into new development will be encouraged. Development proposals that raise awareness of the historic environment will be encouraged.

- Where a Conservation Area Character Appraisal or Management Plan has been prepared (Colmore Row and Environs), it will be a material consideration in determining applications for development, and will be used to support and guide enhancement and due regard should be given to the policies it contains.
Policy TP23 (Promotion of diversity of uses within centres) states that: A diverse range of facilities and uses will be encouraged and supported in centres within the hierarchy, set out in Policy TP20, consistent with the scale and function of the centre, to meet people’s day-to-day needs. This will include:

- Leisure uses.
- Offices.
- Restaurants and takeaways.
- Community uses.
- Cultural facilities.
- Tourist-related uses (including hotels).
- Residential on upper floors where it provides good quality, well designed living environments.

Discussions have been held with Birmingham City Council Planning Department to consider the potential alternative uses in principle, as well as the potential to expand the building to increase the GIA. Specifically, this considered the following planning parameters:

- Ground floor and upper floor uses
- The subdivision of the building into the three original separate buildings
- The reconfiguration of the building through rationalising void/circulation floor space.
- The implications of any expansion of the current footprint (horizontal and vertical).
- The location of the entrance(s) to the building(s).

3.2.3 Listed Building Constraints - Significance of Façade and interior

The Heritage Statement prepared by Alan Baxter Associates (2012) assessed the significance of the building interior and exterior features. Whilst this was prepared in the context of a feasibility study for the Conservatoire relocation within Louisa Ryland House, the findings of the assessment remain relevant.

The vast facades of the Parish Offices are prominent in the surrounding streets, and the Colmore Row and Environs Conservation Area. These have been labelled ‘highly significant’ because although they have suffered some substantial losses such as the clock tower, sculpture and detailing, they are recognisably still the 1882-3 building designed by W.H.Ward.
Entrance

The main entrance was located under the clock tower, and directed visitors and staff into the hall and to the main staircase and Board Room. The entrance punctuates the facade, and is evidence of the historic function of the Parish Offices. It is of high significance, but in the 102 entrance this significance carries through to the retained stone steps and the walls either side. They are of architectural and historic interest and have communal value.

The Board Room

The Board Room was a key space in the building when built, and although the form has been preserved throughout the 1980s development, none of the decorative interior detailing has survived. It is for this reason that it has been given ‘Some Significance’.

Interiors

There is a small section of wooden panelling located just behind the lower ground floor reception, deposited here in a recent reconfiguration of the reception area. This is a clear survival from the original interiors and has therefore been labelled as having ‘some significance’. The carved panelling is thought to be part of the Boardroom woodwork.
Main staircase and ancillary staircases
This main staircase dates from the original building, and led visitors and Board members up the staircase and into the Board Room. Although the materials of the staircase are original, the 1957 plans show the staircase in a slightly different location. This suggests that the staircase having been rebuilt during the 1980s development. Also, the scrolled metalwork balustrade of the staircase has suffered unsympathetic decoration, but is a remnant of the Ward-designed interiors and must be retained.

Roof
The roof is not significant in form or materials, having been completely changed during the 1980s development. The original roof was damaged and repaired to a different form, most notably through the loss of the clock tower and central dome. However, any further changes at roof level should not detract from the modelling of the roof. Furthermore, a significant amount of decorative sculpture and detailing has been lost from the exterior, as well as the clock tower and domes.

Conservation Area Constraints
The site forms part of the Colmore Row and Environses conservation area, which as a result carries restrictions to any redevelopment proposed to Louisa Ryland House. The area is of significant importance to the city centre and contains the most important collection of buildings in the city ranging from early 18th century to 1970. The preservation of the area and its collection of various styles including Edwardian and Victorian architecture is seen to warrant great importance and will undoubtedly affect any development proposals. Generally, the area has a scale and atmosphere seen to be compatible with City Centre use.
4. Appropriate Uses for Louisa Ryland House
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In consultation with the Local Planning Authority the following list of uses has been agreed as appropriate in principle for Louisa Ryland House subject to qualifications where stated. The list is not exhaustive in that alternative uses may be appropriate subject to further discussion with the Local Planning Authority.

- Office (Class B1a)
- Hotel (Class C1)
- Residential (Class C3) - above ground floor within original Louisa Ryland House building
- Retail (Class A1) - ground floor only on all frontages
- Financial and Professional Services (Class A2) - ground floor only on all frontages
- Restaurant/Cafe (Class A3) - ground floor only on all frontages
- Drinking establishment (Class A4) - ground floor only on all frontages
- Education (Class D1)

4.1 Accessibility and Servicing

Car Parking
There are no car parking spaces on the site and on street parking located on surrounding streets.

Cycle Parking
There is potential for cycle parking to be located within the inner courtyard of the development block.

Servicing/Refuse Collection
Servicing and refuse collection could be facilitated by the road-side due to the limited access and service entry width.

Disabled Bay Provision
There would also be a potential requirement for disabled bays in close proximity to the building depending upon use.
5. Development Parameters and Delivery
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A series of development options have been prepared for Louisa Ryland House by DTZ and Lathams. The options were informed by previous work and guidance provided for the property as well as a market assessment to identify likely viable and deliverable development solutions. The options were discussed with the Local Planning Authority and were refined following feedback.

Two options were prepared as follows:

- **Option A** - Sub-division and redevelopment of Louisa Ryland House to provide a new office scheme with ancillary retail and leisure space, and 21 standalone new apartments.

- **Option B** - Comprehensive refurbishment of Louisa Ryland House to provide a new office scheme with ancillary retail and leisure space.

These options were produced and each was tested through a Development Appraisal in order to identify whether the options were viable and deliverable.

There is a third option of hotel development that was not tested however we are aware of there being interest in this site for a 4* + hotel, the design of which would be subject to an operator’s specifications.

It is not the intention of the brief to be overly prescriptive and, therefore, the options are only shown for indicative purposes as a response to the development principles that have been agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The plans are intended to assist potential purchasers in formulating their tender submissions by reducing the uncertainty around the site constraints. The parameters are explained below:

**Use**

The preferred primary use for the building is Class B1(a) office, although the building has potential for conversion to hotel and/or residential use. Conversion of the ground and basement floors to accommodate use class A1 (retail), A2 (financial and professional), A3 (restaurant/cafe) and A4 (drinking establishments) will also be acceptable in principle on all frontages.

**Parking and Transportation**

There is currently no off street car parking provided and any development should consider the limited on street car parking available on surrounding streets. Given the sustainable city centre location, development with no car parking, or limited spaces provided is likely to be supported.

Cycle parking provision will be sought together with services (within the office scheme) that provided showers and changing facilities and storage space for cyclists. The guidelines for cycle provision are 1 per residential unit and 1 space per 400 sqm for developments over 1,000 sqm.

Given the scale of alterations proposed a planning application would need to be accompanied by a Transport Statement, which could be incorporated within a Design and Access Statement.

**Internal Layout**

Subdivision of the building into its original constituent parts is also acceptable in principle subject to satisfactory servicing and access arrangements being provided. Any alteration to the internal arrangement should seek appropriate listed building consent.
Servicing
The ground floor commercial areas are able to be accessed via the existing service bay access and direct corridor access, or using on street space. There is potential for increasing on street servicing by extending parking restrictions through a Traffic Regulation Order.

Height
The development of additional floorspace through increasing the height of the existing buildings is a high risk planning strategy as the LPA’s initial comments are that such a proposal would be unacceptable in principle. Any amendment to the upper facade (i.e. the mansard roof floor) must be sympathetic to the appearance of the building, and seek to preserve the integrity of the historic roofscape.

Heritage
Development proposals will require planning and listed building consent and must be sympathetic to the listed building and should improve its setting and appearance where possible.