



## **Planning and Heritage Statement**

New shopfront

**76a Chancery Lane,**

**WC2A 1AA**

**Version 1 – February 2023**

## Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	2
The Site	2
The Surroundings	3
2. THE PROPOSAL	4
3. PLANNING HISTORY	5
4. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK	6
The National Planning Policy Framework (2021)	6
London Plan 2021	E7
Camden Local Plan 2017	8
Camden Planning Guidance	11
5. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	14
6. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	16
Principle of Development	16
Character and Appearance of the Host Building	16
Impact upon the Conservation Area and Street Scene	17
Amenity	18
7. CONCLUSION	19

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is John Snow and I am a Director with Tetrick Planning, Chartered Town Planning Consultants. I have a BSc Hons and PgDip in Town Planning and am a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.
- 1.2 This Planning and Heritage Statement ('P&HS') has been prepared in support of a Planning Application seeking: "*A new shopfront*" ('the Proposal') at 76a Chancery Lane, WC2A 1AA ('the Site').
- 1.3 This P&HS outlines the Site, the Proposal, the Planning History, relevant planning policies within the Statutory Development Plan, and finally all relevant Material Planning Considerations are assessed against the planning policy context. It also assesses the significance of the existing shopfront and considers the conservation impact of the Proposal.
- 1.4 The Proposal has particular regard to issues of character and design of the host building, impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and street scene, heritage impact and impact upon neighbouring amenity.
- 1.5 This submission has been prepared on behalf of the Applicant. It should be read in conjunction with accompanying Drawings produced by KAS Architects Ltd.

### **The Site**

- 1.6 The application Site is located in Holborn, south of High Holborn, on the western side of Chancery Lane. High Holborn is an historically important east-west route from the City of London to the West End, which is of commercial significance. It's a busy street with a wide range of shops and services on the ground floor and primarily offices on the upper floors. This commercial frontage spills down onto the north side of Chancery Lane and includes the Site.
- 1.7 The Site forms part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, it integrates the protected vista corridor Greenwich Park Wolfe statue to St Paul's Cathedral (5A.2) and it also forms part of

an Archaeological Priority Area. It sits just outside the High Holborn frontage and growth areas as defined by the Local Plan.

- 1.8 The existing shopfront consists of a set of timber bifold doors with matching timber panels on either side, above which is a projecting bay without the respective bay window, which was lost at some point in the past. As a result of these previous works, there is also an exposed column to the front, positioned on a raised step. The fascia is present along the top, matching the neighbouring property to the left-hand side.

### **The Surroundings**

- 1.9 On the western side of Chancer Lane the surrounding properties' shopfronts present with different designs, materials and colours, with the fascias following roughly a similar alignment, providing the street scene with some consistency.
- 1.10 On the opposite side of the road the signage is laid onto stone entablature which is integral to the property, affording a more formalised character.

## **2. THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 This planning application is for a new shopfront at 76a Chancery Lane, WC2A 1AA.
- 2.2 The proposal removes the existing exposed column and reinstates the bay window. The wooden bifold doors give way to glazing with glazing bars used to subdivide the large windows. A new wooden panel element runs along the bottom of the glazed area.
- 2.3 The entrance door will also be glazed and the existing entrance levels including the side step are retained. The existing fascia is also retained.

### **3. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 A planning application (2017/6611/P) was withdrawn on August 14<sup>th</sup> 2018 for the installation of air conditioning unit on the roof.
- 3.2 On 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018 an application (Ref. 2018/0010/A) was granted for an advertisement consent for the display of externally illuminated (trough-lit) fascia and projecting signs.

#### **4. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) makes it clear that decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.2 The Development Plan comprises the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2021
- London Plan 2021
- Camden Local Plan 2017
- Camden Planning Guidance Design 1

##### **The National Planning Policy Framework (2021)**

4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning should aim to ensure that developments function effectively and contribute to the overall quality of an area. Development must respond to local character and history, reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials and should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and landscaping.

4.4 Paragraph 130 states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

4.5 Development should:

- a) Function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) Be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) Be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

- d) Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) Optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- f) Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

4.6 Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

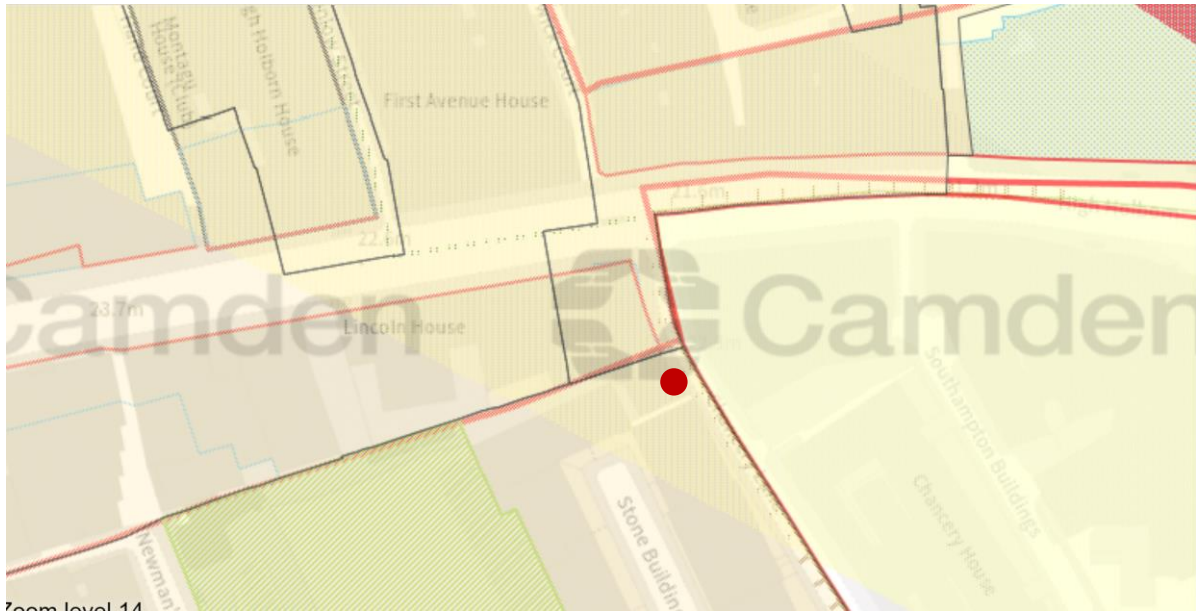
4.7 Paragraph 202 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

### **London Plan 2021**

4.8 Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth states that development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.

## **Camden Local Plan 2017**

- 4.9 Policy E1 Economic development aims to secure a successful and inclusive economy in Camden by creating the conditions for economic growth and harnessing the benefits for local residents and businesses.
- 4.10 Policy TC2 Camden's centres and other shopping areas promotes successful and vibrant centres throughout the borough to serve the needs of residents, workers and visitors. The Council will seek to:
- a. Protect and enhance the role and unique character of each of Camden's centres, ensuring that new development is of an appropriate scale and character for the centre in which it is located;
  - b. Provide for and maintain, a range of shops including independent shops, services, food, drink and entertainment and other suitable uses to provide variety, vibrancy and choice;
  - c. Make sure that food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses do not have a harmful impact on residents and the local area and focusing such uses in King's Cross and Euston Growth areas, Central London Frontages, and Town Centres (Refer to Policy TC4 Town centre uses);
  - d. Support and protect Camden's Neighbourhood Centres, markets and areas of specialist shopping, local shops; and e. pursue the individual planning objectives for each centre, as set out in supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on town centres and retail, and through the delivery of environmental, design, transport and public safety measures.
- 4.11 Policy TC3 Shops outside of centres seeks to protect shops outside centres. The Council will only grant planning permission for loss of a shop outside designated centres provided:
- a. Alternative provision is available within 5-10 minutes' walking distance;
  - b. There is clear evidence that the current use is not viable; and
  - c. Within the Central London Area, the development positively contributes to local character, function, viability and amenity.



*Fig 1 – Policy Map extract*

- 4.12 Policy TC5 Small and independent shops promotes the provision of small shop premises suitable for small and independent businesses.
- 4.13 Policy D2 Heritage aims to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.
- 4.14 Policy D3 Shopfronts expects a high standard of design in new and altered shopfronts, canopies, blinds, security measures and other features. When determining proposals for shopfront development the Council will consider:
- The design of the shopfront or feature, including its details and materials;
  - The existing character, architectural and historic merit and design of the building and its shopfront;
  - The relationship between the shopfront and the upper floors of the building and surrounding properties, including the relationship between the shopfront and any forecourt or lightwell;
  - The general characteristics of shopfronts in the area;
  - Community safety and the contribution made by shopfronts to natural surveillance; and
  - The degree of accessibility

- 4.15 The Council will resist the removal of shop windows without a suitable replacement and will ensure that where shop, service, food, drink and entertainment uses are lost, a shop window and visual display is maintained. Where an original shopfront of architectural or historic value survives, in whole or in substantial part, there will be a presumption in favour of its retention. Where a new shopfront forms part of a group where original shop fronts survive, its design should complement their quality and character.
- 4.16 Paragraph 7.76 Replacement shopfronts states that if a shopfront is replaced or altered, the design should respect the characteristics of the building and, where appropriate, shopfront windows and framework features, such as pilasters, fascias and console brackets, should be retained or restored. Careful consideration will be given to proposals for excavating or re-opening lightwells in front of shopfronts, particularly those in a group, as they can affect the cohesiveness of a frontage.
- 4.17 Policy D4 Advertisements states that the Council will require advertisements to preserve or enhance the character of their setting and host building. Advertisements must respect the form, fabric, design and scale of their setting and host building and be of the highest standard of design, material and detail. We will support advertisements that:
- a. Preserve the character and amenity of the area; and
  - b. Preserve or enhance heritage assets and conservation areas. We will resist advertisements that:
    - Contribute to an unsightly proliferation of signage in the area;
    - Contribute to street clutter in the public realm; e. cause light pollution to nearby residential properties or wildlife habitats;
    - Have flashing illuminated elements; or g. impact upon public safety.
- 4.18 The Council will resist advertisements on shopfronts that are above fascia level or ground floor level, except in exceptional circumstances. Shroud advertisements, banners, hoardings / billboards / large outdoor signboards are subject to further criteria as set out in supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on advertisements.

## Camden Planning Guidance Design Guide

4.19 The PGD states that shopfront alterations should respect the detailed design, materials, colour and architectural features of the shopfront and building itself, the following will need to be considered:

- Historic, locally distinctive or characteristic shopfronts which contribute to the townscape should be retained. In some cases the reinstatement of missing features will be encouraged.
- New shopfronts should be designed as part of the whole building and should sensitively relate to the scale, proportions and architectural style of the building and surrounding facades.
- Shopfronts forming part of a larger new development should be considered as an integral part of the overall design.
- Standardised “house-style” frontages may have to be amended in order to harmonise with the surrounding context and respect the building, particularly in conservation areas and for listed buildings.
- All shopfronts should be designed to provide access into the premises for all.

4.20 Key shopfront components highlight the following:

### Window Displays:

- The window display is the main visual element of a shopfront. Shop frontages should be largely glazed to maintain a window display rather than creating a solid frontage (including obscured glass) which will be discouraged.
- On traditional shopfronts large expanse of undivided glass should be avoided. Vertical glazing bars (mullions) should be used to subdivide large windows to help visually relate the shopfront with the upper elevations of the building.
- The design of the door should be in keeping with the other elements of the shopfront. The solid bottom panel should align with the stallriser. The top of the door should align with the transom.
- Decorative tiling should be retained.
- All new build shop units and shopfronts should be designed to be fully accessible to everyone.

- In the case of existing buildings, particularly where a new shop front is proposed, the following guidance should be followed:
  - Shops that have a change in level from pavement to shop floor surface can usually incorporate ramped access into or within the shop. Exceptions preventing a ramped area to be created may include the presence of structural beams or floor slabs. Entrance doors should be accessible to all, particularly wheelchair users and people with limited manual dexterity. 1000mm minimum clear door width in new buildings and 775mm door width in existing buildings where a new shop front or alterations to a shop front are proposed.

4.21 Where there is an existing shopfront recess, often found in older traditional shopfronts e.g. listed buildings and conservation areas the guidance states they should be retained.

4.22 The guidance states that the fascia should be of a suitable size and proportion in relation to the building and should not normally extend above the cornice or below the capital as it would upset the overall balance and proportions of a shopfront or parade. Furthermore:

- Fascia signs should not obscure or damage existing architectural features. Deep box fascias which project beyond the shopfront frame should be avoided.
- Lettering on fascia signs should be proportionate to the scale of the shopfront. To aid identification, fascia signs should include the street number of the premises.
- Where a shopfront and fascia extend across two or more shop unit bays, the removal of intervening pilasters are not acceptable as it would: – weaken the frame's visual support to the upper floors; and – disrupt the character and rhythm of a shopping frontage created by the widths of individual shopfronts.
- Lettering on fascia signs should be proportionate to the scale of the shopfront. Main fascias should also be of a suitable size and proportion in relation to the building and should sit between cornice and shopfront itself and should not project above or below the cornice level obscuring upper floor or shop windows.
- Fascia and box signs should not obscure or damage existing architectural features.

4.23 Materials should be chosen for their durability and appropriateness to their location. Traditional materials such as timber, stone and render are the most appropriate for new shopfronts, particularly for listed buildings and in conservation areas. More contemporary materials such as colour-coated steel, aluminium and bronze instead of timber may be appropriate in some circumstances. Colour schemes for shopfronts and in particular the

projecting framework should be carefully considered, particularly in conservation areas and for listed buildings. Proposals should be accompanied by full details of materials, finishes and colours (or sample and specification cards).

- 4.24 In relation to advertisements and signs, the guidance states that shops and businesses need to ensure that their name and other details are clearly displayed on their premises and, as a result, signs are among the most prominent forms of advertising on buildings. However, signs that are unsympathetically designed can cause significant harm to the building and the local townscape.
- 4.25 Signs should relate well to the shopfronts character, scale and architectural features of the building and respect their local context. Properties should only have one main fascia sign and one ancillary projecting or hanging sign per street frontage, although two projecting signs may be appropriate in cases of large shopfronts stretching across two or more shop units. Too many adverts/signs on a property contribute to visual clutter and can detract from the appearance of the street scene.

## 5. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.1 The majority of buildings along High Holborn are 20th century large footprint, steel-framed office buildings of varying styles and quality. Some of these buildings may be of neutral townscape value, but as a group entire street frontages merit inclusion by virtue of the increasing rarity of surviving mid 20th century commercial buildings and their contribution to the social and economic history of this era.
- 5.2 The Conservation Area Appraisal presents the following description for the Chancery Lane/Carey Street area: *The buildings situated in Chancery Lane and Carey Street, and those linking these streets to Lincoln's Inn, are built up to the back of the pavement on limited plots resulting in dense development. Several of the Chancery Lane facades are in fact the rear elevations of Stone Buildings and properties in Old Square. However, the overriding architectural character is commercial, with many buildings developed as ancillary uses for the Inns of Court at a later date. In Chancery Lane, buildings fully occupy their historic, long, narrow plots, and are separated by narrow courts, giving a strong sense of enclosure. The smaller-scale buildings facing Carey Street contrast with the rear of New Square, which is visible to the north. Many of the buildings date from the 19th century, and make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Two meetings facing Chancery Lane are grade II listed. No 87 is a late 18th century townhouse with 20th century alterations at ground floor level relating to its conversion to a bank. No 95 is a substantial corner building of three principal storeys dating from 1865. It was originally built as the Union Bank of London by F W Porter, and features a richly detailed Portland stone façade in a High Renaissance style. 5.158 Nos 1-3 (consec) Hardwicke Buildings, Nos 79-95 (consec) Chancery Lane and No 61 Carey Street were formerly in Strand Conservation Area, the remainder of which lies within the boundary of the City of Westminster. Since this area has a similar street pattern of narrow passageways seen elsewhere in this sub area of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and has a predominance of legal uses relating to its evolution as an area adjoining Lincoln's Inn, the boundary of Bloomsbury Conservation Area has been extended to include these properties.*
- 5.3 The view north along Chancery Lane towards First Avenue House, High Holborn has been identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal and forms part of the vista corridor Greenwich Park Wolfe statue to St Paul's Cathedral. The proposal will not have a material impact in the composition or setting of these views.

- 5.4 The application site has been identified as a positive contributor to the wider Conservation Area, but is not listed nor it presents with elements of particular heritage significant. The elements of streetscape interest in Chancery Lane identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal include its stone paving and granite kerbs, however the proposal will not have a material impact upon these.

## **6. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The main material considerations are the Principle of Development, the Character and Design of the Host Building, the impact upon the character and appearance of the street scene and Conservation Area, the Impact upon Amenity and the Heritage Impact.
- 6.2 These should be assessed against the benefits generated through the scheme, namely the contribution towards town centre vitality and vibrancy by enabling a vacant unit to be brought back into use.

### **Principle of Development**

- 6.3 The Site is immediately adjacent to a Central London Frontage (High Holborn). This designation recognises its role as a shopping and service centre for workers and residents. The new shopfront and associated use will be complementary to its offer and activity.
- 6.4 The property forms part of an established row of shop frontages, and the Proposal will enable this vacant commercial unit to be brought back into use, representing a significant benefit to the local area, helping to sustain footfall, vibrancy and vitality whilst boosting local jobs.
- 6.5 The proposal is in accordance with Policy E1, TC2,3 and 5 of the Local Plan and the provisions within the NPPF 2021, being therefore acceptable in principle.

### **Character and Appearance of the Host Building**

- 6.6 The proposed shopfront removes an unsightly exposed column which detracts from the wider setting including the host building and reintroduces the bay window, restoring the frontage to its original design. These changes, together with the added glazing and simple proportions significantly enhance the character and appearance of the host building by allowing it to stand out and become more prominent, whilst removing incongruous elements.

- 6.7 The Proposal helps secure a viable future and bring the unit back into use which will ultimately result in a funded programme of maintenance and upkeep of its fabric and features. The proposals are in accordance with Policies D2 and D3 of the Local Plan and Policy HC1 of the London Plan.

### **Impact upon the Conservation Area and Street Scene**

- 6.8 The Proposal will have a minor beneficial impact upon the Conservation Area by bringing a unit back into use, and thus helping to retain and reinforce the commercial character and quality of Chancery Lane as well as of High Holborn.
- 6.9 The proposal doesn't affect the key views (in fact it results in a minor improvement by removing a detracting exposed column), nor does it affect the stone paving and granite kerbs.
- 6.10 The proposed shopfront is consistent with the surrounding character and respects the architectural form and detailing of the existing building form, having been designed in accordance with the Camden Planning Guidance Design 1 in the sense that it:
- Respects the detailed design, materials, colour and architectural features of the shopfront and building itself.
  - Reinstates missing features (bay window).
  - Sensitively relates to the scale, proportions and architectural style of the building and surrounding facades, matching the adjacent shopfront to the south by virtue of its design and proportions.
  - It comprises mainly a glazed frontage to maintain a window display rather than creating a solid frontage (including obscured glass).
  - Vertical glazing bars (mullions) are used to subdivide large windows to help visually relate the shopfront with the upper elevations of the building.
  - The design of the door is in keeping with the other elements of the shopfront. The solid bottom panels align with the vertical bars.
  - The shopfront remains accessible, with just a small step - easy to cross via wheelchair - present.
  - The existing fascia is retained and does not obscure or damage existing architectural features.

- The fascia does not obscure or damage existing architectural features.

6.11 The proposal is in accordance with Policies D2 and D3 of the Local Plan and Policy HC1 of the London Plan.

### **Amenity**

6.12 The Proposal does not have an impact upon neighbouring properties in respect of loss of light, outlook, noise or disturbance. The proposed bay window it will not lead to an increase in overshadowing to adjacent properties and no other detrimental changes are being proposed.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The Proposal will have a minor beneficial impact upon the Conservation Area by bringing a unit back into use and proposing a shopfront consistent with the surrounding character which respects the architectural form and detailing of the existing building form. The existing key view will also be improved by removing a detracting exposed column.
- 7.2 Any (minimal) adverse impacts would be more than outweighed by the positives such as employment and investment in the local area.
- 7.3 In our view the Proposal is wholly supported by planning policy, but a formal view is sought on whether the proposals would be supported in Principle if they were put forward as a planning application.