



Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd

**17-21 CAMDEN ROAD, LONDON,
NW1 9LJ**

Heritage Statement



Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd

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Heritage Statement

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	OVERVIEW AND PROJECT BACKGROUND	1
2	SITE AND SURROUNDINGS	2
3	PLANNING HISTORY	3
4	THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	4
5	PLANNING POLICY	5
5.1	THE PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990	5
5.2	THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	5
5.3	NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK	5
5.4	OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS	6
6	HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT	7
6.1	HERITAGE CONSTRAINTS	7
6.2	SAINSBURY'S SUPERMARKET	7
	SIGNIFICANCE	7
	IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME	8
6.3	1-12 GRAND UNION WALK	9
	SIGNIFICANCE	9
	IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME	9
6.4	CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL AND WAR MEMORIAL	9
	SIGNIFICANCE	9
	IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME	10
6.5	18-62 CAMDEN ROAD AND ATTACHED RAILINGS	10
	SIGNIFICANCE	10
	IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME	10

6.6	REGENTS CANAL CONSERVATION AREA	10
	SIGNIFICANCE	10
	IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME	11
6.7	HERITAGE LEGISLATION AND POLICY	11
7	CONCLUSION	13

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. This heritage statement relates to the existing Sainsbury's Store at 17-21 Camden Road, London, NW1 9LJ (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). It has been prepared on behalf of Sainsbury's Supermarkets Limited and accompanies an application seeking full planning permission and listed building consent for:
- "Replacement of existing traveller with a new and improved system, installation of a new lift, improvements to public realm, cycle and car park alterations plus associated works."*
- 1.1.2. This application is submitted to The London Borough of Camden as the determining Local Planning Authority (LPA) under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- 1.1.3. A detailed description of the Proposed Development is set out in Section 4 of this Statement and the accompanying plans and reports. The location of the site and the extent of the Proposed Development area are shown on the submitted Location Plan.
- 1.1.4. This statement sets out the context and need for the Proposed Development and includes an assessment of how it accords with relevant national and local planning policies, drawing on relevant supporting information where applicable.
- 1.1.5. Following this introductory section, the remainder of this Planning Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2** describes the application site and surrounding context;
- Section 3** describes the planning history relating to the application site;
- Section 4** sets out a detailed description of the Proposed Development;
- Section 5** provides a summary of the relevant planning policy context;
- Section 6** provides the assessment of Heritage significance and impact assessment;
- Section 7** provides a summary and overall conclusion.
- 1.1.6. This document is intended to fulfil the requirements as set out in paragraph 194 of the NPPF in regards to information required to assess applications affecting heritage assets.

2 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1.1. The application site comprises the existing Sainsbury's store on Camden Road within the London Borough of Camden. The site is Grade II listed and is an architecturally significant building, designed by Nicolas Grimshaw and is the first purpose-built supermarket to achieve National Heritage status in England.
- 2.1.2. The building comprises of Grimshaw's prominent "High Tech" style architecture which centres on revealing the construction techniques used, rather than hiding them away. At street-level, the supermarket is set back from the pavement and enclosed by full-height glazing with the upper level being wrapped in aluminium panelling and features strip windows.
- 2.1.3. The Camden Policies Map 2021 shows that the site is subject to the following planning designations:
 - Located within the Regent's Canal Conservation Area; and
 - Includes a protected frontage.
- 2.1.4. The site lies immediately adjacent to the Church of St Michaels (Grade II*) and the War Memorial at the Church of St Michael (Grade II). To the north of the site lies 1-12 Grand Union Walk (Grade II) and also opposite the site lies 18-62 Camden Road (Grade II).

3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1.1. A review of the London Borough of Camden online planning register reveals there have been a number of planning decisions on site which reflect the supermarket use of the building. These are set out below:
- On the 3 April 1985, outline planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of the land known as the ABC Bakery site (17-21 Camden Road 131-147 Camden Street Camden Gardens and frontage to Kentish Town Road NW1) by the erection of buildings a retail store with associated creche. (LPA ref. 8401869);
 - On the 21 October 1986 full planning permission was granted for six structural-support members on the public highway (LPA ref. 8601494).
 - On the 21 November 1990 planning permission was granted to change the use of the part of the shop unit from A1 retail, to mixed use of art gallery/café (LPA ref. 9003222).
 - On the 5 June 1991, full planning permission was granted for the installation of a new shopfront to Unit One (LPA ref. 9003444).
 - On the 5 May 1992 full planning permission was granted for the erection of a first floor rear extension to the bulk stock warehouse area. (LPA ref. 9200430).
 - On the 21 August 2007, full planning permission was granted for the alterations to front and rear elevations to enlarge the two main entrance doors and to relocate an internal ATM to an external wall. (LPA ref. 2007/2868/P).
 - Full planning permission was subsequently granted on 26 November 2007 to install a second ATM facility and further minor alterations to the existing entrance. (LPA ref. 2007/4906/P).
 - On 13 July 2021, full planning permission and listed building consent was granted for the installation of two condensing units and one air source heat pump to main roof with associated internal alterations. (LPA ref. 2021/3202/L and 2021/2594/P).

4 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1.1. Sainsbury's Supermarkets Limited is seeking to improve the customer experience and access at this store through improvements to the car parking, public realm, traveller and lift.
- 4.1.2. The existing travelator is steep which has led to a number of accidents, additionally it is not suitable for all customers. The proposals would seek to reduce the gradient by introducing run offs at either end to make it safer and more accessible.
- 4.1.3. At present, there is no lift provision between the basement car park and the store, even though the original building was designed with a lift. The proposal would use this existing void to install a customer lift but this would require alterations to create access doors and the addition of a lift mechanism. Along with improving the traveller's gradients, as explained above, the addition of a lift provision would improve accessibility options for customers.
- 4.1.4. The improvements to the basement car parking would seek to create a safer and more pleasant environment, for example the removal/replacement of the defunct ducting, improved lighting, the replacement of the basement car park barriers and an improved layout which would make manoeuvring easier for customers. Given the basement level is explicitly identified as not being of architectural or historic interest in the list description, it is not considered that these works would require detailed heritage assessment.
- 4.1.5. The works to the public realm, for example resurfacing, new cycle stands, moving of the mini cab booth, changes to parking layout and replacement of the service area wall with bollards, are considered improvements to this area, which is currently somewhat utilitarian being both the service area and part of the public realm.

5 PLANNING POLICY

5.1 THE PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

- 5.1.1. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the statutory test for consideration of proposals affecting a listed building or its setting.

Section 66 (1) states:

'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'

Section 72 (1) states:

'In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'

5.2 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 5.2.1. The Development Plan for the purpose of the determination of this planning application comprise of the Camden Local Plan (2017) and the London Plan (2021). The key policies are set out below.

The Camden Local Plan (2017)

- Policy D1 Design; and
- Policy D2 Heritage
- Policy C6 Access for all

The London Plan (2021)

- Policy D3 Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach;
- Policy D5 Inclusive design;
- Policy HC1 Heritage conservation and growth; and

5.3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 5.3.1. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published on 27 March 2012 and was most recently updated on 20 July 2021. This sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The national planning guidance (NPPG) provides guidance on how the policies should be applied.

- 5.3.2. Section 16 of the NPPF outlines the approach to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 5.3.3. This statement is considered to fulfil the requirements set out in paragraph 194 which states that 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.'

5.4 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.4.1. The following Camden Planning Guidance (CPG's) are also relevant to this application and have been considered in preparing this application:
- Access for all
 - Design
- 5.4.2. The following Historic England guidance are also relevant to the application and have been considered in preparing this application:
- Advice Note 12, Statements of Significance
 - Conservation Principles (2008)
 - Easy Access to Historic Buildings (2015)

6 HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 HERITAGE CONSTRAINTS

- 6.1.1. The application site is a Grade II listed building. The site sits on a corner plot, fronting onto Camden Road to the south, and the side elevation faces Camden Street to the east. The site lies within the Regents Canal Conservation Area and there are a number of listed buildings within the immediate vicinity as outlined above and considered in more detail below.

6.2 SAINSBURY'S SUPERMARKET

SIGNIFICANCE

- 6.2.1. The existing building is part of the Grand Union Complex built 1986-88, designed by Sir Nicholas Grimshaw, and is the first purpose-built supermarket to achieve national listing status in England.
- 6.2.2. J Sainsbury took ownership of the site in the early 1980s with the intention to develop an urban supermarket and the scope was revised to also include a terrace of houses (1-12 Grand Union Walk, listed Grade II), and a commercial building (known as Grand Union House).
- 6.2.3. The building comprises a 'High Tech' style architectural design, which centres on revealing the construction techniques used, rather than hiding them away.
- 6.2.4. The architectural significance of the listed building is principally expressed in its 'High-Tech' architectural style, which integrates an overtly modern aesthetic into Camden's historic urban grain. Furthermore, the building features a technological innovation with its intumescent coating, which allows the steel frame to be left exposed. The building is a distinctive landmark within a dense urban setting.
- 6.2.5. The design of the exterior of the building includes the display of its structure, and a glazed shopfront revealing the retail activity within. The building materials comprise of an exposed steel frame with aluminium and glass cladding.
- 6.2.6. Historic England's National Heritage List for England describes the reason for designation as being:

Architectural interest

'As a powerful piece of contextual inner-city High-Tech, integrating an overtly modern aesthetic into Camden's historic urban grain; in the creative use of structure to meet a challenging brief, boldly and exaggeratedly expressed to striking effect; in the technological innovation of its intumescent coating, allowing the frame to be left exposed in a densely developed environment; as a resourceful piece of retail planning which successfully meets the complex, space-hungry demands of a supermarket on a tight urban site; as the centrepiece of a successful mixed-use scheme which marked a turning point in the career of Nicholas Grimshaw, one of the country's leading proponents of High-Tech architecture.'

Historic interest

'As a rare example of the important but typically mundane post-war building type, the supermarket, being designed as a highly original, bespoke piece of architecture; a project made possible by the ambition of the architects, the client and the local authority.'

- 6.2.7. An important part of the listing description clarifies which areas are not of special interest:

'Pursuant to s1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') it is declared that the car park and, with the exception of the curved ceiling over the shop floor, the interior fittings, fixtures and non-structural partitions within the shop and in all back-of-house areas are not of special architectural or historic interest, however any works which have the potential to affect the character of the listed building as a building of special architectural or historic interest may still require LBC and this is a matter for the LPA to determine.'

- 6.2.8. Photographs of the existing site are shown in **Appendix A**.

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

Car Park

- 6.2.9. The car park is expressly recorded as being of no special architectural or historic interest in Historic England's listing description and therefore it is considered that the works proposed here would not affect the significance or special historic or architectural interest of the listed building. This includes the car park entrance barrier works because they would be located at the basement level of the car park, rather than at ground level.

Lift

- 6.2.10. As noted above, the building was designed with a lift housing, however this was never installed for reasons unknown. Therefore, the void for the lift already exists which would be used for the proposals; the only change to the building associated with this work would be the addition of a lift overrun above this void and the addition of a lift door in the existing enclosure.
- 6.2.11. The existing enclosure is not considered to be of any architectural interest, as it appears as a later addition, and therefore the addition of doors to its frontage would not have impact on the significance of the listed building, especially as these would be constructed of matching materials to the enclosure and therefore when closed would have virtually the same appearance as the existing.
- 6.2.12. In the case of the addition of the housing for the lift mechanical equipment, this would involve the addition of a housing above the existing enclosure. However, this would still sit beneath the roof structure, which is of architectural interest, and therefore allow this feature and the form of the roof to be read and understood.
- 6.2.13. Associated with this work the existing incongruous accoutrements above the enclosure such as vents and air conditioning units would be consolidated which would represent an improvement to the appearance of this part of the building.
- 6.2.14. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed works would not cause any harm to the significance of the listed building and would preserve its historic and architectural interest. Furthermore, for reasons given above the work would provide public benefits.

Travelator

- 6.2.15. This feature is mentioned in the list description, specifically the locking system on the trollies. However, looking at the current travelator (see photos in appendix A) it appears that most elements of the travelator have been replaced over the years, so much so that other than in its position and layout, it is no longer considered to be an original feature. Also as noted in the list description, whilst the locking system was an early example of this technology, it is now commonplace.

- 6.2.16. For these reasons, it is felt that the travelators, other than their existence and general layout and positioning have limited contribution to the significance or architectural or historic interest of the listed building, especially given the overall interest of the listed building as defined above and in the list description.
- 6.2.17. Therefore, given the proposals would keep the position and layout and overall appearance of the travelators, just change the gradient and add run offs at the top and bottom, it is considered that the proposed works would not cause any harm to the significance of the listed building and would preserve its historic and architectural interest. Furthermore, for reasons given above the work would provide public benefits.

Public Realm

- 6.2.18. The works are minor in nature ie cycle store, alterations to car parking layout, moving the taxi booth, and seek to tidy this area and make it more consistent, especially the surfacing which would tie in with the already consented surface elsewhere on the site. The works would therefore represent an improvement to the setting of the listed building. This is especially the case with the removal of the incongruous and unattractive service area wall and its replacement with bollards which would be more discreet and considered.

6.3 1-12 GRAND UNION WALK

SIGNIFICANCE

- 6.3.1. 1-12 Grand Union Walk lies to the rear of the Sainsbury's store and comprises of a series of ten terraced houses and two flats. These were also designed by Sir Nicholas Grimshaw as part of his wider vision for the area in the early 1980's.
- 6.3.2. The buildings comprise of a "High Tech" architectural style, which complements the Sainsbury's supermarket. The buildings are faced in aluminium cladding facing the canal, together with motorised glass walls on the northern elevation. The terraces fronting onto the Regents Canal have historically been industrial in character and therefore, the 'High Tech' architectural style ensures that the buildings integrate well within the existing setting and character of the area.

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

- 6.3.3. The proposed scheme will cause no harm to the setting or heritage significance or special interest of 1-12 Grand Union Walk as there will be no inter-visibility between the majority of the proposed works and this listed terrace. The public realm works are the only exception as this area backs onto the terrace. However the appearance of this parking/service area, will remain very similar to the existing, with only few minor changes, and if anything the appearance of the area would be improved through the introduction of more consistency and a tidier appearance and therefore it is felt that the proposed works would not affect the significance or historic or architectural interest of this listed building.

6.4 CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL AND WAR MEMORIAL

SIGNIFICANCE

- 6.4.1. Immediately adjacent to the site on the western side, lies the Church of St Michael, which is Grade II* listed. St Michael's Church is of a Gothic Revival style, designed in 1878 by the influential architect, G. F. Bodley. St Michael's was Bodley's first building in London, although by that date he

had completed works elsewhere. It is an outstanding late Gothic Revival building by one of the most important Victorian and Edwardian church architects of the time.

- 6.4.2. The war memorial at the Church of St Michael is Grade II Listed. This was constructed in 1920 to commemorate residents of Camden who died during the first world war.

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

- 6.4.3. The proposed scheme will cause no harm to the setting or heritage significance or special interest of the Church of St Michael or associated War Memorial as there will be no significant inter-visibility between the proposed works or the church or war memorial because the proposed lift and travelator works are set back from the church underneath the canopy and screened by the boundary wall.

6.5 18-62 CAMDEN ROAD AND ATTACHED RAILINGS

SIGNIFICANCE

- 6.5.1. The terrace of 23 houses opposite the Sainsbury's supermarket, date from the early nineteenth century, and include some later shops. They are constructed in yellow stock brick (No. 28, is painted at first floor level) with rusticated stucco ground floors or stucco shopfronts. They are three storeys tall, (Nos. 26-62 with attic storeys, and basements).

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

- 6.5.2. The proposed scheme will cause no harm to the setting or heritage significance or special interest of 18-62 Camden Road or the attached railings as there is no inter-visibility between the proposed works and the terrace on Camden Road.

6.6 REGENTS CANAL CONSERVATION AREA

SIGNIFICANCE

- 6.6.1. The application site stands within the Regents Canal Conservation Area boundary.
- 6.6.2. The special character and appearance of the Conservation Area is largely derived from the almost hidden nature of the canal. The surrounding townscape largely turns its back on the canal creating a tranquil space distinct from the business of the surrounding city. This character has in part arisen from the topography of the canal located as it is in shallow cuttings along part of its length and partly as a result of canal side development forming an effective barrier, cutting off views towards the canal.
- 6.6.3. Many of the industrial buildings and structures include interesting architectural details and fine examples of industrial brickwork, illustrating styles of engineering and construction techniques of the 19th and early 20th centuries; some building materials were produced in London and others brought in by the railways from the regions. Cast iron and wrought iron are well represented. The historic industrial use of the canal meant that warehouses and similar buildings on the canal edge had to be secure, as did the canal itself, so the ground floors often comprise solid brick structures. These add to the sense of enclosure of the canal and are an important part of its historic character. The change in use of the canal from industrial to leisure will be reflected in new approaches to the treatment of the canal edge, and this can be accommodated without necessarily losing the industrial quality of the area.

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

- 6.6.4. The architectural appearance of the building accords with the character of the conservation area as outlined above given its industrial style. As the special interest and significance of the listed building is preserved as explained above, it follows that the proposed scheme will cause no harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area or its significance especially as the works would only be visible from within the building's site.

6.7 HERITAGE LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- 6.7.1. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the statutory test for consideration of proposals affecting a listed building or its setting. Section 66 (1) states:

"In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses"

- 6.7.2. Section 72 (1) of the Act requires that LPAs pay special attention in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. An important issue to remember is that when considering harm, 'preserving' for the purposes of 1990 Act means 'doing no harm' (South Lakeland v Secretary of State [1992]). This is clarification that preservation does not preclude change to or within the setting of heritage assets. Preserving means not causing harm to the elements which comprise the asset's significance.
- 6.7.3. For reasons as noted above, it is considered that the proposals would accord with section 72 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.7.4. The preservation and enhancement of heritage assets forms an important part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021). Section 16, paragraphs 189 to 208 deals specifically with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 6.7.5. Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. This statement is considered to fulfil this requirement. Similarly, there is a requirement on local planning authorities, having assessed the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal, to take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset.
- 6.7.6. The Planning Practice Guidance for the NPPF defines significance as being the "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest". It adds that significance is not only derived from an asset's physical presence, but also from its setting, that is "the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve". The significance of the relevant heritage assets has been outlined above.
- 6.7.7. The NPPF notes that heritage assets can be harmed or lost through alteration, destruction or development within their setting. This harm, in respect to designated heritage assets, ranges from

less than substantial through to substantial. For reasons as noted above it is not considered that the proposals would cause harm to the heritage assets and therefore it is considered that the application accords with the NPPF.

6.7.8. As set out in paragraph 197 in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the following three points:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

For reasons noted above, the proposals would sustain the significance of the heritage assets, and facilitate the continued viable use of the listed building as a supermarket which is its most viable use consistent with its conservation given that this was the use for which it was designed.

Camden Planning Policy

6.7.9. The Camden Local Plan includes Policy D2 – Heritage. This sets out that the Council will preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden’s rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings. As noted above the proposals are considered to preserve the heritage assets and therefore this policy is complied with.

6.7.10. Furthermore, the Council places a strong emphasis on maintaining the character of Camden’s conservation areas. The Council requires that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area. With regard to listed buildings, the council will resist proposals for a change of use or alterations and extensions to a listed building where this would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the building; and resist development that would cause harm to significance of a listed building through an effect on its setting. As noted above the proposals would not cause harm to the character of the conservation area and therefore this policy is complied with.

London Plan Policy

6.7.11. Policy HC1 – Heritage Policy and Growth – point C states ‘Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets’ significance and appreciation within their surroundings.’ As noted above it is considered that the proposals would conserve the significance of the heritage assets and therefore this policy is complied with.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1.1. The application seeks permission for *“Replacement of existing traveller with a new and improved system, installation of a new lift, improvements to the public realm, cycle and car park alterations plus associated works”*. These proposals would facilitate the improved accessibility and customer experience at the existing Sainsbury’s store at 17-21 Camden Road, London, NW1 9LS.
- 7.1.2. The proposals are minor in nature have been carefully designed to ensure that they will not harm the significance of the Grade II Listed Building’s special architectural and historic interest or the setting of the nearby heritage assets. Furthermore, the proposals will respect the character of the Regents Canal Conservation Area.
- 7.1.3. It is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with national and local planning policy and should be granted planning permission and listed building consent.

Appendix A

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

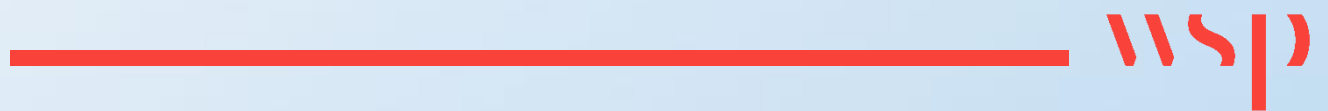


Image 1: View of the Sainsbury's store from Camden Road



Image 2: View of the proposed lift area with the travelator in the foreground



Image 3: *Detail of Travellator*

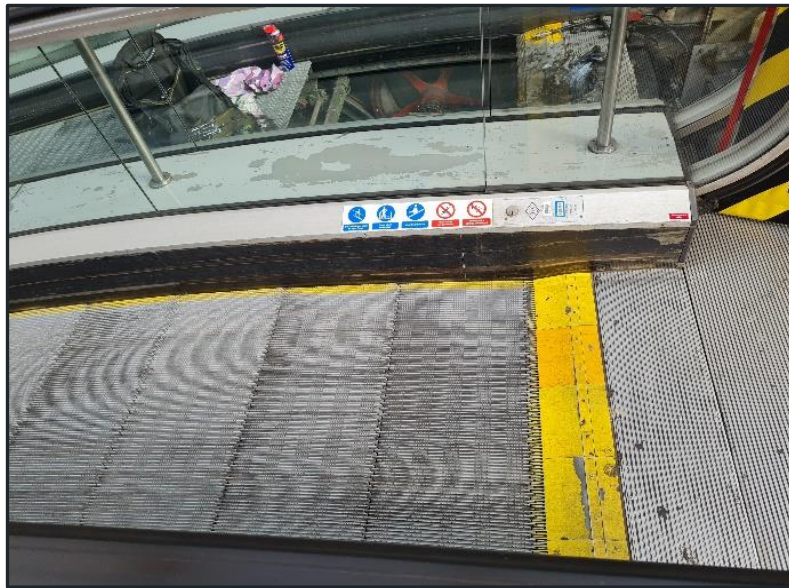


Image 4: *View of the proposed lift area (set back underneath the canopy roof) in relation to the Church.*



Image 5: *Proposed lift area*



Image 6: *Existing public realm/service area*





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