



HERITAGE STATEMENT

UNITS 160 – 162, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, LONDON

1 Scope and Purpose

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of our client, Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council ('the Applicant'), in support of a planning application for the proposed refurbishment and amalgamation of Units 160 and 160, and the refurbishment of Units 161 and 162, Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 7NL ('the Site').
- 1.2 The aim of this Statement is to demonstrate that the proposed development will not harm heritage assets.

2 Application Site

- 2.1 The Site comprises 4no. units; Unit 160 (occupied by Mr Toppers), Unit 160a (occupied by Thomas Exchange UK), Unit 161 (occupied by Spearmint Rhino) and Unit 162 (occupied by The Japanese Kitchen). The Site is accessible for pedestrians via Tottenham Court Road.
- 2.2 The Site sits within Bloomsbury Conservation Area which covers a section of Tottenham Court Road.
- 2.3 Tottenham Court Road is a heavily commercialised area with a focus of retail and leisure uses operating within this area.

3 Policy Requirements

National Policy

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021) is the principal document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 3.2 The NPPF (para. 189 – 2018 inclusive) seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment. The heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Specifically, para. 199, it outlines that:
"When considering the impacts 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."
- 3.3 The NPPF also states that a proposed development which leads to substantial harm of a heritage asset will be refused. However, where there is less than substantial harm it should be weighed against the public benefits including securing its optimum viable use.



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Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.4 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted in order to aid the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.
- 3.5 Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states that substantial harm is a high bar that may not arise in many cases and that while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally the degree of substantial harm will only be at a level where a development seriously affects a key element of an asset's special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed.

Local Planning Policy

- 3.6 At the local level, Policy D2 of the adopted Camden Local Plan (2017) identifies that the Council will grant permission for development which protects, conserves and enhances the historic environment.
- 3.7 With regards to Conservation Areas, this Policy states that development within Conservation Areas should preserve where possible the character and appearance of the area.
- 3.8 In addition, Policy D2, states that the Council will:
- e. require that development within conservation areas preserves or, where possible, enhances the character or appearance of the area;*
 - f. resist the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area;*
 - g. resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area; and*
 - h. preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character and appearance of a conservation area or which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage."*
- 3.9 Policy D1 is concerned with high quality design within development requires that development:
- a) "respects local context and character;*
 - b) preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage;*
 - c) is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation;*
 - d) is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;*
 - e) comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;*



Note continued

- f) integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces, improving movement through the site and wider area with direct, accessible and easily recognisable routes and contributes positively to the street frontage;*
- g) is inclusive and accessible for all;*
- h) promotes health;*
- i) is secure and designed to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour;*
- j) responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;*
- k) incorporates high quality landscape design (including public art, where appropriate) and maximises opportunities for greening for example through planting of trees and other soft landscaping,*
- l) incorporates outdoor amenity space; m. preserves strategic and local views;*
- m) for housing, provides a high standard of accommodation; and*
- n) carefully integrates building services equipment.”*

3.10 Other policies which cover Conservation Areas include Policy A2 and Policy A3. Both of which encourage the safeguarding and protection of conservation sites and require development to make significant contribution to the character and appearance of its setting.

4 Proposal

4.1 Specifically, planning permission is sought for the following:

“Refurbishment and amalgamation of existing retail units 160 and 160a, refurbishment of existing retail units 161 and 162, including the installation new shopfronts and associated works.”

4.2 Whilst external changes are proposed to the existing units as part of the planning application it does not create any new floorspace.

4.3 The result of this is provision of the units which will in fact have a positive contribution and impact on the local character and distinctiveness given it will largely replace four aged shopfronts with modern glazing and provide a greater product offering.

5 Impact on the heritage asset

5.1 As stated above, the retail units are in need of investment in order to attract new occupiers, ensure they are suitable for the requirements of modern retailers and to generally improve the units appearance.



Note continued

- 5.2 The Site is situated in an area which is heavily commercialised, where local planning policy encourages retail and other main town centre uses in this location.
- 5.3 For the avoidance of doubt, the proposals do not propose any increase in new built floorspace or height but rather external alterations to the existing frontage of the units and are therefore very modest in the changes sort.
- 5.4 The refurbishment is designed to be in keeping with the surrounding uses along Tottenham Court Road. The external alterations will be completed to a high quality and to a scale, appearance and function is appropriate given its immediate context.
- 5.5 The refurbishment of the units will not have an impact on the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The nature of the proposed development, noting that it results in no increase built floorspace and aims to improve the façade of the existing retail units, meaning there will be no harm to the designated heritage asset by granting planning permission.
- 6.2 Instead, the proposals will have a positive benefit for the Conservation Area through considerably modernising the existing units which currently have little valuable contribution to the Conservation Area. As such the proposal will preserve and enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 6.3 The Statement meets the requirements of the NPPF, strategic and local planning policy and provides sufficient information and assessment to identify the potential impacts arising from the development of the proposal on existing heritage assets.