

ALHAMBRA HOTEL
17 + 19 ARGYLE STREET
LONDON WC1H 8EJ

DESIGN AND PLANNING
STATEMENT

Application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for
Retention of Existing Green Wall Panel to Front Elevation of Existing
Four-Storey plus Lower Ground Floor Terraced Building in Hotel Use

For Alhambra Hotel Ltd

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1.0 DESCRIPTION

- a. 17 + 19 Argyle Street comprise a pair of terraced houses forming part of a terrace of seven houses – numbers 7 – 19, No19 is the end of the terrace. All of the properties in the terrace are Grade II Listed and situated in the Bloomsbury CA 4 Conservation Area, sub area 13. The properties have been subject to many individual and incremental changes over many years. The property adjoining No19 is Derbyshire House – a larger, later, more modern style, five storey office building fronting on to St Chads Street.
- b. Six of the seven houses in the terrace have been in use for many years as hotels. This pattern of properties originally constructed as terraced houses then becoming hotels more than 50 years ago is repeated in many of the streets in the immediate area – driven by the proximity to Kings Cross, St Pancras and Euston Stations.
- c. The Alhambra Hotel has been in the current family ownership for many years and has been well maintained and sympathetically upgraded to satisfy the demands of the hotel market while respecting its Listed status. It makes a valuable contribution to the local economy in attracting visitors to the locale. The plant panel was added to the front elevation to increase the presence of the hotel within the street scene and enhance the hotel's attractiveness to potential guests in a competitive environment.

2.0 PLANNING STATUS

- a. The property is Grade II Listed and situated in the Bloomsbury CA 4 Conservation Area, sub area 13.
- b. Listing entry dated: 14 May 1974 -

Terrace of 7 houses, now mostly small hotels. c1833-9. Yellow stock brick. No.7, stucco ground floor; No.9, pebble dash rendered ground floor; Nos 13-19 painted stucco ground floors (No.15 rusticated). Plain stucco 1st floor sill bands. Nos 13-19, slate mansard roofs with dormers. 3 storeys, Nos 13-19 attics, and basements. 2 windows each. Round-arched ground floor openings. Doorways of Nos 7-11 with pilaster-jambes carrying cornice-heads; fanlights and panelled doors; Those to Nos 13-19, C20 reproduction with glazed doors. Gauged brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1st floor in shallow, round-arched recesses with cast-iron balconies.

Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with tasselled spearhead finials to areas. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood, Parish of St Pancras IV: London: -1952: 106).

3.0 PLANNING IMPACT

- a. Whilst the seven properties in the terrace containing the Alhambra have similar street elevations there are differences. The ground floor to No7 has been smooth rendered, that to No9 has been pebbledashed, No11 remains facing brickwork. No 13 is also smooth rendered with shallow incised block coursing, No 15 is rusticated and the Alhambra at Nos 17 and 19 is smooth rendered with shallow incised block coursing. The upper floors exhibit differences in the colour of the facing brickwork and details and in the design of the mansard roofs – No 11 is alone in having a pitched roof rather than a mansard roof.
- b. The artificial plant panel is clearly a later addition to the building and will be seen in the same light as other later additions like the signage. There will be no confusion about whether it is an original part of the building. It does not affect the other Listed features. It is accepted that buildings need to change and adapt to changing circumstances and that changes become part of the history of the building.
- c. The artificial plant panel has been installed with minimal fixings to the existing fabric and could be removed with minimal making good to restore the appearance to its state before the installation with no long term damage or effect upon the building. Unlike a living wall panel it does not require an irrigation system and will not generate a moist microclimate around the panel with consequences for the existing fabric.
- d. The panel has a useful function in hiding less attractive parts of the building such as the drainage pipework installed before the Listing.
- e. The panel will not have any effect upon any other property – it will not result in any overlooking or loss of privacy, it will not cause and overshadowing or loss of daylight, it will not result in any increase in residential density or require any increase in on-street or off street parking.
- f. The Environment Agency advises that the site is at 'Very Low Risk' of flooding from surface water or of flooding from rivers or sea. It also advises that flooding from Reservoirs and Groundwater is 'Unlikely'. The Plant panel will not provide any new accommodation at risk of flooding or increase the risk of flooding to the property.

5.0 SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Image 01 – Front Elevation before the installation of the plant panel - Alhambra Hotel in centre, No15 to the left, Derbyshire House to the right



Image 02 - Front Elevation after the installation of the plant panel - Alhambra Hotel in centre, No15 to the left, Derbyshire House to the right.



Image 03 -Front Elevation after the installation of the plant panel - Alhambra Hotel in centre.



Image 04 - Front Elevation detail after installation of the plant panel.