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## **Design and Access Statement**

**Proposed works at 17a Highgate High Street, London N6 5JT For Lady Gould's Charity**

**Separation of the existing commercial property at 17a Highgate High Street into two commercial properties.**

## **Outline of the Proposal**

The goal of the project is to separate the existing commercial property at 17a Highgate High Street into two commercial properties.

17a Highgate High Street occupies the ground and lower ground floors below the property at 17 Highgate High Street.

## **Drawings submitted with this request for pre-application advice:**

Site location plan: HHS-EX-100;

Existing drawings: HHS-EX-01; HHS-EX-02; HHS-EX-03; HHS-EX-04;

Proposed drawings: **HHS-GA-01-D**; HHS-GA-02-C; HHS-GA-03-A; HHS-GA-04-A; HHS-GA-5

Photographs of the site are included with the Heritage Statement supplied as part of this application.

## **Existing Property**

The existing property is located in the Highgate Village Conservation Area and the property is Grade II\* Listed. The list entry number is 1378899. The list title is "Numbers 17, 19 and 21 and attached railings, 17, 19 and 21 Highgate High Street".

The building at Number 17 includes a shop. The shop is currently occupied by Mail Boxes Etc. The shop is designated as 17a Highgate High Street and it occupies the ground floor and lower ground floor of the building at number 17. The upper floors of number 17 are currently in use as

a dwelling. Access to the dwelling at number 17 is via the stepped entrance off Highgate High Street. The proposed works do not affect the upper floors at number 17, they only affect 17a.

The internal fabric of 17a shows no signs of original features. It is understood that the entire property was badly affected by a fire in the 1980's and that the property was largely re-built around 1988. Internal staircases have been added to connect ground and lower ground floor levels and interior spaces have been remodeled and formed with stud partitions. Chimney stacks appear to be intact, however fireplaces have been removed and the openings have been blocked up.

The retail space defined by the area occupied by the entrance to Mail Boxes Etc at ground floor level at 17a is well used, however, the rest of the space at 17a is used as poorly organized storage for the retail space. It appears that the under-used space was previously in use as office space and also a beauty salon and nail bar.

### **Proposed Use**

The separated-off section (17b) will be used for office space as it currently is – but with new access and fire escape it will become commercially viable. At present it is not viable as office or retail space because the fire escape provisions are inadequate. The main retail space at 17a (with the shop front currently used by Mail Boxes Etc.) will continue to be used as retail space.

### **Existing Fire Escape Provisions**

As things stand, the fire escape routes at 17a are not satisfactory. Failings in the fire escape provisions are set out below and are indicated on the application drawings. It is important to note that the alterations to the fire escape provisions are required, with or without the separation of 17a into two separate units. However the building is to be used, the failings in the existing fire escape routes need to be corrected.

### **The Proposed Works**

To create the separation of 17a into two parts the existing internal opening at lower ground floor level is to be blocked up. For the purposes of the application document the part of the 17a accessed directly from Highgate High Street via the Mail Boxes Etc. entrance will be called 17a. The rest of what is currently 17a will be called 17b. (See existing and proposed drawings for more detail on this.)

Apart from the blocking up of the door opening as described above, 17a will be unaffected by the proposed works.

### **Works relating to 17b**

As described above, the fire escape provisions are inadequate as they stand. The key reasons for this are as follows:

- The corridor at ground floor level is too narrow.
- The headroom in the internal stairs is less than 2m in parts.
- The headroom at the exit to the street at lower ground floor level is less than 2m.

To create an adequate fire escape to outside the following works are required:

- The corridor at first floor level will be made wider.
- The internal stairs will be remodeled to ensure that the headroom is more than 2m.
- The external floor level outside the existing door located under the external stairs up to the dwelling at number 17 is to be lowered by 100mm in order to increase the headroom in this area.
- Lowering the external floor level in the lightwell will result in the need to re-model the existing steps that lead from the lightwell up to pavement level.

### **Other Proposed Works**

The metal security grills fixed over the two existing windows at lower ground floor level will be removed.

The existing lightwell, external storage area, steps and railings will be renovated to upgrade the existing materials. Floor coverings will be Yorkstone. The existing external storage area will be carefully inspected and re-instated to its original form and materials wherever possible.

To facilitate the use of the internal spaces of the separated-off section at 17b, internal modifications are required. The modifications involve alterations to existing stud-partition walls and alterations to the existing stair that does not appear to be part of the original fabric of the building.

The proportions of the main room at the front at ground floor level will be returned to their original state as far as is possible. This will be achieved by positioning a replacement separating wall along the line of the original separating (spine) wall.

The interior of the property will be upgraded in general and in line with the application drawings. A new kitchen area and two new WCs are proposed.

Existing ceilings throughout are plasterboard. New plasterboard ceilings to be installed at Ground Floor level to ensure adequate levels of sound and fire separation. Lighting and electrics are to be replaced throughout. Recessed ceiling downlights will be replaced with pendant lights and wall mounted lights as shown on the layout drawings.

Heating will be provided by wall mounted electric panel radiators in locations as shown on the layout drawings. Hot water will be provided by electric instant heater/inline hot water taps.

Cooling will be provided by allowing cross ventilation through windows at ground floor level and by allowing ventilation through windows at lower ground floor level.

The existing cast iron range located in the fire place at lower ground floor level is to be retained.

### **Benefits of the proposed works**

The proposed works will bring an under-used section of the building back into use. The proposed alterations will result in fire escape provisions complying with current building control requirements. And as a result of the re-working of the entrance to the new space, it will become more accessible and more useable.

### **The Applicant**

The client for this project is Lady Gould's Charity.

Lady Gould's Charity was founded in 1691 and is registered with the Charity Commission under number 1173760. It is a Charitable Trust which awards grants to any individual who lives in the Highgate area of London and who is, for whatever reason, in need of financial assistance, for example through mental or physical disability or through other family or household circumstances that result in the lack of some basic necessity. Grants are in the region of £400 - £600 per application. Typically grants cover household items such as baby essentials, furniture, carpets, washing machines, fridges, cookers or clothing. Many of the individuals the Charity helps are referred by the London Borough of Camden's social services department.

The Charity's entire income is derived from the commercial rents received from nos. 17 and 21 Highgate High Street.

The purpose of this application is to preserve and enhance the historic fabric of the Grade II\* Listed building and at the same time increase the rental income from one of the Charity's properties to further the work of the Charity.