

Application ref: 2023/2310/L  
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Dear Sir/Madam

## **DECISION**

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

### **Listed Building Consent Granted**

Address:

**118-120 High Holborn  
London  
WC1V 6RD**

Proposal:

Creation of openings at basement and ground floor to link new accommodation with existing hotel at 2-6 Southampton Row, relocation of existing clock to high level, provision of new windows, installation of skylight and lift over-run on roof.

Drawing Nos: A11566 F0002 I1; A11566 F 0100 I1, A11566 F 0110 I1, A11566 F 0101 I1, A11566 F 0102 I1, A11566 F 0103 I1, A11566 F 0104 I1, A11566 F 0105 I1, A11566 F 0106 I1, A11566 F 0201 I1, A11566 F 0202 I1; A12144 D 0099 I1, A12144 D 0100 I1, A12144 D 0110 I1, A12144 D 0101 I1, A12144 D 0102 I1, A12144 D 0103 I1, A12144 D 0104 I1, A12144 D 0105 I1, A12144 D 0106 I1, A12144 D 0201 I1, A12144 D 0202 I1, A12144 D0210 I1, A12144 D0211 I1; A12144 Z 1099 I1, A12144 Z 1100 I1; Proposed Section AA 467GS01 Rev B; Heritage Statement.

The Council has considered your application and decided to grant Listed Building Consent subject to the following condition(s):

Conditions And Reasons:

- 1 The works hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the end of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: In order to comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: A11566 F0002 I1; A11566 F 0100 I1, A11566 F 0110 I1, A11566 F 0101 I1, A11566 F 0102 I1, A11566 F 0103 I1, A11566 F 0104 I1, A11566 F 0105 I1, A11566 F 0106 I1, A11566 F 0201 I1, A11566 F 0202 I1; A12144 D 0099 I1, A12144 D 0100 I1, A12144 D 0110 I1, A12144 D 0101 I1, A12144 D 0102 I1, A12144 D 0103 I1, A12144 D 0104 I1, A12144 D 0105 I1, A12144 D 0106 I1, A12144 D 0201 I1, A12144 D 0202 I1, A12144 D0210 I1, A12144 D0211 I1; A12144 Z 1099 I1, A12144 Z 1100 I1; Proposed Section AA 467GS01 Rev B; Heritage Statement.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the building in accordance with the requirements of policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 3 All new work and work of making good shall be carried out to match the existing adjacent work as closely as possible in materials and detailed execution.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the building in accordance with the requirements of policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

- 4 Prior to the installation of the new external doors at ground floor level details shall be first submitted to the local planning authority for its written approval. The doors shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the building in accordance with the requirements of policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

#### Informative(s):

- 1 Reasons for granting listed building consent:

The site comprises basement, ground, mezzanine and the first to fourth floors of the existing building at 118-120 High Holborn. The application site is a six storey building located within the Kingsway Conservation Area. The adjoining 2-6 Southampton Row is Grade II\* listed.

The proposals involve the formation of openings in the structural wall between 118-120 High Holborn and 2-6 Southampton Row at basement and ground floor level. These would be in a basement corridor and at the rear of the ground floor hotel lounge in 2-6 Southampton Row. The proposed works are in association with the change of use of the basement, ground floor and mezzanine of 118 - 120 High Holborn to a hotel use, which is occurring in association with the existing hotel at 2-6 Southampton Row (an associated planning application has also been submitted under reference 2023/1853/P).

The majority of works submitted under this listed building consent application (and the associated planning application) benefit from recent consent/permission under application references 2022/1386/P and 2022/1615/L.

It is only the internal works to form the new openings into 2-6 Southampton Row which differ from the previously granted listed building consent which are thus the subject of this application. All other works that were previously considered acceptable under 2022/1615/L are also acceptable as part of this application.

The new works involve the the creation of a 'secret' timber jib bookcase/door to permit internal access at ground floor between the reception area of the boutique hotel at 2-6 Southampton Row, and the adjacent former bank building at 118-120 High Holborn. The previously approved application included a door on the same internal elevation albeit this was located a few metres away closer to the rear of the room and behind the hotel's reception desk. The applicant has stated that location is not appropriate for the new door as the route to the extended hotel area in the adjacent building would then have a 'back of house' feel.

The proposed new door would have the appearance of a bookcase which would blend into the existing bookcase wall when closed. It has been designed to reference the history of the site as a bookshop, and as playful and creative solution to the need to provide connectivity between the two buildings, which facilitates bringing the former back at 118-120 back into active use. When shut the bookcase would not be visible.

- 2 The Council's Conservation Officer has been consulted on this application and has raised an objection, noting that the new opening would be a very prominent feature in this significant room, and would compromise its plan form through eroding the original plan and circulation layout arrangement of the building. It would also adversely affect the composition and rhythm of the space whilst also allowing the neighbouring (non-listed) building to read as part of the Grade II\* listed building, which would detract from its significance. Historic England raised no objections to the proposal.

The comments of the CO above are acknowledged. The siting of the new door more centrally within its host wall would increase the prominence of this opening within the room. However, the applicant has designed the opening sensitively and in a manner which will be clearly visible only when the door is open. The 'secret' bookcase design will thus respect the plan and circulation layout of the room when closed. The design would also bring an element of joy to the use of the room which is considered a positive.

This new doorway is understood to be a key feature of the applicant's proposed development. It is a necessary part of the works to refurbish the former bank building and bring it back into active use as part of an extended hotel, a use which would subsequently activate local streets and improve the local economy by making use of a vacant building. There are other heritage improvements to the host building which are part of the planning application, and thus which form an indirect part of these proposals, including the re-instatement of doors in the original design to 118-120 High Holborn) which would further improve the

character and appearance of the Kingsway Conservation Area through and may not take place unless this internal doorway is re-located.

The comments of the Conservation Officer have been fully considered and it is acknowledged that an element of heritage harm would occur in terms of a loss of composition, rhythm and legibility of the historic room layout and appearance. It is considered in this case that the lower end of less than substantial harm that would occur through the relocating of the door would be outweighed by the number of public benefits the development would provide, which would include improved access between the listed and non-listed buildings, bringing a vacant unit into active use, local economic and public realm improvements, and visual and heritage improvements to the wider Kingsway Conservation Area.

As such, on balance, it is considered that the listed building consent application can be supported.

Special regard has been attached to the desirability of preserving the listed building and its features of special architectural or historic interest, under s.16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act (ERR) 2013.

The planning history of the site has been taken into account when coming to this decision. No comments were received as part of the public consultation for this application.

As such, the proposed development is in general accordance with policy D2 of the London Borough of Camden Local Plan 2017. The proposed development also accords with the London Plan 2021 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

- 3 You are advised that any works of alterations or upgrading not included on the approved drawings which are required to satisfy Building Regulations or Fire Certification may require a further application for listed building consent.

In dealing with the application, the Council has sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way in accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021.

You can find advice about your rights of appeal at:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals/guidance/guidancecontent>

Yours faithfully



Daniel Pope  
Chief Planning Officer