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Design & Access Statement and Conservation Area Assessment For:

A Full Planning Application for the replacement of an existing commercial shopfront, including new glazed windows to Mary Terrace to a ground floor commercial unit and lowering of the internal floor to allow for level threshold to Camden High Street at:

97-99 Camden High Street, London, NW1 7JN

[97 Camden High Street]

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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement is in support of a Full Planning Application for the replacement of an existing commercial shopfront, including new glazed windows to Mary Terrace to a ground floor commercial unit and lowering of the internal floor to allow for level threshold to Camden High Street at 97-99 Camden High Street.

This statement also includes the assessment of the significance of the existing building and its context in the Camden Town Conservation Area. It describes our design intentions and proposal for the above-named project with regard to preserving and enhancing the character of the area with a sympathetic design proposal for the site.

The current proposal is based on a thorough investigation of the site, considering aspects like the immediate site context and prominent architectural forms and materials. It presents our design intentions and proposal with regard to restoring and enhancing the character of the existing building which sits within the Camden Town Conservation Area. This proposal is in accordance with the relevant Camden Local Plan which was adopted in 2017 and the Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal.

2. Site Description & Use

The proposal relates to the site located at 97-99 Camden High Street.

The existing building is a four-storey terrace building with retail use (Class E) at ground floor level and office accommodation (Class E) to the upper levels. Access to the retail unit is at ground floor along Camden High Street as well as through a side access via Mary Terrace, whereas the offices to the upper levels are accessible from Mary Terrace. The site has been vacant and dilapidated since June 2019. The existing shop is in poor condition and lacks level access to the retail shop.

This proposal only relates to the ground floor retail unit.

The existing area around the site comprises of properties of similar use mix, with retail uses at ground and office/ residential uses to the upper levels. Neighbouring properties, along Camden High Street feature cohesive frontages, with large rectangular glazed windows and doors. The upper floors feature brick finishes and casement windows.

Photographs of neighboring buildings along Camden High Street:



Figure 1: Street-scene view along Camden High Street facing towards the site.



Figure 2: Front facade of ground floor retail unit from Camden High Street

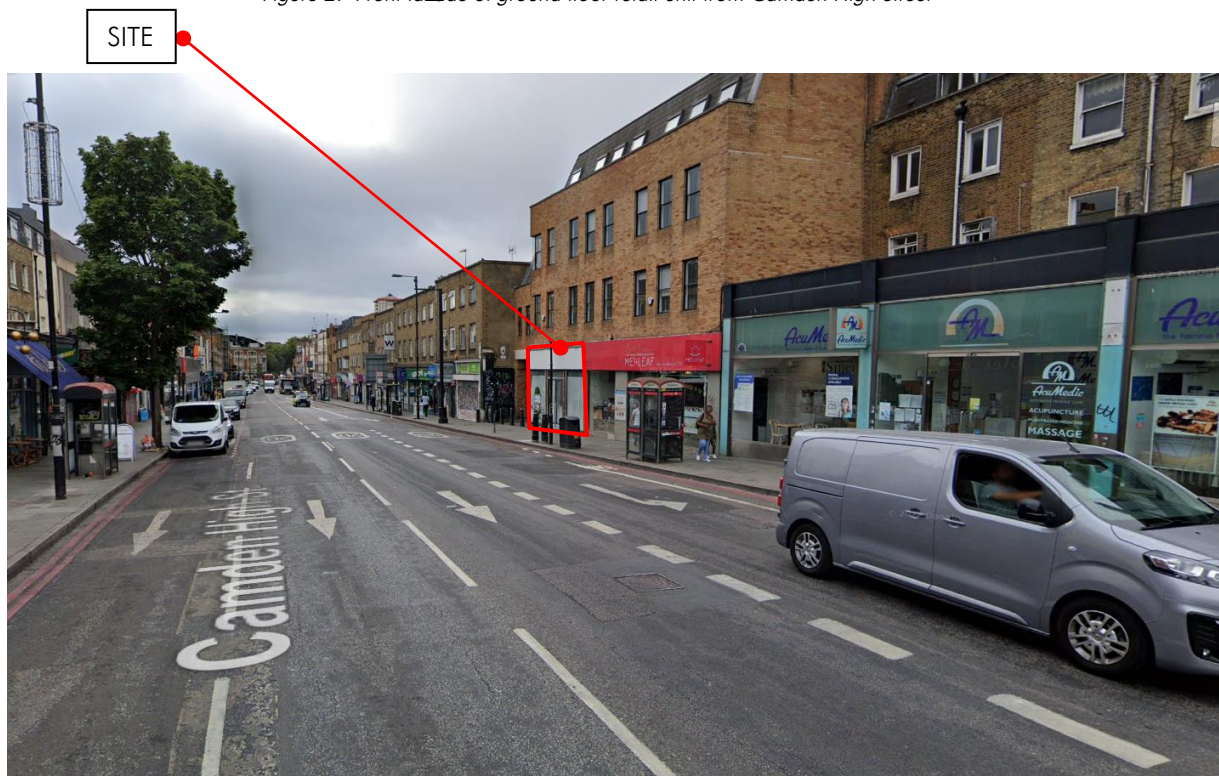


Figure 3: Street-scene view from Camden High Street showing the current retail/ commercial units adjacent to the site

As demonstrated in the photos above and the accompanying drawings in support of the application, the shopfront facade to the retail unit is in need of improvement and it is currently lacking the visual quality and architectural characteristics which are present in the area.

3. Conservation Area Character Analysis

The site falls within The Camden Town Conservation Area and it is not a statutory listed building or within the setting of any Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Summary of the special interest of the Camden Town Conservation Area:

To the east, the backs of the retail premises on Camden High Street are accessed by cobbled mews which today are still largely in commercial use. Beyond the commercial interests are areas of late 18th and early 19th century residential development while to the west of the High Street narrow passage-ways link through to quiet tree lined streets forming the residential sub area. These streets of stock brick and stucco terraces date from the early to mid 19th century and are more consistent in character, and are in marked contrast to the dynamic, busy commercial frontages (Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy).

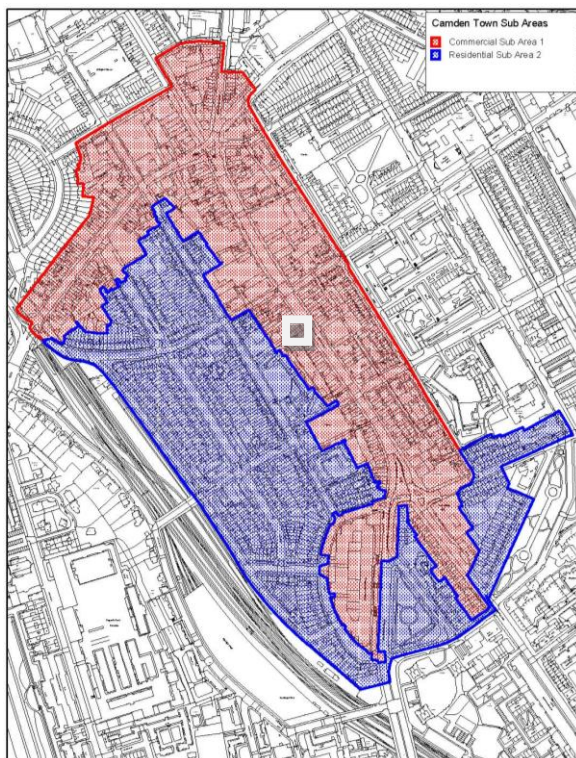


Figure 4: Camden Town Conservation Area map: Sub Areas 2006

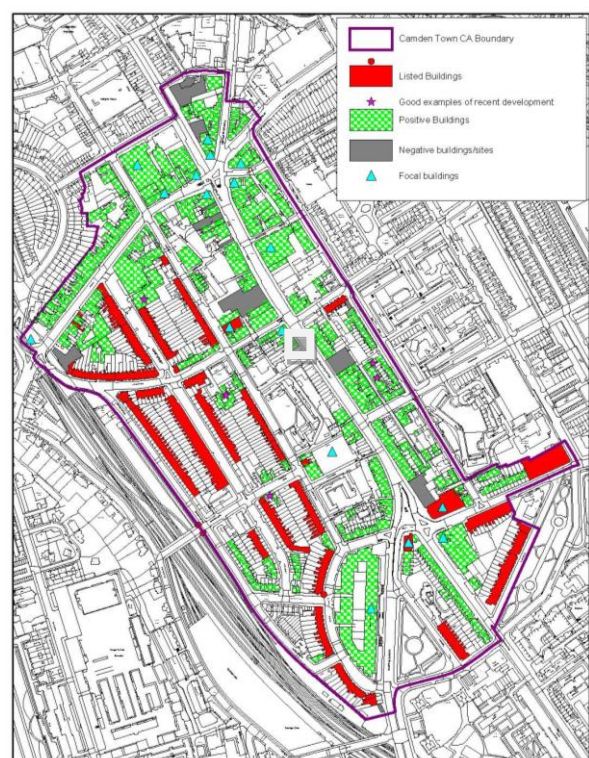


Figure 5: Camden Town Conservation Area Map: Townscape Appraisal 2006

Character Sub Areas; Sub area 1: Commercial

'Camden High Street, running roughly north-south down the centre of the Conservation Area, is architecturally diverse, with a lively mix of 19th and 20th century buildings. The skyline boasts a greater variety of roof forms and chimneystacks. There is a broad range of building materials, with a prevalence of brick, but including natural stone, stucco, polychromatic brickwork, concrete and instances of glazed tiles and faience' (Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy).

The proposal seeks to improve the character of the building with the introduction of level access from Camden High Street and new glazed facade in relation to the Conservation Area and enhance the ground floor commercial facade in-line with the following sections of the Conservation Area Audit:

Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, Appendices, Part 2 of the Management Strategy under new development and work to existing buildings within the Conservation Area for Shopfronts: 'The appearance of shopfronts are an important element in the character of the commercial part of the Camden Town Conservation Area [...].'

In response to point under the *Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, Appendices, Part 2 of the Management Strategy under new development and work to existing buildings within the Conservation Area for Shopfronts: '[...] The Council expects the quality and design of new shopfronts to respond sensitively to their historic setting.'*

We believe that this proposal will have a positive impact to the street scene by improving the existing facade while being sensitive to the historic setting of the conservation area.

Also, based on the **Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Character Appraisal, under Sub Area 1, Commercial:** *'[...] Alterations and extensions in the High Street have introduced over time some diversity to the original homogeneity of design. '[...] The replacement of original windows is widespread and some brick facades have been painted [...].'*

The proposal seeks to replace the existing front doors, which is on a higher level from the Camden High Street pavement level with one of similar style/character to match existing but also to match the pavement level for ease of access. The new doors will be secured doors and energy efficient. This will aim to unify the currently disjointed commercial facades and be in keeping with the character of the area.

Our proposal will also enhance the appearance of the existing fenestration on Mary Terrace by enlarging the existing small/ high level windows and creating a more harmonised look, in line with the proposed shop front and the overall existing building.

Relevant points in:

- *Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal under Summary of Special Interest: '[...] This retail and commercial area is powerfully urban in character with few openings between the continuous building lines and an absence of public open spaces and soft landscaping. [...] The buildings reflect to the diverse and changing architectural styles over the last two hundred years. [...]'*
- *Camden Development Policies Local Development Framework, under Improving and protecting Camden's environment, Issue 4h: 'Shopfronts help to define the character of our town centres and local shopping areas. If well-designed and maintained they can enhance the character of the local area, as well helping to create safe and attractive centres where people want to shop, work and live.'*
- *Unitary Development Plan, Part 7 Conservation and Heritage, under 4.75: '[...] The architectural characteristics of a conservation area derive from the detailing of existing buildings and the particular materials used in their construction. The Council will encourage the use of durable and preferably natural materials, traditional to the particular conservation area, in all development proposals. Where buildings within a conservation area are being altered for the provision of access for people with disabilities, the Council will balance this against the interests of conservation and preservation.'*

Regarding negative features and enhancements; the Conservation Area Audit lists the loss of architectural detail and the replacement of doors, windows and materials which do not reflect the character of the area.

Our proposal seeks to restore and enhance the established rhythm of the existing facade. With the introduction of high-quality materials which reflect their surroundings. Multipaned windows are also introduced in-line with the guide.

As such we believe that the principle of the proposed development will have a positive contribution to the area and it will allow for an existing designated commercial usage to be harmonised. It will form part of a contribution which will bring the property into a longer-term sustainable use.

4. Proposal

The proposal is for the replacement of the existing front entrance to the ground floor commercial unit at 97-99 Camden High Street and the existing small, high-level windows to the site on the ground floor commercial unit at Mary Terrace.

The scheme will see the replacement of the existing, shopfront and reinstatement of locally established materials and architectural forms to enhance the contribution of the building along the street scene.

This proposal has been well considered and is not detrimental to the street scene nor does it constitute over-development of the site. The scheme is sensitive and mindful to take into account all aspects of the conservation area such as site context and characteristics. In addition, the scheme will improve accessibility provisions within the site by lowering the floor and providing level access via Camden High Street.

5. Amount & Layout

The surrounding buildings consist a commercial shopfront on ground floor level with residential use to the upper floors.

The proposal has been designed to be well-proportioned and not detrimental to the neighbouring properties or constitute over-development of the site.

6. Scale & Appearance

The improvement of the existing façade with the introduction of high-quality materials and forms which reflect the adjoining properties and the existing forms to upper floor levels.

This would provide a more cohesive front façade making a positive contribution to its surroundings and the Conservation Area. No alterations are proposed to the upper levels.

Our proposed scheme introduces external additions and alterations to the front and side façade at ground floor as follows:

- The existing main entrance doors has been replaced with ones of similar character and style to match existing.

- The existing side access via Mary Terrace to be removed and replaced with larger fixed glazed windows.
- Introduction of level access from Camden High Street and new glazed facade. Please refer to drawing 1969-P03-00 for details on the new level access and glazed facade.
- The replacement of the existing small, high-level windows at Mary Terrace is poised to not only enhance the pathway's visual aesthetics but also bolster safety. This is due to the improved security and enhanced visibility resulting from the installation of larger openings leading to the commercial units.

In summary, the proposed external alterations have been designed to respect and preserve the original design and proportions of the building, including its architectural period and style. Subsequently the proposal will remain sympathetic to the character and appearance of the existing and surrounding buildings and will make a positive impact to the site.

7. Access

The property is located within close proximity to local amenities and is served well by public transport through nearby bus routes and underground stations. The site is within a short walk from Bond Street and Oxford Circus underground stations, and is also well served by local buses (the site has a PTAL rating of 6b).

Access to the commercial unit is retained at ground floor along Camden High Street and has been redesigned to meet current requirements and provide secure access. This new level access from Camden High Street will improve the building's accessibility provisions and ensure the commercial unit caters to all users.

8. Refuse and Recycling

The existing refuse/recycling collection for the property will be maintained as existing.

9. Summary

The proposed design has been well considered with the proposed alterations and improvements in accordance with the existing building and the character of the Conservation Area in terms of the scale, proportion, fenestration pattern and style, and the types of materials used. The scale and appearance will remain in keeping with the existing street and does not materially disturb the adjoining Conservation Area, although not part of it.

We consider this proposal to be suitable in relationship to its neighbouring properties and not detrimental to the street scene or over development of the site.

We trust the planning policies relevant to this proposal have been addressed and the application is in satisfactory order for you to support this proposal for approval.