

**Daykin Marshall Studio**

## 1/ Introduction

This supporting Heritage, Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Daykin Marshall Studio Architects on behalf of the applicants and owners - Peabody. It accompanies a Full Planning & Demolition in a Conservation Area Application to No.34 to No.42 Neal Street and No.30 Short's Gardens in WC2H. This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings produced by Daykin Marshall Studio and submitted alongside this application.

## 2/ Site Description & Designation

2.1/ The application property, Nottingham House, is an urban block with retail at ground floor and residential above. This planning application is related to the ground floor retail units of Nottingham House only.

2.2/ Nottingham House is bounded by Neal Street to the West, Short's Gardens to the North and Nottingham Court to the East. The properties in the streets surrounding are similarly characterised with retail at ground floor and residential above, however they differ in form. The properties opposite the site along Neal Street are terraced in form, differing from the urban block form of the existing Nottingham House.

2.3/ The property is not listed though is located within the Seven Dials Covent Garden conservation area, Sub-Area 1: Seven Dials. This report demonstrates the architect's and client's understanding of the heritage asset, and details how this knowledge has informed the design proposals.

2.4/ The site is within a Controlled Parking Zone. It has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) rating of 6B.

## 3/ Planning History & Policy

3.1/ There are several planning applications related to the site submitted between 1995 and 2014 for either advertisement consent or full planning applications.

3.2/ One of the full planning applications was in relation to the original conversion of Nottingham House ground floor residential units into retail units. Other full planning applications related to alterations to shopfronts. Based on applications submitted from 2010 onwards; consent was granted on 12th September 2014 (2014/5433/A) for advertisement and lighting. Consent was also granted on 21st December 2010 (2010/5694/P) for



Nottingham House from corner of Neal Street & Short's Gardens

Full Planning Permission for alterations to both facades of existing shop including bi-fold windows. The principle of installing new shopfronts and lighting is therefore well established in the area.

3.3/ No pre-application advice has been sought prior to this submission.

3.4/ The policies have been referred to in preparation of this application:  
 -NPPF policies relating to the vitality of town centres, economy, heritage assets and well-designed places.  
 -Camden Local Plan policy relating to shopfronts, heritage and accessibility  
 -Camden Design Planning Guidance on shopfronts  
 -Camden Conservation Area Statement for Seven Dials (Covent Garden)

Please also refer to the planning statement and drawings accompanying this application.



4/ The Existing Property

4.1/ The existing ground floor retail units are in a good state of repair although are in need of cosmetic upgrades to create a more holistic street facing retail scheme. The images opposite illustrate the inconsistency in signage positioning, glazing units, issues with vandalism, lack of lighting and lack of accessibility for wheelchair users.

4.2/ Ref image top left - Retail unit 1 to no.30 Short's Gardens.

4.3/ Ref image top right - Retail unit 1 towards corner where Short's Gardens and Neal Street meet.

4.4/ Ref image bottom left - Retail unit 1 at no.42 Neal Street.

4.5/ Ref image bottom right - Retail unit 2 at no.40 Neal Street.

5/ Proposed Works

5.1/ The clients wish to refurbish 6no. retail unit shopfronts to the ground floor of Nottingham House which faces onto Neal Street, Short's Gardens and Nottingham Court. Through the proposed works the client's aspiration is to maximise glazing area to help increase window display space and increase natural daylight into the internal spaces. It is envisaged these cosmetic upgrades could aid in maximising commercial viability by creating a more appealing retail experience for vendors and shoppers passing by.

5.2/ The proposal includes new signage, glazing and lighting scheme. The existing signage band will move upwards so it sits over the existing stone lintels, therefore increasing the available space for new taller glazing.

5.3/ A new coherent lighting scheme is proposed to each shopfront and entrance door to enhance consistency across the building and improve wayfinding for vendors, shoppers and postal workers.

5.3/ The brickwork facade is proposed to be retained as existing though chemically cleaned locally where vandalism has occurred. The stone cornice is proposed to be retained and chemically cleaned to retain the overall rhythm of shopfronts.

Please also refer to drawings accompanying this application and refer to the appearance and materials section.



Existing ground floor retail units to Nottingham House





6/ Local Character Appraisal

6.1/ The Seven Dials (Covent Garden) Conservation Area was designated on the 26th November 1971. *“This Conservation Area has the imprint of a unique legacy. Vibrant economic activity combined with conservation of the built heritage has created a place that is important to Camden and to London”. In 1973, “200 buildings were listed in the area and Seven Dials was given ‘Outstanding Status’ by the Secretary of State.”*

6.2/ The application site faces onto Short’s Gardens, Nottingham Court and Neal Street. The site sits within the Seven Dials conservation area sub-area one. Neal street is distinctive due to it’s colourful shopfronts and well-maintained historic terraces. Many of the properties along Neal Street retain the original 17th century plan form but had their facades re-constructed. The Conservation Area Statement notes, *“Many 19th century timber shopfronts can still be found along the street. Typically these shopfronts display classical proportions with pilasters supporting entablature and a projecting cornice. Generally shops have retained the single property width resulting in numerous small shops with a lively combination of shopfronts both modern and traditional”.*

6.3/ The site within Nottingham House, was designed by Peabody in 1925 and is neo-Georgian in style. It was originally built as a block of flats with a dark blue/purple brick facade, red brick quoining and white painted timber framed sash windows. It was restored and converted in 1997/8 into a mixed use development creating shops at ground floor, an additional floor for flats and a new Mission Hall.

6.4/ Within the conservation area appraisal it states that the Nottingham House development improved the street scene. The restoration and conversion works received a commendation by the Civic Trust Awards in the year 2000. Their statement is as follows: *“This block of flats in Covent Garden has been restored, and transformed by replacing the ground level flats with shops. The housing space lost by this has been compensated for by adding a floor to the flat roof. This extra floor at the top is set back under a curved roof profile which minimises the impact from the street and provides charming terraces for residents. At the ground level, the new shops enliven the appearance of a previously bland building and bring vitality to the street”.*

6.5/ The existing features to Nottingham House shopfronts are more modern in their design in comparison with the shopfronts nearby. The continuous stone cornice detailing ties the shopfronts and overall building together and reinforces the urban block form of the building. The dark brick facade with red brick quoining detail around the openings are a distinctive feature of Nottingham House and relate to the Grade II Listed properties along Neal Street. (See image top right). These features are to remain untouched throughout the works.



Contemporary shopfront design



Red brick quoining detail to Grade II Listed property



19th Century timber panelling to Neal Street shopfronts



Taller expanse of glazing at local retail units

Neal Street Peabody Shopfronts

Daykin Marshall Studio



6.6/ The 1997/8 conversion created the 6no. shopfronts along Neal Street and Short's Gardens and responded more suitably to its context. However, the previous use as residential means the height available for glazing is restricted and the positioning of the signage only further reduces this. Additionally, the installation of stonework stallriser and columns has attracted vandalism.

6.7/ Additionally, previous adhoc amendments to each shopfront over time has resulted in an inconsistent street facing presence at Nottingham House. The positioning of signage boards, specification of glazing units and entrance doors, intermittent use of lighting and opportunistic graffiti artwork to the stall risers has attributed to the haphazard and tired looking nature of the existing shopfronts. Therefore, impacting on the commercial viability of the retail spaces.

6.8/ The proposed changes, although minor, aim to improve the commercial viability and street facing presence to Nottingham House retail units. The shopfronts will be visible from Neal Street, Short's Gardens and Nottingham Court and have been designed to respect and enhance the setting of the Conservation Area and the existing features of the building.

Please see overleaf for proposed changes.

Continuous stonework cornicing

Graffiti to facade



Stonework lintel decoration restricts height of glazing and position of sign

Red brick quoining detail



Existing images of shopfronts to Short's Gardens and Neal Street



7/ Layout & Scale

7.1/ There are no proposed extensions to the existing property.

7.2/ Existing opening widths are to be retained as existing, although the height of glazing is to be proposed to increase.

8/ Car Parking, Cycle Storage & Refuse Storage

8.1/ There are no changes proposed to car parking, cycle storage or refuse storage.

9/ Accessibility

9.1/ Only one of six existing retail units has the means to provide wheelchair accessibility into their shop. The other retail units (along Neal Street) currently have a step up from external ground level therefore not providing wheelchair accessibility.

9.2/ It is proposed to rectify this shortfall through the proposed works by installing external threshold ramps to the Neal Street shopfronts satisfying Camden policy requirements.

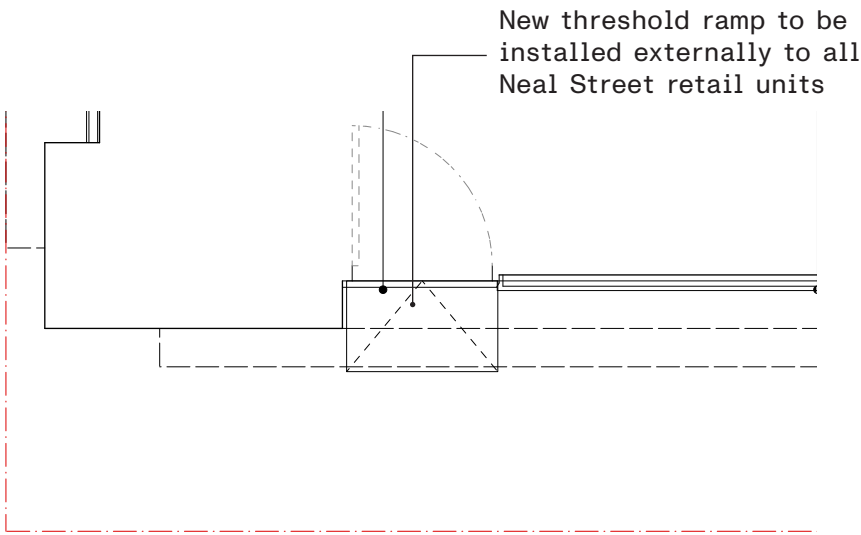
9.3/ A requirement within Camden’s Design Planning Guidance is for the applicant to consider buildings in terms of accessibility, among eight other requirements.

Within Camden’s Local Plan, ‘Policy C6 Access For All’, states that “the council will seek to promote fair access and remove barriers that prevent everyone from accessing facilities and opportunities.”

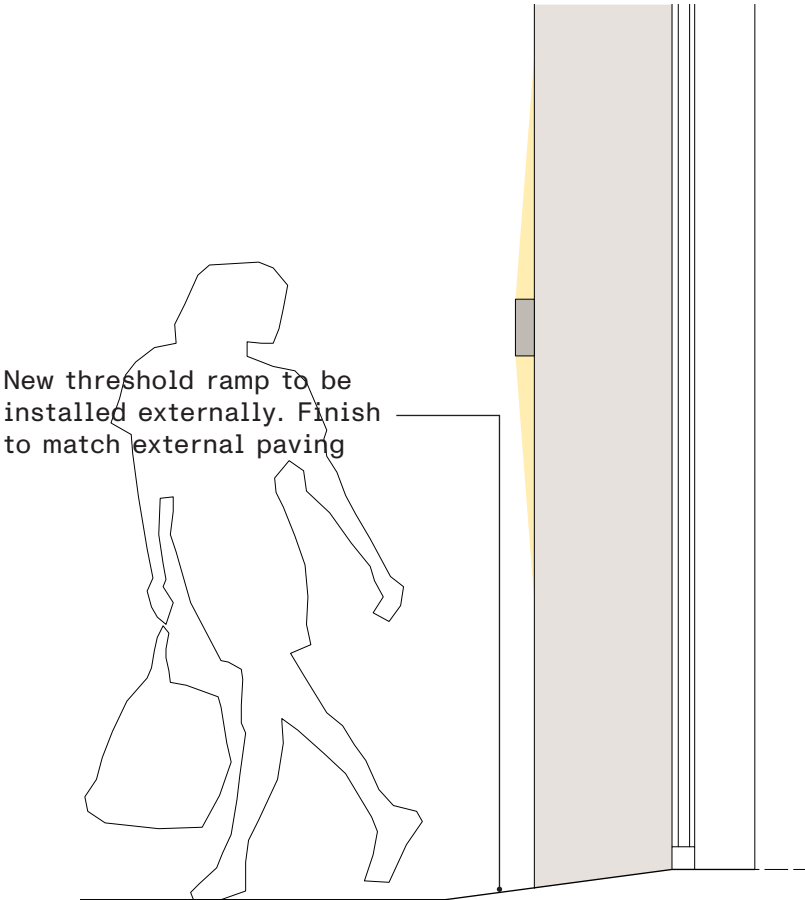
9.4/ The proposed ramps are to be formed with new paving to match the existing paving along Neal Street.



Image of threshold ramp in use



Extract of proposed plan showing position of ramp in doorway  
Scale 1:50



Section detail showing threshold ramp  
NTS

10/ Appearance & Design

10.1/ The existing building has distinctive stonework and red brick detailing to the facade. These features are to be retained through the works to respect the rhythm of the shopfronts at Nottingham House, while reinforcing the continuity of the stonework cornicing.

10.2/ The positioning of the existing signage and the previous use as residential units means it has restricted the available height for glazing resulting in an uninviting retail experience. The proposal seeks to lift the signage band so it sits in the zone of the stonework lintel to maximise on available glazing area. See drawings opposite for further detail.

10.3/ The proposed greater area of glazing increases window display space, increases natural light to the internal shop, which in turn could have a positive affect on commercial viability and appeal more favourably to potential vendors and shoppers passing by.

10.4/ New light fittings to the shopfronts have been designed and located to be discrete and simple. Please see overleaf for further details.

10.5/ Aluminium cladding to the existing stonework pillar helps the shopfront facade read as one and reduces the maintenance requirements.

11/ Materials

11.1/ The existing building is steel framed with a dark blue/purple brick facade and metal standing seam roof covering. There is red brick quoining detailing around existing openings and red brick header coursing to the upper floor white painted timber framed sash windows. There is stonework detailing in the form of cornicing, lintels and stall risers to each shopfront on the ground floor.

11.2/ Existing red brick quoining around openings and dark blue/purple brick to the facade is to be retained throughout the works to respect the rhythm of the existing shopfronts. This is to be chemically cleaned locally. The stonework cornicing is also to be retained and chemically cleaned.

11.3/ New aluminium framed glazing is proposed to replace the existing timber framed shopfronts. The new glazing will be thermally broken and will be a more robust and durable replacement. The frames will be polyester powder coated and charcoal grey in colour.

11.4/ The existing stone columns will be clad in aluminium and coloured to match the windows.

11.5/ The new signage band will also be formed from aluminium. The colour and design details will be submitted via a separate application.

Neal Street Peabody Shopfronts



Extract of existing elevation to Neal Street



Extract of proposed elevation to Neal Street



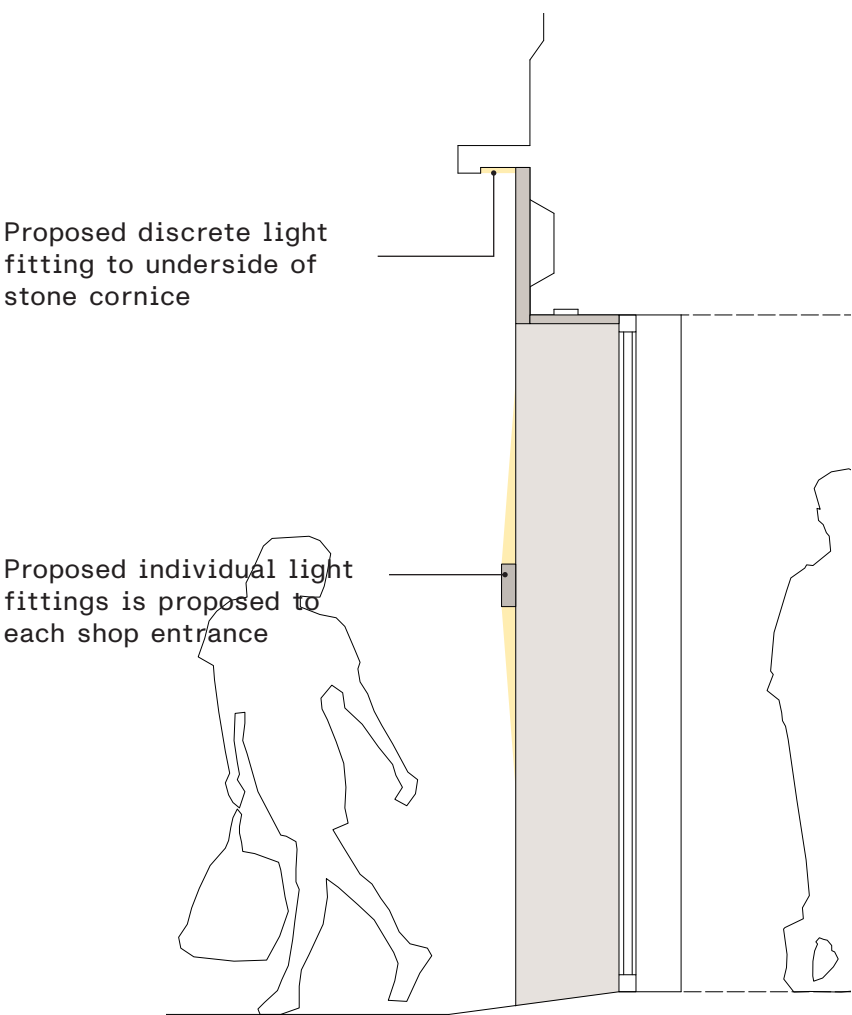
12/ Lighting

12.1/ There are 2no. shopfronts with existing light fittings fixed visibly to the lintel zone and point downwards, part lighting the signage and part lighting the route into the shop. See images bottom right and bottom left.

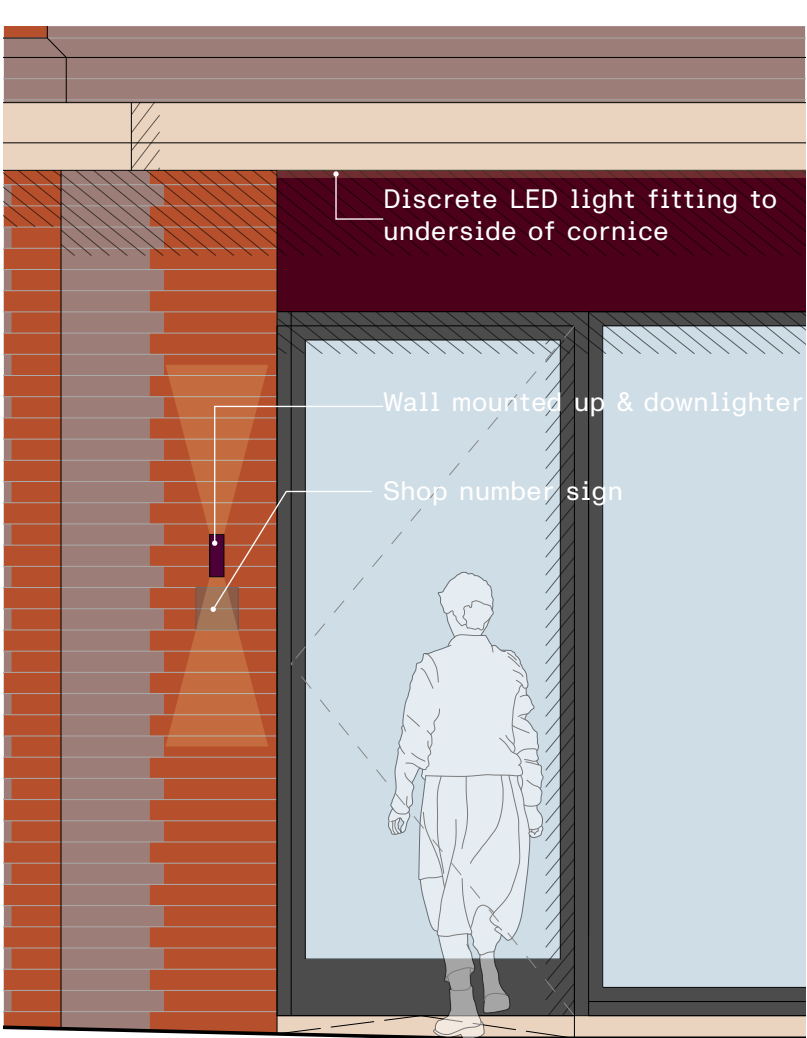
12.2/ It is proposed to remove these existing light fittings and make good. Then replace with a discrete LED light fitting that sits to the underside of the existing stonework corncicing. The proposed light fittings will be sized to fit the length of each shopfront

12.3/ Additional up and downlighters are proposed to be mounted to the front entrance of each shop with a new shop number below to improve wayfinding for vendors, pedestrians and postal workers.

12.4/ The holistic lighting scheme for the building will make an improvement for safety and wayfinding and reinforce the street facing presence of Nottingham House.



Section through shopfront



Elevation of shopfront with proposed light fittings



Images of existing external light fittings over two shopfronts



Daykin Marshall Studio

Neal Street Peabody Shopfronts



## 13/ Sustainability

13.1/ Daykin Marshall Studio are committed to design that reduces negative effects on the environment in construction, in use and at the end of the lifespan of the building.

13.2/ The extent of the proposal is limited to the glazing and materials applied to the shopfront facade. Through specification of the glazing items, DMS has adopted a 'fabric first' approach to ensure the first step to improving thermal efficiency is adopted. The thermally broken aluminium frames will help to improve overall thermal efficiency of the retail space and in turn reduce the need for space heating and overall carbon emissions.

13.3/ The aluminium material to the frames is more robust and durable which improves the longevity and maintenance of the units, making it more suitable for the high street footfall.

13.4/ Similarly, the aluminium to the signage band has been specified based upon its longevity, adaptability and potential for recycling.

## 14/ Neighbouring Amenity

14.1/ The works to the application site do not materially affect overlooking, overshadowing or any rights of light to neighbouring property.

## 15/ Other relevant reports or information

15.1/ Please read this document alongside the submitted drawings and planning statement.

## 16/ Compliance with Building Regulations

16.1/ The proposals have been designed to be compliant with all relevant current Building Regulations to the level required at RIBA Stage 3. I.e. features have been incorporated and provisions made so that full compliance can be demonstrated during RIBA Stage 4 - Technical Design.

## 17/ Summary

17.1/ The design maintains the existing character and identity of Nottingham House by retaining the brickwork detailing and continuity of stonework cornicing running the length of the building.

17.2/ The red brick quoining and dark blue/purple brickwork remains untouched through the works, ensuring the overall rhythm and extent of the shopfronts is retained.

17.3/ Maximising the glazing by repositioning the signage and removing the stall riser make a positive improvement to the shopfronts, creating a more inviting and light retail space with increased area for window display while also helping to reduce the opportunity for vandalism.

17.4/ New external threshold ramps to each shop improves wheelchair accessibility which responds to the local planning policy.

17.5/ The discrete, simple and holistic lighting scheme will help improve wayfinding and safety.

17.6/ Overall the alterations proposed make a positive improvement to the shopfronts at Nottingham House, reinforcing its street presence and in turn preserving and enhancing the setting of the Seven Dials conservation area.



