

architecture : planning

Upp

**Full-Planning and Listed Building Consent for the
reinstatement of the roof of The Clocktower, together
with external improvements to the tower**

The Clocktower, 49 Heath Street London NW3 6UD



1. Introduction

- 1.1 UPP Architects + Town Planners have been instructed by the applicant to apply for full planning permission and listed building consent at The Clocktower, 49 Heath Street, London, NW3 6UD. The application seeks planning permission and listed building consent for the reinstatement of the roof of The Clocktower together with external improvements to the tower.
- 1.2 This document provides details of the proposed scheme and will demonstrate that proposal is in accordance with planning policy and guidance at national, regional and local levels.

2. The Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The existing site, comprises a 4-storey storey corner property located in the heart of Hampstead at the junction of Heath Street and Holly Hill, immediately opposite Hampstead Station. The building is in use for commercial purposes on the ground floor with residential units located on the upper floors. The most notable feature of the building is the clocktower on the front façade, although it is evident that its roof is missing.
- 2.2 The application site is Grade II listed which covers the entire building. Historically, the building was used as a fire station until 1915 before being used for commercial purposes. Incidentally the watch tower was also a water tower and was originally one of the first buildings for London's new horse-drawn fire brigade to have one (taken from the listing). The site is also located within the Hampstead Conservation Area.
- 2.3 The site is located within the secondary retail frontage of the Hampstead Town Centre. There are no other planning designations impacting the property. The surrounding area is mixed in character with commercial and residential uses found within the wider area.
- 2.4 The site is located in a highly accessible area and has a PTAL rating of 4 which is considered 'good' access to public transport. The site is located approximately 20m from Hampstead underground station. Furthermore, there are several bus stops located within a close radius to the application site on Heath Street and Hampstead High Street providing access across London.



3. Planning Designations

- The site is located within the London Borough of Camden.
- The site is Grade II Listed
- The site is located within the Hampstead Conservation Area which is also protected by an Article 4 Direction.
- The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which is considered to have a low risk of flooding from rivers and seas.

4. Relevant Planning History

4.1 The relevant planning history for the site is as follows:

- 2019/1387/L - Conversion of loft to habitable space. Replacement of existing rooflight and insertion of 1x new rooflight. Internal alterations. Approved (25/04/2019)
- 2019/0104/P - Conversion of loft to habitable space. Replacement of existing rooflight and insertion of 1x new rooflight. Approved (24/05/2019).
- 9370058 - The erection of a spiral staircase overhanging the central courtyard from the second floor flat to the roof garden above. Approved (11/06/1993)
- 9300332 - The erection of a spiral staircase overhanging the central courtyard from the second floor flat to the roof roof garden above. Approved (11/06/1992)

5. Planning Policy

5.1 The Local Development Framework is as follows:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- London Plan (2021)
- Camden Local Plan (2017)



National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) holds an emphasis on creating sustainable development. There are three aspects which comprise sustainable development; these are the economic role, the social role and the environmental role. In terms of the economic aspect land has to be made available where there is a demand to support growth; the environmental role involves the protection of the natural, built and historic environment; and the social role is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations.
- 5.3 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF discusses the historic environment and notes that “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”
- 5.4 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that “where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”
- 5.5 Also of note is paragraph 206 which considers that “Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.”

The London Plan (2021)

- 5.6 The new London Plan has been formally adopted by the Mayor of London. The relevant planning policies are:
- 5.7 Policy GG2 – Making the Best Use of Land – “*To create successful sustainable mixed-use places that make the best use of land, those involved in planning and development must:*



- A. *enable the development of brownfield land, particularly in Opportunity Areas, on surplus public sector land, and sites within and on the edge of town centres, as well as utilising small sites*
- B. *prioritise sites which are well-connected by existing or planned public transport*
- C. *proactively explore the potential to intensify the use of land to support additional homes and workspaces, promoting higher density development, particularly in locations that are well-connected to jobs, services, infrastructure and amenities by public transport, walking and cycling*
- D. *applying a design-led approach to determine the optimum development capacity of sites*
- E. *understand what is valued about existing places and use this as a catalyst for growth, renewal, and place-making, strengthening London's distinct and varied character*
- F. *protect and enhance London's open spaces, including the Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, designated nature conservation sites and local spaces, and promote the creation of new green infrastructure and urban greening, including aiming to secure net biodiversity gains where possible*
- G. *plan for good local walking, cycling and public transport connections to support a strategic target of 80 per cent of all journeys using sustainable travel, enabling car-free lifestyles that allow an efficient."*

5.8 Policy HC1 – Heritage conservation and growth– *“Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets’ significance and appreciation within their surroundings.”*

Camden Local Plan (2017)

5.9 Policy A1 Managing the Impact of Development – *“The Council will seek to protect the quality of life of occupiers and neighbours. We will grant permission for development unless this causes unacceptable harm to amenity.”*

5.10 Policy D1 Design – *“The Council will seek to secure high quality design in development. The Council will require that development:*

- a. *respects local context and character;*



- b. preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage;*
- c. is sustainable in design and construction, incorporating best practice in resource management and climate change mitigation and adaptation;*
- d. is of sustainable and durable construction and adaptable to different activities and land uses;*
- e. comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character;*
- f. integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces, improving movement through the site and wider area with direct, accessible and easily recognisable routes and contributes positively to the street frontage;*
- g. is inclusive and accessible for all;*
- h. promotes health;*
- i. is secure and designed to minimise crime and antisocial behaviour;*
- j. responds to natural features and preserves gardens and other open space;*
- k. incorporates high quality landscape design (including public art, where appropriate) and maximises opportunities for greening for example through planting of trees and other soft landscaping,*
- l. incorporates outdoor amenity space;*
- m. preserves strategic and local views;*
- n. for housing, provides a high standard of accommodation; and*
- o. carefully integrates building services equipment.*

The Council will resist development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.”

5.11 Policy D2 Heritage – *“Designed heritage assets include conservation areas and listed buildings. The Council will not permit the loss of or substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, including conservation areas and Listed Buildings, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site;*
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;*
- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use. The Council will not permit development that results in harm that is less than substantial to the*



significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

Conservation areas are designated heritage assets and this section should be read in conjunction with the section above headed 'designated heritage assets'. In order to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas, the Council will take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management strategies when assessing applications within conservation areas."

6. Policy Considerations

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The principle of development is established through the fact that the relevant part of the application site is in use as flats and this use will not change a result of the proposal.
- 6.2 The development is seeking planning permission and listed building consent for historical enhancements to the property to reinstate features that have historically been lost. It is thought that the look-out tower was subsequently dismantled at some point between 1927 and 1965. As the proposal is seeking consent for an historical reinstatement of a previously existing feature attached to a Grade II listed building, it is not anticipated that the principle of development will be contested in this instance.

Design

- 6.3 The proposal seeks to accurately reinstate the roof of The Clocktower to reflect the original roof of the building as it was originally created. The applicant has been able to achieve this through a detailed analysis of historic photos for the site which showed how the roof of the clocktower originally looked.
- 6.4 The plans will not deviate in any way from its historical accuracy in terms of design or materials. It is proposed that a new roof access hatch will be created in the existing roof to allow the topmost element to be used as a lookout tower, akin to its historic purpose. The new roof will be



supported by timber columns on all four corners of the property and a new flag staff will be installed. A new weather vane will be situated at the top of the roof to match the original vane.

- 6.5 In terms of materials, it is proposed that historically sensitive materials will be used. As mentioned above, the new columns will be constructed out of timber, whilst the roof tiles will be reclaimed clay tiles to accurately match the existing ones. The lead roof finial will feature a decorative wrought iron weather vane and lightning arrestor above. It is also worth noting that as part of this restoration project, the applicant is proposing to repoint the brickwork where inappropriate refurbishments have historically taken place and replace them with a Dorking grey stone lime to two of sharp clean pit sand lime-mortar mix which is more historically accurate in this location.

Heritage

- 6.6 The application proposal is unique in so far as it involves historic restoration and reinstatement to an element of the building which was historically in existence until it was removed during an unspecified time between 1927 and 1965.
- 6.7 No internal changes are proposed to the property as the original roof hatch is still in existence.
- 6.8 It is proposed that the new roof over The Clocktower will accurately match the pre-existing roof in terms of design, style, height and materials. A detailed study of historic photographs dating back to when the Clocktower was in existence has helped to provide historic accuracy and ensure that details are replicated to an exacting standard.
- 6.9 The historic restoration also provides the opportunity to repair any historically insensitive work which has been carried out as reparation works over the years, for example poor quality repointing, to be replaced with more historically sensitive materials to improve the overall appearance of the tower and maintain its historic integrity.
- 6.10 It is considered that the significance of the building principally derives from its external elevations, historic use and its contribution to the character and appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area. It is considered that the harm caused to this Grade II listed building would be negligible and the proposed development, including the restoration and reinstatement of the historic roof, is classified as preservation and enhancement to rectify the historic changes and ensure that the building continues to closely resemble its original built form.
- 6.11 Whilst it is not considered that there is any harm identified by the proposal, the public benefits including the reinstatement of the historically accurate roof which is an iconic feature dominating the Hampstead landscape at an integral junction within the Hampstead community. As such, from



a heritage perspective, the proposal is thought to be in accordance with the NPPF, the London Plan and local plan policies.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.12 As part of any planning application, it is important to ensure development proposals would not have an adverse impact on neighbouring amenity with regards to light, outlook or increased sense of enclosure.
- 6.13 The proposal will add a new roof to the existing tower which will result in additional height and built form. It is noted that the clocktower is higher than any of the surrounding neighbouring properties as it sits above the existing roof level. Furthermore, given the size of the roof and the distance from neighbouring properties, it is not considered that the proposal is likely to have an adverse impact on them.
- 6.14 The only potential impact that could arise is in terms of overlooking from the watchtower. However, given the size of the area and the limited access there is only space for one person at a time to access the tower which would mean it could not be used for social events. However, it is also noted that the views will be oriented either towards Holly Hill, Heath Street or Hampstead High Street and does not directly face onto any neighbouring habitable room windows. As such, it is not anticipated that any overlooking would arise as a result of this proposal. Furthermore, it is considered that the benefits of the historic restoration/reinstatement outweigh any potential harm.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 To conclude, it has been demonstrated that the proposal would be compliant with national, regional and local planning policies. The historic use of the property will not change as the proposal only relates to external alterations to the property.
- 7.2 With regards to heritage, it has been identified that there was historically a roof to The Clocktower which was removed between 1927 and 1965 and has been corroborated on historic photos. It is



considered that the benefits of restoring and reinstating the historic roof Grade II listed building outweigh any potential harm. Ultimately, the proposal will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Grade II listed building and wider conservation area. It has also been demonstrated that neighbouring amenity will not be compromised as a result of this proposal.