



# PLANNING BY DESIGN

FROM CONCEPT TO COMPLETION

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**Planning, Design and Access Statement**

**37 Neal Street, Camden, London WC2H**

**Internal and External alterations, including to shop front, and advertisement signage. External lighting and non-illuminated signage**

**On Behalf of Studio Exp for Barbour**

Drafted by **Planning by Design**

## **Introduction**

Planning By Design (the agent) has been instructed to act on behalf of Studio Exp for Barbour (the applicant) to submit a planning application and application for Listed Building Consent to Camden Council (the Planning Authority) for the proposed “Internal and external alterations, including to shop front, and advertisement signage. External lighting and non-illuminated signage” at 37 Neal Street, Camden, London (the site). In support of this application the following Planning, Design and Access Statement will demonstrate the suitability of this site for this proposal, and evaluate its accordance with national and local planning policies. This is accompanied by a separate Heritage Statement which addresses any impact on the Grade II Listed Heritage Asset, and the wider Seven Dials Conservation Area.

## **Site Location**

37 and 37a Neal Street form the end of a terrace row of Georgian townhouses, with ground floor and basement uses within Class E, and a number with residential (Class C3) flats above. Neal Street is a partially pedestrianised block-paved narrow street, where many high-end brands occupy leases on the ground floor and basement for retail sales. The site sits within Seven Dials Conservation Area.

There is an Article 4 Direction (October 2016) that removes rights granted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (“the Order”) as amended. Specifically, the rights removed relate to permitted development, for the creation of residential basements. 37 and 37a Neal Street sit on the corner of and Neal Street. Just across the paved road in both directions a further Article 4 Direction (February 2023) is in operation, for the removal of Permitted Development Rights which provide for the conversion of retail and office units (Class E) to residential (Use Class C3) through the prior approval application process.

The retail section of the London Borough of Camden encompasses the site, and stretches from the theatre district in the southeast, to the British Museum in the northwest and through Covent Garden to the south. This is a significant area for retail, where the council are keen to utilise policy to retain and focus active front uses at ground floor. Neal Street is an attractive street. The site is within the Central London Area – Local Frontages, CLA Primary frontages. This designation, in combination with the requirement for full planning consent required from Camden Council to change from retail in the neighbouring streets, demonstrates that the focus of the area is for the strict retention of Class E uses.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan (not to scale, see planning drawings and designs)

## **Proposed Development**

The application proposal is for a suite of changes to facilitate the opening of a new Barbour clothing retail store.

### **Front Elevation**

There are a number of minor changes to the front elevation, primarily to align the storefront with Barbour branding. Studio Exp have worked with their clients Barbour to produce a scheme that utilises muted colours with painted ironworks and preserves the period “factory” feel. The shopfront will be prepared for redecoration in Farrow and Ball “Railings” in eggshell finish. The brass door furniture will be retained. The existing glazing will be retained. The step will be painted black. The signage on the fascia will be the Barbour name as a logo, in stove enamelled laser cut 8mm metal plate. This will sit slightly proud of the existing refurbished and repainted backboard, held with 50mm anthracite-coloured pins. Beneath the Barbour logo the words “ESTABLISHED 1894” will be mounted in 4mm thick laser cut brass lettering and numbers, pinned off the fascia by 30mm. There will be a new hanging, non-illuminated sign above the shop fascia, replacing the previous shop sign. This links back to the heritage of the building, reutilising the existing wrought iron hanger and chains, and being painted in Farrow and Ball “Railings” in eggshell finish. The Barbour lettering will be flat printed in brass coloured paint. There will be brass fixings and protective edge trim, echoing the existing brass door furniture that is being refurbished and retained.

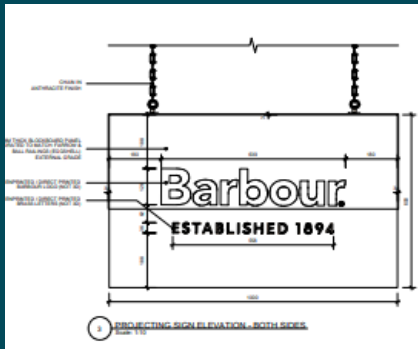


Figure 1: Proposed projecting hanging sign

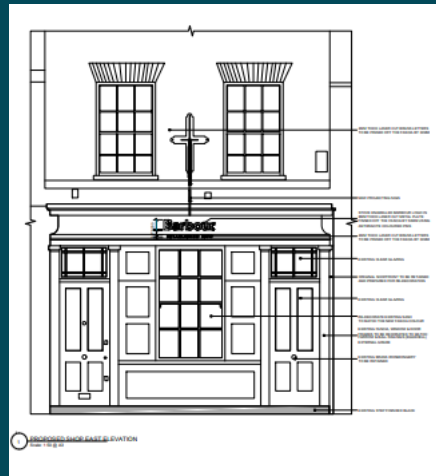


Figure 2: Existing left and Proposed right elevations (not to scale, see planning drawings and designs)

### Internal Changes

The interior of the retail unit is to be refurbished and designed in a heritage branding style for Barbour. The interior has seen many changes over the years, as different leaseholders have adapted and decorated it to suit their needs. Studio Exp have assessed the structure and existing interior to design a sympathetic scheme that respects the building, restores period style features, and determines the space to maximise the leaseholders retail needs. All of the works proposed are specifically designed to ensure that, once no longer required for the leaseholder's use, can be returned if desired to the previous state.

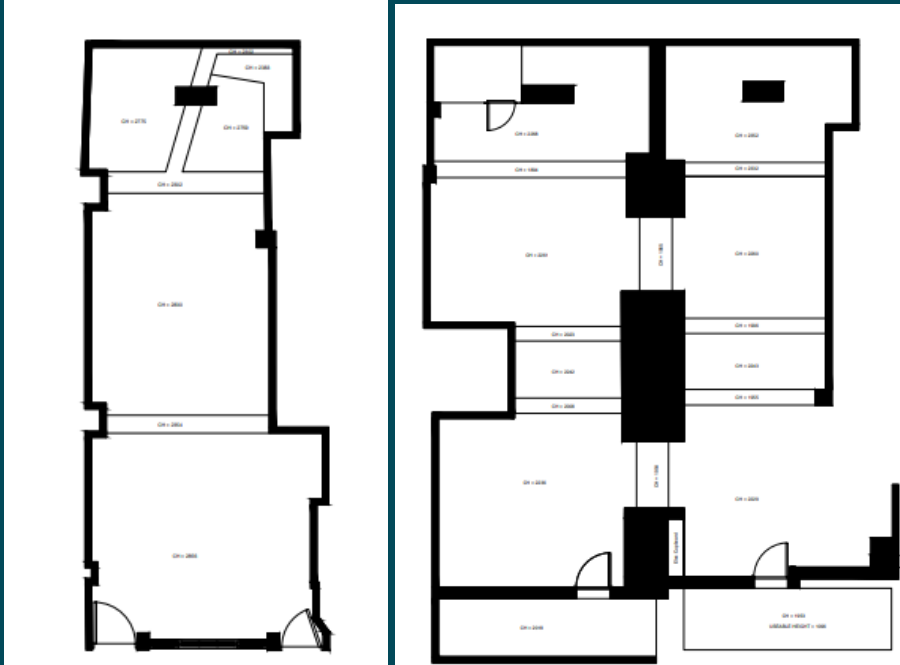


Figure 3: Existing ground floor (left) and existing basement (right) layout.

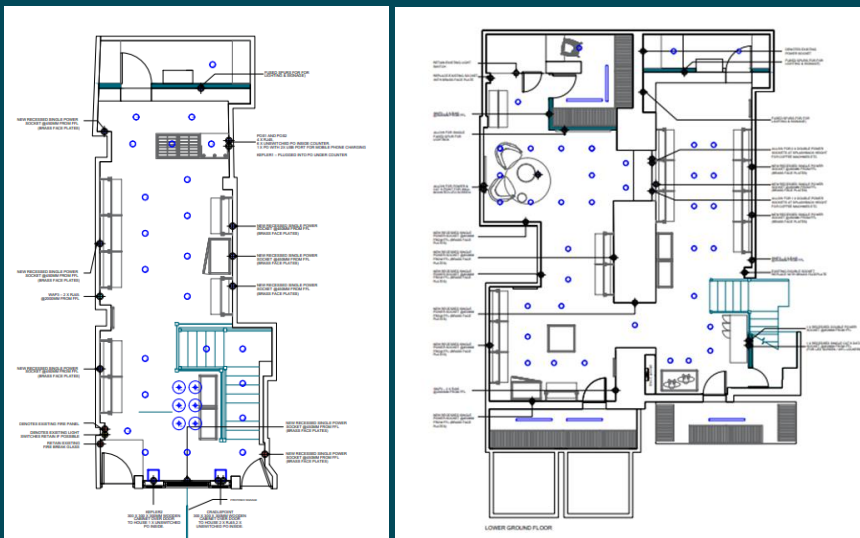


Figure 4: Proposed ground floor (left) and proposed basement (right) layout – showing electrical installation.

The interior is to be fitted-out in a heritage style for Barbour. This concept reflects the longevity of the brand as well as this historic building. The designers have worked with Barbour with the goal of:

*“Acknowledging our deep roots in manufacturing and craftsmanship. Creating purposeful design that is hardwearing and made to last. Industrial in nature but refined throughout time.”*

This is eminently appropriate for this listed building in the conservation area setting. The colours chosen are traditional and muted, complemented by contrast with the limewash white painted walls, and rich traditional wood tones.

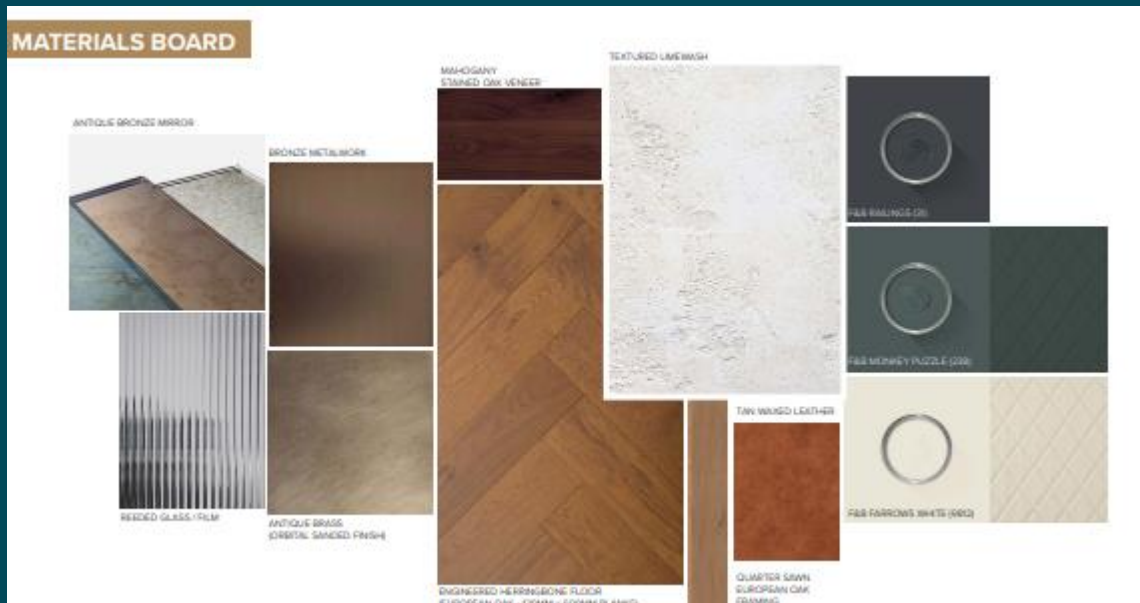


Figure 5: Materials board

The proposed herringbone timber flooring is proposed to be installed with glue only, to facilitate removal in the future if desired. Shop cabinets and display units are to be primarily affixed to this flooring to limit the invasive work on the fabric of the building.



Figure 6: Proposed ground floor shop fit.



Figure 7: Proposed ground floor shop fit.

The heritage concept continues into the basement.



Figure 8: Proposed basement shop fit.



Figure 9: Proposed basement shop fit.



## Planning History

### Planning Policy and Assessment

The following policy and guidance documents are recognized as primary considerations for the decision relating to this application:

- National Planning Policy Framework.
- National Planning Practice Guidance.
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended)
- National Planning Practice Guidance –Enhancing and Conserving the Historic Environment (Revised July 2019)
- Historic England’s Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 “Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment”
- Historic England’s Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 “The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition)”
- The London Plan 2021
- Camden Council Local Plan

The following section will evaluate the proposals in accordance with the relevant policies and supplementary design guidance of the Council to demonstrate why the proposal should be acceptable in principle and in strict accordance with the Councils development criteria.

The main planning considerations in this case are: ·

- the impact on the heritage significance of the Grade II listed building
- the impact on the Conservation Area
- the compliance in terms of the local plan and supporting documents
- the appropriateness of the proposed changes in the area, considering its planning designations and restrictions

### National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)

#### Ensuring High Quality and Sustainable Design

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF explains that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation, and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of



present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

- an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built, and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimizing waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

**Analysis:** *The proposal will positively contribute to all three developmental objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework. Economically, the new high-end retail use at this location complements the wider retail area and provides employment and investment in Neal Street. From a social perspective, the proposal will provide a new retail business in this previously vacant unit. The impact of vacant shop fronts, which can lead to dilapidation, further vacancies and lower levels of investment have been shown to have a direct impact on the social wellbeing of communities. The proposal will result in no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area nor the amenity being entirely appropriate for this location. From an environmental perspective Studio Exp have an excellent ethos for sustainability and a strong understanding of the potential impacts. Barbour, as leaseholders, have ethics and sustainability at the core of their brand and this is rolled out across their stores, ensuring waste is dealt with appropriately, and that their clothing is long lasting, which reduces waste.*

### **Well-designed Places**

Section 12 of the NPPF relates to achieving Well-designed Places which states that “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”

Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development
- b) are visually attractive because of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change
- d) are establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places to work and visit.

**Analysis:** *The proposal will lead to the creation of a useful and well-designed retail unit that complements other units in the area and provides further options for shoppers in this Primary Frontage Local Centre. Barbour opening a store here adds another high-end brand to the range of retailers. Barbour has an international reputation that is well recognised and brings with it a long legacy of reliability and quality that will benefit the area. The proposal meets all of the above criteria and considers the importance of a well-designed place.*

### **Heritage and Conservation Area Implications**

Full consideration of the proposed development in relation to the Grade II listed building that is 37 Neal Street, as well as the Seven Dial Conservation Area can be found in the accompanying Heritage Statement. An outline is given here. The purpose of the Heritage element of this statement is to satisfy paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contributions made by their setting” and to assess whether the proposed development meets the test of sustainable development as regards its impact on the historic environment.

The statutory protection for Conservation Areas is laid out in the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. The Act defines a Conservation Area as an area identified by the Local Planning Authority as having “special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (s69(1)(a)). Section 72 of the Act requires planning authorities to pay “special attention” to “the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

It is recognised in national planning guidance that this does not mean that every aspect of a Conservation Area's character or appearance is to be preserved or enhanced: “Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance” (NPPF paragraph 213). Development should conserve or enhance those elements of a Conservation Area's character or appearance that positively contribute to its special architectural or historic interest.

The NPPF requires in the case of all heritage assets, designated or otherwise, that local planning authorities should consider “the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of such heritage assets and of putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation” (NPPF 2021 paragraph 203a).

In the case of designated heritage assets such as the Conservation Area the NPPF requires that “great weight” is given to the conservation of the asset, and “the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be” (NPPF paragraph 205).

If the development will lead to “substantial harm” to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 207 of the NPPF indicates that the development should be refused consent by the local planning authority, unless it can be proved that the loss or damage to the asset

can be outweighed by substantial benefits to the public or if the proposal can meet a number of specific conditions. If the development leads to “less than substantial harm” to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 208 indicates that this harm still needs to be assessed against the public benefit of the scheme and whether or not the viability of the site is being optimised.

**Analysis:** *The proposed alterations and refurbishments to 37 Neal Street are of a high-quality design and will have no significant impact upon the Seven Dials Conservation Area nor the Grade II listed building. As has been discussed and is examined in greater depth in the Heritage Statement, the proposal will lead to safeguarding of the heritage asset and will improve the conservation area local designated heritage assets.*

## **Local Planning Policy**

### **The London Plan**

- The West End Retail and Leisure Special Policy Area (WERLSPA) – including Covent Garden and Soho, where retail should complement the strategic cultural, leisure, evening and night-time economy roles of these areas
- Policy SD4 The Central Activities Zone (CAZ)
- Policy SD6 Town centres and high streets

### **Camden Borough Council: Camden Local Plan 2017**

- Policy G1 Delivery and location of growth
- Policy TC1 Quantity and location of retail development
- Policy D3 Shopfronts
- Camden Planning Guidance (CPG)
  - CPG5: Town centres, retail and employment

The London Plan states that London’s Central Activities Zone (CAZ) and town centres are the primary locations for commercial activity in the capital. These are complex parts of London, with a wide mix of uses and unique local character. The CAZ and the town centre network have a crucial role to play in supporting London’s growth. The CAZ is the vibrant heart and core of London. It is one of the world’s most attractive and competitive business locations. It accommodates one third of London’s jobs and generates almost 10 per cent of the UK’s output. It is internationally renowned for its culture, night-time economy, tourism, shopping and heritage. The unique international, national and London-wide roles of the CAZ, based on an agglomeration and rich mix of strategic functions and local uses, should be promoted and enhanced. The distinct environment and heritage of the CAZ should be sustained and enhanced. The vitality, viability, adaptation and diversification of the international shopping and leisure destinations of the West End (including Oxford Street, Regent Street, Bond Street and the wider West End Retail and Leisure Special Policy Area) and Knightsbridge together with other CAZ retail clusters including locally oriented retail and related uses should be supported.

Camden Council Local plan states that the Council will deliver growth by securing high quality development and promoting the most efficient use of land and buildings in Camden by:

- a. supporting development that makes best use of its site, considering quality of design, its surroundings, sustainability, amenity, heritage, transport accessibility and any other considerations relevant to the site

Central London's unique role, character and mix of uses plays an important part in providing the vibrancy, diversity and identity that makes the borough such a popular place. It contains strong residential communities that not only add character, life and diversity to the area but also support its economy and other functions. The residential areas sit alongside and within the major commercial elements. A large part of London's Central Activities Zone (CAZ) falls within Camden and is a major business and employment centre and the main focus of Camden's economy. It contains a significant proportion of the borough's office floorspace, and a variety of shopping areas, including Neal Street.

The Council seeks to maintain a successful economy and improve opportunities. Camden Council recognises that the borough has a successful and diverse economy that makes a significant contribution to the UK economy as well as being a key part of Central London's economy, with its concentration of businesses, retail and tourism uses. The Council wants to maintain and strengthen Camden's economy and competitiveness, whilst ensuring communities benefit and the borough's special identity is preserved. The council seeks to support residents and businesses to make the most of the opportunities.

In respect of proposed changes to shopfronts, the Council expect a high standard of design for altered shopfronts. Considerations in assessing standards of design include:

- a. the design of the shopfront or feature, including its details and materials.
- b. the existing character, architectural and historic merit and design of the building and its shopfront
- c. the relationship between the shopfront and the upper floors of the building and surrounding properties, including the relationship between the shopfront and any forecourt or lightwell
- d. the general characteristics of shopfronts in the area

Where an original shopfront of architectural or historic value survives, in whole or in substantial part, there will be a presumption in favour of its retention. Where a new shopfront forms part of a group where original shop fronts survive, its design should complement their quality and character.

**Analysis:** *The proposal is compliant with the related London Plan Policies and Camden Local Plan. The improvement and refurbishment of the retail unit over two floors, contributes to economic growth, improves the immediate local area, adds to the variety of retail offer, as*

*well as providing employment. The style and proportions of the external changes are in keeping with the setting and wider conservation area. The heritage concept reaffirms the historic feel of Neal Street, and the opening of a Barbour shop, as a British brand with a long history and a quality reputation, in this location will add considerably to the retail offer.*

## **Conclusion**

The proposals above can be seen to be compliant with both local and national policies. The improvements and refurbishment of 37 Neal Street to facilitate the opening of a new Barbour clothing store will be an asset to the area. The occupied and improved unit will add to the vibrancy of the retail area, ensure the building is maintained and create an active ground floor use. The refurbishment and branding to the shop front will conserve and improve the appearance of the front elevation. The improvements inside are planned to create an attractive and engaging shopping experience, with great consideration given to the heritage of the building, the historic area, and the brand.

Should the Planning Authority have any queries or concerns relating to any element of this proposal, Planning By Design welcome the opportunity to correspond to any issues prior to the release of any formal decision. We kindly request for the council to view upon this application favourably and issue a timely decision in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

