

# Heritage Statement

**151-153 Camden High Street, London, NW1 7JY**

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<b>On behalf of:</b>	Leafgreen Estates Limited	<b>Ref:</b>	0954

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Ignus Froneman, Director at Cogent Heritage, in consultation with the Applicant, Place Architecture & Design, and JLA Planning Consultants. The Heritage Statement supports a planning application for a replacement shopfront and rear remodelling the building at 151-153 Camden High Street.
- 1.2 The author of this report is a qualified heritage consultant with over 20 years of experience in the historic environment. This includes regular appearances as an expert witness at public inquiries, on behalf of both appellants, public bodies and local planning authorities.

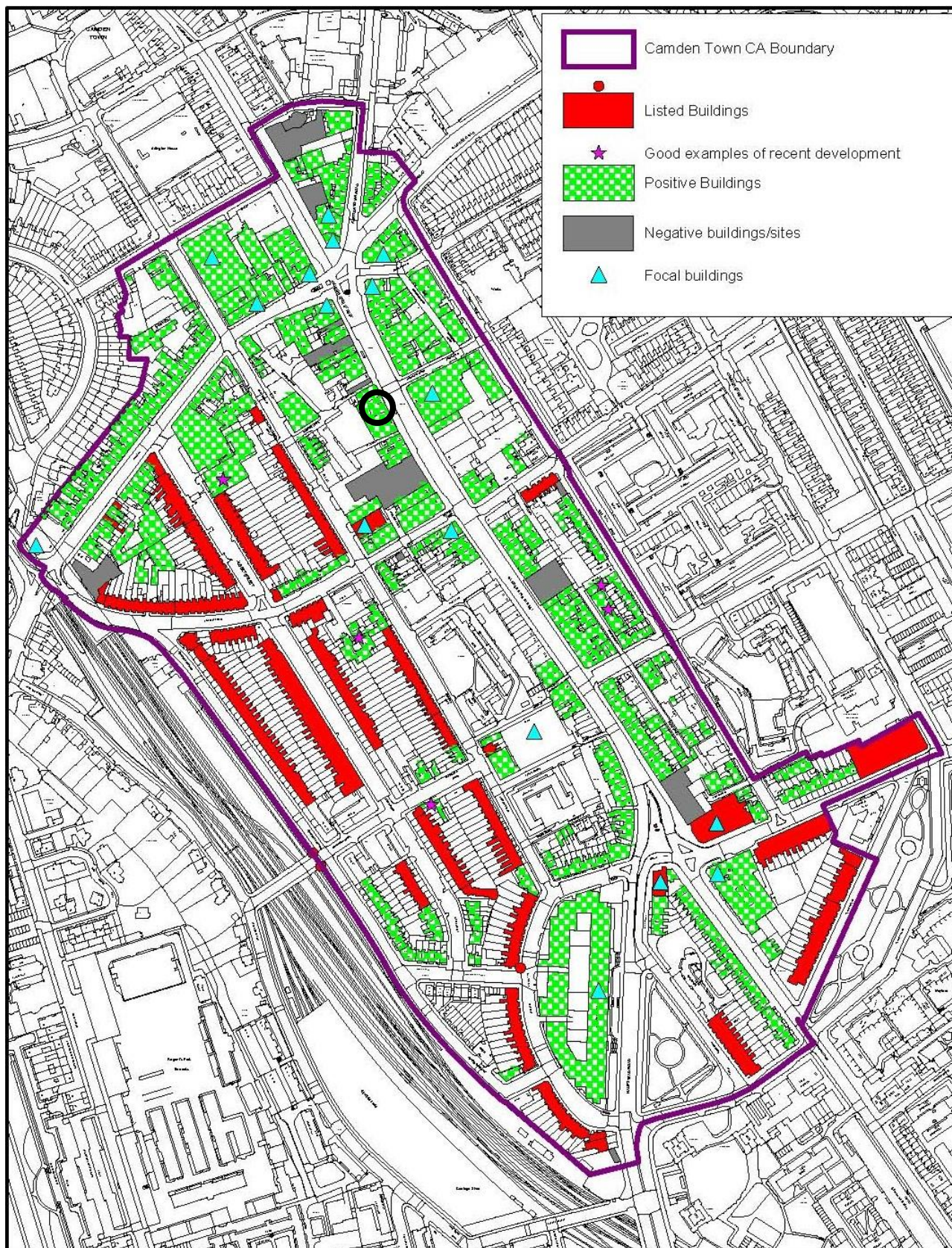
### Heritage assets

- 1.3 The application site falls within the Camden Town Conservation Area. It is identified as a 'positive building' on the Camden Town Conservation Area Townscape Appraisal Map on Camden Council's website, an extract of which is shown at **Fig 1** below.
- 1.4 There are no listed buildings nearby, of which the setting or significance could be affected by the proposed development<sup>1</sup>, and there are no other designated heritage assets that could be affected by the proposed development.
- 1.5 The Camden Town Conservation Area is therefore the heritage asset that is the focus of this assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> This can be seen from the map extract, but it has also been ascertained on a site visit.





**Fig 1:** An extract of the Camden Town Conservation Area Townscape Appraisal Map on Camden Council's website. The approximate location of the application site is highlighted with a black circle.



## **Purpose of the report, site inspection and research**

- 1.6 The Heritage Statement assesses the effects of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the Camden Town Conservation Area.
- 1.7 The Heritage Statement was informed by a site visit, in May 2024, and desk-based documentary research. The purpose of the documentary research was to establish readily available sources of information about the history and evolution of the application site and its context. This is intended to be informative and proportionate, but it is not intended to be comprehensive/exhaustive and it is therefore possible that other sources of information relating to the application site exist.
- 1.8 The photos included to illustrate this report were taken on the site visit, including drone photography; they have not been altered, aside from cropping or annotation in some instances.

## **Legislation and policy summary**

- 1.9 The section below summarises the key provisions of s.66 & s.72 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan policies.
- 1.10 **Legislation:** Legislation relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act). Section 66(1) of the Act sets out the statutory duty in relation to development affecting the setting of listed buildings (which is not relevant in this case) and section 72(1) sets out the statutory duty in relation to any buildings or other land in a conservation area.
- 1.11 It is a well-established concept in case law that 'preserving' means doing no harm for the purposes of the 1990 Act. The Court of Appeal's decision in *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire District Council* [2014] (EWCA Civ 137) established that, having 'special regard' to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building under s.66, involves more than merely giving weight to those matters in the planning balance. There is a strong statutory presumption against granting planning permission for any development which would fail to preserve a listed building or its setting (and the same for conservation areas). In cases where a proposed development would harm a listed building or its setting (or a conservation area), the Barnwell decision has established that the duty in s.66 of the Act requires these must be given "*considerable importance and weight*".

1.12 The key legal principles, established in case law, are:

- i. 'Preserving' for the purposes of the s.66 and s.72 duties means 'to do no harm'.
- ii. The desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building, or the character or appearance of a conservation area must be given 'considerable importance and weight'.
- iii. The effect of NPPF paragraphs 205-208 is to impose, by policy, a duty regarding the setting of a listed building that is materially identical to the statutory duty pursuant to s.66(1) regarding the setting of a listed building (and s.72 in relation to the character and appearance of a conservation area)<sup>2</sup>.
- iv. NPPF paragraph 208 appears as part of a 'fasciculus' of paragraphs, which lay down an approach corresponding with the s.66(1) duty (and similarly the s.72 duty)<sup>3</sup>.
- v. If harm would be caused, then the case must be made for permitting the development in question, and the sequential test in paragraphs 206-208 of the NPPF sets out how that is to be done. If that is done with clarity, then approval following paragraph 208 is justified. No further step or process of justification is necessary<sup>4</sup>.
- vi. In cases where there may be both harm and benefits, in heritage terms, great weight has to be given to the conservation and enhancement of a listed building, and its setting, and the preservation and enhancement of a conservation area. It is possible to find that the benefits may be far more significant than the harm.

1.13 **The National Planning Policy Framework:** Section 16 of the revised (December 2023) National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment, in paragraphs 195 to 214. Paragraph 195 of the NPPF states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

1.14 According to paragraph 200 applicants should 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.

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<sup>2</sup> *Jones v Mordue* [2015] EWCA Civ. 1243 per Sales LJ [at 28].

<sup>3</sup> *Jones v Mordue* [at 28] per Sales LJ.

<sup>4</sup> *R (Pugh) v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2015] EWHC 3 (Admin) as per Gilbert J [at 53].

- 1.15 According to paragraph 205, which applies specifically to designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation (the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This reflects the provisions of the 1990 Act in that it applies irrespective of whether it involves total loss, substantial harm, or less than substantial harm to significance.
- 1.16 Paragraph 206 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. It then deals with substantial harm to, or total loss of significance of, different types of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 207 continues on the subject of substantial harm.
- 1.17 Paragraph 208, on the other hand, deals with less than substantial harm. Harm in this category should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) describes public benefits as "*anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress*".
- 1.18 The **Development Plan** is the London Plan (2021) and Camden's Local Plan (2017).
- 1.19 **London Plan:** Policy HC1 of the London Plan, entitled "*Heritage conservation and growth*" is the most relevant of the policies in Chapter 7. Parts A and B of the policy deals with strategic considerations/requirements and these are not relevant to determining planning applications.
- 1.20 Part C deals with development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings. This part of Policy HC1 requires development proposals to conserve the significance of heritage assets, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The policy also requires the cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings to be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process.
- 1.21 **Camden's Local Plan (2017):** Policy D2 deals with heritage and requires development to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas and listed buildings. According to the policy, the Council will not permit development that results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset unless the public benefits of the proposal convincingly outweigh that harm.

## 2.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTRIBUTION

### Historic background

- 2.1 The historic background in the next section was synthesised from the information in the *Camden Town Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy*<sup>5</sup> (adopted on 4 October 2007) (the 'Appraisal' hereafter), alongside information sourced as part of the research for this report.
- 2.2 The Appraisal sets out the early history and development of the conservation area, which is not repeated here, but instead a summary of some of the more relevant aspects of the area's history is provided below.
- 2.3 The Appraisal notes that, by the end of the C18, the expansion of London had reached Camden Town, and the once open fields began to be developed. Local land owners Charles Pratt, Earl Camden, and Charles Fitzroy, Baron Southampton started selling leases for the construction of houses. Pratt's land was to the east of what is now Camden High Street, and Fitzroy's to the west. Many of the streets within the conservation area are named after these two families.
- 2.4 As the area developed in the C19, shops were built on the front gardens of the terraces fronting the High Street, with new public houses and hotels added, and with poorer people moving into the streets that were made grimy by the railways (and industrial developments).
- 2.5 Towards the end of the C19, parts of the conservation area, particularly around Britannia Junction, began to be redeveloped; small shops were replaced with larger shops of three or four storeys and with ornate front elevations.
- 2.6 The 1873 Ordnance Survey map (**Fig 2**) shows the area before the late C19 development that would shape much of its present-day character. The map shows no real difference in the historic patterns of the development between the east and west sides of the High Street, aside from the plots to the east being longer than those on the west side. The application site at this time appears to have been comprised of two buildings (likely ground floor shops with houses above), built close to the road in common with the established building line.

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<https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/7309268/Camden+Town+conservation+area+appraisal+and+management+plan+4.10.07.pdf/bb0ea857-958d-c68a-cfc7-aff1414f4d30>



**Fig 2:** An extract of the 1873 Ordnance Survey map. The approximate location of the application site is highlighted in red.

2.7 The 1891 Goad insurance plan extract (**Fig 3**) shows the two buildings on the application site at that time. Both were shops, unsurprisingly, but the Goad map gives the heights of the buildings and it is interesting to note that 153 was four storeys in height and 151 was three storeys. Behind the street fronting blocks, the plots had been covered in development; these were single or double storey rear outbuildings. Underhill Passage at this time was 'Pleasant Passage'.





**Fig 3:** An extract of the 1873 Ordnance Survey map. © British Library

- 2.8 The 1896 and 1916 Ordnance Survey maps (not reproduced) show the application site similar to the 1873 version and the Goad plan. Kelly's Directory of 1915 records the application site as occupied by D Silver & Co and, later, by Sanders Goldsmiths (from 1920 to 1943). The application site must have been redeveloped during this time, as the London Metropolitan Archives holds a photo of 1936, in which the application site can be seen in its present incarnation; a uniform three storey building of two bays in width (**Fig 4**). The façade stylistically fits an early C20 construction date.
- 2.9 The image shows the façade cluttered with signage, including a large fascia sign that overlapped the first floor windows, and with a traditional shopfront below. The rest of the façade had minimal architectural detailing, much like it is at present. It has not been possible to establish the designer, and it is unlikely that the building, with its sparse and commonplace detailing, would have been designed by a notable or distinguished architect.
- 2.10 Two aerial photos of 1946 (**Figs 5 & 6**) record the High Street, with the oblique aerial photo giving a sense of the three dimensional appearance of the street at the time. The aerial photos record the amalgamated footprints of 151 and 153, which must reflect the earlier arrangement as seen on the 1936 photo.





**Fig 4:** An extract of a photo of 1936, showing the application site occupied by Sanders Goldsmiths, and seen obliquely from the north. © London Metropolitan Archives



**Fig 5:** An extract of an oblique aerial photo of 1946, with the application site encircled red. © HES



**Fig 6:** An extract of a vertical aerial photo of 1946, with the application site encircled red. © Historic England



2.11 It can be observed from the aerial photo at **Fig 5** that, even at this time, the area to the rear of the buildings fronting the High Street was mixed, informal and piecemeal in character. Like today, the rear of the application site would not have been visible from the surrounding area. The London County Council bomb damage map (not reproduced) does not record damage to the application site. The 1951/2 Ordnance Survey map (**Fig 7**) shows the amalgamated footprints of 151 and 153, as the 1946 aerial photo, and with a small projection behind 149 High Street (most likely some kind of service access).



**Fig 7:** An extract of the 1951/2 Ordnance Survey map. The approximate location of the application site is highlighted in red.



- 2.12 The planning archives have a record pertaining to the 'Refurbishment of existing shop front as shown on drawing no. B/3928/10 and as specified in the schedule dated 27th February 1985.' The works were said to have been implemented in 1985 under planning application ref. 8500365. Further changes to the shopfront were made in 1990, under planning application ref. 9003166. Subsequent planning applications, recorded on Camden's website, relate to an internally illuminated fascia sign.

### **The significance of the conservation area**

- 2.13 Under the heading 'General character and plan form' the Appraisal states:
- "The ancient north-south route, which has become Camden High Street, formed a spine along which development started about two hundred years ago. Typical of 19th century speculative development the plan form of the area evolved as a series of grid patterns - streets of terraced houses within garden plots. Around the two major junctions the plot sizes are more random particularly where larger late 19th and 20th century buildings occupy prominent focal positions and break the tight pattern. Around Britannia Junction larger retail units and commercial buildings, alongside single shops, form a looser, more random grain. Some terraces around Mornington Crescent and Harrington Square Gardens still conform to a tight regular plot size."*
- 2.14 The Appraisal divides the conservation area into two character areas or sub-areas; sub area 1 is the commercial part of the conservation area and sub area 2 is the residential part of the conservation area. The application site falls in sub area 1, the commercial part of the conservation area, which is considered further below.
- 2.15 The Appraisal notes that Camden High Street and Parkway are the main commercial streets and goes on to highlight that there is greater architectural variety in the commercial sub-area, due to long history of redevelopment, since the late C19. Consequently, where historic buildings survive, there is a greater tendency for alterations, resulting in a much lower proportion of listed buildings.
- 2.16 Under the heading 'Camden High Street and environs' the Appraisal notes that Camden High Street is "*architecturally diverse*" with a lively mix of C19 and C20 buildings. The skyline is said to 'boast' a great variety of roof forms and chimneystacks. There is a broad range of building materials, but a prevalence of brick.
- 2.17 Under the heading 'Area south of Britannia Junction' the Appraisal states that much of the original development of the High Street from the 1820s and 1830s survives. It is said that the underlying character of the street is derived from the modest three-storey terraces on narrow plots, partly concealed behind later C19 single-storey shops.

- 2.18 The Appraisal goes on to note a *"varied roofline on the west side of the street, between Delancey Street and Parkway, due to the presence of several two-storey buildings"*. It can be noted that the application site is obviously a three storey building.
- 2.19 155-157 Camden High Street, immediately adjacent to the application site, is described as *"a high quality, four-storey brick building with twin gables (and with a third gable facing into Underhill Passage), with a canted bay at the corner"*. The Appraisal makes no mention of the application site, however.
- 2.20 The Appraisal notes how alterations and extensions to the buildings on the High Street have introduced, over time, some diversity to the original homogeneity of design. It notes that shopfronts in the High Street have been replaced or altered periodically, resulting in little uniformity at ground level. Timber and aluminium frames are noted to be the most common, but the quality of their detail varies considerably. Several examples of shopfronts with oversized signage, employing garish materials and which are insensitive to their context, are noted. Also, fascias that have been installed at different heights, with irregular alignment. Many shopfronts – like the application site – have been fitted with *"out of keeping roller shutters which deaden the street frontage out of trading hours"*.
- 2.21 The Appraisal also highlights the pedestrian alleys to the east of Arlington Road, which lead to the High Street and add to the permeability of the neighbourhood. Underhill Passage, to the north of the application site, is noted (amongst others) as an example.
- 2.22 The Appraisal has a section dealing with 'Key views' but the application site does not feature in any of those.
- 2.23 In conclusion, the 'Summary of the special interest of the Camden Town Conservation Area' at the beginning of the Appraisal (pages 4-5 of the Appraisal) provides a good summary/overview of the significance of the conservation area, and this is quoted in full below:

*"The Camden Town Conservation Area can be divided into two sub areas of distinctly different character, a busy commercial and retail area, and, a quieter more formal residential area.*

*The commercial sub area consists of a traditional wide shopping street linking the busy junction at Mornington Crescent to the eclectic and lively town centre at the heart of Camden Town. The focus of Camden Town is Britannia Junction which acts as a hub and an important interchange, with busy, noisy, dynamic and diverse characteristics. 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. Within this part of the Conservation Area there are two underground stations, an array of banks, restaurants, street markets, shops and stalls, signs and vehicles all existing within an historic architectural streetscape. The buildings reflect the diverse and changing architectural styles over the last two hundred years. Terraces of flat fronted early to mid 19th century houses now fronted by shops, mid Victorian stucco terraces, Victorian Gothic buildings, late Victorian and Edwardian red brick parades four and five storeys high with decorative gables, imposing banks, places of entertainment and public houses occupying key focal sites, and 20th century buildings all contribute to the wide ranging variety of architectural styles.*

*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.*

*The Conservation Area has a high proportion of 19th century buildings both listed and unlisted, which make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There is an overall 19th century architectural and historic character and appearance throughout.”*

### **The contribution of the application site**

- 2.24 Unsurprisingly, given its somewhat relatively recent date and somewhat undistinguished appearance, the application site is not locally listed and it is not mentioned in *Pevsner*<sup>6</sup>. However, as has been noted in the Introduction, the Townscape Appraisal Map of the Appraisal (**Fig 1**) identifies the application as part of a row of ‘positive buildings’ that take in the west of the High Street, between Pleasant Row and Underhill Passage. The application site can be seen in its context on **Photos 1-2** below. The quasi-traditional building can be seen to fit comfortably in the street scenes and, in this sense, it positively contributes to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

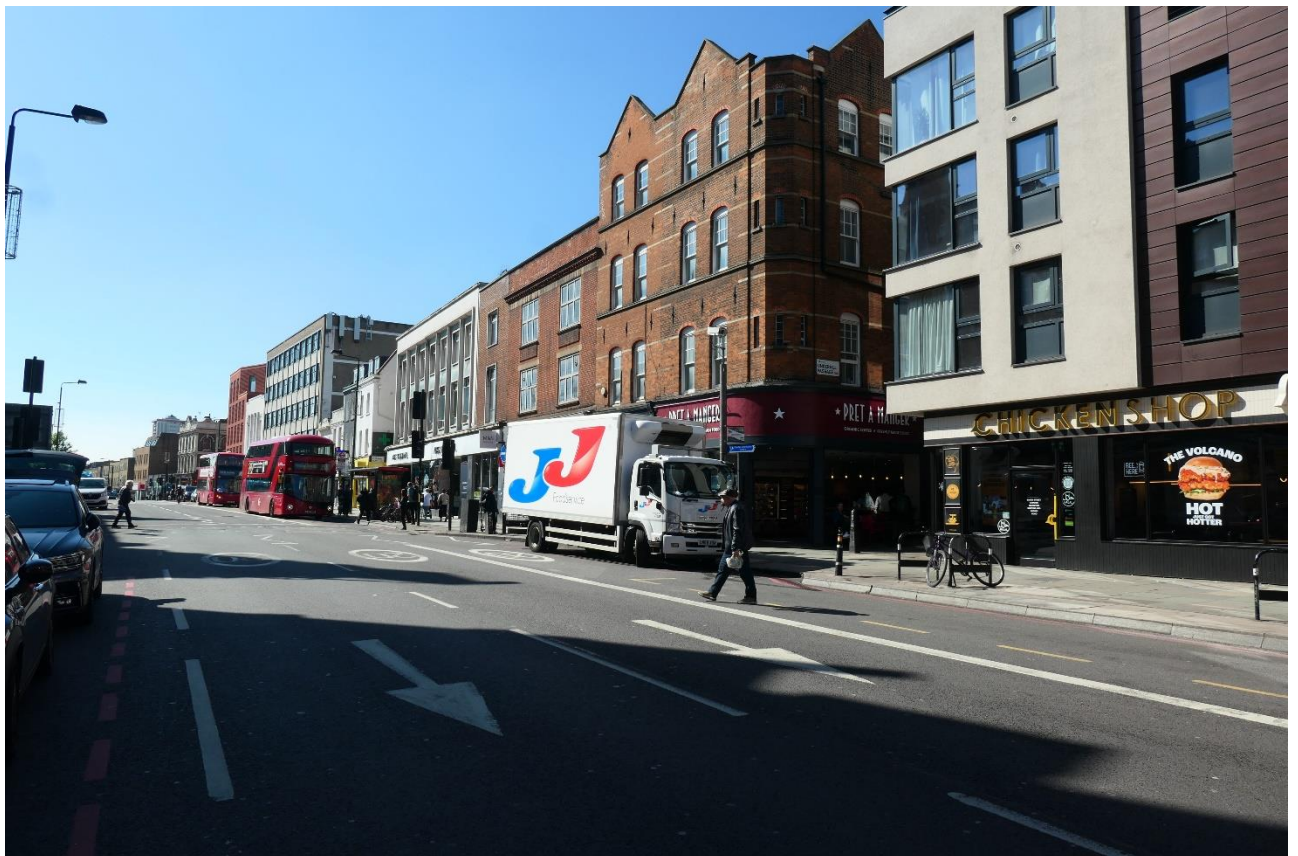
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<sup>6</sup> Bridget Cherry & Niklaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, London 3*





**Photo 1:** The application site, seen in context from the south.



**Photo 2:** The application site, seen in context from the north.



- 2.25 When looking at the building more closely, e.g. **Photo 3**, it can be seen that the modern shopfront – fitted with a roller shutter, as is disparagingly referenced in the Appraisal – is a modern feature of no interest. The polished granite surround has replaced the traditional shopfront elements seen on the 1936 photo, including the console brackets. The cornice is the best feature (perhaps more accurately the only notable feature) of the elevation, with the cement/concrete lintels and banding indicating that this is not a building of any great age. The window sills and brick aprons add some limited depth and interest. The jambs appear to have been done in a different brick, suggesting these were inserted. It is a building with a simple but pleasant façade, and it is the façade that makes the positive contribution to the conservation area.



**Photo 3:** A frontal view of the application site.



- 2.26 The rear of the application site is not visible in public views, as can be seen from **Photos 4-6**, from various points on or near Underhill Passage.



**Photo 4:** A view towards the application site (which is completely obscured) from the eastern end of Underhill Passage.





**Photo 5:** A view towards the application site (which is completely obscured) from the car parking area to the north of Underhill Passage.



**Photo 6:** A view towards the application site (which is completely obscured) from the western end of Underhill Passage.



2.27 However, not only is the application site obscured from public view, but when looking at the character of the area behind the Camden High Street frontage, it is clear that this is a very disparate and perfunctory piece of backland urban townscape, which has no coherence or any recognisable attributes of special interest. It is a poor quality, ad hoc, back of house/service area that is devoid of interest and, fortunately, hidden from public view.



**Photo 7:** An aerial view of the back of the application site (indicated with a red bracket), seen in context from the west.

2.28 The back of the application site itself is a mishmash of ad hoc and poor quality elements, topped with a perfunctory mansard-like roof. There is nothing about this part of the application site that can be described in positive terms, and it can again be noted as fortunate that this structure is not exposed in public views. It is something of an eyesore that can only reasonably be categorised as a detractor. It is unsurprising that planning permission was granted recently for the complete remodelling of the rear of the building (ref. 2019/5077/P).





**Photo 8:** An aerial view of the back of the application site.



- 2.29 The Decision Notice for the recently approved scheme notably included the following comments, which remain relevant:

*"The rear elevation of this property lies amongst a variety of different rear and roof treatments, heights and projections on neighbouring properties, much of which is very utilitarian. The rear facade itself is uncharacteristic of this terrace and completely hidden from any public or private views. [...]"*

*Although the extensions together result in totally remodelling the rear elevation, it is considered that this is acceptable in this context of varied adjoining rear elevations and lack of visibility from the public realm."*

### **3.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 The proposed development essentially comprises the same development that has been previously permitted (ref. 2019/5077/P), albeit this time without the mansard roof that was previously included in with a shallow mono-pitch roof instead. The proposals can be summarised as:

- i. a new shopfront with residential side entrance; and
- ii. and extension to and remodelling of the rear of the property, including a new mono pitched roof that would sit below the parapet level and which would not be visible from the street (or in any public views).

- 3.2 The inwards-canting modern glazed shopfront, behind the steel roller shutter, is modern and unrelated to the façade above. It is uncharacteristic of the conservation area and makes no contribution to the conservation area. The proposed replacement would be modern, but nevertheless improve on the existing arrangement. The side door has the added benefit of facilitating the beneficial use of the upper floors, thereby animating the building and the street after hours, and preventing dilapidation of the upper floors, a common blight on shopping parades such as this. The effect of this part of the proposals would be a minor enhancement to the conservation area.

- 3.3 The rear elevation is largely modern and unremarkable (if not somewhat ad hoc). It is absent of any heritage value. Neither does it contribute in any meaningful way to the conservation area; to the extent that it is visible in private views, it is something of an eyesore. The proposed rear extension would continue the existing first floor massing, save for a small terrace, and replace the mansard-like rear roof and toilet block. The windows would all be of similar size and vertically aligned. As per the previous consent, these would be aluminium framed, tilt and turn double glazed windows. This would, to some extent, rationalise the rear of the building. Overall, the rear remodelling would

blend unassumingly into the disparate backland context. The contribution of the building to this part of the conservation area would be unaffected, if not slightly improved by way of adding a degree of design cohesion, and removing the steel grilles to the windows, etc.

- 3.4 It is worth again noting the comments in the Decision Notice in relation to the previously permitted proposals, as per the quote below (comments in relation to the then proposed mansard roof are omitted in the quote below):

*"The rear elevation of this property lies amongst a variety of different rear and roof treatments, heights and projections on neighbouring properties, much of which is very utilitarian. The rear facade itself is uncharacteristic of this terrace and completely hidden from any public or private views. The proposed 2nd floor rear extension would sit above the existing 1st floor one, matching its size and depth, and would replace the mansarded rear and toilet block projection. The resulting gap between this new extension and the flank wall of the neighbouring property at no.155 would be infilled by a stepped 2 storey extension. The 1st floor element would match the depth of the existing lean-to extension and the 2nd floor element would align with the existing rear facade of no.155.*

*Although the extensions together result in totally remodelling the rear elevation, it is considered that this is acceptable in this context of varied adjoining rear elevations and lack of visibility from the public realm. The overall rear extension depth will match the existing extensions and be similar to the projection of no.157 further north [...] The rear extension is articulated so as not to be overly bulky [...] Overall the extensions are considered on balance acceptable in size, height, depth and design, subject to more detail on design and materials.*

*The new shopfront replacing an existing modern glazed one and with a new separate residential side entrance is acceptable subject to more detail provided.*

*The extensions and alterations would preserve the character and appearance of the Camden Town conservation area."*

- 3.5 These comments remain equally relevant to the acceptability of the proposed development.

## **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 This report presents a proportionate assessment of the significance of the Camden Town Conservation Area, and the contribution of the application site to the significance of the conservation area.

- 4.2 The assessment in this report has demonstrated that the proposed development would preserve and enhance the character, appearance and significance of the conservation area.
- 4.3 Because no harm has been identified, there are no policy conflicts with the Development Plan. This means that the proposed development would comply with Policy HC1 of the London Plan. The proposed development would also comply with Policy D2 of Camden's Local Plan.
- 4.4 The proposed development would not trigger paragraphs 205-208 of the National Planning Policy Framework and comply with the statutory duties in s.72 of the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act, 1990.