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DESIGN AND ACCESS / PLANNING / HERITAGE / STATEMENT

Retain and complete alterations to shopfront, and external extraction unit/flue.

Property Address: 98 Marchmont Street, London, WC1N 1AG.

May 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Design and Access / Planning / Heritage Statement is submitted on behalf of the applicant in respect of a planning / advertisement application to retain and complete alterations to shopfront, replacement signage, and external extraction unit/flue. This Statement should be read in conjunction with other drawings and documents accompanying the planning application.

1.2 This Statement comprises:

- A description of the application properties and surrounding area;
- A description of the proposed development;
- A summary of relevant planning history; and,
- An assessment of the proposed development against relevant planning policy.

2.0 APPLICATION PROPERTY AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The application relates to No. 98 Marchmont Street which is a small two storey building ‘sandwiched’ between No. 1 Leigh Street and No. 96 Marchmont Street. The property is in use as a restaurant.

2.2 The site is located within a mixed use area. There is wide variety in overall building scale and form in the area.

2.3 The property is not listed, although the neighbouring buildings on Leigh Street are. The site is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The development comprises:

- ***Retain and complete alterations to shopfront:*** There had been a long standing non-descript shopfront in place until relatively recently. This previous shopfront was not befitting of a restaurant premises and resembled a shop / office frontage in many respects. It also had solid metal shuttering concealing the frontage when closed (refer to Figure 1 below). In order to give the premises a frontage more appropriate to its restaurant use, a glazed aluminium shopfront was installed. It is of simple design and materials and being largely glazed offers

high levels of passive surveillance and visual interest through passers by being able to see in and vice versa. It is proposed to further adapt the existing shopfront by adding a stallriser and fanlights to give somewhat of a more traditional appearance.

- **External extraction unit/flue:** It is sought to retain the existing external extraction and flue equipment. This has recently been upgraded including the addition of a Ventorn silent box fan unit (AMF-500/1) and new electric board.



Figure 1: Former non-descript shopfront with solid metal shutters.

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 There is no recent planning history for the premises according to Camden online planning records.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF) seeks to support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation (para. 86 refers).

The proposed development is not considered contrary to NPPF policy. The overall area within which the premises sits is a mixed use vibrant area with significant variety in shopfronts and signage.

London Plan (2021)

5.2 Policy SD6 of the new London Plan (2021) recognises the importance of mixed use town centres and supporting continued growth of commercial activity.

The proposed development is wholly in compliance with London Plan policy.

Camden Local Plan 2019-2040

5.3 As per the Camden Proposals Map, the site is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and directly adjacent the Marchmont Street / Leigh Street Local plan Centre.

5.4 Policies D2 (Heritage), D3 (Shopfronts), A1 (Managing the Impact of Development) are of relevance to the proposal. Policy D2 is discussed separately below in section 6. Policy D3 states:

“The Council will expect a high standard of design in new and altered shopfronts, canopies, blinds, security measures and other features.

When determining proposals for shopfront development the Council will consider:

- 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;*
- e. community safety and the contribution made by shopfronts to natural surveillance; and*
- f. the degree of accessibility.*

The Council will resist the removal of shop windows without a suitable replacement and will ensure that where shop, service, food, drink and entertainment uses are lost, a shop window and visual display is maintained.

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”

The proposed development would not in any way be contrary to this policy. An active frontage will be provided for. It is further submitted:

- *The proposed shopfront is a vast improvement on the previous shopfront which was non-descript, had poor levels of visual interest / passive surveillance, and which had an obtrusive solid metal security shutter when the premises was not trading.*
- *Signage proposed with the shopfront is more restrained than the previous shopfront i.e. no projecting blade sign is proposed. Remaining signage does not require planning permission.*
- *The building is ‘sandwiched’ between No. 1 Leigh Street and No. 96 Marchmont Street. As such it is somewhat stand-alone and without reference in the street frontage.*
- *There is significant variety in building frontages / ‘shopfronts’. A selection of ‘shopfronts’ are shown in Figure 2 below.*
- *An aluminium shopfront was permitted to the property right next door (No. 96) under permission ref. No. 2023/0321/P. An informative to the decision notice stated:
“In regard to the other alterations, it is recognised that the pre-existing shopfront was modern and poor quality timber with little design merit. It is also noted that approval was granted in 2020 for an aluminium framed double shopfront directly opposite at nos. 87-89 Marchmont Street (2019/3793/P). Under these particular circumstances, and on balance, alterations to introduce an aluminium framed shopfront and glazed commercial entrance door are acceptable and would not be out-of-keeping within the context of the existing streetscene”.
An aluminium shopfront was permitted at No’s 87-89 Marchmont Street under permission ref. No. 2019/3793/P.*



No. 87 Marchmont Street



No. 78 Marchmont Street



No. 81 Marchmont Street

No. 98 Marchmont Street

Figure 2: Variety of shopfronts nearby on Marchmont Street

5.5 Policy A1 of the Local Plan states:

“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.

We will:

- a. seek to ensure that the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbours is protected;*
- b. seek to ensure development contributes towards strong and successful communities by balancing the needs of development with the needs and characteristics of local areas and communities;*
- c. resist development that fails to adequately assess and address transport impacts affecting communities, occupiers, neighbours and the existing transport network; and*
- d. require mitigation measures where necessary.*

The factors we will consider include:

- e. visual privacy, outlook;*
- f. sunlight, daylight and overshadowing;*
- g. artificial lighting levels;*
- h. transport impacts, including the use of Transport Assessments, Travel Plans and Delivery and Servicing Management Plans;*
- i. impacts of the construction phase, including the use of Construction Management Plans;*
- j. noise and vibration levels;*
- k. odour, fumes and dust;*
- l. microclimate;*
- m. contaminated land; and*
- n. impact upon water and wastewater infrastructure.”*

The proposal is not considered contrary to this policy. There has been a restaurant here for many years. The applicant is amenable to conditions controlling noise levels.

6.0 HERITAGE

Assessment of the significance of the affected heritage asset(s)

6.1 The property sits within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. According to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011) the special character of the conservation area is multi-faceted but is in large part derived from its historical origins, building typology and form, traditional building materials, verdant character, and architectural quality of buildings.

6.2 According to the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy, No. 98 nor indeed Marchmont Road are not singled out for any particular mention. Works of the nature proposed are not identified as negative features or threats to the conservation area.

Impact of the proposed development on that significance including any measures to mitigate potential harm and/or better reveal significance.

6.3 Whilst the important scenic, historic and architectural features of this building and wider area are noted, it is argued that the primary setting of the application site is within a mixed use commercial setting which already contains development of the nature proposed.

6.4 Given that the works to the shopfront represent a significant improvement on the previous condition, and that there is precedent nearby for works of the nature proposed, it is not considered there would be any adverse impact to the special character or appearance of the conservation area arising from the development. Indeed it is considered the works would enhance the conservation area through improving architectural quality.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The application site is within a mixed use urban area, and there is huge variety in shopfronts, advertising, and outdoor seating.

7.2 The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with NPPF policies.

7.3 The proposal is also considered in compliance with the Camden Plan.