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## Design and Access Statement – September 2024



*Figure 1 Store Elevation from Camden High Street*



**RSK CONSULTANCY  
& CONSTRUCTION**

## SUMMARY

This Design and Access statement describes the building as it is now and later sets out proposals for refurbishment and re-classification works to convert a disused basement into a state-of-the-art electronic attraction, comprising of an open space for Virtual Reality Immersive Entertainment. The existing retail space falls under planning classification is Class E, which this VR experience continues to fall under.

Externally, the only works are to form a shallow blue painted non-permanent timber frame around the existing fire escapes, that will advertise the attraction within through electronic LEDs.

## Design and access Statement

### Overview

The following Design and Access Statement explains the processes which have led to the finalised development proposal. Each of the required processes takes into account the design details of internal works proposed and how they fit into the wider context of the application site's significance within Camden High Street.

Camden High Street has undergone significant changes in recent years, having international brands and cultural trends all concentrating in on this lively and vibrant commercial district.

Camden High Street is deemed the perfect location for a new and innovative enterprise that compliments the existing diverse and luminary businesses.

Much of the proposed works is within the basement but externally, the visible work is limited to gentrifying a disgusting doorway that attracts crime and grime.

A non-permanent timber frame store front is proposed to gentrify the existing two external recessed doorways. One single leaf door on the left is to provide access down into the basement, the single leaf door on the right is a final exit door for a neighbouring retail unit. There is a temporary plywood door installed in front of the original external escape door.

Above the two recessed doors, a derelict Fascia Sign once existed.

The existing doorway storefront is a magnet for criminal activity, with evidence of drugs, graffiti and public urination occurring frequently within these doorways. The proposed works will stop negative activity, replacing it with an innovative and bright alternative.





*Figure 2 Existing two recessed doors*

Internally, the basement has been left derelict as current retail tenants above do not have use for it. There are derelict lift shafts and evidence of former customer staircases serving the retail unit above, now removed. The large open basement space is served by two existing fire escape stairwells. These two stairwells lead up to a narrow ground floor landing/ These small internal areas can only serve as landings. One entrance / exit is on Camden High Street, the other is on Inverness Street to the north.





Figure 3 Image of open basement space



Figure 4 Image of open basement space. Camden exit highlighted in green.



Figure 5 Image of open basement space - back of house





*Figure 6 Single stairwell leading up to Inverness Street*



*Figure 7 Single staircase leading up to Camden High St*

### Design

Proposed external works are to promote and advertise the Immersive entertainment area within the basement area. The proposals have adopted an 'Industrial Space' theme that they want to exude out to public.

A non-permanent blue painted timber framed storefront is to be installed to create a surrounding feature around the two doorways. An LED screen is to be installed within the timber framed storefront structure.

The two existing door entranceway positions are to be retained, but receive new door frames and leaves. The temporary black painted plywood door to the basement entrance on the left is to be removed, reveal both recessed alcoves to the public highway.

The principal entrance doorway leading down to the basement reception area is to be replaced with a clear glass door. A clear glass door creates an open and inviting feeling within customers who will be encouraged to descend down the existing stairwell. The recess will receive painted wood and improved lighting.

The neighbouring fire escape door on the right is to be decorated with a temporary graphic image of a 'Spaceship Doorway'. The fire escape door strategy adopted by the neighbouring retail unit is to be retained and left affected. A light fixture is to be installed within the recessed doorway to prevent further criminal activity within it.

Both recessed alcoves will receive new black floor tiling.



*Figure 8 Artists Impression of the proposed new doorway*

### Landscaping

There is no room for landscaping works.

### Use

The application site is use Class E(a) retail space as a Virtual Reality Entertainment space.

### Access

Access down into the entertainment space is physically limited by the small existing landings at ground floor at the Camden High Street and Inverness Street entrances. The Camden High Street is deemed the appropriate location for principal entrance down into the entertainment space.

There is currently no Disabled Wheelchair Access down into the basement. Part M recognises that it may not always be possible for an existing building to accommodate passenger lifts. In these situations, Part M suggests a hierarchy, starting with the passenger lift, then a platform lift and, lastly, a stairlift as the options to be considered.

- **New Passenger Lift** : There is no enough space on the ground floor to install a new passenger lift. *Therefore, not applicable*
- **New Platform Lift**: There is not enough space on the ground floor to instal a new passenger lift. *Therefore, not applicable*
- **Stairlift**: The existing width of the two escape stairs is 1000mm. This meets the current fire escape regulations for the purpose use of the basement space. Installing a stairlift will restrict the existing escape width to below the regulatory threshold.

### Appearance and Context

Camden High Street is a vibrant and busy high street and is noted for its night life. The site is located directly opposite to The famous Electric Ballroom nightclub, that has a bright and illuminating presence in the immediate vicinity.



Figure 9 At night, the immediate area is dominated by the electric ballroom





*Figure 10 Camden High Street is renowned for being brash and loud. At night the street is dominated by excentric light displays*

The proposed new timber shopfront and its LED screen aesthetic will enhance and compliment the eccentric location of Camden High Street. There is no better location for a modern Virtual Reality enterprise, that aims to express its self in new technological methods through vibrant lights and themes. The proposed shop front will not stand out, but will stand with the existing electric shopfronts at night, adding to the ongoing diversity of cultural investments that Camden prides itself on.

