

30-34 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1EP



Architecture - Town Planning - Licensing

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

*Camden
Council*

Se&Se Consultancy Ltd.
E: info@seandse.co.uk
T: 020 4579 53 00
M: +44 (0) 7404765500
W: www.seandse.co.uk

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Design and Access Statement accompanies the application for Display of internally illuminated Fascia Signs and internally illuminated Projection Sign and Addition of retractable awning canopy above shopfront at **30-34 New oxford street, London WC1A 1EP.**
- 1.2. It explains the concept and principles of the proposed development in relation to key issues such as surrounding context. It also examines how the proposal accords with relevant National and Local Planning Policy and other material planning policy considerations.
- 1.3. This statement is divided into seven main sections and has the relevant information included in the introduction, the context of the site, the proposed development, planning history, planning policy context, appraisal and conclusions.
- 1.4. In addition, the Design and Access Statement is supported by the application submissions sent electronically via the Planning Portal.

2. Site description

- 2.1. The application site is located at **30-34 New oxford street, London WC1A 1EP.**
- 2.2. The site is in Camden conservation area, within Bloomsbury Conservation Area, and the building is not a statutorily listed building.
- 2.3. Due to the road layout and scale of the surroundings the site has unusually low visibility.
- 2.4. The site is visible facing West from the South side of Bloomsbury Way from a point opposite Tavistock Chambers. However, from this vantage point, due to the twist in the road layout, it is largely seen against a backdrop of the large-scale modern developments of the West End.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. This proposal is for Display of internally illuminated Fascia Signs and internally illuminated Projection Sign and addition of retractable awning canopy above shopfront at **30-34 New oxford street, London WC1A 1EP.**
- 3.2. The awning canopy will be constructed using high-quality materials that complement the surrounding architecture.
- 3.3. The installations would follow safety regulations.
- 3.4. The location of advertisement and awning canopy is situated at a height of 3.14 meters above ground.

4. Planning History

- 4.1. Ref. No: 2011/2532/A | 34 New Oxford Street London WC1A 1AP | Status: **Granted.**
Display of 3 x halo illuminated fascia signs and 1 x externally illuminated projecting sign to restaurant (Class A3).

4.2. Ref. No: 2014/4849/P | 34 New Oxford Street London WC1A 1AP | Status: **Withdrawn Decision.**

Erection of an additional storey at roof level to create a roof level office space (Class B1) and the reduction and repositioning of the existing plant.

4.3. Ref. No: 2016/2217/P | 32-34 New Oxford Street London WC1A 1AP | Status: **Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement 16.**

Erection of mansard roof extension, relocation of air condensing units and installation of 1x air source heat pump to mixed use building (Use B1a/A3) to provide office space.

4.4. Ref. No: 2020/0262/P | 32-34 New Oxford Street London WC1A 1AP | Status: **Granted.**

Replacement shopfront and relocation of entrances to restaurant (Class A3).

4.5. Ref. No: 2020/0926/A | 32-34 New Oxford Street London WC1A 1AP | Status: **Granted.**

Display of 1x internally illuminated fascia sign and 2x internally illuminated projecting signs.

5. Planning Policies

- National Planning Policy Framework (2021).
- London Plan (2021).
- Camden Local Plan.
 - Policy D1
 - Policy D7
 - Policy D8
 - Policy CC10
- Bloomsbury conservation area appraisal and Management Strategy (2011).
- Bloomsbury Conservation Guidelines for shopfront design and Advertisement.
- Camden Planning Guideline for shopfront design.
- Camden Planning Guidance for Advertisements

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 5.1.** In the first instance it is necessary to consider the national planning policy context which is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2021.

- 5.2.** The NPPF is clear that Planning Permission should be granted for development where it accords with planning policy. To this end in Paragraph 7 of the NPPF the point is made that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- 5.3.** Paragraph 8 of the NPPF outlines the three strands to sustainable development namely economic, social and environmental objectives. It includes 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.

- 5.4.** Paragraph 9 reinforces the point that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.
- 5.5.** The National Planning Policy Framework at Paragraph 11 makes it clear that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of national planning policy and where a proposal accords with planning policy then it should be permitted without delay.
- 5.6.** Further attention is drawn to Paragraph 38 of the NPPF which encourages local planning authorities to approach decision-taking in a positive way by looking for solutions rather than problems. Decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications by using the full range of planning tools available to them and working proactively with applicants.
- 5.7.** Paragraph 51 of the NPPF, which identifies local circumstances as a relevant factor to consider when making decisions. Further Paragraph 55 makes it clear that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where necessary.
- 5.8.** Paragraph 54 states Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable using conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.

- 5.9.** Paragraph 81 mentions that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

London Plan (2021)

- 5.10. The London Plan** was updated on 29 January 2021 to incorporate consideration of its impacts on equality, the environment, health, community safety and natural habitats.

- 5.11.** The policies in the current adopted London Plan (2021) relevant to this application are as follows:

- **Policy D3 – Character and Appearance**

- 5.12.** This policy states that development proposals should enhance local context by delivering building and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their layout, orientation, scale, appearance and shape, with due regard to existing and emerging street hierarchy, building types, forms and proportions.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (2011)

- 5.13.** Bloomsbury Conservation Area covers an area of approximately 160 hectares extending from Euston Road in the north to High Holborn and Lincoln’s Inn Fields in the south and from Tottenham Court Road in the west to King’s Cross Road in the east.

- 5.14.** This appraisal has been prepared to define the special interest of the Conservation Area in order that its key attributes are understood and can be protected, and that measures are put in place to ensure appropriate enhancement. It replaces a Conservation Area Statement adopted in 1998.

Bloomsbury Conservation Guideline for shopfront and Advertisements

- 5.15.** All historic shopfronts within the Conservation Area contribute to the special character and their retention is particularly important. The Council expects all historic shopfronts to be retained and restored in the appropriate manner.
- 5.16.** The installation of a new shop front, shutters and grilles and most alterations will need planning permission. Inappropriate and poorly designed shopfronts detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Council expects the quality and design of new shopfronts to respond sensitively to their historic setting and, importantly, the building frontage.
- 5.17.** The installation of signage in many cases requires advertisement consent; this is particularly the case for illuminated signage which can have a major impact in conservation areas. A proliferation of signage, even of an appropriate design, could harm the character of the Conservation Area.
- 5.18.** New development may increase pressure for more intensive advertising. This will be resisted where it is considered to detract from the character and appearance of the area.

Camden Planning Guidance for Shopfront Design and Advertisement.

- 5.19.** Shopfronts make a significant contribution to the character and richness of experience of Camden's centres and streets.
- 5.20.** Planning permission is required for the proposed complete or substantial demolition of any building in a conservation area. This includes the removal of a shopfront or of any feature that gives character to a building. In assessing applications to alter shopfronts within conservation areas special attention will be given to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas.
- 5.21.** For shops in conservation areas, reference should also be made to the relevant Conservation Area Statement/Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy (there are 40 in total). These describe the area and its special character and include guidelines that provide the framework for development proposals in the area and the appraisals contain audits of shopfronts of merit.
- 5.22.** There are several general principles that apply to the design of shopfronts, whether new or historic, as set out below:
- Shopfronts should respect the design, character and proportions of the building within which they are situated and respect the character of the street.
 - Shopfronts should always be considered as part of a unified design of the whole building and should respect the character of adjacent properties.
 - Any corporate “house styles” or branding should be appropriately and sensitively adapted to respond to and fit in with the context of the building or surrounding street.
 - The materials and proportions of shopfronts should be sensitively chosen to be appropriate to the host building and surrounding context.
 - Shopfronts should be designed to add visual interest, quality and vitality to the street scene.
 - Any signage or lettering should be uncluttered and respect the character and design of the building.

- Any security safeguards should be unobtrusively incorporated.
- All shopfronts should be designed to provide access into the premises for all (For further guidance on designing accessible buildings, please see CPG Access).

5.23. The design of new shop frontages should add to the richness of experience for users of streets and public spaces and contribute to the character and attractiveness of the frontage of which they form part. Shopfronts play a key role in creating active and attractive frontages, in town centres, and enlivening streets and public areas. Well-designed shopfronts should include detailed features that help to add richness to the shop and wider street scene; for example, vertical or horizontal elements that respond to the rhythm or symmetry of upper floors or adjacent buildings.

6. Appraisal

- 6.1.** London Plan Policy E9 supports a successful, competitive and diverse retail sector, which promotes sustainable access to goods and services for all Londoners. The proposal will not cause a detrimental impact on the area's vitality and viability, contribution to a sense of place, as well as community safety, health and well-being.
- 6.2.** Access and servicing do not result in an adverse impact on the safety of pedestrians and traffic flow or cause unacceptable increases in traffic and parking.
- 6.3.** Considering the information above, the proposed development is appropriate in this location and is acceptable.

Heritage

- 6.4. The proposal would not have an adverse effect on the building regarding conservation areas in Camden council. The Advertisement and Awning Canopy have been carefully considered in respect to planning policies and guidance to achieve balance and not bring harm to the conservation area.

- 6.5. The proposal is clearly reversible without causing any significant harm that cannot be prepared without a minor repair, but at the same time allow the restaurant to function efficiently and therefore maintain the viability of the conservation area.

Impact on Neighbourhood and Visual Amenity

- 6.6. The proposed development would enhance the aesthetic appeal to shopfront and contribute positively to visual amenities of the neighbourhood. The design, colours, and materials ensure that awning and advertisements do not obstruct or detract from the visual appeal of neighbouring properties.

- 6.7. The development will enhance the local character and contribute to the economic vitality of the neighbourhood by integrating seamlessly with the existing architectural style and respecting the conservation area guideline.

Impact on Highways/Parking

- 6.8. This application does not have any impact on the surrounding highway network.

Public Safety

- 6.9.** The awning and signage will be constructed and installed following all relevant policies and building regulations together with safety standards, ensuring they are securely fixed and capable of withstanding varying weather conditions, thereby minimizing the risk of accidents.

- 6.10.** The awning is positioned at a height of 3.14 meters directly below advertisement board to avoid interference with pedestrians' movement, maintaining clear and safe access along the footpath.

- 6.11.** As mentioned in the proposals, advertisements and awning is designed with adequate visibility in mind, ensuring they are easily seen by passersby without obstructing views of traffic or creating any visual blind spots. This is to avoid distraction to both pedestrians and drivers.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. Having analysed the planning policy context and material considerations the proposals don't present significant issues which would warrant a refusal. The proposal will improve the appearance of shopfront, contribute to the visual appeal of the streetscape while ensuring the signage is tasteful, proportionate, and avoids visual clutter.
- 7.2. The planning proposals at the application site are entirely appropriate for the locality, in accordance with the planning policy documents. The proposals would enable the delivery of positive economic effects from the application site, including the creation of local jobs, as well as the added benefits in terms of an increase in footfall and vibrancy. These positive economic benefits are wholly in accordance with the objectives of planning policies in respect of the area at national and local levels.
- 7.3. As shown in the application, with the proposed mitigation measures in place, the plan will not have a negative impact on the neighbouring units in terms of odour and noise.
- 7.4. Having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposed development accords with the policy objectives of the current Local Plan and the NPPF. Planning Permission should therefore be granted for this proposal having regard to the benefits outlined in this statement.