

# Planning Statement

Area outside the Uniqlo Store,  
Eastern Coal Drops Viaduct,  
Coal Drops Yard,  
Stable Street,  
N1C 4DQ

Uniqlo

January 2025

## Version Control

Document owner		GC			
Project Reference		2024-358			
Date created		20/01/25			
Next scheduled review					
Version number	Modified by	Modifications made	Date modified	Reviewed by	Date reviewed
0.1	GMC	First Draft	20/01/25	JW	28/01/25

### Versioning guidelines:

0.1	<draft version>
1.0	<approved version>
1.1	<minor amendment>
2.0	<major revision>

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## Executive Summary

Newsteer Real Estate Advisers is delighted to have been instructed to submit this full planning application on behalf of our client, Uniqlo, for temporary permission relating to outdoor seating and art installation at the area outside the Uniqlo Store, Eastern Coal Drops Viaduct, Coal Drops Yard, Stable Street, N1C 4DQ. The proposal follows the opening of the Applicant's 20<sup>th</sup> Uniqlo UK store and is proposed as a 'welcome gift' to the community in line with the brands Japanese cultural heritage.

To develop the proposal, the Applicant partnered with, Coal Drops Yard neighbour, Central Saint Martins ('CSM') as a student design collaboration. Set by Uniqlo, the concept for the design project centred on the Japanese concept of '*hikkoshi no aisatsu*' – an introduction to neighbours with the presentation of a small gift. In addition to this, the student brief was guided by heritage input by Malcom Fryer Associates and planning advice provided by Newsteer.

The proposals went through an iterative design process (including formal pre-application engagement with the Council) in which the concepts, materials and colour palette was refined with the final proposal drawing on the architecture of the Site and historic environment together with the sense of 'homeliness' associated with housewarming. The modular design draws on elements of the historic fabric including the arches and colour palette, whilst creating opportunities for interaction and engagement with the modular pieces.

Sensitive to the historic environment, the proposal seeks permission for a two year period and is not physically fixed to the Site and is fully reversible. Considering key views into and around the Site the proposal ensures views in and around the Site are retained.

The proposal is considered to be an overall benefit to the Site presenting opportunities to increase footfall and engagement within Coal Drops Yard in line with the wider aspirations of the space.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Newsteer Real Estate Advisers (hereinafter 'the Agent') on behalf of Uniqlo (hereinafter 'the Applicant') in support of a full planning application at the area outside the Uniqlo Store, Eastern Coal Drops Viaduct, Coal Drops Yard, Stable Street, N1C 4DQ (hereinafter 'the Site').
- 1.2 The proposals – in support of which this Planning Statement has been prepared – seek temporary permission for the provision of a public art / seating installation (hereinafter 'the Proposed Development').
- 1.3 The description of development for which full planning permission is sought is as follows:  
*"Provision of a temporary art installation/ public seating area for up to 2 years."*

## UNIQLO, CSM the Background and the Brief

- 1.4 This is a project between Uniqlo and Central Saint Martins ('CSM') as a student design collaboration project for a public art installation/ area of public seating. This collaboration followed a previous project together in 2022 which focused on re-imaging unsellable Uniqlo items through the lens of 'Essential Futures'. The brief for this proposal focuses on 'Spatial Practices' seeking for students, via their consultancy course, to create a playful –sustainable– sculpture that invites all visitors to play and interact around the opening of the Coal Drops Yard Store.
- 1.5 UNIQLO is a global clothing apparel company, originally founded in Yamaguchi, Japan in 1949. The Applicant operates according to their mission – "...to create clothes that are non-disposable, long-lasting, and which function as perfect components of everyday wear." The principles of sustainability are central to delivering this philosophy, with the aspiration being for UNIQLO at Coal Drops Yard to "...become a concept store that aligns with the key pillars of; sustainability, innovation/creativity and community." Building on this background, the design brief guided students to develop an interactive public art proposal framed by the following concept:

*Taking inspiration from our Japanese heritage, it is considered polite for new residents to introduce themselves to their neighbours and present a small gift, practice known as, 'hikkoshi no aisatsu'. We would like to thank the diverse neighbourhood and community for their warm welcome by giving back.*

- 1.6 To ensure the suitability of the piece, Malcom Fryer Architects and Newsteer were commissioned to inform the relevant planning and heritage considerations reflective of the Site's historic context. These considerations include:
  - Reversibility – the proposals leave no trace on the building or viaduct once removed.
  - Self-Supporting – the proposals do not involve any drilling into the Eastern Coal Drop Building or viaduct floor (protecting the waterproofing layer beneath the surface).
  - Maintaining Views – the proposals manage impact on the key views from Bagley's Walk to the South.
  - Secure by design – the proposals consider how the public could / would interact with the installation as well as resistance to damage / vandalism / antisocial behaviour.
  - Inclusivity – the proposals are interactive and are designed to be inclusive.
  - Sustainability – the proposals were designed with sustainability in mind.

### Supporting Documents

- 1.7 In addition to this Planning Statement, this full application is accompanied by supporting documents. The list of documents prepared has been discussed and agreed through pre-application discussions with the local planning authority.
- 1.8 The supporting documents include the following:
- Application Form;
  - CIL Form;
  - Design Statement;
  - Planning Statement (this document);
  - Heritage Note;
  - Location Plan; and
  - Proposal Plans and Elevations.

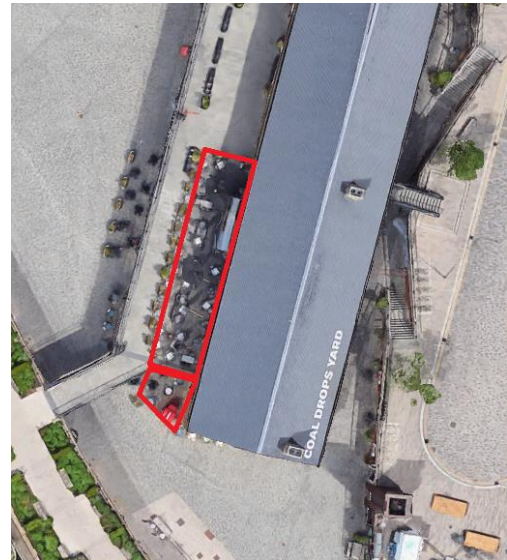
### Structure of this Statement

- 1.9 The remainder of this statement is set out in the following sections:
- Section 2 – The Site and Site Context;
  - Section 3 – The Proposed Development;
  - Section 4 – Pre-application Engagement;
  - Section 5 – Planning Policy Context;
  - Section 6 - Planning Considerations; and,
  - Section 7 – Summary and Conclusions.

## 2 The Site and Site Context

### The Site

- 2.1 The Site itself comprises a small area of public realm located directly outside the Uniqlo Store at first floor level whilst retaining a generous circulation space connecting to Badgely Walk in front of the store (**Figure 1**). Additionally, the Site includes a small area of public realm located at yard level providing opportunities to active the upper and lower areas of Coal Drops Yard.



**Figure 1:** Figure 1 – Aerial Photograph of Site (Site in red)

### Site Context

- 2.2 The Site is located in what is known as the Eastern Coal Drop Viaduct, an area in the southeastern corner of Coal Drops Yard. The Site was originally built as a railway siding alongside the Eastern Coal Drop Building and now forms an area of public realm outside of the Coal Drops Yard Uniqlo Retail Store.
- 2.3 Subject to comprehensive regeneration as part of the 67 acre master planned King's Cross Central development, the recent transformation of the Site together with the wider Goods Yard has sought to balance the extraordinary history of the site with meaningful public access and amenity which respects and reveals the significance of the many heritage assets. As part of this transformation masterplan, Coal Drops Yard and its surrounding buildings were subject to a substantial and ambitious redevelopment for retail use between 2016 and 2018, designed by Heatherwick Studios. The development adaptively re-used the eastern and western coal drop buildings, their viaducts and a section of the Wharf Road Viaduct and included a substantial roof level development that linked the two coal drops buildings, and substantial new public spaces.
- 2.4 The Site is located within the Regents Canal Conservation Area (sub area 3 Kings Cross Goods Yard), King's Cross Opportunity Area, Site Allocation 1 – King's Cross Growth Area, Central London Area, Flood Zone 1 and Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Area (Regents Canal and Rail Infrastructure). Within the draft New Local Plan (currently at Regulation 18 stage), the Yard has an emerging designation of a CAZ Retail Cluster.
- 2.5 In addition to the above designations, as part of the Eastern Coal Drop, the Site is listed Grade II listed. Additionally, it is surrounded by various designated and non-designated heritage assets. The designated heritage assets include:
- Eastern Coal Drop (Grade II listed) and curtilage listed Eastern Coal Drop Viaduct
  - The Granary Building (Grade II listed)
  - The Gasholder Triplets (Grade II listed)
  - Gasholder Park (Gasholder No. 8, Grade II listed)
- 2.6 The Regent's Canal Conservation Area Buildings and structures that contribute positively to the conservation area include:
- The Regents Canal

- Western Coal Drop and Viaduct
- Fish & Coal Offices
- Wharf Road Viaduct (now Bagley's Way)
- The listed buildings (named above)

2.7 The key views that include the Coal Drop Buildings and Coal Drops Yard which have been carefully considered in the proposed development site are:

1. From the south of the canal, looking north to the Granary, Fish & Coal Offices and Eastern Coal Drops
2. Along Stable Street, with brick arcading on both sides of the street
3. From Wharf Road Viaduct (now known as Bagley Walk) towards the two Coal Drops and the Heatherwick's roof extension between
4. From the north, towards the two gables of the Coal Drops and the new extension
5. From the ramp, with views of Fish & Coal Offices and the gables of the Coal Drops with the Triplets beyond

### Planning History

2.8 The Site has a long planning history, the following are considered most pertinent to an assessment of the proposed development.

2.9 Coal Drops Yard was granted planning permission in 2015 under Reserved Matters Application (ref. 2015/6018/P). This permission formed part of the wider Kings Cross Railway Lands Redevelopment (ref. 2004/2307/P). This permission was supported by the corresponding Listed Building Consent applications (Ref. 2015/6016/L, 2017/6732/L, 2018/2566/L and 2018/3623/L).

2.10 A number of planning and listed building consent applications followed the above permissions for placemaking and public realm works related to the roof extension that links the eastern and western coal drops as well as signage lighting throughout the Goods Yard. These applications sought improvements to lighting, sound systems and the provision of a number of external visual screens (ref. 2019/4509/P, 2019/4149/L and 2020/3110/P).

2.11 More recently, further permission for public realm and placemaking works has been sought with listed building consent and advertisement consent being granted in August 2023 for the installation of new signage, lighting and speakers (refs. 2023/2159/A and ref. 2023/2044/L) these works were focused at the Yard Level.

2.12 The proposal seeks to build on the principles of placemaking and activation of the Coal Drops Yard site established through the above history.



### 3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The description of development for which full planning permission is sought is as follows:

*“Provision of a temporary art installation/ public seating area for up to 2 years”*

#### The Proposal

- 3.2 To celebrate the opening of Uniqlo's 20th store, the Coal Drops Yard Store, the Applicant together with CSM has designed an interactive public art/ seating area to be in place for up to 2 years.
- 3.3 The proposal seeks temporary permission for an interactive temporary art installation at the Site. Developed with the Japanese concept of 'housewarming' in mind the proposal brings together two initial design concepts the first being 'soft/urban pillow/modular' and the second being 'arch/assembly for all/round table'. This concept seeks the provision of a combination of soft interactive structures for sitting and climbing and structured elements including arches and a round table allowing opportunities for interactivity and increased dwell time within the public realm.
- 3.4 The materiality of the proposal has been thoroughly considered to ensure it is robust and resistant to the elements. The muted colour palette draws on both the historic (warm orange) and natural (green) environment whilst drawing on a muted Uniqlo red and a nod to housewarming culture with a soft beige.
- 3.5 Aligning with the principle of a temporary structure the proposals are weighted in order to remain in place without the need for 'fixing' to the historic fabric of the building. The proposal includes the provision of low level lighting to be conditioned utilizing the existing power provision within the Site.
- 3.6 Further information is provided in the Design Document produced by CSM submitted in support of this application.

## 4 Pre-Application Engagement

- 4.1 Paragraph 39 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (hereinafter 'the NPPF') recognises that good quality early pre-application engagement enables better coordination between public and private resources which often improves outcomes for the community.
- 4.2 Cognisant of this, the Applicant proactively sought to engage with the LBC, through the pre-application process, with submission of a pack of information and a meeting at LBC's office on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2025. This meeting was further bolstered by a written response and email exchanges.

### Pre-Application Feedback

- 4.3 The pre-application meeting focused on the design detailed within this submission. During the meeting CSM Students presented the proposals to officers detailing the design brief, development, aspirations for and approach to the proposal.
- 4.4 During this meeting the background to the wider Coal Drops Yard development was discussed including the heritage context for the scheme. The Applicant team discussed how the proposal had been designed to respect key views of the building whilst creating activity and excitement to the new Uniqlo store as well as the wider Coal Drops Yard development.
- 4.5 Officer's supported the approach taken to the historic context, including the proposal of a free-standing installation that would retain the integrity of the existing building fabric. It was noted that as the installation is not readily moveable, Listed Building Consent is required.
- 4.6 The provision of soft low level lighting was supported by Officer's, with comments noting that any conduits / power points / cabling would need to be detailed with any application. It was noted that the site is some distance from residential uses, accordingly there are no amenity concerns in terms of loss of light or noise pollution.
- 4.7 It was agreed that the application would be exempt from the requirements of Biodiversity Net Gain, with the proposal falling under the de minimis threshold.
- 4.8 As the Site is located within the public realm the importance of maintaining circulation routes was welcomed.
- 4.9 Overall, the proposal was supported and received as a positive intervention that would help to *"enliven and activate this area which currently feels quiet and desolate"*.

## 5 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 Directed by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), Planning Applications should be determined in accordance with an up-to-date development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the purpose of determining applications at the Site, the Development Plan consists of the following documents: -
- Camden Local Plan (2017);
  - Camden Site Allocations Plan (2013)
  - London Plan (2021);
- 5.2 The NPPF and NPPG are also material considerations in any proposal at the Site. Additionally, the Regents Canal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) is also a material consideration.
- 5.3 The Council is also currently in the process of updating their Local Plan. The Council consulted on the draft new Local Plan, Regulation 18 stage, from 17 January to 13 March 2024.
- 5.4 The Site is subject to the following Planning Policy Designations: -
- Regents Canal Conservation Area (sub area 3 Kings Cross Goods Yard);
  - Grade II Listed Eastern Coal Drop;
  - King's Cross Opportunity Area;
  - Site Allocation 1 – King's Cross Growth Area;
  - Central London Area; and,
  - Flood Zone 1 and Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Area (Regents Canal and Rail Infrastructure).
- 5.5 Within the draft New Local Plan (currently at Regulation 18 stage), the Yard has an emerging designation of a CAZ Retail Cluster.

## 6 Planning Considerations

- 6.1 This planning application proposes the provision of a temporary art installation/ public seating for a period of up to 2 years.
- 6.2 The key planning considerations in the determination of this planning application will be set out under the respective headings below.
- The Principle of Development
  - Principle of the Proposed Installation
  - Design and Heritage Considerations
  - Sustainability Matters
  - Access and Circulation
  - Biodiversity Net Gain
  - Neighbouring Amenity
  - Provision of Lighting

### *Principle of Development*

- 6.3 At the heart of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development (Paragraph 11), which states that permission should be granted without delay, where proposals accord with the Development Plan.
- 6.4 The Site is located in the Kings Cross Area for growth and area in which **Local Plan Policy G1** directs the most significant growth. As the borough's largest development area Local Plan **paragraph 2.25** recognises that (the now complete) development is bringing life back to the area with the community facilities including inter alia new routes, high quality public squares and play spaces adding vibrancy to the area.
- 6.5 As a sustainably located Site, located in one of the borough's major growth areas, development is considered acceptable in principle subject to the detailed matters of the development plan. Further to this, it is relevant to note that the proposal seeks temporary permission, with the proposal being fully reversible, further supporting the acceptability of development in principle.

### *Principle of Proposed Installation*

- 6.6 The proposed development seeks to create excitement and engagement within the public realm associated with the new UNIQLO store. This principle accords with **Local Plan Policy TC2** through which the Council seeks to promote successful and vibrant centres. This policy specifically looks to protect and enhance the role and unique character of each centre ensuring that new development is of an appropriate scale for the centre in which it is located.
- 6.7 The proposed installation comprises the provision of interactive public art/ seating, provided to create engagement and excitement within Coal Drops Yard. Adding to the high quality landscape design within Coal Drops Yard, it accords with the principles detailed in **Local Plan Policy D1 k** which seeks the incorporation of high quality landscape design, including public art. It is recognised that this policy goes on to state that public art will only be permitted where it enhances the local character and environment, whilst contributing to a harmonious and balanced landscape design (discussed in the following section).
- 6.8 The supplementary text provided in **Local Plan paragraph 7.24** recognises that public art can help to add visual interest and act as a focal point to create a distinctive character to places and spaces. The location of the proposed art together with the temporary nature of the

installation assist in supporting these principles, creating opportunities for the public to engage and increase dwell time within Coal Drops Yard. This approach was supported in the pre-application response through which the Officer's note that the principle of an installation with the potential to enliven the space and create interest and attraction is welcomed.

### *Design & Heritage Considerations*

- 6.9 The proposal seeks to provide opportunities for interaction and excitement connecting with the opening of the Coal Drops Yard Uniqlo Store. Taking direction from **Local Plan Policy D1**, the proposal aims to deliver high quality development that incorporates the use of sustainable materials, with the colour of the materials drawing on the materiality of the listed building. The proposed materials and the approach to materiality is detailed in the accompanying Design Document.
- 6.10 Further detailed in the accompanying Design Document, the proposals include a number of separate elements providing inclusive opportunities for interaction with elements at a range of levels. The modular aspect of the design also enables flexibility with the arrangement of the individual pieces providing opportunities for rearrangement and new opportunities for interaction throughout the seasons. According with **Local Plan Policy D1 part i**, the proposal retains clear sight lines around the development discouraging antisocial behaviour.
- 6.11 By retaining sight lines to the listed building, the proposal seeks to retain an emphasis on the heritage of the building. The design draws on the historic fabric of Coal Drops Yard with the installations drawing on elements of the listed building such as the arched structure which reflects the arched windows of the eastern coal drop that are a recognisable feature of the historic fabric. By ensuring that the installation is stand alone and does not rely on fixings to either the terrace or walls the installation is fully reversible and protects the historic fabric of the building. The heritage considerations are detailed in the accompanying note by Malcom Fryer Architects.
- 6.12 The proposal as a whole sits below the eaves height of Eastern Coal Drops Viaduct ensuring the key views (detailed above) around the Site, in particular those looking through the yard (views 3, 4 and 5) are retained. **Local Plan Policy D2** guides the LPA's approach to protecting heritage assets. In order to ensure the retention and protection of the Site as a designated heritage asset temporary permission is being sought for 2 years with reversibility forming a key aspect of the brief.
- 6.13 According with the above assessment, the sensitive design, together with the reversibility and temporary nature of the proposal ensure compliance with **Local Plan Policies D1 and D2** with the special architectural and historic interest of the building are retained.

### *Access and Circulation*

- 6.14 As detailed throughout this submission, the proposal is located within the public realm adjacent to the Uniqlo store. To ensure the proposal does not impinge on the wider circulation space, the modular elements will be set within 4m of the building wall, with the retained circulation space connecting to Badgely Walk in excess of 4m wide. This arrangement is reflected at the yard level with the provision of a 'pillow' within close proximity to the building outside of key circulation space. This approach aligns with **Local Plan Policy T1** which prioritises walking, cycling and public transport, and seeks to ensure that the pedestrian environment is protected and allows for clear access for all users, in particular those who are more vulnerable and who may use wheelchairs or mobility scooters.
- 6.15 Detailed in the submitted Design Document, the proposals have been carefully designed giving consideration to interaction by a variety of users. This includes ensuring accessible

heights for the table element and the provision of flexibility to allow for manoeuvrability between individual elements.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.16 It is noted that mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain was introduced in February 2024, requiring the provision of 10% BNG on development Sites – subject to a number of exceptions. The de minimis exception removes this requirement for Sites that impact less than 25sqm of non-priority habitat. The Site is comprised of hard standing in its entirety; accordingly, the proposal does not impact any habitats and meets the de minimis exemption.

#### Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.17 The proposal is located within an existing commercial area away from any existing or proposed residential uses. In light of the separation distances (in excess of 100m) and the presence of buildings between, the proposal is unlikely to result in any impact to neighbouring occupier amenity – this assessment is consistent with the view taken by Officer's during the pre-application feedback.

#### Provision of Lighting

- 6.18 The proposal includes the provision of low level soft lighting associated with the arch and table with seating. As detailing in the Heritage submission, the proposal will make use of the existing power points located on the building façade. As the detail associated with the low level lighting included as part of the installation, must be co-ordinated with the fabricators, the Applicant proposes the following condition to enable the provision of low level lighting at the time details are available.

*"Prior to the installation of conduits of external lighting as part of the temporary art installation/ public seating details of the lighting scheme must be agreed in writing with the LPA."*

- 6.19 The timing of this condition ensures the proposal will not result in any adverse impact on the listed building associated with the provision of lighting, whilst enabling the Applicant to commence the production and provision of the installation in advance of these details.

## 7 Summary and Conclusions

7.1 A full planning application is submitted seeking:

*“Provision of a temporary art installation/ public seating area for up to 2 years”*

7.2 This application is accompanied by detailed planning and design documentation which demonstrate that the proposals are not only acceptable and in accordance with local, regional and national policy but further the goals and aspirations set by policy.

7.3 In summary, the proposal has been subject to pre-application engagement process, working with LBC. The proposal is for a temporary period and seeks to makes best use of the Site providing an exciting opportunity to create activity and excitement within the Coal Drops Yard centre.

7.4 The proposed development constitutes “sustainable development” in accordance with Paragraph 8 of the NPPF and according to the provisions of Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the development should be granted Planning Permission “without delay”.