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105 Judd Street, WC1H 9RN,
Townscape, Heritage Visual Impact
Assessment S.73 Report

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1 Introduction

Purpose

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to support the Section 73 application for amendments to the approved proposals, 2022/1817/P, and subsequent NMA, at 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9RN.
- 1.2 These updates result from the development of information for the construction process, feedback from the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and changes to facilitate a tenant fitout scheme.
- 1.3 The report should be read in conjunction with the Townscape, Heritage & Visual Impact Assessment prepared by KMHeritage in March 2022, which provides detailed background on the heritage and townscape context and has been relied upon for historical context. That report also contains townscape methodology used for assessment. Details of the proposals are provided in the S.73 Design & Access Statement prepared by Stiff+Trevillion.

Author

- 1.4 The author of this report is Nick Collins BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS IHBC. Nick is a Director of Portico Heritage. He has thirty years experience in the property sector, including working with KMHeritage and as a Project Director in the conservation team at Alan Baxter & Associates. Nick spent nine years at Historic England where he was a Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas leading a specialist team of historic building inspectors, architects, and archaeologists on a wide range of heritage projects in East & South London. Previously a Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Bromley, Nick began his career at real estate consultancy Jones Lang LaSalle as a Chartered Surveyor.
- 1.5 Nick is a member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and sits on the Historic England London Advisory Committee.

2 The site and its context

105-121 Judd Street

- 2.1 105-121 Judd Street is a large, red brick building of the early 20th century, situated in the north-eastern sector of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in the London Borough of Camden. The site is bounded by Judd Street to the east, Hastings Street to the north, and Thanet Street to the west. To the south, the site is bounded by 19th century terraced houses and the whole block is terminated at that end by Medway Court. Judd Street is part of a key north-south route running from Guilford Street to Euston Road.
- 2.2 Constructed in two phases, the first was the L-shape section on the north and west of the site between c.1900-10 and the second, onto Judd Street, between 1922 and 1939.
- 2.3 Built in red brick, it is a decorative building featuring sandstone accents, large ornately framed windows at ground floor level and a turret on its north eastern corner (first phase). The places where the two phases meet can be discerned on Judd Street through the different elevation treatments at ground floor level with the later phase making bold use of sandstone dressing.
- 2.4 The building was occupied on its completion in 1911 by the Salvation Army and utilised as its Trade Headquarters where all of its business excepting printing was carried out.



Figure 1: The building shortly after completion in 1911

- 2.5 The building escaped major damage during the Blitz of the Second World War and continued to be occupied by the Salvation Army until 2000 when it was taken by the Royal National Institute of Blind People.
- 2.6 The consent in 2022 was granted for (amongst other elements) the upward extension of the building as a modern mansard roof incorporating a steady rhythm of double height contemporary dormers¹.
- 2.7 The extension was chamfered and plain behind the corner turret, providing a clear backdrop. The turret continued to pierce the sky in townscape views.
- 2.8 The projecting decorative dormers at 5th floor created a skyline silhouette that echoed, but was distinct from and subservient to, the profile of the existing building masonry dormers at 3rd floor below.
- 2.9 In order to mediate successfully between the host building and its extension, the scheme proposed the addition of an additional level of masonry floor to replace the mansard on the 'plainer' elevations of Hastings Street and Thanet Street. The reproduced the existing appearance of these elevations below, with a subtle change to a plainer lintol detail, and remained separated from the elaborate masonry dormers of Judd Street and the corner.
- 2.10 The central part of this additional masonry storey on Thanet Street was set back as part of a stepped elevation that mitigated the effect of the proposed additional building mass on the western side of Thanet Street.
- 2.11 The result was a combination of old and new, the new complemented the old by being different, and visually subservient. The design eschewed the tried and tested format of the 'glass box' for a much more subtle and considered approach that drew on the past without imitating it.

¹ Description of consented proposal from THVIA, KMHeritage March 2022

3 The heritage & townscape context of the site

Introduction

- 3.1 The site lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area which was designated in 1968. Whilst there are no listed buildings on the site, there are a number in the immediate vicinity including 87-103 Judd Street; 8-17 Thanet Street; 2-9 Sandwich Street; 61 & 63 Judd Street – all Grade II listed – as well as buildings on Leigh Street, Cartwright Gardens, Mabledon Place and Camden Town Hall at the top of Judd Street.

The heritage & townscape context of the site

- 3.2 The heritage and townscape context of the site is described in detail in the previous KMHeritage THVIA report.
- 3.3 105 Judd Street makes a positive contribution to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. It is a characterful building that enlivens the varied streetscapes of Judd Street, Hastings Street and Thanet Street.
- 3.4 It sits amongst various building typologies, ranging from early 19th century terraced houses, through Victorian and Edwardian mansion blocks, 20th century municipal buildings, and post-war flatted housing to a new urban townhouse from 2002.
- 3.5 The existing building has obvious heritage significance. It possesses clear evidential and historical value, both in terms of illustrating the development of the area in a certain period but also in its original subsequent use. It has aesthetic value as an example of Edwardian/inter-war architectural design.
- 3.6 Its corner turret performs a useful townscape role in creating a focal point at the corner of Judd Street and Hastings Street. Despite being built in two phases the building is clearly perceived as one building, though there is a clear architectural hierarchy – the principal elevation is that to Judd Street and the first portion of Hastings Street. The rest of Hastings Street elevation and that on Thanet Street is humbler.
- 3.7 105 Judd Street and its context collectively illustrate the development of this part of London. The story of the site and its surroundings help illustrate how the city evolved over an extended historical period, and particularly illustrates change that occurred firstly in the development of Bloomsbury in the 18th century and secondly by economic, social and architectural developments in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries that overlaid the earlier Georgian grid with replacement buildings and amalgamated plots.

Townscape Character

- 3.8 Townscape character is defined not just by the built environment but also by Judd Street's status as a key north-south transit route through the eastern portion of Bloomsbury connecting with the Euston Road which can lead it to be busy with road traffic.
- 3.9 The street exhibits a range of building typologies, ranging from early 19th century terraced houses of up to three storeys, through to Edwardian mansion blocks of up to seven storeys (for example Jessel House, Queen Alexandra Mansions, Hastings Houses and Tonbridge Houses), post-war blocks of flats set around small, green spaces (e.g. Medway Court) and large early-mid 20th century commercial and municipal buildings (including Camden Town Hall and a 1950s telephone exchange). There are a few small convenience stores, restaurants, public houses and independent business in Judd Street and Leigh Street but their relatively low-key presence is not enough to engender a bustling local character.
- 3.10 The townscape significance of the site lies in its location — at a key node on Judd Street, an important north-south throughfare through the district and in its physical manifestation. Its corner turret performs a useful townscape role in creating a focal point at the corner of Judd Street and Hastings Street.

4 The proposed scheme and its effect

4.1 The proposals are described and illustrated in detail in the S.73 Design & Access Statement prepared by Stiff+Trevillion Architects. As referred to earlier, these proposals result from the development of information for the construction process, feedback from the LFB and changes to facilitate a tenant fit out scheme. They have been subject to considerable pre-application design dialogue with Officers including both meetings and workshop.

4.2 The changes to the consented scheme are as follows:

- Increased plant allowances to tenant requirements
- Additional plant accommodated within the building where possible to minimise increase to roof top plant enclosure
- Extension of plant enclosure at roof level to accommodate lab tenant building services requirements New flues centrally located at roof level for lab tenant extract cupboards, extending 3m above the plant enclosure at roof level
- Extension to existing UKPN Substation to met lab tenant power requirements
- New louvres in existing openings at lower ground, ground and first floor levels to facilitate additional building services & UKPN requirements
- Extension of southwest stair core to provide divergent means of escape at 4th & 5th floors responding to LFB compliance comments
- Bridge over existing lightwell and new entrance to service tenant gas store and delivery on Thanet Street
- Extension of goods lift to serve 1st and 2nd floors with overrun into 3rd floor 'white coat' BOH lab goods circulation routes separate to lifts in core 1 – windows in south elevation infilled to accommodate
- Reopen north east corner entrance with new ramp and re-organised steps
- Levels adjustment to Judd Street entrance ramp & plinth to better align with NE corner entrance.

4.3 Clearly the internal works will have no impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area or the setting of nearby listed buildings and so this report focussed on those external elements that *might*. The impact of these changes has been assessed using eight street views that formed part of the original assessment, comparing the consented scheme with the proposals and considering the impact of the proposals. These views have also formed a key part in the pre-application discussion.

Street View 1 – Judd Street/Hastings Street looking South

Consented



Proposed



- 4.4 The consented scheme is seen against the sky as a wholly roof-like proposal, with the additional masonry storey on Hastings Street blending seamlessly with the host building.
- 4.5 The contemporary dormers are expressed as part of the roof whose materiality and colour is subservient to the red and beige tones of the masonry building below.

- 4.6 At the time of the previous application the magnitude of effect of the proposal was regarded as being Minor to Moderate, with the quality of effect being Beneficial.
- 4.7 In terms of their external impact, the amended proposals relate primarily to the new corner entrance, including changes to the steps and the new ramp, and the changes to the roof enclosure massing to rationalise the tenant plant design.
- 4.8 The proposed reintroduction of the north east entrance as the 'Main Entrance' is a particularly positive element of the proposal. The new DDA compliant ramp access has been designed to facilitate this in an elegant manner that will not detract from the building.
- 4.9 Following a determined rationalisation of the required plant space and the 'workshopped' approach to the design, the roof level changes will have a minimal impact on the silhouette of the building in this view.
- 4.10 A 'raked' approach to the additional mass is proposed as the visually simplest option and the spire detail to the north east corner remains prominent in the view - remaining the focal point of the corner, with clear sky surrounding it.
- 4.11 The proposed changes will not alter the previously assessed impact as outlined above.

Street View 2 – Judd Street looking South

Consented



Proposed



- 4.12 In this view the mass at roof level of the consented scheme is set back to allow the spire detail on the norther eastern corner of the site to remain a key visual feature. The overall scale of the proposal is consistent, in perspective, with the telephone exchange building in the foreground.

- 4.13 At this distance the consented scheme was regarded as creating a composition that completes, and is consistent with, the style and appearance of the host building.
- 4.14 At the time of the previous application the magnitude of effect of the proposal was regarded as being Minor to Moderate, with the quality of effect being Beneficial.
- 4.15 The proposed changes include the new entrance and ramp at ground level. At roof level, the additional plant space is slightly more visible, however still remains comfortably in perspective with the nearby buildings.
- 4.16 The roof silhouette has been carefully modelled to ensure the pre-eminence of the corner spire – both in backdrop and allowing its top to just be seen against the sky.
- 4.17 Whilst the proposed new roof enclosure massing is slightly larger, following design efforts and detailing we do not believe that it has such a change as to change the previously assessed impact.