



## Design and Access Statement

Curzon Bloomsbury,  
The Brunswick, WC1N 1AW

Planning submission  
January 2014

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE REPORT

This Design and Access Statement is to support a Planning application for proposed works at the Bloomsbury Cinema at the Brunswick Centre. In designing this scheme we have considered the following planning policies and guidelines:

#### NPPF

1. Building a strong, competitive economy
2. Ensuring the vitality of Town Centres
7. Requiring good design

#### Camden Core Strategy

CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage

#### Camden Planning Guidance

##### CPG1 Design

3. Heritage
8. Advertisements, signs and hoardings

##### CPG 3 Sustainability

##### CPG5 Amenity

6. Food, drink and entertainment uses

#### Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy

Sub Area 12: Coram's Fields/Brunswick Centre

## 1.2 SITE LOCATION

The site is located in the Brunswick Centre in Russell Square, London and is within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The full address is The Brunswick, London WC1N 1AW.

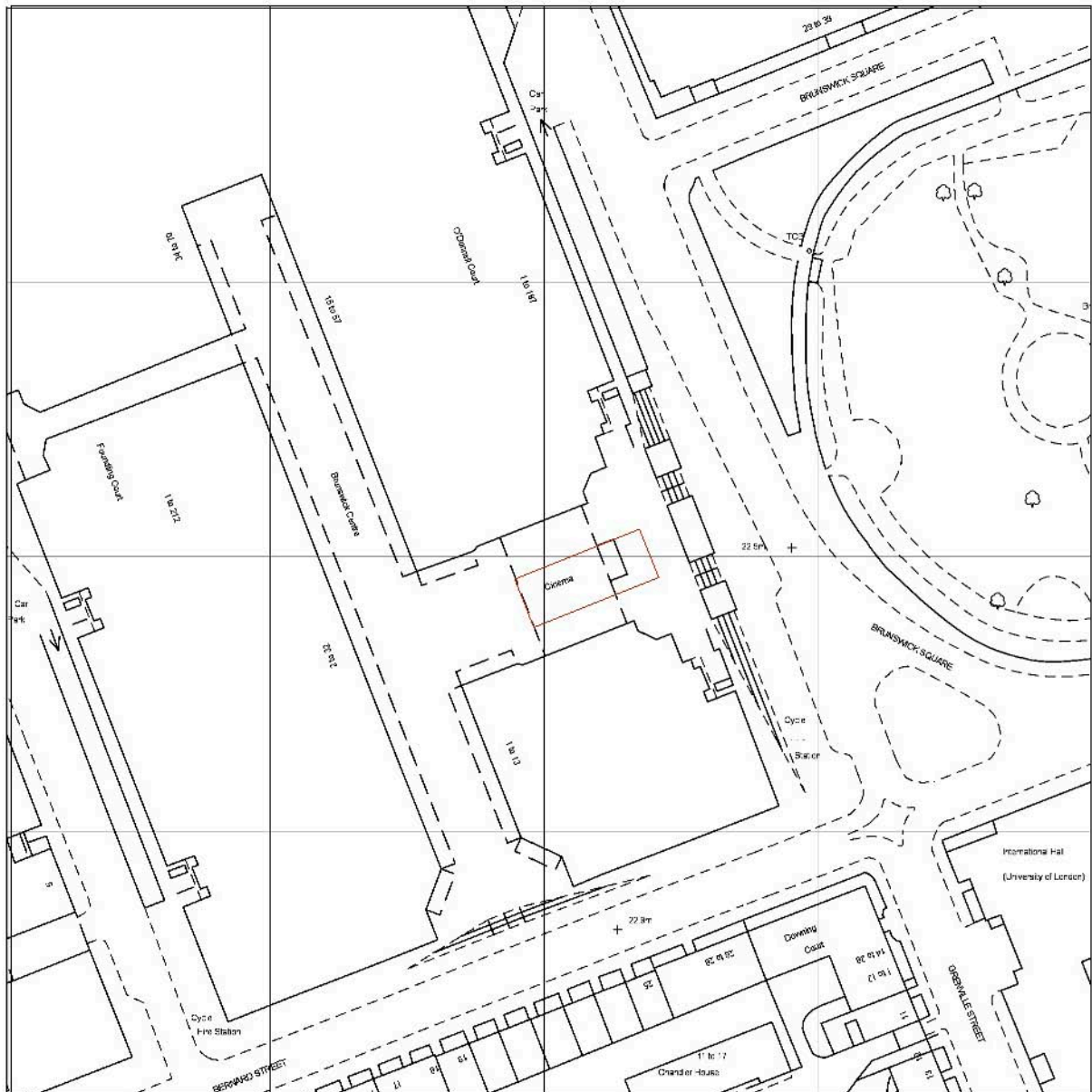


Fig 1. Site Location plan with application site marked in red

## 2.0 SITE CONTEXT

Situated in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, the cinema comprises a street level glazed entrance enclosure which gives access to two levels of basement accommodation consisting of two cinema screens and associated café/bar accommodation and ancillary accommodation. A separate application for Listed Building Consent has been submitted by Unick Architects for internal alterations on the basement levels and a new staircase.

## 2.1 HERITAGE STATEMENT

Originally built in 1972, The Brunswick Centre is one of the pioneering examples of a megastructure in the UK and was Grade II listed in 2000. In the listing description, the internal finishes of the cinema are noted as 'not of special interest'. There have been minor external and internal alterations over the buildings lifetime. Opening in January 1972, the Bloomsbury Cinema consisted of a single cinema screen. Under new ownership in 1978, the main screen was divided to create two equal capacity screens. After a short period of closure and a refurbishment, it re-opened May 1986, renamed the Renoir Cinema.



Fig 2. View of the original cinema from Brunswick Square Gardens



Fig 3. View of the original cinema from the Brunswick

## 2.2 PLANNING HISTORY

Following construction, several applications were submitted and approved (1972-78) for various illuminated sign boxes, poster boxes and signage. It was noted that in 1972 permission was granted for two internally illuminated single sided box signs on west elevation each to read 'BLOOMSBURY' in red letters with a white outline.

In September 2003, planning approval was granted for refurbishment of the Brunswick Centre including a redesigned cinema entrance. The granted scheme comprised of a new circular glazed enclosure with an angled roof, bearing little resemblance to the existing structure and wider Brunswick context. This proposal has not been implemented as the current owners and managers believe it would detract from the street scene and reduce the presence of the well regarded and vital cinema amenity.

### 3.0 THE CINEMA TODAY

The existing ground floor entrance enclosure comprises a glazed curtain wall typical of the period, the quality of which is relatively low in comparison with other areas of the Brunswick Centre. It is not known when, but a lift enclosure was added to the north elevation to improve accessibility. The enclosure was constructed in light coloured metal frames. Over time, the frames weathered significantly and needed to be painted. It has been maintained as such to this date. The internal finishes include in-situ concrete, plastered masonry, lay-in grid ceiling tiles, carpet and rubber flooring.



Fig 4. View from the Brunswick Square Gardens, 2013



Fig 5. Rear view, 2013



Fig 6. Interior view

Demolition of the ground floor enclosure was established as acceptable through a planning consent granted in 2003 for refurbishment of the Brunswick Centre, most of which has now been implemented (Reference number PSX0104561). As it is over 40 years since the ground floor enclosure was first constructed, is now proposed to replace it, bringing it up to the standard of the recently refurbished Brunswick Centre.

The 'Renoir' sign and cinema features are to be retained and sensitively reinterpreted as part of the proposals.

Toh Shimazaki Architecture



## 4.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

### 4.1 FORM, SCALE AND MATERIALS

The proposed replacement enclosure will include a small extension and external seating area overlooking Brunswick Square Gardens. This will accommodate internal and external seating areas for cinema patrons. The extension will align with established building lines to the north and south of the cinema. The extension would not project any further than the adjacent residential entrances (see proposed ground floor plan 386\_114). The proposed canopy to the east would be in line with the canopy over the same residential entrances.

The framework and structure will be elegantly proportioned and will hold the glass with minimal detailing in keeping with the Modernist spirit of the original building. The glazing proportions of the new enclosure have been considered to harmonise with the rhythm of the concrete structures of The Brunswick Centre. Anodised aluminium frames with high performance glazing will replace the existing single glazed enclosure. The fascia will be of a matching material. The materials will be of high quality and durability so to be retained as an exposed metal finish.

The existing enclosure and the wider Brunswick complex have formed strong precedents for the design. Internally the proposed floor finishes will compliment those of the wider Brunswick Centre. A concrete inset floor and staircase take the customers to the screens below, concrete being the defining material of this megastructure context. Light red has been chosen both as a reference to the original 'Bloomsbury signage' and to evoke the atmosphere of red carpets and theatre houses. The bar areas and terrace will be paved with stone to compliment the adjacent paving but will have a different module to delineate the external seating area and canopy above.



Fig 7. South elevation

Toh Shimazaki Architecture

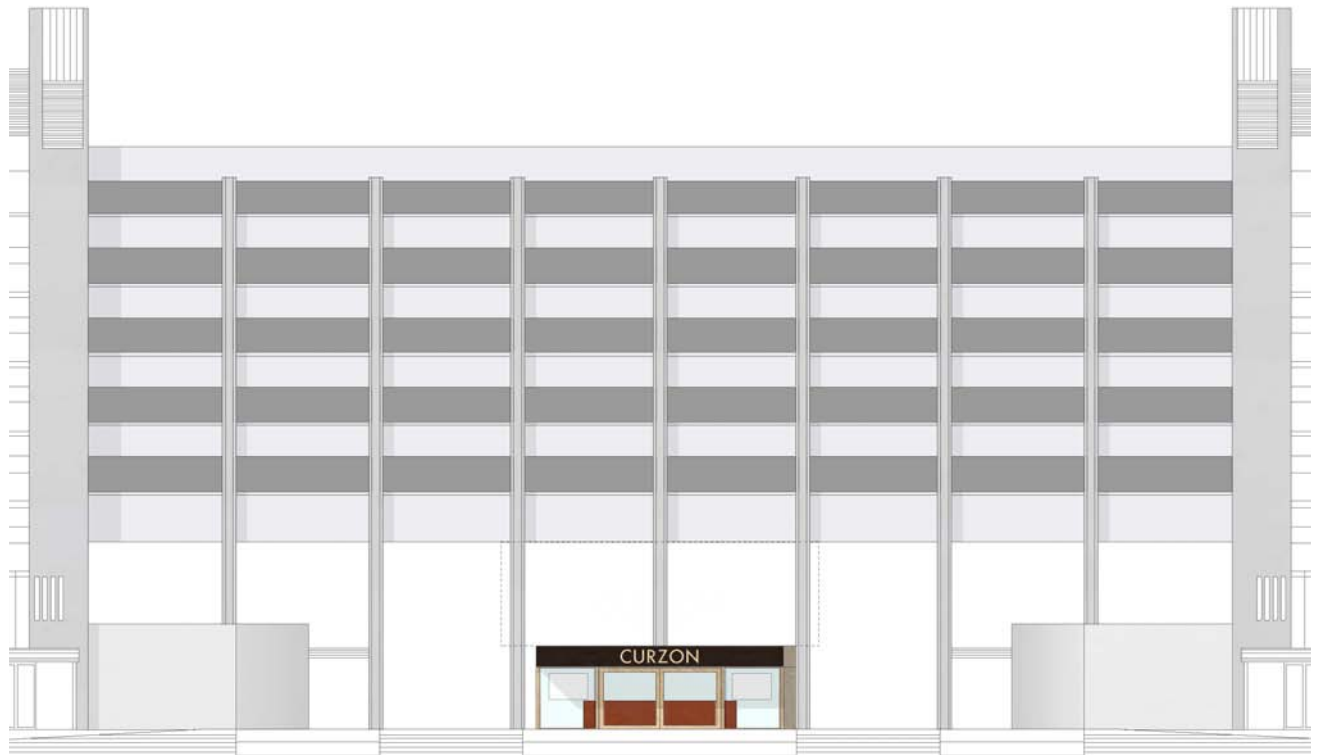


Fig 8. East Elevation

It is proposed to rename the cinema as Curzon Bloomsbury. The original name of the cinema was the Bloomsbury Cinema. It then became the ABC Bloomsbury and eventually the EMI International Film Theatre in January 1977. Following this it was renamed the Gate 2 and the screens were called Gate Bloomsbury 1 and 2 respectively. In 1986, it was renamed the Renoir Cinema under the ownership of Artificial Eye. The Cinema will be renamed Bloomsbury and the main screen of the cinema will be called the Renoir screen, to retain this site heritage.

#### 4.2 ACCESS

There are no proposed changes to the access into the building. The existing lift will be retained to the lower levels.





Fig 9. East Elevation

#### 4.3 SIGNAGE

A separate planning application will be submitted for signage. In brief, a sensitive reinterpretation of the Renoir sign is proposed, as it can no longer be accommodated externally due to the proposals for the 'Eyecatcher' restaurant above. The colour of the new signage will match the light colour of the existing 'Renoir' sign. The sign will be set against a dark coloured fascia, similar to the existing. The 'Renoir' sign itself will be relocated to the interior of the cinema, where the main screen will be named 'Renoir'.

#### 5.0 MEETING THE CLIENT'S BRIEF

This cinema is located in the heart of Bloomsbury and is a well known landmark fronting the Brunswick Square Gardens. Curzon Cinema have chosen to re-develop this building and strengthen their portfolio of unique and specialist art-house cinemas throughout the UK.

Through consultation and discussion, Curzon Cinemas are seeking to liaise closely with Camden Planning Authority to ensure the viability of this asset to the surrounding community.

We are working with the cinema owners in close co-operation with Levitt Bernstein regarding the Eyecatcher proposals. It is vital that the cinema retains an important presence at this important entrance to the Brunswick Centre.