



ENGLISH HERITAGE

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Mr Neil McDonald
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Development Control Planning Services
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Our ref: P00257111

26 September 2013

Dear Mr McDonald

**Notifications under Circular 01/2001, Circular 08/2009 &
T&CP (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010
16A/B AND 18 WEST CENTRAL STREET , 10-12 MUSEUM STREET , 35,37 AND
39-41 NEW OXFORD STREET , CAMDEN , WC1A
Application No 2013/4275/P and associated Conservation Area Consent**

Thank you for your letter of 16 August 2013 notifying us of the application for planning permission relating to the above site. We do not wish to comment in detail, but offer the following general observations.

English Heritage Advice

This submission follows on from previous proposals for the site (your references 2008/4337/C and 2009/5460P) on which we commented in letters of 30 October 2008 and 19 January 2010. Whilst the scheme has been modified to such an extent that it is much improved in many respects, it still involves the demolition and erection of a new building on the site of 16-18 West Central Street, and it is this element of the scheme that raises concerns for English Heritage.

The existing building on the site is highlighted in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Character Appraisal of 2011 as making a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. English Heritage is in agreement with this assessment and considers the building to meet a number of the tests that are set out in our publication '*Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*' in relation to identifying buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of conservation areas. It is our view that the building is a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands. It is clearly associated with the historic laying out of the roads and blocks within the area and is one of a number of light industrial properties that were discretely screened from principle routes behind more formal facades. The facade of the building reflects the traditional functional character and uses within the area, being evidently related to the former brewery and stable use of the site. Although altered,

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the facades are still considered to be of architectural interest in their own right. The elevations relate positively to the adjacent grade II listed building at 43-45 New Oxford Street, carrying through the architectural themes of that building on the west facade and continuing this grand aesthetic to the southern facade, which is presented a series of arches with defined keystones and other applied classically referenced details. We do not, therefore, agree with the applicant's assessment that the contribution that this building makes to the conservation area is limited and consider the loss of this building to cause harm to the significance of the conservation area.

In the light of the building making a positive contribution to the character and significance conservation area, its demolition would need to be justified against either policies 133 or 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It is our view, that the proposed new development does not secure any public benefits that would outweigh the proposed harm.

In respect to the proposed new building, we consider the building to neither make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the conservation area. The proposals still offer little contextuality to their conservation area location and the overall massing is still over and above any of the principle frontage buildings within the block.

Recommendation

We would urge you to address the above issues, and recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice. It is not necessary for us to be consulted again. However, if you would like further advice, please contact us to explain your request.

Please note that this response relates to historic building and historic area matters only. If there are any archaeological implications to the proposals it is recommended that you contact the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for further advice (Tel: 020 7973 3712).

Yours sincerely

Claire Brady

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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