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Knight Frank

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79-81 HEATH STREET, NW3

HERITAGE STATEMENT

JULY 2013

INTRODUCTION

This Statement has been prepared by Morse Heritage to accompany the submitted applications for listed building consent and advertisement consent at 79-81 Heath Street, Hampstead, NW3.

79-81 Heath Street is statutory listed at Grade II and lies within the Hampstead Conservation Area. Located within a terrace of listed and historic buildings at the northern end of Heath Street, No. 79-81 is a mid-19th century, former public house, of two storeys with some 20th century replacement details. The upper floors are in residential use, whilst the ground floor is already occupied and in estate agency use by the applicant Knight Frank.

The submitted application affects only the ground floor advertising. Permission is sought for a new replacement fascia sign, a new replacement projecting sign, plus internally-mounted advertisement displays located within the existing shop windows. No proposals are made to alter the shopfront itself, or the internal layout or fit-out.

This Statement, in accordance with best practice, assesses the impacts arising from the proposed development upon the special listed interest of the property. It outlines the heritage significance of 79-81 Heath Street, relevant policy and assesses whether the submitted proposals are in accordance with planning policy controls. In this case, it is understood that the impacts upon the application site as a listed building will be the Local Planning Authority's principal consideration, affects upon the Conservation Area are however also considered in this Statement for completeness. Under national and local planning policy, Permission should be granted if the significance of these heritage assets is preserved or enhanced, or if likely harmful impacts are outweighed by wider benefits arising.

In accordance with best practice, the assessments made in this Statement have been informed by on-site inspection and research using public archives. For a full understanding of design proposals this Statement should however be read in conjunction with the application drawings, Design & Access Statement and other submitted documents.

HERITAGE POLICY

Legislation

Statutory protection for listed buildings and conservation areas is laid out in the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. This requires Local Planning Authorities to preserve the special interest of these assets. Currently no other form of heritage asset is protected by legislation.

National Policy

National planning policy, the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF), provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 12 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:

- Delivery of sustainable development
- Understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment
- Conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, and
- Recognition that heritage contributes to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

The NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be appropriate if heritage assets are to be maintained long term. Paragraph 128 states that planning decisions should be made with understanding of the significance of the heritage asset, and the impacts arising. The level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to review the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.

Regional Policy

The *London Plan* (July 2011) encourages local authorities to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets within their jurisdiction. Wherever possible, the historic environment should be promoted as having a positive, central role in place shaping (Policy 7.8).

New development should preserve heritage assets, where appropriate. New development in the setting of heritage assets should be sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural details (policy 7.8). Development should give adequate status to the heritage asset in the design of proposals (Policy 7.9).

Local Policy

Relevant local policy is laid out in Camden's *Core Strategy* (Jan 2011). Policy CS14 promotes the highest standard of design, respecting local context and character, in historic places. Policy CS7, on Camden's retail centres, notes the high quality, village character of the Hampstead Village retail centre. Development in the Hampstead Village area is expected to be sensitive to the area's unique historic character, with shopfront alterations being required to preserve or enhance the appearance of the centre and to respect original frontages (Centre Specific Planning Objectives). Policy CS17, on Making Camden a Safer Place, notes that lighting from shop windows can be beneficial in increasing security in centres after dark, but lighting should nonetheless be well designed and sensitively located.

The Core Strategy is supported by *Development Policies* (2010). Policy DP25 seeks to preserve or enhance the borough's listed buildings and conservation areas. Policy DP30 seeks to retain historic shopfronts. Window displays are noted as having the potential to add to the attractiveness of premises and to the vitality of the retail centre.

Camden Planning Guidance provides detailed design guidance for shopfronts and signage (Chapter 5) and advertisements (Chapter 8). Fascias should be of a suitable size and proportion in relation to the building, should not obscure architectural features, and should not normally extend above the cornice or below capitals. Lettering should be proportionate to the scale of the shopfront. Box signs should not obscure architectural features. Signs should relate well to the character, scale and architectural features of the building and local context. Only one fascia sign and one projecting sign will normally be appropriate per shopfront. Advertisements should respect the form and scale of the host building. Illuminated adverts may be acceptable, but should be sympathetic to the design of the building. Externally illuminated signs should be an unobtrusive size and siting, sensitively designed corporate designs should be acceptable.

Guidance on the significance of the Hampstead Conservation Area is laid out in the *Area Statement* and the *Design Guide*. 79-81 Heath Street is highlighted as an architectural building of merit and of listed status, its shopfront is not however included in the shopfronts of merit list. Signage should normally be non-illuminated or externally illuminated, approaches to corporate advertising will however be considered. No specific guidance is given in the Design Guide to shopfront detailing.

THE APPLICATION SITE

Description

79-81 Heath Street comprises a two storey, mid-terrace, mid-19th century former public house. The building has suffered some alteration over time, in particular the replacement of windows and the modification of the central entrance bay and side door at ground level, all in the mid-19th century. The interior was also extensively refurbished in the 1990s.

Key original features do however still remain, including the three bay arrangement of the ground floor frontage. At ground floor, the shopfront combines a mix of original features, such as the granite pilasters and dentiled cornice, and the later (early 20th century?) timber shopfront. The first floor is of red brick, but retains its highly ornate stucco cornice and pilasters, and its original balustraded and finialed parapet.

Currently, only the ground floor is occupied by the applicant, Knight Frank, and is already in use as an estate agent's office. This application proposes no changes to either that use or the occupier. Nor does this application propose any changes to the appearance or fabric of the shopfront. Designs are only submitted for upgrades to signage and advertising.

As present, the following advertising and signage is in situ at 79-81 Heath Street:

- a single, long fascia sign, spanning the full width of the ground floor unit. Fascia is located between the original pilaster capitals and the dentil cornice. Fascia is branded and coloured as per the occupant's corporate branding. Non-illuminated;
- One projecting sign, mounted on the southernmost pilaster of the shopfront (two mounting points). Sign is branded and coloured as per the occupant's corporate branding. Externally illuminated using two projecting lamps;
- Large window displays of property advertisements, internally mounted within most windows. Advertisements are suspended from wire mounts, with each display top-illuminated by separate halogen bulbs;
- A VDU display screen, mounted in one window; and,
- Opaque sticker signs, affixed to the bottom of each window, detailing contact information for the estate agency and/or corporate logos.

Significance

The Grade II listed status of 79-81 Heath Street highlights it as a building of architectural or historic special interest.

Site inspection demonstrated that the front elevation is the feature of highest architectural significance. Surviving original features - including the pilasters, decorative cornices, first floor mullioned windows and the parapet – all contribute positively to the special interest of the building and to the character of the Conservation Area. The timber elements of the shopfront, though of traditional design, are believed later additions and are of much simpler finish, making them of lesser value.

The current signage and advertising is of a scale which does not overwhelm or detract from the proportions of the front elevation. Nor are any historic features obscured by signage and advertising, with fascia and projecting signs located between architectural detailing. This is in-keeping with policy expectations and ensures that signage does not detract from the appearance of the building. A precedent has been set for illumination of window displays, and for illumination of the projecting sign, allowing the shopfront to have an active appearance within the streetscape after dark.



79-81 Heath Street, front elevation



Detail of existing shopfront, projecting sign (externally illuminated) and window displays (externally illuminated)



Detail of existing shopfront, showing illuminated window displays for property advertisements (left and right), the existing VDU display screen (just visible within centre window) and the opaque logo/contact detail stickers at the bottom of each window

ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATION PROPOSALS

The submitted applications propose changes to signage and advertising only, at the ground floor estate agent's offices at 79-81 Heath Street. No works are proposed which will alter the ground floor shopfront, the internal layout or finishes of the estate agent unit, or the first floor.

The application works are summarised and assessed in the remainder of this chapter. For proposals to be acceptable to the Council, the application scheme should preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed 79-81 Heath Street. In addition, no harm should be caused to the character or appearance of the Hampstead Conservation Area, within which the application site is located.



Images showing existing (top) and proposed (bottom) signage for 79-81 Heath Street

Overview

The application scheme comprises the following proposed works:

- Replacement of fascia sign – to simplify sign appearance and update corporate branding;
- Replacement of projecting sign – to update corporate branding and illumination;
- Updating of window displays for advertisements – to update corporate branding and illumination;
- Updating of electronic window display – replacement of existing suspended video screen with a new standing (totem) VDU display unit;
- Introduction of new suspended internal window rail-mounted signs, to display corporate branding and contact details;
- Adhesive stickers along bottom of windows – no change proposed.

A comparison visualisation of the existing and proposed ground floor frontage for 79-81 Heath Street is provided on the previous page.

Quantum of Signage

As can be seen from the images on the previous page, the majority of the proposed signage simply updates that already existing. The overall change in the building's appearance is therefore relatively minor.

The only new signage features proposed are the rail-mounted contact and logos signs, proposed to be suspended in the upper part of the windows. These signs are located within display areas already associated with signage and advertisement displays and are not considered appropriate in scale or appearance to the listed building. No harm is therefore anticipated from these three signage additions.

In summary, the quantum and intensity of signage is not considered to be notably altered from that already existing. It is not considered to dominate or inappropriately overwhelm the appearance of the listed building.

Design

The proposed scheme rationalises signage text across the shopfront, in particular on the fascia and the projecting sign. Signage text will be the same, or smaller in size than that existing. This makes advertisements clearer, but also helps to de-clutter the appearance of the shopfront signage. This is considered an improvement over the appearance of existing signage.

The colours and branding of signage across the shopfront remains largely as existing, reflecting corporate style. Though branding will be updated to reflect latest designs, minimal discernable change in this regard is anticipated.

Relationship to Architectural Features

The proposed fascia sign is the same size as that existing, and sits within the established location between the pilaster capitals and the shopfront cornice. It does not therefore obscure any architectural details, in accordance with policy requirements.

The proposed new projecting sign is also located in the same position as that existing, re-using the same fixing points. This proposed sign will also therefore not obscure any architectural detail.

Illumination

Illumination will be updated for the proposed scheme. At present, all window displays and the projecting sign are illuminated using suspended lamps and spotlights. The new advertisements and signage are proposed to be internally illuminated, to give a softer and more consistent lighting character across the shopfront after dark, with displays being easier to read.

Planning policy allows for the illumination of window displays in retail centres to introduce activity after dark. Internal illumination of signage or advertisements is not prohibited by policy, but it must be of high quality and sensitively designed. The application of a more consistent lighting approach across the shopfront is considered to be an improvement in appearance. The low lighting levels proposed are not considered, even cumulatively, as being likely to overwhelm the appearance of the listed building.

Conclusion

Overall, it is considered that the proposed application scheme will meet policy requirements to preserve the special interest of 79-81 Heath Street.

The majority of proposed signage simply replaces equivalent signage already existing, with changes in the overall appearance of the shopfront therefore being relatively minor. The quantum of signage will not noticeably increase.

Beneficial improvements to the appearance of signage should result from the more rationalised, cohesive signage strategy proposed. Whilst none of the proposed signage is anticipated to obscure any architectural features.

The change to internal illumination is anticipated to alter the appearance of the shopfront after dark. Advertisement displays should stand out more clearly in window displays, however the low lighting levels proposed are not considered likely to be over-dominant to the building or in the streetscape. The benefits deriving from illumination being well designed and consistent across the shopfront are considered to help justify the move towards internal illumination in this case.

Appendix A – List Description for 79-81 Heath Street

CAMDEN

TQ2685NW HEATH STREET
798-1/26/805 (West side)
14/05/74 Nos.79 AND 81
Nachos

(Formerly Listed as:
HEATH STREET
Nos.79 AND 81
Cruel Sea Public House)

GV II

Public house, now restaurant. Mid C19. Red brick with stucco dressings. Slated roof. 2 storeys. Double fronted with 3 window bays. Public house ground floor has original granite pilasters on plinths supporting dentil entablature. Early C20 windows and later entrance. 1st floor with channelled pilaster strips at angles and dividing bays carrying dentil cornice with enriched frieze. 3-light transom and mullion windows. Parapet with stucco balustraded panels over end bays and dies at angles with ball finials. INTERIOR: altered early 1990s.

Listing NGR: TQ2636985855