

275 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1

Proposed change of use of part of the ground floor of an existing office accommodation building for A3 (restaurant and café) use.



Photo 1.0 showing the existing building at 275 Gray's Inn Road.

1.0 Design Statement.

Use: No. 275 Gray's Inn Road is a five storey (plus basement level) purpose built office block constructed in the early 1980's on an infill site on the west side of a busy one-way street. The building has recently been acquired by the National Union of Students property holding company and will be occupied as their headquarters. A financial business appraisal has determined that there is an opportunity to use part of the ground floor as an income-generating unit that will add value to the investment and ensure its long-term viability.

This planning application therefore requests approval for a change of use of part of the ground floor to an A3 café use together with the creation of a new entrance from the Gray's Inn Road pavement. The existing office use on the upper and basement floors are unaffected by the proposal as is the access arrangements to that element of the building.

Amount: There is no proposed physical increase in the building mass and the café use is anticipated as only providing pre-packaged food and coffee without the need for extensive commercial kitchen extract systems.

Windows and doors: The existing windows are single glazed aluminium framed and are to be replaced with high performance double glazed aluminium framed units as detailed on the drawings all within the existing structural openings, the frame colour will be to match the existing i.e. RAL8040. The new entrance door will be of similar material and colour and be incorporated into the new central window providing the required access and exit arrangements to meet current Building Control standards. A modified fire strategy is to be implemented within the building providing enhanced detection and smoke control which has resulted in the second escape stair becoming redundant; this stair is to be removed to allow an increase in the useable floor space. As a result of this the existing escape route and door to the south end of the building are not required and this will, together with the associated light well bridge, be removed and the opening in-filled with a new glass panel, the existing balustrade and low wall will also be in-filled with matching detailing to close the opening and provide protection to the open light well.



Photo 2.0 showing one of the existing windows into the ground floor area under consideration.

The new entrance will also be in aluminium to the same colour and form and accessed by the construction of a new “bridge” structure constructed to span across the light well and incorporating side return walls to the face of the building to repeat the low facing brick walls and railings of the existing detail. This new access will be for the full width of the existing central window opening avoiding any structural alterations to the building.



Photo 3.0 looking into the light well from Gray’s Inn Road pavement to be bridged over by the new entrance structure.

Layout and Scale; The layout and scale of all of the elements proposed in this application are shown in detail on the enclosed drawings.

Landscaping: There is no opportunity for the introduction of any landscaping measures.

Appearance: The change of use proposed is considered to have only a minor effect on the appearance of the existing building within the context of the general street scene which has predominantly a retail or commercial related use at ground floor level.

2.0 Access Statement

Approach: There are no changes proposed to the arrangement for approach to the main building (office access) entrance. The new access to the proposed café unit will be over a level approach and threshold and together with the entrance door arrangement will all be in accordance with Approved Document M.

Inclusive access: Although not influential in the planning process it is also confirmed that the internal fit out works, which is to be carried by the tenant, will be fully compliant in terms of accessibility and environmental health with current legislation and standards.

3.0 Heritage Statement

Use: The building is located within the King's Cross Conservation area in the Gray's Inn Road sub area 4 but is recorded as having neither a positive or negative contribution to the streetscape. The proposed work is as described above and will utilise materials and detailing similar to the existing and as the building is not considered to be of any architectural or historical interest in the context of the conservation area no further elaboration is considered to be necessary under this section of the document.

4.0 Supporting Documents

Drawings and Details: The enclosed existing and proposed drawings as recorded on the separate schedule show the proposed work associated with the change of use application in detail and together with the application forms and statements complete the submitted documentation.

5.0 Conclusions

The proposal, as presented for the Camden Planning Committee's determination, is intended to provide additional facilities within the existing building to enhance the applicants business investment in the property all in a manner and style that reflects the existing street scene activities of Gray's Inn Road.

It is envisaged that additional planning applications will be made to provide for signage and any enhanced service provisions as may become evident after the future tenant has taken responsibility for the fit out works. The café will be a commercial, available to let, unit and as such some details regarding staff numbers and opening hours are unknown at the present time.