

50-57 High Holborn, London WC2

Introduction

This note is an addendum to the Planning Design Report dated September 2009, which was the Design and Access Statement for the planning consent Ref no. 2009/0675/P dated 7 July 2009 and the further Minor Amendment submission document dated September 2011, which was approved in October 2011.

This addendum is a direct response to the recent amendments to national and local policies in respect of conserving and enhancing the historic environment and conserving Camden's heritage.

Protecting the Heritage

Enhancing and preserving the buildings and elements of buildings that contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area remains one of the central objectives in the proposals and to this end the design approach remains unaltered from those agreed through the minor amendments process. This strategy for enhancement and preservation is critical to improving the quality of the local environment and securing the future use and enjoyment of these elements of the site. This in conjunction with a number of other objectives was fundamental to the regenerative qualities of this proposal.

The approach to protecting the heritage elements of this site is aligned with the wider and local policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and the Local Development Framework - Camden Development Policies 2010-2025 in their reference to conservation and strategic development principles. The proposals seek to address the sometimes conflicting issues to enhance and preserve and thereby not harming the conservation area and listed buildings.

As referred to previously the approach involved an analysis of the existing buildings (Historic Building's Architect's Report dated June 2007 by Donald Insall Associates) to assess the significance of the heritage assets of this site and further analysis to understand their level of flexibility and constraint. Alternative uses have been considered to establish whether they were appropriate and whether the buildings could be adapted to suit. Other ways in which these buildings could be incorporated into the overall proposals were also reviewed. The culmination of this process identified the best strategy for protecting the heritage of this site.

The proposals are to refurbish and convert the listed Georgian terraced houses on Bedford Row from office to individual family dwellings for which they were originally designed. The buildings at 24/25 Hand Court and 45, 59-51 Bedford Row and Brownlow House are to be retained, refurbished and converted to residential flats. The front portion of High Holborn House is to be retained and rebuilt to better reveal its significance in the street scene. With reference to 23 Hand Court it has been established that the quality of the façades is the only element of this individual building that positively contributes to the character of conservation area and the proposal is to retain the façade with appropriate redevelopment contained behind the façade for predominantly residential accommodation.

The proposal also incorporates enhancements to the appearance of the heritage elements by sensitive repair and restoration as well as improving their setting with new roofs finished in appropriate materials.

In summary the approach and design principles meet the requirements of Policy 12 of the NPPF by enhancing the significance of the site's heritage assets and putting them to appropriate viable uses, which as a result will provide a positive contribution to the local community. The design also complies with policy DP25 of the Camden Development Policies by preserving and enhancing the special character and appearance of the area.