



Real value in a changing world

Planning **Statement**

Prospect House, 80- 110 New Oxford Street, London

Hermes Real Estate Investment Management Ltd

October 2011

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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by the Jones Lang LaSalle Planning Group on behalf of Hermes Real Estate Investment Management Ltd ('Hermes') who represent Britel Fund Trustees Ltd.
- 1.2 The proposal is for the refurbishment of the main office entrance and reception area for Prospect House at 80 to 110 New Oxford Street and will ensure that the site continues to meet modern office requirements in this central London location.
- 1.3 Planning Officers support the application in principle, the proposal accords with adopted and emerging planning policy and due regard has been had to the existing building and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 1.4 We are therefore of the view that the proposals accord with the development plan and as such planning permission should be granted.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by the Jones Lang LaSalle Planning Group on behalf of Hermes Real Estate Investment Management Ltd ('Hermes') who represent Britel Fund Trustees Ltd. The proposal is for the refurbishment of the main office entrance for Prospect House at 80 to 110 New Oxford Street, London.
- 2.2 The details contained within this document need to be considered alongside all of the other documents comprising the planning application package.
- 2.3 This Statement is structured as follows:
- Section 2- Site, the Surroundings and the Planning History;
 - Section 3- The Proposals;
 - Section 4- Relevant Planning History;
 - Section 5- Planning Analysis; and
 - Section 6- Conclusions.

Application Background

- 2.4 Hermes act on behalf of Britel Fund Trustees Limited who own the freehold for Prospect House.
- 2.5 Prospect House's existing entrance is outdated and out-of-scale with the rest of the building. Hermes is keen to increase the size of its frontage so as to strengthen the building's street presence and improve internal space. It therefore proposes to refurbish and enlarge the building's existing main entrance and reception area. So doing will enhance the frontage of this central London location, improving its visual prominence whilst respecting the character of the surrounding area.

Description of Development

- 2.6 Planning permission is sought for:
- "Refurbishment to the main office entrance."*

Format of Submission

- 2.7 The planning application comprises:
- Planning fee of £170;
 - Planning application form and ownership certificates;
 - Drawings:
 - Site Location Plan GA-00-00;
 - Existing and Proposed Full Building Elevation Ex-01-01-Rev;
 - Entrance façade, Existing and Proposed Plan, Elevations & Section EX-01-02.
 - Planning Statement;
 - Design and Access Statement.

3 Site, the Surroundings and Planning History

The Site

- 3.1 Prospect House is located at 80 to 110 on the north side of New Oxford Street, east of the junction with Tottenham Court Road. It falls within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area but the property is not listed.
- 3.2 The building comprises 7-storeys, plus two basement levels, with retail and offices on the ground floor and offices above. We understand that the building underwent significant renovation in the late 1990s.
- 3.3 Tottenham Court Road, Holborn and Goodge Street underground stations are located in close proximity to the site (140m, 541m and 673m respectively), the site is well served by buses and overground services are available at Euston Station, approximately one mile north of the site.

The Surroundings

- 3.4 Commercial uses predominate along either side of New Oxford Street, typically with retail at ground floor and offices above. Oxford Street lies west of the site, beyond Tottenham Court Road, and Holborn is located to the east.

Planning History

- 3.5 We have undertaken a desk-based search of the London Borough of Camden's statutory planning register.
- 3.6 Planning applications relating to the site are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The Site's Planning History

LPA Reference & Applicant	Proposal	Status
PSX0204662/R3 Britel Fund Trustees Ltd	Change of use of ground floor offices (Class B1) to retail (Class A1) and associated shopfront alterations including the installation of folding gates to recessed entrances.	Conditional approval granted 15 th April 2003
PSX0205225 HCA International Ltd	The installation of two grills to the rear elevation at second floor level.	Conditional approval granted 11 th December 2002
PS9804797 Corston Holdings Ltd	Removal of three windows and replacement with two louvres to serve standby generator on rear façade at ground floor.	Conditional approval granted 1 st October 1998
PS9804726 Corston Holdings Ltd	Replacement of existing marble cladding to columns on ground floor with stone cladding.	Conditional approval granted 1 st October 1998
PS9804154RI Bass Tavern Ltd	Installation of new stained hardwood shopfront, ornamental planter with functional lanterns, the blocking up of an existing doorway, the formation of a new service	Conditional approval granted 8 th May 1998

	entrance and other alterations to the rear elevation in Bainbridge Street.	
PL/9401778/RI Zamora Ltd	Approval of details and reserved matters relating to LPA Ref: PL/9201250/RI relating to elevations, facing materials, dormers and the central roof feature.	Approved 20 th January 1995
PL/9201250/RI Zamora Ltd	Full and Conservation Area consent for the demolition of the 4 th , 5 th and 6 th floors and the remainder of the building behind the rest of the front façade and the erection of a 7-storey and basement building for office and retail use.	Conditional approval granted 7 th June 1993
PL/8703745 Randsworth Trust PLC	Rebuilding Prospect House for office and retail use with alterations to the retained front elevation.	Conditional approval granted 19 th April 1988
P13/12/A/24355 Department of the Environment Property Sources Agency	Replacement of glass doors on the front elevation by timber doors.	Granted 27 th April 1977

4 The Proposals

- 4.1 The proposed refurbishment works relate to the main office entrance of Prospect House and will introduce a new revolving door with pass doors suitable for wheelchair access, a new canopy and signage and new finishes and glazing.
- 4.2 Several options were considered for the refurbishment and the final design has emerged following a comprehensive assessment of the site and the surroundings, in liaison with Hermes and the design team.
- 4.3 The proposed works will increase the size of the frontage, provide a new canopy, enable improvements to the internal reception area and strengthen the office entrance's street presence.
- 4.4 The existing entrance is outdated and out-of-scale with the building. Hermes wants to ensure that the proposed improvements deliver high quality office-space that attracts and retains tenants in this central London location.
- 4.5 Hermes is keen to ensure that the design respects Prospect House's existing design features. A bronze toned anodised aluminium finish will be used, for example, to complement and match the adjacent frontage. Similarly, while the proposals enlarge the existing entrance, this is still in keeping with the scale and façade of the rest of the building.
- 4.6 Further details are set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Pre-Application Discussions

- 4.7 The proposals have evolved following pre-application advice from Senior Planning Officer Amanda Peck who we wrote to on 15th February and have had several telephone conversations with subsequently. We understand that Ms. Peck has also discussed the proposals with a Conservation Officer.
- 4.8 These discussions have sought to agree the application's scope of works and an appropriate design, having due regard to the development plan and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area but also ensuring that the proposed refurbishment is commercially suitable.
- 4.9 Ms. Peck considered the principle of the proposed enlarged, glazed entrance and glazed window acceptable, and the design team has sought to ensure that the final design and detailing are of an appropriately high quality.
- 4.10 Ms. Peck also stated that the new canopy should have a similar projection to the existing entrance archway/sign. The design has therefore sought to balance Hermes' desire to improve the building's entrance so it is comparable with other offices in the area, whilst also respecting the building's existing features and the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 4.11 It should also be noted that while Ms. Peck highlighted the impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area as a key consideration, she did not consider it necessary to apply for Conservation Area consent as part of the application.

5 Relevant Planning Policy

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of national, regional, and local planning policies relating to the planning application as well as other material considerations.
- 5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.3 Section 38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that where there is a difference in policy, the most recently adopted policy take precedence.
- 5.4 The statutory development plan which covers the application site comprises The London Plan (July 2011), 'saved' policies from the Camden Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 2006), the Camden Core Strategy 2010- 2025 (November 2010) and accompanying Proposals Map (2010) and the Camden Development Policies 2010- 2025 Development Plan Document (DPD).
- 5.5 Regard should also be had to the Government's emerging National Planning Policy Framework (July 2011).

National Guidance

PPS4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth (December 2009)

- 5.6 PPS4 (December 2009) sets out national guidance on economic development. Amongst other things it requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to adopt a positive and constructive approach towards planning applications for economic development, stating that planning applications that secure sustainable economic growth should be treated favourably (Policy EC10).

PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment (March 2010)

- 5.7 PPS5 (March 2010) sets out national guidance on the conservation of the historic environment.
- 5.8 Policy HE6 requires applicants to provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance, within the Design & Access Statement. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset.
- 5.9 Policy HE7 requires LPAs to identify and assess the particular significance of any element of the historic environment that may be affected by the relevant proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset).
- 5.10 Policy HE9 stipulates that there should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be.

5.11 Draft National Planning Policy Framework (July 2011)

- 5.12 The draft National Planning Policy Framework (July 2011) sets out the Government's commitment to securing sustainable economic growth, highlighting the role of the planning system in ensuring that sufficient land of the right type, and in the right place, is available to allow growth and innovation. Fostering the delivery of sustainable development is considered development control's primary objective, and development should not be hindered or prevented.
- 5.13 Local Planning Authorities (LPA) are required to approve all individual proposals wherever possible and the Framework states that "decision-takers at every level should assume that the default answer to development proposals is 'yes'" (paragraph 19).

- 5.14 Paragraph 180 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance. The Framework further adds that when considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight given to its conservation should depend on the asset's importance.

Regional Planning Policy

The London Plan (July 2011)

- 5.15 On the Key Diagram that accompanies The London Plan, Prospect House falls within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), specifically the area identified for mixed uses with strong academic character. As indicated on Map 2.3, it also sits within the West End Special Retail Policy Area and on the very edge of the Tottenham Court Road Opportunity Area.

Central Activities Zone (CAZ)

- 5.16 Policy 2.10 seeks to enhance and promote the CAZ as one of the world's most attractive and competitive business locations. The Mayor seeks to bring forward development capacity and supporting infrastructure and services to sustain and enhance the CAZ's strategic functions. This includes ensuring that office development is not constrained, and enhancing the CAZ as a globally iconic core of one of the world's most attractive and competitive business locations.

Employment

- 5.17 Policy 4.1 sets out the Mayor's intention to promote and enable the continued development of London's strong, sustainable economy, particularly in central London.
- 5.18 With regard to offices, under Policy 4.2 supports the redevelopment of office provision to improve London's competitiveness. This includes meeting the distinct needs of the central London office market, a global business location, and encouraging the renewal and modernisation of existing office stock in viable locations to improve its quality and flexibility.

Design

- 5.19 Policy 7.6 requires buildings and structures to be of the highest architectural quality. Details and materials are expected to complement but not necessarily replicate the local architectural character.

Heritage

- 5.20 Policy 7.8 requires development affecting heritage assets and their settings to conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

Local Planning Policy

- 5.21 On the Planning Policy Map Prospect House falls within the Central London Area and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area but is otherwise not allocated for development.

Camden Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 2006)

- 5.22 Only the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies relating to land use proposal sites are 'saved' until such time as they are replaced by the emerging Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD). These policies do not relate to Prospect House and are therefore not reviewed for the purpose of this Statement.

The Camden Core Strategy 2010- 2025 (November 2010)

Central London

- 5.23 Policy CS3 promotes appropriate development in the highly accessible areas of Central London.

- 5.24 Policy CS9 supports and promotes the Central London area of Camden as a successful and vibrant part of the capital to live in, work in and visit. This includes supporting Central London as a focus for Camden's future growth in a mix of uses, including offices, ensuring that such development contributes to London's economic, social and cultural role while meeting the needs of local residents and respecting their quality of life.

Employment

- 5.25 Policy CS8 sets out the Council's approach to securing a strong economy in Camden. This includes supporting the Borough's industries by safeguarding existing employment sites and premises by meeting the needs of modern industry and other employers. The policy also seeks to improve the quality of the area's streets and places.

Design

- 5.26 Policy CS14 states that the Council will ensure that Camden's places and buildings are attractive, safe and easy to use by, inter alia:
- Requiring development of the highest standard of design that respects local context and character;
 - Preserving and enhancing Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including Conservation Areas and archaeological remains;
 - Seeking the highest standards of access in all buildings and places and requiring schemes to be designed to be inclusive and accessible.

Camden Development Policies 2010- 2025 Development Plan Document (November 2010)

Employment

- 5.27 Policy DP13 states that the Council will retain land and buildings that are suitable for continued business use.

Design

- 5.28 Policy DP22 requires development to incorporate sustainable design and construction measures although BREEAM is only applied to non-domestic developments exceeding 500 sq m.
- 5.29 Policy DP24 requires all development to be of the highest standard of design and will expect developments to consider:
- Character, setting, context and the form and scale of neighbouring buildings;
 - The character and proportions of the existing building, where alterations and extensions are proposed;
 - The quality of materials to be used;
 - The provision of visually interesting frontages at street level;
 - The appropriate location for building services equipment;
 - Existing natural features, such as topography and trees;
 - The provision of appropriate hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments;
 - The provision of appropriate amenity space; and
 - Accessibility.

Conservation Areas

- 5.30 Policy DP25 relates to Conservation Areas and stipulates that the Council will:
- Take account of Conservation Area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within Conservation Areas;

- Only permit development within Conservation Areas that preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area;
- Prevent the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area where this harms the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention;
- Not permit development outside of a Conservation Area that causes harm to the character and appearance of that Conservation Area; and
- Preserve trees and garden spaces which contribute to the character of a Conservation Area and which provide a setting for Camden's architectural heritage.

5.31 With regard to archaeology the policy further adds that it will protect remains of archaeological importance by ensuring acceptable measures are taken to preserve them and their setting, including physical preservation, where appropriate.

5.32 The supporting text also notes that the Council will only grant planning permission for development in Camden's Conservation Areas that preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area (Paragraph 25.2). It adds that Design and Access Statements should include an assessment of local context and character, and set out how the development has been informed by it and responds to it.

5.33 Policy DP29 seeks to promote fair access and remove the barriers that prevent people from accessing facilities and opportunities. It expects, amongst other things, that all buildings and places meet the highest practicable standards of access and inclusion.

Bloomsbury Conservation Area Draft Appraisal and Management Strategy (November 2010)

5.34 The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Draft Appraisal and Management Strategy (November 2010) identifies the key management issues for the Bloomsbury Conservation Area based on the recent appraisal of its character and appearance. It is a material consideration in determining relevant planning applications.

5.35 Prospect House falls within the New Oxford Street/High Holborn/Southampton Row Sub-area of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and is classified as a 'positive building'. As such it is considered to make a positive and valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as an important local building in its own right.

6 Planning Analysis

- 6.1 This section considers the key issues relating to the proposed development in the context of relevant national, regional and local planning policy, as well as material considerations.
- 6.2 The following issues are key to the application and considered in turn below:
- Economic development (office-space);
 - Heritage including the Bloomsbury Conservation Area; and
 - Design.
- 6.3 Pre-application advice has been sought from Senior Planning Officer Amanda Peck and the below reflects these discussions.

Economic Development (Office-space)

- 6.4 Prospect House sits within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), which is recognised as a strategically important office and global business location (London Plan Policy 4.2).
- 6.5 Hermes is aware that the existing entrance to Prospect House is outdated and the proposed refurbishment intends to bring the building up to modern standards, strengthen its street presence and improve internal space. So doing will ensure that Prospect House offers high quality office-space that attracts and retains tenants in this central London location.
- 6.6 This is in keeping with both adopted and emerging regional policy which encourages the renewal and modernisation of existing office stock in order to improve its quality and flexibility (London Plan Policy 4.2).
- 6.7 Similarly planning policy adopts a positive approach to economic development which supports and safeguards existing employment sites (PPS4, Core Strategy Policy CS8).
- 6.8 The proposed works therefore adhere to relevant planning policy and are in accordance with the development plan.

Heritage, including the Bloomsbury Conservation Area

- 6.9 The site falls within Bloomsbury Conservation Area although Senior Planning Officer Amanda Peck confirmed that it was not necessary to seek Conservation Area consent as part of the planning application.
- 6.10 In accordance with Development Policies Policy DP25, due regard has been had to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area Draft Appraisal and Management Strategy (November 2010). A summary of the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area is set out in Section 5 and the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 6.11 The proposals are relatively minor and do not involve the demolition, substantial or otherwise, of Prospect House. The application site does not include any trees or garden spaces and is not considered to have any archaeological implications.
- 6.12 In line with PPS5 and Development Policies Policy DP25 the character and appearance of both Prospect House and the surrounding area have informed the design of the proposed works. The materials used will be of a high quality and have been chosen to respect and complement those already present in the building. A bronze toned anodised aluminium finish will be used, for example, in order to match the adjacent frontage.

- 6.13 It is our view that the proposals therefore enhance Prospect House, strengthening the building's positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area in accordance with the draft Appraisal and Management Strategy.
- 6.14 The proposed works therefore adhere to relevant planning policy and are in accordance with the development plan.

Design

- 6.15 The existing entrance to Prospect House is not only outdated but also out-of-scale with the rest of the building.
- 6.16 Adopted policy requires development to be of a high quality and standard of design whilst maximising site potential (London Plan Policy 7.6, Core Strategy Policy CS14 and Development Policies Policy DP24). The proposals have therefore sought to balance opening up Prospect House's façade, meeting modern office requirements within the CAZ and respecting the character and appearance of both Prospect House and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.
- 6.17 In accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS14 and Development Policies Policy DP24 due regard has been had to local context and character, particularly in relation to the rest of Prospect House and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (see above for details).
- 6.18 The design also increases the size of the entrance's frontage, albeit in keeping with the scale of adjacent frontages. This will strengthen the entrance's street presence which together with the use of high quality materials will provide a visually interesting frontage along New Oxford Street, in line with Development Policies Policy DP24.
- 6.19 Pre-application discussions with Ms. Peck have also assisted in ensuring that the proposals are acceptable and of an appropriately high quality design.
- 6.20 The proposed works therefore adhere to relevant planning policy and are in accordance with the development plan.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 Prospect House sits within central London within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), which is recognised as the country's most important strategic office location. The proposed works are intended to bring the building up to modern requirements, and therefore offer high quality office-space that attracts and retains tenants in this central London location. This is in keeping with adopted and emerging policy which presumes in favour of economic development and office modernisation.
- 7.2 Due regard has been had to the site's location within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the positive character of Prospect House. The materials proposed are of a high quality and have been chosen to respect and complement those already present in the building, thereby strengthening the character and appearance of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area in accordance with adopted policy.
- 7.3 Given the above it is our view that the proposals accord with relevant national, regional and local planning policy and should therefore be granted planning permission.



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