

APPLICATION BY NYRAFF LTD TO RETAIN THE UNDERCROFT AS OFFICE SPACE WITH THE  
WHITE ROLLER SHUTTER DOOR REMOVED AND REPLACED WITH A BIFOLD DOOR ON THE  
SOUTH ELEVATION OF OMEGA HOUSE, 67-74 SAFFRON HILL, LONDON

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## PLANNING STATEMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

This planning statement has been prepared by Raymond Stemp Associates and seeks to examine the application in relation to local, regional and national planning policies. Consideration will be given to the appearance of the area and the existing development within the immediate locality of the application site as well as possible impacts to amenity. Conclusions will be drawn based on the assessment undertaken and relate to the acceptability of the proposed development in relation to its setting.

The full details of the application are discussed in the Design and Access Statement, submitted as part of this application and this statement simply seeks to assess the proposal against relevant planning policy.

## CONTENTS

Page 1	Introduction and Contents
Page 2	The Proposal
Page 3	The Site and Surrounding Area
Page 5	National Planning Policy
Page 6	Local Planning Policy
Page 9	Regional Planning Policy
Page 10	Conclusion

## THE PROPOSAL

1.1 This planning statement relates to an application seeking planning permission for the retention of the undercroft extension and the replacement of the white roller shutter door with a bifold door. This is a retrospective application and the extension works have already taken place. The undercroft extension is currently subject to enforcement action.

1.2 The existing white roller shutter door replaces a previous roller shutter located more centrally in the building. These works took place following the removal of an external wall and in the inclusion of the old yard – location at the southern side of the building – as office space and toilet facilities. The new facilities provide 3 male toilets in a block and 3 female toilets in a block and an additional office floor space of approximately 78 square metres. These works did not require planning permission as indicated by the planning officer in pre-application discussions as they were within the same B1 use for the building. However, this was later found not to be the case.

1.3 The external wall in which the roller shutter is located has been blocked up from an archway and included the provision of new side windows. There are 6 windows on this elevation – each with a small window at the top. These replace 12 square windows on the old elevation. These are clearly shown on the submitted plans.

1.4 It is proposed that the existing white roller shutter be replaced by a bifold door. This is to resolve noise complaints received from neighbouring residents. More details are provided within the design and access statement also submitted with the application.

## THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

2.1 The application site is located on the north eastern side of Saffron Hill, London which runs in a north to south direction adjoining Clerkenwell Road (5201) to the north and Charterhouse Street to the south.

2.2 The site is within central London, located between Islington to the north, Moorgate to the east and Bloomsbury to the west. To the south is the Thames River.

2.3 There is good public transport access to the site via the Farringdon underground station located within a short walking distance of the site to the south east.

2.4 Saffron Hill is a very narrow one way road with high building built up to the back edge of pavement on either side. There are very limited parking facilities and single yellow lines all along the Saffron Hill.

2.5 Photograph 1 below shows the street scene with the application site at the rear.

Photograph 1: The street scene with application site at the rear

The application building



2.6 The building is constructed of red brickwork and part rendered walls, with a large amount of glazing.

2.7 The site, comprising 67 to 74 Saffron Hill, comprises a part 2 part 5 storey building, the two storey element of which fronts onto Saffron Hill with the 5 storey element behind. This is clearly shown on the submitted plans.

2.8 Further, due to the central location of the site within the city, public transport is readily available and easy to use for those who work at or visit this property.

2.9 The application building is currently in use by a number of companies. The table below clearly sets this out.

Floor	Company
BASEMENT	Cameron Mackintosh
GROUND FLOOR	Call Print
FIRST FLOOR	Jenkins and Potter
THIRD AND PART FOURTH FLOOR	Medecin Sans Frontier
FOURTH FLOOR	Usborne

2.10 The building is owned by the Applicant Company – Nyraff Ltd.

## NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

3.1 National planning policy is a material consideration in determining planning applications and appeals.

3.2 In relation to the current application, it is considered that the relevant planning policy document is PPS1 "Delivering Sustainable Development". Relevant extracts will be considered here in relation to the current proposal.

3.3 Paragraph 4 of PPS1 highlights the need, among other things, to maintain a *"high and stable level of economic growth and employment"*. The works to the building allow the extension of the existing ground floor office at the application site, assisting with economic growth by allowing more office space and thus office expansion for those occupying the building. It is considered that this will assist in meeting the requirement of this paragraph of PPS1.

3.8 Paragraph 23 relates to sustainable economic development. It recognises the need to promote a strong and stable economy, and acknowledges that this can deliver environmental and social benefits, allow the economy to prosper through identification of suitable locations for development, and to facilitate good quality development which is sustainable.

3.9 Assessing the proposal against this requirement it is considered that by altering the building as now proposed, it will allow the continuation and expansion of the existing business in the building, helping to strengthen the economy, all be it in a small way. Overall it is considered that this proposal is well designed, fits in with the character, appearance and existing fabric of the area, and is totally in keeping.

3.10 Taking the above into account the conclusion is drawn that the development does comply with the aims and objectives of Central Government planning advice contained within PPS1.

## LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Relevant local policy is contained within the Core Strategy and the Development Policies Document. Relevant policies from each of these documents will be considered below.

4.2 CS5 addresses the management of growth and development, such as its possible impacts on the amenity of occupiers and neighbours. It is argued that the bi-fold door proposed does not harm such amenity. Significant care has been taken to provide a development that is both respectful and suitable for the mixed use nature of the locality.

4.3 Policy CS14 relates to design. However, it must be emphasised that in deliberating the quality of design, commercial activity is a common feature within the area and thus *'respects local context'*. Therefore commercial activity is expected within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area and is not a basis to refuse planning permission. This is emphasised by the previous appeal decision provided by the Planning Inspector, not identifying the Conservation Area as a basis to refuse the proposals.

4.4 With regard to this policy requirement, the proposal is simple alterations to an existing building. The building already forms part of the character of the area and therefore it is considered that slight alterations which do not materially change the appearance of the building, will be in keeping with the character and appearance of this area.

4.5 Taking the above into account, and the requirement for development to be in keeping with the surrounding area, it is considered that the development does meet the policy requirements set out in policy CS14.

4.6 Other relevant policies within the Core Strategy and Development Policies include CS11, DP17 and DP19, in relation to transport. It is argued that the shutter

door complies with these various policies. For instance, the positioning of the site is highly sustainable for pedestrians and cyclists and cycle storage is provided within the service yard, made more secure by the shutter door. Such forms of transport are thus likely to be encouraged.

4.7 CS8 is also relevant. This relates to the location of businesses and it is considered that the site in question is appropriate, as reflected by the entire building used for business purposes. The undercroft being utilised for business purposes is therefore considered to provide more efficient use of the site, without harming the adjacent residential amenity. It should also be emphasised that this space between Omega House and Ziggurat has long been actively used and its use has not risen to any unreasonable level. In fact the suggested legal agreement will likely reduce the level of noise associated with the service yard to a lower level than even if the undercroft was reinstated. Should the undercroft be reinstated, a shutter and pedestrian door would still exist.

4.9 Policy DP24 relates to alterations and claims that they should consider the surrounding character of buildings and their proportions. It is argued that the undercroft extension is clearly obscured from view by the front roller shutter. Also it is clear on the elevations submitted with the application, that the design and materials of the door reflect the existing building design, integrating within that which exists. The character of the building is subsequently retained.

4.10 DP25 relates to conservation areas and the site in question is located within the Hatton Garden Conservation Area. Therefore any development has to ensure that the *'character and appearance of the area'* is preserved or enhanced. Once again, it is emphasised that the retention of the undercroft extension is not visible from the street scene and has been designed to appear suitable for the design of the building. Also the Hatton Garden Conservation Area is known for its mixed use nature and actually fears that residential conversions and development could destroy this character. Caution is therefore needed that unreasonable residential complaints do not cause the



commercial activity to be threatened or harmed, to the detriment of the historic and inherent character of Hatton Garden.

4.11 Policy DP28 expresses concerns for development that might cause noise or vibration pollution. This is a principal issue and a main basis for producing the bi-fold door design, which focuses on avoiding any noise impact. Subsequently, noise concerns are removed. The additional legal agreement will also ensure the avoidance of noise is maintained.

## REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

5.1 The London Plan provides spatial policies for Greater London to ensure that it is a prosperous and developing sustainable city. Of the policies contained within the Plan, those relating to office demand and supply are considered of most relevance.

5.2 Policy 3B.2 states at point 2 that the Mayor will *“seek the renovation and renewal of existing stock to increase and enhance the quality and flexibility of London’s office market offer, in line with policies for maximising the intensity of development”*.

5.3 The proposed development allows for the renovation of the existing building at ground floor level to improve the office facility provided at the site. It also allows for the existing users to expand the company in accordance with the aims of this paragraph of the London Plan.

## CONCLUSION

6.1 This planning statement has been prepared to assess the proposed development against national, regional and local planning policies.

6.2 The effect of the proposed development has been assessed in relation to planning policy requirements. The conclusion has been drawn that there will be no adverse impact on the character or appearance of the area as a result of this development.

6.3 In addition, consideration has been given to the need to provide sustainable communities and respect the neighbouring residents. Consideration of neighbouring amenity is at the very forefront of this proposal, as is more readily identified within the design and access statement.

6.4 Having regard to the discussions above, the conclusion is drawn that the development is acceptable for this location and that it is well in keeping with the existing development. There will be no harm to the character or appearance of the area as a result of the proposal. Issues in relation to the neighbouring residents shall also be resolved by way of a legal agreement.