



**Our Ref:** 11037/SK/tw  
**Your Ref:**  
**Email:** skarat@firstplan.co.uk  
**Date:** 7 April 2011

Planning Services  
Camden Town Hall  
Argyle Street  
London  
WC1H 8EQ

Dear Sir,

**242-246 WESTON HOUSE, HIGH HOLBORN - PLANNING APPLICATION FOR NEW SHOPFRONT TO AN EXISTING RETAIL UNIT**

We have been instructed by our client Waitrose Ltd, to submit a planning application for a new shopfront at the above property (via Planning Portal ref: PP-01442255) to enable the use of the unit as a convenience foodstore. This application is made further to the granting of planning permission **2010/5551/P** on 12 December 2010 for the erection of a single storey ground floor extension (350 sq m GEA) to the rear of the retail unit to allow it to trade as a convenience foodstore. This application is submitted in the context of this planning permission and should be considered together with the concurrently submitted applications for new plant (Planning Portal ref: PP-01442436), and new signage (Planning Portal ref: PP-01440645).

In accordance with national and local validation requirements the following documents are attached:

- 4 no. copies Completed Planning Application Forms
- 4 no. copies Site Location Plan
- 4 no. copies Drawing ( No: YA-001 Existing Floor Plan )
- 4 no. copies Drawing ( No: AF-002 Proposed Floor Plan)
- 4 no. copies Drawing ( No: AE-006 Existing Elevation & Section)
- 4 no. copies Drawing ( No: AE-005 Proposed Elevation & Section)
- 4 no. copies Design and Access Statement

A cheque for £170 (made payable to London Borough of Camden) in respect of the requisite planning application fee has been sent separately by post.

We set out our supporting Statement below:

**Site & Surrounding Area**

The planning permission for the rear extension (ref: 2010/5551/P) has not yet been implemented. Therefore at the present time the application site currently comprises of two A1 retail units on the ground floor, occupied by Blackwells and Clinton Cards, together with basement storage space.

The application premises occupies a corner site fronting on to High Holborn; Little Turnstile forms the northern boundary with Whetstone Park to the south. To the east of the site is situated Renaissance Chancery Court Hotel. There are seven floors above in offices use; the basement is used in connection with the retail shops on the front with the remaining basement space occupied by Fitness First.

The shopfront of the Clinton Cards unit has double access doors either side of which are window displays and associated fascias. The unit currently occupied by Blackwells has two single access doors each with an adjacent window display area. The rear of the unit is currently in use as a car park consisting of 21 spaces together with plant and refuse storage area. Part of the car park is covered with three levels of B1 office space above with lightwells either side. Access is provided to the rear car park/storage area via two galvanised metal roller shutter doors in the building from Whetstone Park to the rear.

Please refer to the accompanying approved plans relating to planning permission **2010/5551/P** which illustrate the layout once the permission is implemented. The application is made in accordance with this permission.

### **Relevant Planning History**

Planning permission (**2010/5551/P**) was granted on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010 for:

*“Part-enclosure and extension to existing ground floor car park to create additional retail floorspace (A1).”*

This planning permission grants consent for a rear extension of 350 sqm (GEA), 334 sqm (GIA) which will enclose the covered area of the car park and service yard to the rear, to provide additional retail floorspace to the shop fronting onto High Holborn. This will combine the two units into one to provide 667 sqm (GEA), 631 sqm (GIA) at ground floor and the existing basement will continue to be used in conjunction with the retail units above (240 sqm GIA).

### **Application Proposals**

This application seeks permission for alterations to the existing shopfront to enable the use of the unit as a convenience foodstore. A key feature of the proposals together with the new fascia is the new double auto door which will act as the single point of entry for customers and service deliveries on the Holborn frontage. The alterations proposed are comprised of the following:

#### **High Holborn Elevation**

- New shopfront stall riser with 30mm box section to mimic panel. Powder coated aluminium.
- New stall riser. 20mm Black granite.
- New 900mm fascia. Powder coated aluminium.
- New double automatic sliding door. 10.8 mm laminated glass.

### **Planning Policy**

The statutory development plan for this site comprises the London Plan (Consolidated 2008) and Camden Development Policies DPD 2010-2025, which replaced the Camden Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006 as of November 8<sup>th</sup> 2010. The London Plan sets out broad planning policies for London whilst the Camden Development Policies DPD sets out policy at the borough level.

### *Camden Development Policies 2010-2025*

The site lies on the Proposals Map within the High Holborn Central London Frontage, the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and in an Archaeological Priority Area and as such Policy DP25 - *Conserving Camden's Heritage* and *Policy DP30 – Shopfronts* are specifically relevant in the consideration of this application.

Policy DP25 states in terms of conservation areas and archaeology that the Council will seek to maintain the character of Camden's conservation areas and protect archaeological remains where appropriate:-

- take account of conservation area statements, appraisals and management plans when assessing applications within the conservation area; and
- only permit development within conservation areas that preserve and enhance the character of the area.

Policy DP30 on shopfronts states that the Council will expect a high standard of design in new and altered shopfronts. When considering proposals for shopfront development they will consider:-

- the design of the shopfront or feature;
- the existing character, architectural and historic merit and design of the building and its shopfront;
- the relationship between the shopfront and the upper floors of the building and surrounding properties, including the relationship between the shopfront and any forecourt or lightwell;
- the general characteristics of shopfronts in the area; and
- community safety and the contribution made by shopfronts to natural surveillance.

Policy DP29 states that in respect of increasing access for all, the Council will:-

- expect buildings to meet the highest practicable standards of access;
- require buildings and spaces to be accessible as possible;

### *Camden Planning Guidance*

The shopfront has been designed to accord with the principles set out in the Camden Planning Guidance (both the adopted 2006 version and Draft Consultation November 2010). The shopfront relates to the scale, proportions and architectural style of Weston House, which is a 1960's era building. The detailed shopfront subject of this application is largely glazed to create an active frontage and has been designed in a simple, contemporary style to mirror the style of the existing building and other shopfronts in the High Holborn area.

### *Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy 2010*

A draft version of this document was recently published for consultation. However, it is yet to be adopted by the Council and therefore has only limited weight in influencing the determination of planning applications.

The document highlights important features and characteristics of the conservation area, and provides guidance on the management of development proposals within it. The statement makes clear that new shopfronts will must be well designed and not detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area. Historic shopfronts are subject to particular policy protection, however, the Weston House shopfront is of a modern design and is therefore not subject to the these policies.

## **Assessment**

The current shopfront is of a dated and incongruous appearance. There are a significant number of differences between the adjacent Clinton Cards and Blackwells units as follows:-

- The fascia on the Clinton Cards unit has larger dimensions and protrudes further than the fascia on the adjacent Blackwells unit.
- The stall riser on each of the units differ in terms of materials, colouring and dimensions.
- The doors are a mix of single and doubles.

The proposed new shopfront will remedy this disjointed appearance to the benefit of the conservation area and appearance of the building through the removal of the previous unattractive shopfront. The new shopfront will include a new stall riser and fascia of an appropriate design and dimensions. The application has been designed to ensure it complements the quality and character of the building by introducing a new standardised shop front to replace the existing mismatched arrangement in accordance with Policy DP30. The glazed shopfront and associated stall riser and fascia uses high quality materials and is considered to fully accord with Policy CP25 and CP30. The new centrally located double automatic sliding door which replaces the existing accesses will also help to simplify access and bring uniformity to the shopfront.

## **Design and Access Issues**

### **Use**

This application seeks permission for alterations to the building's shopfront only. The unit already benefits from planning permission for the A1 Class use.

### **Amount and Scale**

The shopfront alterations will have no effect on the size or scale of the building and will simply enable a retailer to begin trading from the unit.

### **Layout and Appearance**

The installation of a new glazed shopfront with stall riser and new centrally located automatic door will bring uniformity to the incongruous shopfront that currently exists. The appearance of the shopfront is deliberately of a simple design in order to complement the detailing of the building and create an active frontage.

### **Landscaping**

The proposals relate simply to alterations to the shopfront, accordingly there will be no impact on landscaping.

### **Access**

Customer access and goods delivery will continue from the High Holborn frontage. Service vehicles will continue to stop and make deliveries from the existing service bay. However, access to the store for both customers and deliveries will be rationalised to a single access point. The new entrance will be formed from a new glazed double automatic sliding door. The access has been designed to be wheelchair accessible.

## Summary

The replacement of the existing incongruous shopfront with a new purpose built and attractive shopfront is essential to the success of the unit and its ability to trade as a convenience foodstore. The existing shopfront is of a dated and irregular appearance, the fascias and stall risers are of differing dimensions, colours and materials and when combined with the numerous doorways results in an unattractive contribution to the conservation area.

The proposed shopfront will significantly improve the appearance of the building by creating an attractive frontage whilst respecting the architectural character of the building. The simple glazed shopfront accords with relevant policy by creating an attractive frontage whilst respecting the architectural character of the building. The materials and design of the new fascia and stall risers are appropriate, of high quality and will introduce consistency across the breadth of the shopfront which will benefit the character of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. The new sliding doors rationalise access to the building and meet the relevant access criteria.

We trust that the information enclosed is sufficient and we look forward to hearing from you once this has been registered

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley Karat".

SHIRLEY KARAT  
Director

Enc.