

106-109 Saffron Hill London EC1

PPG15 STATEMENT(Para 3.19 (i) (ii) (iii))

JUSTIFICATION FOR DEMOLITION

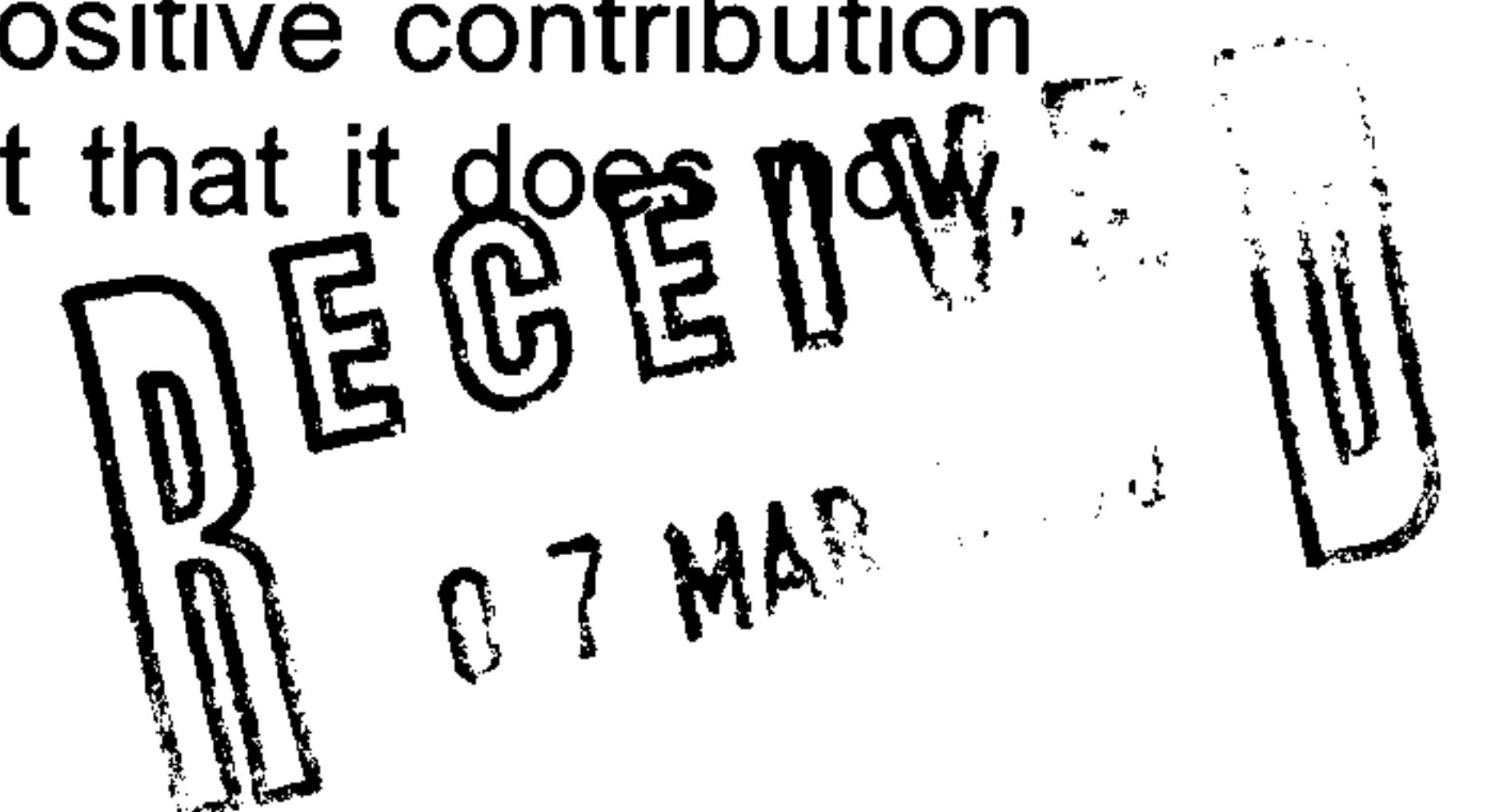
Introduction

It is important to recognise that 106-109 Saffron Hill is not a scheduled Listed Building. Equally the building is not listed in the Hatton Garden Conservation Area Statement either as a building making a positive contribution to the Hatton Garden Conservation Area.

On considering the current planning application and proposal to demolish the building, planning officers have indicated that they would now consider the building to be considered as making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

The building has not been changed in any significant way since the Conservation Area Statement was prepared in 1999 except to say that it has been vacant for the last 4 years and is gradually falling into a state of disrepair.

The fact that the building was not considered to make a positive contribution when the Conservation Area Statement was prepared, but that it does now, may require qualification.



PPG15

The requirements to justify partial or complete demolition under paragraphs 3.19 (i) (ii) (iii) relate specifically to Listed Buildings.

106-109 Saffron Hill does not meet the criteria for inclusion of buildings dating from the mid-nineteenth century in the Government's statutory List of Building of special Architectural or Historic interest. These statutory criteria are set out in DLGG Circular 01/2007 : *Revisions to principles of selection for Listed Buildings* (published 8 March 2007) and the English Heritage *Selection Guide : Commercial Buildings*.

PPG15 however expects the authority to address the following considerations:

3.19 (i) the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use.

The building is of early 20th century construction and is of a hybrid composition: partially load-bearing brickwork walls and partially framed with cast iron columns, with timber floor joists.

The building was previously in office use. The building had been previously vacant for over 2 years before the current owners acquired it in June 2006. The building has remained vacant since, despite an extensive period of marketing through local commercial agents without success.

The marketing efforts have proved that the building does not provide for efficient use of floor plates or quality of accommodation to attract tenants in a competitive commercial property market. The profile of tenant occupiers for such a location require open, high quality air-conditioned space, avoiding the need to place staff on multiple floors.

Furthermore, the construction and floor loading of the present building will also preclude current tenants finding the building suitable. The building would need to undergo comprehensive structural modifications at great cost, with the inclusion of a passenger lift to bring the property up to meet modern day standards and expectations for office accommodation.

Therefore, due to the configuration and composition of the construction of the building it has proved that it would not be an economically viable proposition to refurbish the property to meet current office needs which would attract a tenant and secure a viable future.

3.19 (ii) the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use.

As previously described efforts have been made to market the building for letting in current use over the past 3-4 years. The property has failed to attract a tenant occupier in its current configuration and composition. The building is not Listed and has little of a special character which might make it attractive to an alternative use

3.19 (iii) the merits of alternative proposals for the site.

The poor quality of the present building both in terms of its fabric and architectural character mean that it is difficult to see how it can be refurbished or given a new lease of life.

It is contended that the current proposals to demolish and re-build the site would positively enhance the character and appearance of the streetscape and the conservation area. The new building would provide an increase in the amount of employment generating floorspace of a standard which would be economically sustainable on the site together with the provision of residential accommodation, which would satisfy an identified need in the UDP.

Furthermore, the proposed mixed use development would serve to reinforce the diversity of use in the Conservation Area, which would introduce new

occupiers and economic activity to the neighbourhood, significantly contributing to the prosperity and character of the conservation area.

The Hatton Garden Conservation Area Statement

Conservation Area designation introduces a general control over the demolition of non-listed buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest (PPG section 4).

Historical Associations

We have been unable to discover any specific historical information for the particular site of 106-109 Saffron Hill. The area of Saffron Hill was an area of poor quality building within Clerkenwell which was re-developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Character and Appearance of the Area.

The Conservation Area Statement states in relation to Townscape Quality: *'There is a degree of enclosure in most streets and the appearance of high urban density. This is particularly the case in the narrower streets where taller buildings dominate, such as in Leather Lane, Saffron Hill and Vine Hill'.*

In fact 106-109 Saffron Hill is only 2 storeys above ground and is significantly smaller than other buildings in the street which are typically of 5-6 storeys. This is with the exception of the single storey Territorial Army building next door at 111-115 Saffron Hill. The building therefore could be considered somewhat anomalous with the general character of the area.

The CA states in relation to architectural character : *'Building Types which make a particular contribution to the character and appearance of the CA include Georgian terraced buildings, late 19th century and early 20th century residential blocks, warehouse and workshop buildings and neo-classical buildings'.*

Whilst 106-109 Saffron Hill is undoubtedly a building of late Victorian construction it does not exhibit any features of architectural character which could make it worthy of preservation.

The ground floor 'shop front' has been completely replaced in the 20th century. Above this there is one row of plain arched headed windows with an arrangement rather clumsy timber sash windows which may or may not be contemporary with the construction of the building.

On the floor above this the elevation has been re-built completely as evidenced by the change in brickwork. The original windows have been replaced with Crittall type steel windows and the arched heads have been replaced with simple precast concrete lintels. The proportion of the window openings has been changed and is discordant in relation to the windows below.

There is no other architectural decoration. There are no architectural features which could identify the building as of warehouse of commercial use such as gantries, hoists or doors at upper levels typical of 19th century warehouse buildings.

Conclusion

106-109 Saffron Hill is an undistinguished building of low quality construction substantially altered since it was built, for which there is little commercial demand.

It is not typical of the character of the townscape of Saffron Hill and more so is an anomaly within the conservation area. The building lacks sufficient scale or architectural quality to contribute positively to the streetscape.

The building makes no contribution to the conservation area and at best the frontage serves as a neutral element. It is of negligible architectural quality, and contains no features of interest or significance either.

For the reasons set out above, we believe that the proposed demolition of the building satisfies the requirements set out in PPG15 and the Hatton Garden Conservation Area Statement, and should therefore, be permitted.