

**Part Ground and Basement Floors  
Change of Use and External Alterations**

**114-118 Southampton Row, London, WC1**

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**DM/DZ/P3085  
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**PLANNING**

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## Site Location and Existing Use

The site is located along the north side of Southampton Row directly opposite the Bedford Hotel. The ground floor of the premises comprises a Class A3 restaurant use (Pizza Express), an entrance to access the upper floors and a vehicular access to a redundant basement car park which is currently vacant. The upper floors of the building are used for office purposes.

This application relates solely to part ground and basement floors and associated external works to provide for a new shop front and for the future Class A unit's plant needs. The extent of the site is illustrated on the site location plan and associated drawings.

The application site is currently vacant but was previously used as a vehicular access at ground floor level leading to the basement car park. The ground floor comprises a roller shutter entrance which allows vehicles access into the site from Southampton Row and a car lift to access the basement car park. The car lift is no longer in operation and the lift is totally inoperable and unsafe. The car park has been vacant for some time. There is a space between the vehicular entrance and car lift which is an open area. The basement consists of a car park, car lift, lift motor room, a vehicle turntable and an access to the upper floors.

The site is located within the Central London Area. The site is not allocated within a designated retail frontage but the character of the frontage is one of fragmented Class A and C1 uses. The surrounding area is mixed use in character with the immediate properties comprising of shops, restaurants, cafes, hotels, offices and residential.

The existing ground floor frontage consists of a metal roller shutter and door. The vehicular entrance creates a dead frontage to the site and provides no benefit to the street scene. The roller shutters are the only shutters at street level along Southampton Row and arguably detract from the character and appearance of this part of the street (Photo 1 below). The existing vehicular access is also hazardous for pedestrians as vehicles must cross over the busy pavement to access the basement car park on site. The proposed alterations for the frontage will therefore improve both the appearance of the premises and the immediate area and the safety of pedestrians walking along Southampton Row.



**Photo 1: Metal roller shutter on site frontage.**

## The Proposal

The use of part ground and basement floors of the site for either Class A1 (retail), Class A2 (financial and professional services), Class A3 (Restaurant and Cafes) or Class A4 (drinking establishments) use is proposed for the site. The application therefore seeks maximum flexibility in potential future letting of the accommodation. As a future tenant of the premises is not yet known, the applicant wishes to obtain as much flexibility in the future use as possible and is therefore seeking a “dual/alternative” use permission.

It is considered that all of the above uses would be suitable for the site due to its Central London location and surrounding uses. There are a high number of hotels in the immediate surroundings and any of the proposed uses would provide a service for visitors as well as the local residents and workers in the area.

The proposal replaces the vacant and unattractive accommodation with an attractive shop front and Class A use throughout that part of the ground and basement floor and basement previously used for parking.

The proposal includes the installation of a new extract duct to serve a potential Class A3 or A4 use. The extract duct with sound attenuations and fan will be located internally within the ground and basement levels to prevent external noise. The duct will extract up to roof level replicating the adjacent Class A3 use (Pizza Express). For indicative purposes only, the proposal illustrates the position for the housing of air handling equipment on the first floor roof. The plant would be installed under a separate application once a tenant for the premises has been appointed.

The installation of a shop front and access into the premises are also proposed. The change of use provides the opportunity to significantly enhance the physical appearance of the ground floor frontage and street scene. The proposed scheme takes it lead from Camdens Supplementary Planning Guidance for the provision of new shop fronts. The Design and Access statement below provides further details about the proposals.

There will be no parking associated with the premises. The opening hours of the premises are likely to replicate other similar services in the area.

## **Design Statement**

### **Use**

Planning permission is sought for a dual/alternative use of part ground and basement floors for either Class A1 (retail), Class A2 (financial and professional services), Class A3 (restaurants and cafes) and/or Class A4 (drinking establishments). The proposal also includes the installation of a new ground floor frontage to the site which is proposed to match that of the adjacent "Pizza Express".

The Class A uses proposed for the site will be complimentary to Southampton Row as the street is already lined with a variety of shops, restaurants and hotels. Any of the proposed uses would serve visitors and local residents in the area. All of the proposed uses should add to the vitality and function of Southampton Row.

### **Layout**

The proposal involves alterations to the internal layout of the site. A new dividing wall at ground floor level is proposed to create a fire escape for the proposal and to maintain the existing fire escape route for the adjacent premises. A new staircase leading to the basement level is proposed at the rear of the site with a passenger hoist/lift between the ground and basement floors ensuring full accessibility. A new roof-light is proposed at ground floor level to allow natural light into the rear of the ground floor and basement. The roof-light will form a new hipped, double glazed powder coated aluminium roof-light. The roof-light will be fixed within the new flat roof construction. The new flat roof will have a simple asphalt covering.

### **External Appearance**

A new ground floor frontage is proposed for the site. The proposal has been designed to ensure the proportions, window sizes and materials compliment the existing building and surrounding context. The shop front will comprise of a new full height frameless glazing system to match the existing ground floor elevation of the adjoining premises. The manifestation proposed will comply with building regulations part N2. The proposed glazed entrance door into the unit will match the adjacent entrance to the upper parts of the building. The shop front cuts back the existing block work wall to the entrance to the upper floors to increase the amount of internal space for the new unit.

The proposed shop front fully complies with Camden **Planning Guidance 2006 on 'Shop fronts'** and is to be of a high standard of design. The shop front has been designed to relate to the scale, proportions and architectural style of the surrounding facades. As the site has no previous shop front to work from, the design was informed by the existing character of the surrounding buildings. The shop front is largely glazed to maintain a window display which is not broken up by horizontal or vertical bars.

As indicated on the drawings, a new signage zone is proposed for the site. The proposed signage area for the unit will mirror the existing signage zone of the adjacent unit (Pizza Express) in terms of context and scale (Photo 2). The drawings show an indicative signage on the existing fascia for illustrative purposes and advertisement consent will be sought by prospective tenants if required. The size and proportion of the existing fascia complies with Camden Supplementary Planning Guidance and relates well to the building.



**Photo 2: Exemplar signage of adjacent building.**

The proposed flat roof and roof light will be visible at the rear of the site. The flat roof will require the bricking up of a rear window at the first floor level.



## Access Statement

The proposal has been designed to comply with approved Document Part M of the building regulations to embrace best practice and to enhance everyone's experience of visiting the proposed uses.

The existing frontage has level access as it was used as a vehicular entrance into the site. The proposal retains this level access providing inclusive access to the future unit. The interior floor level will be at the same level as the pavement ensuring level and convenient access to the interior space. A notional location for a new interior communication staircase between ground and basement levels has been designed so as to be capable of use by ambulant disabled users. The proposal also includes the potential for a passenger lift for wheelchair users or visitors with pushchairs from ground to basement level.

There are fire escape doors located on both the ground and basement floors. Access for emergency services will be via entrance doors and windows.

## Camden Council Policy

**Policy B3: Alterations and extensions** states that permission will not be granted for alterations and extensions that is considers would cause harm to the architectural quality of the existing building or to the surrounding area. The site and frontage are of no intrinsic architectural merit and are of general poor design offering nothing to the overall street scene. The proposal will significantly enhance the premises and the street scene.

**Policy R2: General impact of retail and entertainment uses** lists the criteria that shopping, services, food and drink use developments must meet to be granted. The proposal for Class A1, A2, A3 and /or A4 use is fully in accordance with Policy R2 as the development will not cause harm to the character, amenity, function or vitality of the area and is readily accessible by a wide choice of transport. It is considered that the proposal will enhance the function and vitality of the area by replacing a vacant site with a service for visiting and local members of the public and creating an active ground floor frontage. Furthermore, the proposal will not create a cumulative impact within the area because of the wide range of uses that surround the premises.

Likewise the proposal complies with **Policy R3: Assessment of food and drink uses and licensed entertainment** as it is considered that the use would not cause individual or cumulative harm to the area.

The proposal involves the loss of the basement car park. **Policy T11: Alternative use of existing car parks** states that permission will be granted for the redevelopment of existing car parks for alternative uses provided that the provision for cycles, people with disabilities, service vehicles and coaches are maintained and if the parking removed is surplus to needs for public, operational business or residents parking. The basement car park has been vacant for a considerable amount of time and the car lift is no longer in operation. The Council welcomes proposals to convert excess car spaces into other alternative uses and the proposal therefore complies with Council policy.

## Summary

In summary the proposed dual/alternative Class A1, A2, A3 and/or A4 use and alterations to the ground floor frontage would be wholly consistent with and supported by the Policies of the newly adopted UDP. The proposed uses are considered to be in keeping with the mix of commercial uses in the area. The proposed shop front will greatly improve the appearance of the premises and surrounding area.