

RLA/DM/P2914  
30<sup>th</sup> August 2006

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London Borough of Camden  
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**For the attention of: Ms E Quigly**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**31 – 37 Whitfield Street, London W1T 2SF**

Further to our recent pre-application discussions and site inspection, please find enclosed, on behalf of our client Moorley Pooled Pensions Ltd, a planning application for the refurbishment of the existing building fronting Whitfield Street including the upgrading the front elevation, the extension of the building at roof level and the provision of new enclosed roof top plant. Please find enclosed the following;

- o Existing and proposed drawings
- o Site Location Plan
- o Design/Access Statement
- o Daylight and Sunlight Report
- o Acoustic Report
- o A cheque for £530, this being the requisite planning application fee.

#### **The Site**

The site is located at on the west side of Whitfield Street close to its junctions with Scala Street and Goodge Street. The existing building is a mid-terrace commercial building which was purpose built in 1968 as a recording studio for CBS, later the Sony Corporation. Its design and appearance is representative of this period, comprising predominantly of brickwork with a substantial plant room.

The property is currently vacant though until recently was occupied as recording studios and offices. There is an existing vehicular access to an external courtyard at the rear of the property from Charlotte Street; this two storey rear part of the building is subject to a separate planning application.

Terraces of buildings continue to the north and south of the site, and comprises a variety of architectural styles and building scales. To the north of the site is a four storey block which turns onto Scala Street where residential properties predominate. To the south is a three storey plus

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pitched roof public house which turns the corner onto Goodge Street. Opposite the site are three more recent commercial buildings, four and five storeys high, with varied individual architectural styles.

The site lies within the Central London Area, Charlotte Street Conservation Area, Chelsea/Hackney Rail Safeguarding area and a Strategic View – Viewing Corridor within the adopted Camden Unitary Development Plan (2006).

### **The Proposal**

The building is in poor condition with a dated external appearance and a generally poor internal standard of amenity by modern office/business space standards, incorporating dated suspended ceilings and raised floors. The building is now vacant due to significant changes in current production technology. It is therefore proposed to undertake extensive refurbishment of the property to modernise both the internal layout and the external appearance to make it more widely attractive to the letting market. As part of this refurbishment it is proposed to provide additional office accommodation at roof level, to improve the internal layout of the existing commercial floorspace including providing for disabled access and facilities throughout the building, and also providing for enhanced building services.

The front facade of the building will be remodelled to provide a more attractive and contemporary appearance. The new elevation will comprise a high performance aluminium framed glazing system to be installed between retained existing tile clad piers. A strong grid appearance will create a horizontal emphasis to match relate to that above. The design of this elevation seeks to draw reference to the existing buildings within the streetscene, incorporating a horizontal rhythm to complement the adjacent buildings. The rear façade will also be improved to increase and rationalise the window openings and improve daylight into the building. The existing flues and large external ducts will be removed from the rear elevation and the existing external escape stair refurbished. The accompanying Design Statement explains the design of the proposed scheme in more detail and how it responds to the local street scene.

The existing oversized plant space at fourth floor level will be converted into usable office space and extended, and in response to pre-application discussions has been set back 2.5m from the façade of the building so as not to be visible within the local street scene. The design of the extension is to be visually lighter and more lightweight than the floors below. The additional floorspace created at fourth floor would be used for Class B1 business purposes.

In addition to the physical alterations to the front part of the building it is also proposed to enhance the existing rear part of the building accessible from Charlotte Street. Whilst currently this part of the building is accessible from the Whitfield Street entrance the refurbishment of this part of the building has been designed as a stand alone small commercial office space which could be accessed from Charlotte Street. This increases flexibility for the future use of both the front and rear parts of the building. The refurbishment includes improvements to both the external appearance of the building and courtyard and internal improvements to the layout and facilities. These alterations are subject to a separate planning application.

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## Planning Considerations

**Policies E1, E2 and SD5** of the replacement UDP (adopted 2006), seek to retain existing and encourage new office development in locations which are accessible by a choice of means of transport, including the Central London Area within which the site lies..

The proposed development proposes an increase in floorspace of **108 sq m**. **Policy SD3** of the replacement UDP seeks to encourage mixed use development and requires a contribution to housing where proposals create additional floorspace over the threshold of 200 sq m additional B1 space. As the proposed development does not create over 200sqm of additional Class B1 floorspace this policy is not applicable and as such we consider there is no policy requirement for the provision of a mixed use residential component.

The roof storey of office accommodation would be consistent with **Policy B3** of the replacement UDP and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (2002). The extended storey with new roof plant would be subordinate to the main building form below and by being set back from the front elevation would have no material visual impact in views from Whitfield Street or the building's existing skyline. The location of the building and the position of the extension at roof level will ensure there would be no material visual impact either upon or from Scala Street or Goodge Street. As such the proposed profile will ensure that the roof storey is not significantly or materially exposed to any view of importance

The proposed roof extension is in keeping with the height of the commercial buildings on the opposite side of Whitfield Street and given the proposed set back of the extension, it is considered to respect the height and scale of neighbouring buildings. The site also falls within the periphery of a strategic view corridor though higher buildings north and south of the site interrupt the same strategic view to the Palace of Westminster from Parliament Hill. Given that the buildings opposite are of a similar height, we do not consider any material impact will be made upon the strategic view, which as you know is presently under detailed review by The Mayor's Office and GOL..

The design of the roof extension is in keeping with the proposed elevational alterations and would be architecturally sympathetic both in design and positioning to the character of the building and its setting within the street. The roof plant would also be set back and profiled to ensure that there would be no discernable effect upon the daylight and sunlight received by nearby facing properties. The accompanying daylight and sunlight report confirms that the proposal would have no material impact. An acoustic assessment has also been undertaken which confirms that no material impact is anticipated as a result of the provision of the new roof plant.

The Council's general design principles are set out within **Policy B1** of the UDP and seek to ensure development is designed to a high standard by respecting its setting, being sustainable and easy to adapt and seeking to improve the attractiveness of an area without harm its appearance or setting. The proposal is considered to be consistent with these policies offering a height, scale and elevational design which is appropriate to the wider setting by respecting neighbouring buildings and comprising high quality materials. The proposed development would in our opinion greatly improve the visual appearance of the existing 'tired' building, providing a more attractive appearance within the street-scene of Whitfield Street. The proposals incorporation of a more open and "active" ground floor presence should help to significantly enhance the building's contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Charlotte Street Conservation Area. The scheme may therefore be consistent with **Policy B7** of the UDP.

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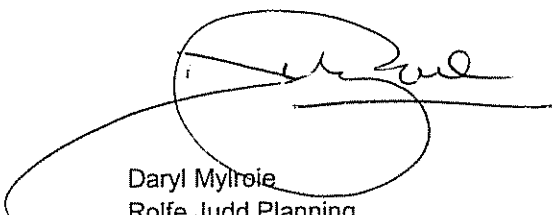
### Summary

The proposed refurbishment and extension of the existing building will create more flexible, high quality business use accommodation. The proposal will enable the provision of enhanced and additional better quality office accommodation suited to the needs of modern business uses considering locating in this area. The refurbishment of the building will also provide an opportunity to upgrade the existing layout and provide facilities to allow for disabled access where none presently exist.

The high quality and modern design of the front and rear elevations will enhance the building's appearance within the streetscene and improve the character and appearance of this part of the Charlotte Conservation Area whilst respecting local standards in respect of sunlight/daylight and noise..

We trust you have sufficient information to determine this application and look forward to a swift and positive decision, however should you have any queries or require any further information please contact myself on 020 7556 1543.

Yours sincerely



Daryl Mylroie  
Rolfe Judd Planning

Encs

cc: Client + Design Team