

**PLANNING &  
CONSERVATION  
STATEMENT**

In respect of

**227-233 TOTTENHAM  
COURT ROAD, 24 STORE  
STREET AND 10/12  
SOUTH CRESCENT & 19-  
21A STORE STREET & 38  
ALFRED PLACE**

On behalf of

**THE CORPORATION OF  
LONDON**

Prepared by

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CgMs Ref: MRH/3601

Date: July 2004

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning and Conservation Statement relates to resubmitted applications for development at two sites to the east of Tottenham Court Road in the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Those sites are:

- i) 227-233 Tottenham Court Road, 24 Store Street and 10/12 South Crescent (referred to in this report as 227-233 Tottenham Court Road) and;
- ii) 19-21A Store Street, 38 Alfred Place (referred to as 19-21A Store Street).

1.2 The applications comprise:

- i) A planning application for alterations and additions at 227-233 Tottenham Court Road to provide improved retail and office facilities.
- ii) A Conservation Area consent application for 10-12 South Crescent relating to demolitions associated with the above development.
- iii) A planning application for alterations and additions at 19-21A Store Street to provide residential accommodation and improved retail floorspace.

1.3 The applications for both sites have been submitted simultaneously because residential uses (which Camden Borough Council seeks where additional office floorspace is provided) are proposed to be created at 19-21A Store Street while the office increase is at 227-233 Tottenham Court Road.

1.4 Previous applications for a very similar form of development at 227-233 Tottenham Court Road were recently withdrawn and some changes to reduce the scale of the

plant areas have been incorporated in the current drawings. The proposal for Store Street are unchanged.

1.5 This statement includes the following:

- Descriptions of the sites and proposals.
- An appraisal of relevant planning policies.
- A planning assessment addressing the planning issues raised.
- A conservation assessment addressing policy and the changes to the buildings.
- Principal conclusions.

1.6 The applications are accompanied by a Design Statement prepared by the scheme architects, Hamilton Associates, which deals with the approach to design in more detail and provides illustrative material.

## **2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSALS FOR 227-233 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD**

### **227-233 Tottenham Court Road – Application Site**

- 2.1 This site comprises a main building (227-233 Tottenham Court Road and 24 Store Street) constructed in about 1905, providing a total of 8 shops on the ground floor and parts of the basement areas, with commercial uses (offices and training uses) and some retail (sales and storage) above. The main elevation to Tottenham Court Road is a well proportioned 4 storey commercial façade rising to five storeys at the northern and southern ends. There have been later alterations and additions to the rear.
- 2.2 There is a linked building at 10-12 South Crescent with a curved façade. The building behind the façade is irregular in shape and is in poor physical condition.
- 2.3 Much of the floorspace on the upper floors of the buildings is currently under-used or vacant and is in need of refurbishment and renewal. These areas are generally subdivided with later partitioning to form offices and store rooms. As a result of the piecemeal changes, the buildings contain an irregular arrangement of corridors and spaces with various accesses and escape stairs serving the different areas and uses.
- 2.4 The retail areas of the buildings have similarly been altered over the years and also comprise some irregular shaped floorspace. There is a disproportionate amount of ancillary space (with no public access) for the retail uses, located at basement level and on the upper floors. The extent of retail sales space on the ground floor is limited.
- 2.5 The designs of the shopfronts are varied and, for the most part, are not sympathetic with the architecture of building. The signage largely comprises bold, internally

illuminated, fascia signs which detract from the building's appearance. Photographs are included in the Design Statement.

### **227-233 Tottenham Court Road – The Proposals**

2.6 The scheme for 227-233 Tottenham Court Road comprises the following principal elements:

- i) Refurbishment of the main block fronting Tottenham Court Road including replacement of shop fronts and reinstating architectural details.
- ii) Creating improved retail units at ground floor and basement levels with offices above.
- iii) Reconstruction and extension to the rear of the main block and behind the retained façade of 10-12 South Crescent to create improved office floorspace, a new office entrance on South Crescent and a landscaped deck above the extended ground floor retail area.
- iv) Construction of a modern glazed roof top addition set back from the parapet line. This would provide an additional floor of offices with a gallery level.

2.7 The architects approach to the design of the scheme and details of the various elements are set out in the Design Statement.

2.8 The scheme has been amended as a result of discussions with the planning and conservation officers. The revisions decrease the rooftop plant areas and the resubmitted applications, therefore, have a lower height for the core and a reduced roof height above 10-12 South Crescent. These changes significantly reduce the visibility of the plant areas.



### **3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSALS FOR 19-21A STORE STREET**

#### **19-21A Store Street - Application Site**

3.1 19-21A Store Street and 38 Alfred Place is an early 20th century commercial building comprising:

- Basement – offices (Nos.19 and 20), storage (21) and wine bar (21A).
- Ground floor – office (19), two shops (20 and 21) and café (21A).
- First to fourth floor – offices.

3.2 It is an attractive building although its appearance is marred by unsympathetic shopfronts which would be replaced as part of this scheme.

3.3 Planning permission was granted in July 2003 (ref. PSX0205302) for a refurbishment scheme which involved rearranging the uses to improve the ground floor/basement retail areas and to provide a new glazed entrance and core for refurbished offices above. That consent has not been implemented and has been overtaken by the emerging proposals for the combined sites.

#### **19-21A Store Street - The Proposals**

3.4 The proposals would replace the offices on the upper floors with 11 flats comprising 8 two bedroom flats and 3 one bedroom flats. The access to those flats would be from Alfred Place. The existing unsympathetic canopy on the Alfred Place frontage would be removed. The existing in-filled entrance arch would be opened up to create an access to a courtyard leading to a new entrance, stair and lift core. This would be similar to that in the approved office scheme although it proposes an open courtyard instead of a glazed link to the street.

- 3.5 The ground floor and basement would be reconfigured to provide A1 retail space throughout (except for the access to the upper floors). This would provide increased retail space and would be capable of occupation as a single unit or sub-division into two or three shops depending on market demand.



#### 4.0 PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 The sites are within the Central London Area as defined in the Camden UDP March 2000. The UDP notes that this is an area with a concentration of business uses and retailing along Tottenham Court Road (para. 2.72). Within the Central London Area there are a number of areas with a particular character identified and the sites are within the Fitzrovia Local Area. They are also within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Relevant policies are outlined below.

##### **Employment Policies**

- 4.2 Strategic Policies on employment (Policies SEC 2, 3 and 4) seek to foster a range of employment uses, support the provision of a range of premises and seek to direct the expansion of business uses to areas with a high level of public transport accessibility (such as Tottenham Court Road). Policy EC4 identifies the Central London Area as one of the locations having most potential for the expansion of business development.
- 4.3 With regard to this part of the Fitzrovia Local Area, the UDP acknowledges at paragraph 14.61 the suitability of Tottenham Court Road for further larger scale office development and states that:
- “Tottenham Court Road marks the contrast between the scale and commercial (largely, but not exclusively, retail) function of the main road and the scale and mixed use character of surrounding areas....The corridor presents opportunities for development (subject to detailed consideration of public transport capacity), including development of a scale that would generally be considered out of keeping with the surrounding area.”
- 4.4 Policy EC3 seeks to retain employment uses and again the proposals would meet that objective and would also achieve an increase in employment floorspace.

4.5 The retention of accommodation for small firms is sought (Policy EC5) and the design of the scheme would enable sub-division to take place. This is addressed in more detail in the Planning Assessment section of this statement.

4.6 Overall, the proposals are considered to be fully in accordance with the employment policies, providing enlarged and improved employment floorspace in a highly accessible location.

### **Mixed Uses**

4.7 Policy RE5 seeks mixed use developments in the Central London Area. In considering the mix of uses the policy states that the Council will have regard to 'the character, diversity and vitality of the surrounding area'. In this location, the area is characterised by retailing on ground floor level with mainly commercial uses above and the scheme continues that pattern.

4.8 The supporting text for the adopted policy also notes that the Council would particularly welcome an increase in residential accommodation and this is reiterated in the supporting text of the Central London Chapter which refers to the uses which are particularly encouraged as including housing and 'additional retail uses adding interest and vitality at ground floor level' (para 14.52).

### **Retailing**

4.9 Policy SH1 encourages the 'consolidation and improvement' of shopping centres and the Central London Chapter states that:

"Tottenham Court Road performs a strong retail function and is one of the major development corridors within the Central Area."

- 4.10 The UDP seeks to maintain the vitality and viability of the centre and support its general and specialist retail function (para. 14.60). For the reasons explained in the Planning Assessment section, the proposals are considered to significantly enhance retail provision on Tottenham Court Road and Store Street.

### **Housing**

- 4.11 Policy HG8 seeks an increase in the amount of land in residential use. There are no residential uses in either block at present but the proposals would introduce housing in 19-21A Store Street. Policy HG16 seeks a mix of housing types. The development would provide one and two bedroom units and the approach to the mix of units is addressed in the Planning Assessment section.

### **Conservation Area Policies**

- 4.12 Policy EN31 seeks to ensure that developments preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. The Council will seek to retain buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area but where redevelopment of other buildings is proposed, Policy EN32 states that conservation area consent will be granted "...where the contribution of the proposed replacement when compared with that of the existing building would be of more or equal benefit to the conservation area". For the reasons set out in these submissions, we consider that the redevelopment element of the proposals behind the façade of 10-12 South Crescent would be considerably more beneficial to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area than the existing structure.
- 4.13 Policy EN34 states that where shopfronts are out of character with the building and/or the area, the Council will 'encourage installation of a new shopfront which is appropriate to the building and enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area'. Proposals for appropriate shopfronts following consistent design principles are set out in the Design Statement.

## **UDP Alteration No.2**

- 4.14 The UDP Alteration No.2 is not yet adopted but regard has been had to its provisions in preparing these applications. In particular account has been taken of the wording of the revised Policy RE5 which seeks to promote mixed use schemes and encourages the inclusion of housing. It includes the following:

“In the Central London Area and the Major Centres, where a proposal would increase total gross floorspace by more than 500 sq.m. the Council will expect development to incorporate an appropriate mix of uses. Where appropriate up to 50% of the additional gross floorspace should be for residential use...”

- 4.15 It goes on to say that in considering the mix of uses, regard will be had to factors including the scale and location of the proposed development and the character, diversity and vitality of the surrounding area. In this instance, Tottenham Court Road is characterised by larger commercial buildings, mainly offices over retail uses, and the proposals would place the residential element in the quieter Store Street location.

## **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

- 4.16 An assessment of the proposals against the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance has been carried out. It is considered that the scheme complies with all the relevant guidelines including those relating to residential design.



## 5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 In this section we address each of the elements of the development, identifying the physical and land use changes proposed and the planning issues raised. Floorspace schedules for the existing and proposed areas are attached as **Appendix 1** and a floorspace Summary Table is enclosed as **Appendix 2** which sets out the relevant changes in each use.

### Offices

- 5.2 The floorspace schedules demonstrate that the proposals would provide an overall increase of 1,735m<sup>2</sup> (gross) of employment floorspace. As explained in section 4, an increase in office uses on Tottenham Court Road is consistent with the employment policies of the UDP which recognise this as a suitable location for additional office floorspace.
- 5.3 The refurbished and extended offices would provide a much improved working environment and a high quality building which would make a positive contribution to the area. Particular features of note comprise:
- A double height office entrance is proposed from South Crescent which would give views through to the first floor landscaped deck to the rear.
  - A glazed roof top addition is proposed with a curved profile which would create an interesting and attractive addition to the building and complement the architecture of the main building.
- 5.4 The improvements at 227-233 Tottenham Court Road include the provision of a new office core, which would enable disabled access to be provided throughout the building. At present there is very limited disabled access.

- 5.5 The offices are designed to be capable of sub-division in accordance with Policy EC5 of the UDP. The Tottenham Court Road area is popular with media companies and professional practices and they generally require such flexibility in any event. The Corporation of London's experience with a block to the north is that such companies need to acquire or sub-let space quickly depending on the business cycle. Those buildings have proved very successful in this respect and at present, there is a significant amount of sub-letting. The building at 227-233 Tottenham Court Road would have similar characteristics. The location and arrangement of the core is such that the upper floors are capable of being let individually or subdivided into partial floors.
- 5.6 Although the upper floors of 19-21A Store Street would change from employment use to housing, the objectives of Policy EC3 on the retention of employment uses would be met by the overall increase in employment floorspace in the combined schemes. In any event, that policy allows for changes of use to the preferred residential use.
- 5.7 The site is highly accessible. It is within a few minutes walk of a number of underground stations, the closest are Goodge Street (Northern Line), Tottenham Court Road (Central and Northern Lines), Warren Street (Victoria Line and Northern Line) and Russell Square (Piccadilly Line). Tottenham Court Road is also on a number of bus routes including Night Bus routes.

### **Residential**

- 5.8 Where there is an increase in gross floorspace, the emerging planning policies seek up to 50% of that increase as residential floorspace. The intention of the policy is to relate any increase in offices to the provision of residential accommodation and the officer's letter of 21.10.03 in response to pre-application discussions states that 'any residential accommodation provided should represent up to 50% of the uplift in employment accommodation'. The increase in gross floorspace in employment use

as a result of the scheme is some  $1,735\text{m}^2$  (taking into account the reduction in office use at 19-21A Store Street) and 50% of that increase would be  $867\text{m}^2$ . The increase in overall gross in the building at 227-233 Tottenham Court Road, taking into account plant and common areas shared with retail uses, is  $2,304\text{m}^2$  and 50% of that would be  $1,152\text{m}^2$ .

5.9 Under the emerging policy, the Council would, therefore, seek residential accommodation in the range  $867\text{m}^2$  to  $1,152\text{m}^2$ . The policy is to provide 'up to' that level. Consideration has, therefore, been given to the best way of accommodating residential uses in the scheme. The building at 19-21A Store Street is considered to be an ideal opportunity to accommodate such uses particularly having regard to the following:

- i) The building at 19-21A Store Street lends itself readily to accommodating the residential use. It is domestic in both scale and general appearance and there are, for example, former fireplaces which will add to its character. It divides well into two and three bedroom flats.
- ii) Store Street is a better residential location than Tottenham Court Road because it has much less traffic and is, accordingly, quieter particularly in the evenings and at weekends when Tottenham Court Road still carries a considerable volume of through traffic.
- iii) A good quality independent entrance, with private courtyard and new lift/stair core can be provided for the flats from 38 Alfred Place. This would offer a better residential environment than inclusion in a larger office scheme.
- iv) It was being vacated in any event to enable the approved refurbishment and alterations scheme to be implemented and existing lettings are only on a short term basis.
- v) It is the right size to meet the requirement. The gross external floorspace proposed for the residential use is  $1,008\text{m}^2$  which is more than 50% of the



increase in employment space in the scheme and represents some 44% of the increase in gross at 227-233 Tottenham Court Road. It is, therefore, in accordance with the policy which seeks up to 50% of the gross increase for housing.

5.10 Provision of a secondary use of this nature on a site separate from the office space is recognised as acceptable in the draft form of Policy RE5 in the Alteration No.2 which states that 'In appropriate cases the Council will accept the provision of secondary uses off-site' and the supporting text at paragraph 3.50 of that Alteration (Post Inquiry Draft) states that this will be acceptable for developments providing more than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> where the applicant provides clear evidence that off-site provision is more appropriate.

5.11 The mix of residential units reflects the nature of the building and the location. The planning officers have indicated that the Council favours larger family accommodation in suitable locations. In this instance, the building does not lend itself to larger units for families taking into account the following considerations:

- i) No garden or play area can be provided in the scheme. Nor can any roof terraces be created. A small courtyard leading to the entrance to the block and the lift core, would not be suitable for children's play. There are no areas of public open space in the immediate vicinity. The nearest is the small area at Crabtree Fields, but that is to the west of the busy Tottenham Court Road. There are no other open spaces suitable for children's play within 400 m. or indeed for some distance beyond.
- ii) The location is a relatively busy commercial one, with commercial buildings in all directions and a public house immediately next door. There is a college use immediately to the rear. There are no adjacent flats. Whilst this is a lively environment for single people and couples, it is not considered very suitable for families. The relationship to the college to the rear is noted as a

consideration that needs thoughtful handling to avoid issues of overlooking. It is considered that the form of development proposed is most suitable from this point of view. The college will not be in use in the evenings or weekends, which makes it a suitable neighbour for working people, it may be less suitable for family use over longer hours.

- iii) The Corporation of London is advised that the market in this location is for smaller flats of this nature rather than larger family accommodation. Policy HG16 sub-paragraph (d) recognises that such "marketing considerations" are a relevant factor.
- iv) This is a relatively small development (only 11 units) and it is important to its viability that values are sufficient to justify the conversions costs and the provisions of facilities including a lift, with the associated service charges. Larger units would not achieve the same sales values in this location and service charges would be divided between a smaller number of flats.
- v) The internal layout of the building is very well suited to sub-division into 1 or 2 bedroom units. 3 bedroom units would not make such effective use of the space.

5.12 For these reasons, we remain of the view that the particular mix of residential units proposed in this block is the most suitable.

5.13 These proposals would involve some minor external alterations at 19-21A Store Street, which are similar to the previously approved office scheme. This comprises the new core to the rear; the replacement on a like for like basis of the windows; the replacement of the unsightly shop fronts with designs.

## Retail

5.14 The proposals would result in a considerable improvement in the quality of the retail floorspace albeit with a reduction in the gross area in retail use. Overall, it is considered that this would be a substantial benefit since it would:

- i) Increase the sales area (because the existing retail space is inefficient)
- ii) Provide larger units to strengthen Tottenham Court Road as a shopping centre.
- iii) Create more regular shaped units with better public access.
- iv) Increase the length of shopping frontage.
- v) Replace unsympathetic shopfronts.

5.15 We expand on these points below.

5.16 Some areas on the upper floors and basements of 227-233 Tottenham Court Road are used as ancillary retail space but for the most part those areas are not sales floorspace and comprise small store rooms, spread over a number of levels. They do not provide an efficient use of floorspace and contribute little to retailing in the area.

5.17 We calculate the existing sales area at both 227-233 Tottenham Court Road and 19-21A Store Street combined to be approximately 1,800 m<sup>2</sup> (out of a gross of 3,872 m<sup>2</sup>). The equivalent sales area with the scheme is expected to be approximately 2,700 m<sup>2</sup> (in a gross of 3,593 m<sup>2</sup>). Thus the development would significantly increase sales floorspace.

5.18 The scheme would also provide larger units for which there is demand on Tottenham Court Road. Such units can attract quality retailers who would enhance the retail offer and the image of Tottenham Court Road as a shopping centre. The same approach in the block to the north enabled a flagship store to be provided for

Paperchase and attracted larger units, for example, Purves & Purves and 20:20 Optical.

- 5.19 At present both of the application sites contain mainly smaller, irregular shaped shop units. At 19-21A Store Street, the alterations would provide scope for 1 large shop or 2 or 3 smaller retail units depending on market demand, located on the ground floor and basement. At present there are only two small shops on the ground floor.
- 5.20 At 19-21A Store Street, the proposals would considerably increase the length of retail frontage to encompass all of the Store Street and Alfred Place frontages. The existing shopfronts, particularly for the corner A3 unit, are not attractive and would be replaced.
- 5.21 On Tottenham Court Road, there would be 3 larger units and the changes to the shops will include extending the retail space at ground floor level back into what is at present the untidy rear area, greatly improving the size and quality of the ground floor retail space and forming regular shaped units. The proposals would also extend the area of the basement available for retail sales and provide new staircases into those basement areas. Where basement retailing takes place at present, this is generally via unattractive staircases and, from observation, it is apparent that relatively few customers are attracted into those areas.
- 5.22 At 227-233 Tottenham Court Road, the existing unsympathetic shopfronts would also be replaced. The existing appearance is shown on the photographs in the Design Statement. It would then be possible to adopt a consistent approach to the design of the shopfronts based on a tenants' handbook and greatly enhance the appearance of this section of Tottenham Court Road.



## 6.0 CONSERVATION ASSESSMENT

### Historical And Architectural Development

- 6.1 Tottenham Court Road originally formed part of the Fitzroy Square development (largely to the north of Tottenham Court Road), which was laid out to the designs of the Adam Brothers c.1790 onwards. The area was planned as an estate with a range of housing to attract the wealthy middle classes and minor aristocracy, and included a market and shops, public houses, and a church. Pevsner states that this area was a centre for furniture manufacture from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, explaining the erection of grand department stores and warehouses here later in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. Many of these large stores survive along Tottenham Court Road and have been adapted for modern commercial uses. Although some were replaced in the 1950s and 1960s with equally substantial modern developments, Tottenham Court Road is characterised by its impressive commercial buildings, with shopfronts at ground floor level.

### 227-233 Tottenham Court Road

- 6.2 227-233 Tottenham Court Road was built c.1905 to the designs of Lewis Solomon in an Edwardian Baroque style typical of commercial architecture of the period in London. It is a substantial red brick building richly decorated with buff terracotta or faience. Its two primary frontages address Tottenham Court Road and the corner of Store Street, and a third frontage curves into South Crescent. The latter part of the composition is somewhat plainer than the elevation facing Tottenham Court Road.
- 6.3 Both the Tottenham Court Road and Store Street elevations are largely three storeys high above ground level, rising to four storey turrets at either end of the Tottenham Court Road frontage. Here, the steeply hipped roofs rise to become features in their own right, and the canted corner to Store Street bears the date 1905 above the parapet. In all, there are eight irregular bays to Tottenham Court Road, and two

main bays to Store Street. Each bay is separated from the next by a faience pier that rises through the whole height of the elevation, being a solid pilaster at ground floor level, a rusticated pier at first floor, and a giant pilaster through the second and third floors. There are full-width openings in the bays at ground and first floor, and smaller windows (mostly two per bay) above this, but there have been numerous alterations and variations over the years. Four of the wider bays facing Tottenham Court Road have segmental pediments that rise above the parapet and balustrade.

- 6.4 227-233 Tottenham Court Road has been much altered, and contains fabric at the rear which is very unattractive. Nevertheless, it is a building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Its restoration and upgrading will therefore be of immediate visual value as well as of wider benefit to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

### **The Application Proposals**

- 6.5 In summary, the proposal involves the following works:
- The addition of a roof extension in contemporary design, set back from the parapet along the Tottenham Court Road elevation.
  - Partial demolition of poor quality structures behind the South Crescent façade, to facilitate the erection of a new extension linking vertically to the additional roof structure.
  - New shopfronts, to reinstate the rhythm and detailing of the original Edwardian façade as far as possible.
  - Alterations to the South Crescent frontage, including a new office entrance and the restoration of the existing windows and other architectural detailing.
  - Enhancement of the current employment accommodation by improving the quality and usability of the existing office space.

### **Alterations To The Roof**

- 6.6 There is a consistency in height, scale and massing to the buildings along the east side of Tottenham Court Road. The scale and height of 227-233 Tottenham Court Road is consistent with the surrounding buildings on the east side, and it stands comfortably in the streetscape. Because of the relative narrowness of the street, it is not easy to get a direct view of the Tottenham Court Road frontage, and it is normally seen at an angle from the south or the north, and in part from Percy Street and Windmill Street to the west.
- 6.7 Given the low pitch of the existing roof structure, and the height of the parapet and its faience balustrade, it is not possible to obtain a clear view of the existing roof from ground level, except from Percy Street and Windmill Street.
- 6.8 The design of the proposed roof extension contrasts in style with the Edwardian Baroque detailing on the main facades, but will preserve the character of the existing parapet by virtue of its lightweight appearance and construction. The new roof level will be set back so as to limit the impact on the profile and skyline of the building. Consequently, there will be little or no material impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area when seen from ground level.

### **Partial Demolition Behind The South Crescent Facade**

- 6.9 The internal fabric and structure of 227-233 Store Street is utilitarian and has been subject to piecemeal alteration throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It contributes nothing to the character or appearance of the conservation area, and in some areas its quality is particularly poor. This is the case to the rear of the South Crescent elevation, where an arched access leads through the building to an open yard dominated by those elevations of the 1905 building that were not intended for public display.



- 6.10 It is proposed to take down part of the building behind the South Crescent façade, where the internal layout is at its most awkward because of the unusual shape of the building. By rebuilding this element, and by incorporating a new galleried extension that links vertically to the roof extension, the internal quality of 227-233 Tottenham Court Road will be vastly improved. Externally, the essential fabric will be retained and upgraded, and the better use of the building will be to the wider benefit of this part of the conservation area. Some further information and comment on this aspect was provided in our letter of 11<sup>th</sup> June 2004.

### **External Restoration**

- 6.11 The restoration of architectural details such as the pilaster caps on the shopfronts, and the return of the ground floor as far as possible to its Edwardian appearance, will greatly improve the character of this part of the building. This will be of particular importance to shoppers and pedestrians as an enhancement of the streetscene at eye level.

### **Relevant Planning Policy And Guidance**

- 6.12 From a conservation area and listed building point of view the key legislation is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Government guidance on planning and the historic environment is contained in PPG15, and those paragraphs of particular relevance are noted below.
- i) Paragraph 1.2: It is said in this paragraph that “The objective of the planning processes should be to reconcile the need for economic growth with the need to protect the historic environment.”
  - ii) Paragraph 1.3: England’s historic environment is described as “all-pervasive” with the result that it cannot, in practice, be preserved unchanged. It is

therefore important to identify what is important within the historic environment so as to be able to assess the impact of future development.

- iii) Paragraph 1.4: It is noted that most historic buildings can still be put to economic use in, for example, commercial or residential occupation.
- iv) Paragraph 1.5: This paragraph refers to the way in which conservation can play a key part in ensuring that an area offers attractive living and working conditions.
- v) Paragraphs 3.8-3.11: Generally, the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings is to keep them in active and economically viable uses.
- vi) Paragraph 4.18: This paragraph contains detailed guidance on the design of new buildings within conservation areas, including matters such as scale, height, form, massing and other considerations. No new buildings are proposed as part of the current application, but this paragraph is relevant to the extensions.

### **Relevant UDP Policies**

- EN1 (General environmental protection and improvement)
- EN21 (Alterations to existing buildings)
- EN22 (Extensions to existing buildings)
- EN24 (Roof alterations and extensions)
- EN31 (Character and appearance of conservation areas)
- EN33 (Restoration and maintenance of buildings in conservation areas)

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

#### **2.7 - Alterations and extensions**

2.8 - Roofs and terraces

2.9 - Shopfronts

### **Conservation Area Appraisal**

6.13 The (undated) Bloomsbury Conservation Area (West) draft conservation area statement describes the application site as being within sub-area 5 "Alfred Place/Tottenham Court Road." It refers to 227-233 Tottenham Court Road as follows:

"To the south of Store Street Nos. 227-233 continues the use of red brick along Tottenham Court Road. This four storey building, which is heavily ornamented with baroque, terracotta detailing has a frontage to Store Street and South Crescent."

### **Policy Discussion**

#### EN1 (general environmental protection and improvement)

6.14 Policy EN1 seeks to ensure that developments will not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the surrounding area and the quality of the wider environment. The proposals to improve the facades of the building will be a significant enhancement of the conservation area. Improvement of the shopfronts, for example, will recreate visual links with detailing on the upper floors of the building, thereby improving its character and appearance.

6.15 The new roof is to be set back from the parapet line to limit its impact on the streetscape and the conservation area. The photographic survey which has been submitted in support of the application indicates that the new roof would not be visible from any the surrounding London Squares (namely Bedford Square) and would be barely visible on approach from the north along Tottenham Court Road. The addition would not be visible from the south.

- 6.16 Alterations at the rear of the Store Street elevation will be masked by the retained elevation which fronts onto the Crescent.

EN21 EN22 and EN24 (Alterations and extensions to existing buildings and roofs)

- 6.17 Policies EN21 and EN22 seeks to ensure that proposals relate to the form, proportions and character of the building and its setting. The form of this particular building derives principally from its elongated elevations punctuated by classical embellishments. The horizontality of the Tottenham Court Road façade is emphasised by a continuous parapet along the skyline, which masks the shallow pitched roofs.
- 6.18 The proposed roof addition is designed to be no taller than the head of the corner turret roof, so that its effect on the conservation area will be negligible. The impact of the addition has been further lessened by the fully glazed elevation to Tottenham Court Road. Although the proposed roof extension takes a different form to the Edwardian building, it will have a negligible impact on views from ground level and only a limited impact when seen from private viewpoints such as the upper floors of the buildings opposite.
- 6.19 Solomon's drawings of the building in 1905 show two elaborate weathervanes, one at either end of the Tottenham Court Road elevation. It is considered that the provision of new weathervanes will enhance the corner turrets by introducing an architectural detail which was part of the original design.
- 6.20 The extension at the rear of the South Crescent façade will have no impact on the public realm except to act as a means of upgrading the overall use and quality of the building and its environment.



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EN31 (character and appearance of conservation areas)

- 6.21 The policy seeks to ensure that developments preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. Local character is derived from the consistency in the height, scale and massing of development and the continuous building alignments. The proposed roof extension will preserve the character and appearance of the building and the conservation area by virtue of the fact that the extension would be barely visible from the public realm.
- 6.22 The Store Street elevation is to be enhanced by restoring more sympathetic fenestration, and the existing archway through to the rear of the site will become an entrance with full-height glazing, creating an active street frontage in place of what is currently an unattractive part of the building. The new development to the rear will be visible through the double-height space within the entrance foyer, which will improve and enhance the main frontage of the building and enhance the streetscape within the crescent by returning the building to active use.

EN33 (restoration and maintenance of buildings in conservation areas)

- 6.23 The building is to be restored as far as possible to its original appearance, including architectural detailing and the incorporation of weathervanes on the corner turrets of the Tottenham Court Road elevation. Unsympathetic shopfronts will be replaced.
- 6.24 In accordance with policy and SPG (2.9) the proposed shopfronts will respect the proportions of the building and its architectural detailing. Seamless glazing, set back within the opening, will allow the original pilasters and decorative terracotta console brackets to become the main architectural features. Furthermore, guidelines will be drawn up for future tenants requiring fascia signs that respect the original character and appearance of the building.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 In the light of the above we draw the following principal conclusions:

1. The proposals would provide additional employment in a highly accessible location in central London. This is fully in accordance with the Council's employment policies.
2. Physical changes will improve the appearance of both Tottenham Court Road and Store Street sites, including restoring original features on these conservation area buildings.
3. The scheme will provide improved retail floorspace on Tottenham Court Road and Store Street.
4. The development includes the provision of housing at 19-21A Store Street to create a greater mix of uses and accords with the objectives of providing housing where there are increases in office floorspace.
5. It is considered that the design of the new build elements would enhance the appearance of the buildings within the conservation area.

7.2 We accordingly consider that these conservation area and planning applications should be approved.

# APPENDIX 1



227-233 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD

Existing and Proposed GEA's  
July 2004

EXISTING GEA				
Floor	Retail	Employment	Common areas	Total
Basement	1422	410	18	1850
Ground	1121	193	37	1351
First	656	470	28	1154
Second	263	873	19	1155
Third	263	546	16	825
Fourth	4	238	0	242
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3729</b>	<b>2730</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>6577</b>

PROPOSED GEA				
Floor	Retail	Employment	Common areas (including plant)	Total
Basement	1707	77	151	1935
Ground	1185	300	147	1632
First		1238		1238
Second		1315		1315
Third		1315		1315
Fourth		982		982
Gallery Plant		402	62	464
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2892</b>	<b>5629</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>8881</b>

# 19-21A STORE STREET

## Existing and Proposed GEA's

EXISTING GEA					
Floor	Retail	Café and wine bar	Storage	Employment	Total
Basement		176	93	185	455
Ground	143	64	3	90	298
First				236	236
Second				229	229
Third				217	217
Fourth				207	207
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>1164</b>	<b>1642</b>

PROPOSED GEA			
Floor	Retail	Residential	Total
Basement	455		455
Ground	246	27	273
First		255	255
Second		250	250
Third		252	252
Fourth		224	224
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>1709</b>

## **APPENDIX 2**

## 227-233 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD AND 19-21A STORE STREET

### Land Use Summary Table (Combined sites)

#### Existing

Retail gross	3,872 m <sup>2</sup>
Approximate retail sales	1,707 m <sup>2</sup>
Café and wine bar	240 m <sup>2</sup>
Employment	3,894 m <sup>2</sup>
Miscellaneous.	214 m <sup>2</sup>

#### **Total floorspace**

<b>227-233 Tottenham Court Road</b>	<b>6,577 m<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>19-21A Store Street</b>	<b>1,642 m<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Combined sites</b>	<b>8,219 m<sup>2</sup></b>

#### Proposed

Retail gross	3,593 m <sup>2</sup> (decrease of 279 m <sup>2</sup> )
Approximate retail sales	2,700 m <sup>2</sup> (increase of c1,000 m <sup>2</sup> )
Employment	5,629 m <sup>2</sup> (increase of 1,735 m <sup>2</sup> )
Residential	1,008 m <sup>2</sup> (increase of 1,008 m <sup>2</sup> )
Miscellaneous (including common areas and plant)	360 m <sup>2</sup>

#### **Total floorspace**

<b>227-233 Tottenham Court Road</b>	<b>8,881 m<sup>2</sup> (increase 2,304 m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>a</sup></b>
<b>19-21A Store Street</b>	<b>1,709 m<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Combined sites</b>	<b>10,590 m<sup>2</sup></b>

#### Notes

<sup>a</sup> The increase in gross floorspace at 227-233 Tottenham Court Road is above the indicative 500m<sup>2</sup> threshold in emerging policy. The increase in gross at 19-21A Store Street is below that threshold.